

Sharpening the Tip of the Spear: Preparing Special Forces Detachment Commanders for the Future

**A Monograph
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Abstract

SHARPENING THE TIP OF THE SPEAR: PREPARING SPECIAL FORCES DETACHMENT COMMANDERS FOR THE FUTURE by MAJ Edward C Croot, U.S. Army, 50 pages.

Given the fact that Special Forces detachments cause effects at the strategic and operational levels of war in the GWOT, it is imperative that SF detachment commanders are adequately prepared to develop a comprehensive understanding of the situation at the operational and strategic levels of war and how their decisions influence and affect it. However, research for this monograph uncovered that not all detachment commanders have a good understanding of the strategic and operational levels of war. There is very little formal preparation of strategic and operational understanding via institutionalized SF training and education. Those who are prepared have knowledge or insight through informal means such as self-interest, self-study, or prior experience. This monograph determines if an SF detachment commander is adequately prepared to operate in the contemporary operational environment.

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Introduction

Background

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 have ushered in a new era of counterinsurgency to deal with Al-Qaeda-linked insurgent and terrorist organizations.¹ Enemies in the past needed great armies and great industrial capabilities to endanger America. Now, shadowy networks of individuals can bring great chaos and suffering to our shores for less than it costs to purchase a single tank. Terrorists are organized to penetrate open societies and to turn the power of modern technologies against us.² In response, the United States Government embarked on a Global War on Terror (GWOT) against terrorists and their supporters throughout the world. The war against terrorists of global reach is a global enterprise of uncertain duration.³

Since the beginning of the GWOT, the United States and partner nations have inflicted considerable damage on the leadership of this transnational threat – specifically the Al-Qaida network and the associated global terror movement.⁴ However, the terrorist threat in 2008 has evolved. It remains the preeminent danger to the Homeland and to U.S. interests abroad. We now face an ideological global insurgency supported by state and non-state actors alike.

According to the U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM):

Government instability and failed states have become the catalyst for the spread of international terrorism. Besides the problems of poverty, corruption, porous borders, and ineffective national security structures, today's environment has state and non-state actors fostering instability and political chaos across numerous geographic regions of the world. The resulting instability creates an accessible population of disaffected youth that can be motivated and nurtured

¹ Colonel Gregory Wilson, U.S. Army, "Anatomy of a Successful COIN Operation: OEF-Philippines and the Indirect Approach," *Military Review* (November-December 2006): 2.

² Office of the President of the United States, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America 2002* (Washington, D.C.: September 2002), 3.

³ Ibid.

⁴ United States Special Operations Command, *Posture Statement 2007* (MacDill Air Force Base, FL: USSOCOM, n.d), 2.

into willing fighters, then skillfully used by militant groups to manipulate large portions of the populace.⁵

Thomas Barnett, a prominent American military geostrategist, shares a similar view. He proposes that terrorists operate between the seams of *Core Countries* (countries that are globalized, have a yearly minimum per capita income of US \$3,000, experience a free flow of people, information, and ideas, and have functioning governments) and *Gap Countries* (those with opposite attributes to a core country). He estimates that 95% of US non-humanitarian crises responses since 1990 have occurred within these gap countries.⁶ He also describes the importance of the seams by stating that:

Most of the terrorists we fear operate and are based within the gap countries and that if they had their way they would bring their violence into the core countries via the seams. They represent the fundamental battle lines in this global war on terrorism: They are like the middle ground on a chessboard, or the countries most likely to be either lost to the gap or pulled into the core. As international trade studies consistently show, proximity still determines a lot of economic transactions across the globe.⁷

Afghanistan is a strong example of a gap country. We have learned since September 11, 2001 that a gap country like Afghanistan can pose as great a danger to our national interests as a strong state. Poverty does not make poor people into terrorists and murderers. Yet poverty, weak institutions, and corruption can make weak states vulnerable to terrorist networks, drug cartels, and criminal agencies within their borders.⁸

If the Al-Qaida network and the associated global terror movement, and their ability to operate, resource, and recruit within the seams, is the greatest threat to the security of the United States, then which element of the government is best suited to deal with this threat? When

⁵ United States Special Operations Command, *Posture Statement 2007* (MacDill Air Force Base, FL: USSOCOM, n.d), 2..

⁶ Thomas P.M. Barnett, "The Concept of Seam" Thomas P.M. Barnett::Weblog, entry posted March 19, 2004, http://www.thomaspmbarnett.com/weblog/2004/03/the_concept_of_seam.html [accessed October 30, 2007].

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Office of the President of the United States, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America 2002*, (Washington, D.C.: 2006), 5.

considering the complex and uncertain environment of current and future battlefields, the ability to deploy “rank and file” military formations against an enemy who lives in and amongst the populations of the globe is exceedingly difficult if not impossible.⁹ In the 2006 Unified Command Plan (UCP), President Bush expanded USSOCOM’s responsibilities to serve as the lead combatant command for planning, synchronizing, and as directed, executing global operations against terrorist networks in coordination with other combatant commanders.¹⁰ This allows USSOCOM to affect military action on a global scale, across geographic boundaries, by arranging military actions to ensure optimum employment of force.¹¹

As the lead combatant command for the GWOT, which unit within USSOCOM is best suited for the mission? As the potential of a conventional military “force-on-force” clash wanes and irregular warfare (IW) looms prominent, the United States strategy will increasingly and routinely turn to the world’s premier unconventional warriors, the U.S. Army Special Forces. Special Forces (SF) is the largest single Special Operation Force (SOF) component in USSOCOM and is the largest single SOF contributor to efforts in the GWOT.¹²

Current U.S. unconventional warfare and counter-terrorism strategy talks of exploiting an enemy’s vulnerabilities (e.g. finances, resources, sanctuaries) and disrupting his processes while upsetting his ability to create conflict. This approach to warfare focuses heavily on “dislocating” ones opponent. Here the intent is to psychologically and physically upset his balance and create numerous unexpected challenges that he is surely unready and unable to confront.¹³

⁹ Lieutenant Colonel William H. Dodge, United States Army, *A Comprehensive Transformation Strategy For U.S. Army Special Forces for the 21st Century* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: 2006), 3.

¹⁰ Office of the Secretary of Defense, *2006 Unified Campaign Plan* (Washington, D.C.: 2006), 5.

¹¹ United States Special Operations Command, *Fact Sheet 2007* (MacDill Air Force Base, FL: USSOCOM, n.d), 4.

¹² *A Comprehensive Transformation Strategy For U.S. Army Special Forces for the 21st Century* (Fort Bragg, NC: 2007), 11.

¹³ *Ibid*, 4.

The Special Forces are specifically equipped, trained, and designed for this type of warfare. Disruptive attacks by kinetic or non-kinetic means through clandestine or overt approaches are just one of a myriad of specialized tasks well within the purview of SF.¹⁴ Special Forces soldiers are carefully selected and specially trained to conduct extended operations in extremely remote and hostile territory, under ambiguous circumstances and conditions. They specialize in Unconventional Warfare (UW) that includes guerrilla warfare and other offensive low-visibility, covert, or clandestine operations, as well as the indirect activities of subversion, sabotage, intelligence activities, and evasion and escape. The SF soldier is uniquely suited to operate against terrorist networks within the seams because of his maturity, military skills, language skills, and cultural awareness.¹⁵

The operational arm of SF is comprised of five active SF Groups and two U.S. Army National Guard Special Forces Groups. Currently, each SF group has three battalions with three operational companies in each. The operational companies have six 12-man teams entitled Special Forces Operational Detachment Alphas (SFODAs). A captain normally commands an SFODA and is responsible for the tactical employment of the detachment to achieve operational and strategic effects.¹⁶ SF activities are a critical tool for the U.S. government in the GWOT. “SOF’s indirect action activities – typically performed by Special Forces when they work by, with, and through the forces and people of the host nation – are critical for reshaping the sociopolitical environment in which terrorists and insurgents thrive.”¹⁷

¹⁴ *A Comprehensive Transformation Strategy For U.S. Army Special Forces for the 21st Century* (Fort Bragg, NC: 2007), 5.

¹⁵ Joint Special Operations University, *Special Operations Forces Reference Manual*, Revised July 2006, The JSOU Press (Hurlburt Field, FL), 3-8.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 1-2.

¹⁷ David Tucker and Christopher J. Lamb, “Restructuring Special Operations Forces for Emerging Threats,” *Strategic Forum 219* (January 2006): 1.

It is critical that the SF Detachment Commander understands all aspects of the detachment's operations from the tactical through the strategic level so that the SFODA can help achieve strategic and political objectives. Since the U.S. involvement in the Balkans during the 1990s, it has become critical for leaders (not just SF) at all levels within the U.S. military to understand the strategic and political implications of tactical actions. Leaders must also understand the ways that forces can be employed to achieve political ends, and the ways that political considerations affect the use of force.¹⁸ Military leaders must understand the legal and political constraints to avoid strategic failure while achieving tactical success. All commanders must adopt courses of action that legally support those objectives even if the courses of action are beyond traditional doctrine.¹⁹ Again, this is particularly important for SFODA commanders.

At this point, it is necessary to first define, and then outline in current joint and army doctrine the role of Special Operations (SO). SO is defined in doctrine as:

Operations conducted in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments to achieve military, diplomatic, informational, and/or economic objectives employing military capabilities for which there is no broad conventional force requirement. These operations often require low-visibility, clandestine, or covert capabilities. SO are applicable across the range of military operations. They may be conducted independently or in conjunction with operations of conventional forces or other government agencies and may include operations through, with, or by indigenous or surrogate forces. SO differ from conventional operations in degree of physical and political risk, operational techniques, mode of employment, independence from friendly support, and dependence on detailed operational intelligence and indigenous assets.²⁰

Joint Publication (JP) 3-05 *Joint Special Operations* puts SO in strategic and operational context:

SO can be conducted across the range of military operations at all levels of war and throughout all phases of a joint campaign. Commanders and planners should

¹⁸ Max G. Manwaring, "Peace and Stability Lessons from Bosnia," *Parameters* (Winter 1998): 5.

¹⁹ COIN Center for Excellence, *Foreign Internal Defense Brief* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: 2005), 12-13.

²⁰ Department of Defense, Joint Publication 3-05, *Doctrine for Joint Special Operations* (Washington, D.C.: 2003), I-3.

focus SO at strategic and operational levels to maximize efficiency. SO can also be applied tactically although the greatest utility is at the strategic level.

The President designates national objectives and sanctions the military means to achieve them. In pursuit of these objectives, SO may be conducted under the direct supervision of the President or the Secretary of Defense (SecDef).

Theater objectives are established by Geographic Combatant Commanders (GCC), based on national objectives, and are an integral part of a theater campaign plan. The integration of SO through the theater special operations command (TSOC) can help the commander attain these objectives.

Operational objectives established by subordinate Joint Force Commanders (JFC) support theater objectives and lead directly to theater success. SO provides the JFC with a selective, flexible deterrent option or crises response capability to achieve operational objectives.

SO may be conducted in support of a conventional force's tactical objectives when doing so will be critical to the achievement of strategic or operational objectives by that conventional force.²¹

Field Manual (FM) 3-05 (FM 100-25) *Army Special Operations Forces* outlines Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF) support to the Joint Force Commander (JFC) at all levels of war.

Strategic – The strategic level concerns the broadest aspects of national and theater policy. Decisions at this level reflect national and multinational goals, integrate all the instruments of national power, provide forces, and determine constraints on their use. The President or the SecDef and the GCCs determine the strategic-national and strategic-theater objectives and the manner of use of military means to achieve them. The President or the SecDef and the GCCs may directly or indirectly (through subordinate commanders) employ ARSOF in pursuit of these objectives.

Operational – The operational level focuses on theater campaigns and major operations. JFCs determine operational objectives that lead to the attainment of strategic-theater objectives. These objectives are attained through the design, organization, and conduct of campaigns and major operations that, in turn, guide tactical events. A GCC, subordinate unified command commander, joint task force (CJTF) commander, Service component commander, or functional component commander may employ ARSOF as part of a joint force to attain these operational objectives.

Tactical – The tactical level focuses on battles and engagements. Decisions at this level apply combat power to create advantages while in contact with or close to the enemy. ARSOF may support tactical actions (offense, defense, and stability actions) designed to have significant effect in attaining operational

²¹ Department of Defense, Joint Publication 3-05, *Doctrine for Joint Special Operations* (Washington, D.C.: 2003), I-3.

objectives. Tactical actions may directly attain tactical, operational, and strategic objectives simultaneously.²²

As outlined above by Department of Defense (DOD) doctrine, an SFODA commander's operational awareness and understanding from the tactical through the strategic level is critical. SF provides decision makers with increased options for achieving national security strategy objectives across the spectrum of conflict through the SOF core missions: counter-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), counterterrorism (CT), foreign internal defense (FID), special reconnaissance (SR), direct action (DA), and UW.²³ They differ from traditional military operations in degree of political risk. Tactical level decisions with operational and strategic implications are essential as concurrent revolutions in military affairs, technology, and information have shattered traditional boundaries, merging tactical, operational, and strategic levels of war into a single, integrated universe in which action at the bottom often has instant and dramatic impacts at all levels.²⁴

SF operations during Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in Afghanistan provide numerous examples of tactical level decisions with operational and strategic implications. *Weapon of Choice*, the USSOCOM official history of the early days in OEF, demonstrates how the war to drive the Taliban from power and help the Afghan people was successfully accomplished by majors, captains, warrant officers, and sergeants in tactical teams and aircrews operating at the tactical level.²⁵ They validated the concept of SF as a force multiplier and a lever for strategic, campaign-level operations.²⁶

²² Headquarters, Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-05 (Field Manual 100-25), *Army Special Operations Forces* (Washington, D.C.: 2006), 1-5.

²³ United States Special Operations Command, *Fact Sheet 2007*, 3.

²⁴ Major Bruce R. Swatek, United States Army, *Role of Special Forces Liaison Elements in Future Multinational Operations* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: 2002), 74.

²⁵ Combat Studies Institute, *Weapon of Choice: U.S. Army Special Operations Forces in Afghanistan* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: 2003), xv.

²⁶ Center for Army Lessons Learned, *Issues Associated with Conventional Army mindset in an Unconventional Combat Environment Brief* (Fort Bragg, NC: 2006), 3.

SF operations during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF) also serve as an example. In Western Iraq, 1st Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) infiltrated into Iraq early and prevented the launch of any missiles into neighboring countries, especially Israel. A missile launch would have instantly complicated the conflict, and quite possibly triggered a wider regional war.²⁷ In Southern Iraq, 2nd Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) provided intelligence and targeting data to British forces, the principal U.S. partner in the war, from Basra to Karbala to Najaf between the Euphrates and Tigris rivers.²⁸ In Central Iraq, SFODA 551 infiltrated the critical Karbala Gap and provided intelligence of Iraqi defenses. It prevented Iraqi forces from stopping the 3rd Infantry Division and facilitated the assault on Baghdad.²⁹ In Northern Iraq, 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) (5,200-man task force) and coalition air-power fixed thirteen divisions of the Iraqi army (more than 100,000 soldiers) and prevented them from attacking the U.S. forces to the south and from going to Baghdad's defense.³⁰ All of these SF missions required tactical actions by SFODAs that produced strategic effects.

The proceeding examples reveal that SF Captains are operating at the tip of the spear, throughout the world, in support of the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). Their daily decisions have far-reaching operational and strategic impacts. It is critical that an SFODA commander is well versed in the tactical, operational, and strategic levels of war in order to play a critical role in the efforts of the United States in the GWOT.

²⁷ Linda Robinson, *Masters of Chaos: The Secret History of the Special Forces* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), 192.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 224-225.

²⁹ *Ibid*, 246.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 299.

Significance of the Research

The SFODA commander routinely leads eleven other men halfway around the world in unknown or hostile territory, thousands of miles from any superior officer.³¹ The average SF officer is 28 years old upon his arrival at the Special Forces Group and has six years of experience as a military officer.³² At this point in his career, he has received little education of the operational and strategic levels of war, Joint-Interagency-Intergovernmental-Multinational (JIIM) environment, or critical thinking skills. His team is comprised of ten Non-Commissioned Officers and one Warrant Officer, all of which are highly skilled operators, trainers, and teachers but rely on the Captain to provide the operational and strategic focus, JIIM awareness, and critical thinking skills required for planning. He must ascertain the systemic realities of the operational and strategic environment with limited direction from his superiors. The SFODA commander's maturity, training, and education are constantly challenged.

The author of this monograph served as an SFODA commander in both Iraq and Afghanistan. It is the author's opinion that his detachment performed well at the tactical level. However, after receiving education on the strategic and operational levels of warfare, elements of the JIIM, and critical thinking skills at the United States Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC), it became apparent that as a detachment commander the author did not have a complete understanding of the situation at the operational and strategic levels of war and how their actions influenced and effected the environment.

Several informal interviews conducted with other CGSC and School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS) SF students reveal similar experiences. A review of how a SF detachment commander is selected, trained, educated, and developed, could identify if shortfalls

³¹ Linda Robinson, *Masters of Chaos: The Secret History of the Special Forces* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), 26.

³² Major Matthew F. Harmon, Personnel Management and Assignment Officer at Human Resource Command, e-mail to Edward Croot, February 19, 2008.

exist in preparing him to understand the operational and strategic levels of war. This could ultimately lead to changes that would better prepare him to operate in the contemporary operational environment.

Research Question

Given the fact that Special Forces detachments cause effects at the strategic and operational levels of war in the GWOT, it is imperative that SF detachment commanders are adequately prepared to develop a comprehensive understanding of the situation at the operational and strategic levels of war and how their decisions influence and affect it. However, research for this monograph uncovered that not all detachment commanders have a good understanding of the strategic and operational levels of war. There is very little formal preparation of strategic and operational understanding via institutionalized SF training and education. Those who are prepared have knowledge or insight through informal means such as self-interest, self-study, or prior experience. This monograph intends to determine if an SF detachment commander is adequately prepared to operate in the contemporary operational environment.

Hypothesis

Improvements to the process of selecting, training, educating, and developing SF captains will enhance their ability to understand the situation at the operational and strategic levels of war and how their decisions influence and affect it and increase their effectiveness to create intended operational and strategic effects.

Methodology

This monograph begins by examining officer's assessment and selection during the Special Forces Assessment and Selection (SFAS) course operated by the United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (SWC). It starts with a description of SFAS and the type of soldier it intends to select using secondary source SF and Recruiting command

documents. This is followed with primary source interviews of SWC staff, the Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne) commander, and cadre to evaluate the process. It concludes with a study conducted by the U.S. Army Research Institute (ARI) for the Behavioral and Social Sciences to determine if the attributes evaluated properly predict the future success in SF of those candidates selected.

Second, the monograph takes a macro look at the entire training pipeline that both officer and enlisted SF student's experience. It begins with a description of the Special Forces Qualification Course (SFQC) and how it intends to train SF soldiers, utilizing secondary source SF and Recruiting command documents. The chapter concludes with primary source interviews of former students and cadre and secondary source professional papers.

Third, the monograph converges at the micro level on the officer specific training that captains receive during the Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) Qualification Phase of the Q-Course. It begins with a description of the Special Forces Officer Course and how it intends to train SF Officers using the SF Officer Course Command Brief as a secondary source and a primary source interview with the commander of A Company, 4th Battalion, 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne). This is followed by an outline of the current changes to the course that highlights the addition of levels of warfare, interagency, and critical thinking skill education. For comparison purposes, the chapter concludes with an illustration of a new introductory United States Naval Special Warfare Sea Air Land (SEAL) officer professional development course that focuses solely on education.

Fourth, the monograph outlines the education SF majors receive during Intermediate Level Education (ILE). It uses the ILE curriculum as a secondary source and a primary source interview of the curriculum author. For additional comparison purposes, it concludes with an illustration of a different approach to officer education as conducted by the British Army.

Fifth, the monograph examines the captain's subsequent development by superiors upon arrival at the SF Group. It will use primary source interviews of former SF battalion commanders

to evaluate detachment commander's performance during the GWOT. Additionally, it will use primary source interviews of former SFODA commanders to evaluate development practices at SF Groups. For comparison purposes, it concludes with an illustration of a different approach to officer development as currently conducted by the SEALs.

Sixth, the results of a survey issued to current CGSC and SAMS SF Majors who served as detachment commanders during the GWOT is presented. The survey first sought to evaluate their training and education prior to detachment command. Secondly, it also queried whether the education received at CGSC would have been beneficial prior to detachment command. Thirdly, it queried whether development by company or battalion commanders, an Officer Professional Development (OPD) Program, and an academic and government agency guest speaker program would have been beneficial prior to detachment command. Fourth, it queried whether or not exposure to critical thinking skills, levels of war, and JIIM education at the SFQC would help future SF captains command SFODAs in combat. It concludes with their additional recommendations of how changes to their selection, training, education, or development could have better prepared them for detachment command.

The monograph concludes with a discussion of what may be missing from the process of selecting, training, educating, and developing SF captains. This is followed by recommendations for proposed changes to the preparation of SF captains that may enhance their ability to understand the situation at the operational and strategic levels of war and how their decisions influence and affect it. It concludes with recommendations for follow-on research in the general area of SF officer and conventional army officer preparation.

Conclusion

Is the SF captain able to effectively lead his detachment at the operational and strategic levels? To this point in his professional military career, the SF captain has trained to operate at the tactical level. He does not have the breadth of knowledge required to appreciate the

operational and strategic intricacies required to effectively command a remote firebase or meet the country team's intent.

This monograph outlines several shortfalls to an SF officer's selection, training, education, and development. Many of the shortfalls have already been identified by the SWC and changes to the process are underway or have already been adopted. However, some shortfalls have not. All shortfalls will be addressed with recommendations for ways of improving the process of preparing SF captains to command SFODAs to maximize their ability to understand situations at the operational and strategic levels of war and how their decisions influence and affect it.

Definitions and Key Doctrinal Concepts

It is essential that the reader understand the distinction between training and education. The Army defines education as instruction with increased knowledge, skill, and/or experience as the desired outcome for the student. This is in contrast to training, where a task or performance basis is used and specific conditions and standards are used to assess individual and unit proficiency.³³

Training refers to the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and competencies as a result of the teaching of vocational or practical skills and knowledge that relates to specific useful skills. Education encompasses teaching and learning specific skills, and also something less tangible but more profound: the imparting of knowledge, positive judgment, and well-developed wisdom.³⁴

Training serves to teach procedural tasks whereas education teaches transfer tasks. Procedural tasks can be physical tasks, like assembling a rifle, or mental tasks, like computing the maximum ordinal of an artillery round. These tasks are procedural because there is a prescribed

³³ Department of the Army Regulation 350-1, *Army Training and Leader Development*, (Washington, D.C., 2007), 140.

³⁴ Robert McClary, SAMS Faculty, e-mail to Edward Croot, February 06, 2008.

or known way of performing the task. Transfer tasks have significant variation from any specific application to the next. They are taught using underlying concepts and principles, such as levels of warfare, JIIM, or critical thinking skills, which should then enable the learner to apply new and creative ways to the specific context in question. Training is below education on the cognitive scale of learning. Training and education are ways to achieve an ends in learning.³⁵ Learning is not achieved through either training or education but through a synthesis of both.

Selection - Special Forces Officer Assessment and Selection (SFAS)

Outline

SFAS is the two-week, critical initial process by which candidates with the necessary aptitude and attitude are identified for entry into the SF community.³⁶ Promotable first lieutenants that volunteer are selected by a Department of the Army centralized accession board in order to attend.³⁷ SFAS is the first of five phases of the SFQC that requires a commitment of 1-2 years of intensive coursework based on the soldier's military specialty training.³⁸ The entire SF Q-Course is the responsibility of the 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne), and SFAS is conducted by Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne).³⁹

Since 2005 the SFAS cadres assess, examine, and evaluate approximately 3,236 Special Forces volunteers a year (300 of which are officers) to determine those suitable for Special Forces

³⁵ Lieutenant Colonel Chadwick Clark, Combined Arms Center Special Operations Forces Cell, e-mail to Edward Croot, February 06, 2008.

³⁶ *USSOCOM Posture Statement 2007*, 15.

³⁷ Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-3, *Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Career Management*, 161.

³⁸ United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, *Special Forces Pipeline Fact Sheet*, <http://www.soc.mil/swcs/Pipeline.shtml> [accessed December 11, 2007].

³⁹ 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne), *Command Brief* (Fort Bragg, NC: 2007), 5.

training.⁴⁰ All candidates participate in a variety of activities designed to place them under various forms of physical and mental stress. SFAS assesses qualities and potential through behavioral observation, analysis via performance measure, and recording data. All activities are performed in a neutral environment with limited information and no performance feedback.⁴¹

United States Army Recruiting Command (USAREC) Pamphlet 601-23 *In-Service Special Forces Recruiting Program for Officer and Enlisted* states that the course uses a “Whole Man” selection process that assesses each candidate for six attributes that are important for all Special Forces Soldiers. These attributes are intelligence, trainability, physical fitness, motivation, influence, and judgment.⁴² The USAREC website also states that the program affords SF an opportunity to assess each Soldier’s capabilities by testing his physical, emotional, and mental stamina. Conversely, it allows each Soldier the opportunity to make a meaningful and educated decision about SF and his career plan.⁴³ The pamphlet does not outline any differentiation for officer candidates.

SWC outlines the SFAS model as focusing on student trainability and suitability for service in Special Forces. Teaching, coaching, training, and mentoring are important aspects of the program. In contrast to the USAREC Pamphlet 601-23, it outlines a series of 13, not six, attributes linked to success in the Q-Course that form the basis for evaluating candidate suitability. These attributes include intelligence, physical fitness, motivation, trustworthiness, accountability, maturity, stability, judgment, decisiveness, teamwork, influence, responsibility,

⁴⁰ Colin Jorsch, Training Instructor/Administrator A/1/1 SWTG(A), e-mail to Edward Croot, April 1, 2008.

⁴¹ Headquarters, United States Army Recruiting Command, USAREC Pamphlet 601-25, *In-Service Special Forces Recruiting Program for Officer and Enlisted* (Fort Knox, KY: 2006), 4.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ United States Army Recruiting Command, *SFAS Overview*, <http://www.usarec.army.mil/hq/sfas/overview.html> [accessed December 11, 2007].

and communications.⁴⁴ Again, there is no mention of different or additional attributes required for officer candidates.

Major Craig Doane, commander of Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne), outlined the following in response to the question “What is the higher guidance that SFAS follows to conduct selection?”

There is not any published guidance that is current or relevant to what we are doing in SFAS. Most of what happens in SFAS is given *informally* from the commanding general of SWC to the SFAS Company. However, there is also the out of date SWC Reg 350-12, Training Relief, Recycle, and Retraining of Resident Students, 23 Sep 1995, United States Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) 350-12, FM 7.0, Training the Force, 22 Oct 02, FM 7.1, Battle Focused Training, 15 Sep 03, TRADOC Reg 350-18, The Army School System, May 2000, USASOC Reg 350-2, Training Airborne Operations, 27 Sep 01, SWC Fiscal Year 2005 Annual Training Guidance, and the annual training guidance published by the Group Commander every September. All of these are considered in running SFAS.⁴⁵

MAJ Doane stated that the SFAS mission statement is to “Conduct assessment to select the right Soldiers who demonstrate the potential for success during the SFQC.”⁴⁶ SFAS is divided into three sections with each section measuring two major attributes. Some of the areas are compared against a population of 300 SF officers and 3,236 enlisted soldiers and the others are compared against only the current class of candidates.⁴⁷

The first section measures Intelligence Quotient (IQ). The IQ is used to evaluate intelligence and application. The second section measures Unconventional Warfare Suitability (UWS). The UWS is used to evaluate judgment and influence. The third section measures the Physical Quotient (PQ). The PQ is used to evaluate physical fitness and motivation.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ SWC *Special Forces Pipeline Fact Sheet*

⁴⁵ Major Craig M. Doane, CDR A/1/1 SWTG(A), e-mail to Edward Croot, January 26, 2008.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

In reference to officer candidates, MAJ Doane stated that they look at officers in reference to Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-3, Chapter 17, Characteristics required of Special Forces Officers.⁴⁹ The pamphlet outlines the following unique attributes required to be an SF officer:

- Be physically fit.
- Possess unquestioned personal integrity and moral courage.
- Be self-reliant team players that can function as leaders in tightly knit small groups or independently.
- Possess the cognitive resilience and mental dexterity to act autonomously while under great stress and be able to inspire others to perform effectively in a highly stressful environment.
- Be an adaptive thinker, able to thrive in complex and ambiguous situations.
- Be mentally flexible and willing to experiment and innovate in a decentralized and unstructured environment.
- Have the ability to solve complex political-military problems and develop and employ conventional or unconventional solutions. Develop and employ non-doctrinal methods and techniques when applicable. Be capable of decisive action for missions in which no current doctrine exists.
- Be able to learn new skills, accept new ideas, and teach others.
- Possess good interpersonal and cross-cultural communications skills as well as political acumen and cultural sensitivity. Mission success will often depend on an ability to establish rapport and influence the attitudes and behaviors of people from foreign cultures.⁵⁰

Officers also take a variety of psychological batteries to include the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI), Wonderlic Personnel Test, and General Ability Measure for Adults (GAMA). The tests measure general personality, intelligence, and ability respectively.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Major Craig M. Doane, CDR A/1/1 SWTG(A), e-mail to Edward Croot, January 26, 2008.

⁵⁰ Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-3, *Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Career Management*, 161.

⁵¹ Major Craig M. Doane, CDR A/1/1 SWTG(A), e-mail to Edward Croot, January 26, 2008.

Analysis

The attributes measured in SFAS by the IQ, UWS, and PQ are in direct correlation with the attributes outlined in USAREC Pamphlet 601-23 and measure both enlisted and officers for intelligence, trainability (application), physical fitness, motivation, influence, and judgment. However, the IQ, UWS, and PQ does not appear to directly measure the entire population of candidates (officer and enlisted) for trustworthiness, accountability, maturity, stability, decisiveness, teamwork, and communications as outlined in the SWC SFAS model. Analysis of how SFAS utilizes the Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-3 and psychological tests show that SFAS does measure officers for trustworthiness, accountability, maturity, stability, decisiveness, teamwork, responsibility, and communications as outlined in the SWC SFAS model. Therefore, SFAS does assess, examine, and evaluate candidates to determine who is suitable for Special Forces training and who may be unable to adapt to the Special Forces environment consistent with the attributes as outlined by Department of the Army, USAREC, and SWC.

However, a logical follow-on question is: whether or not there is a unique attribute required in officers that facilitates their flexibility to command an SFODA tactically and understand the complexities of the operational and strategic levels of war? A study conducted by ARI in 2005 concluded that adaptive proficiency is critical for operating in the dynamic SF mission environment. Recent increases in mission tempo require that officers be proficient and operationally prepared immediately upon entering SF.⁵²

Results from a field survey show lower-than-desired adaptive proficiency from recent SFQC graduates.⁵³ As adaptability has been rated as critically important for the jobs of SF

⁵² U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, *Research Report 1831: Developing Adaptive Proficiency in Special Forces Officers* (Fort Bragg, NC: February, 2005), i-vii.

⁵³ M.M. Zazanis, R.N. Kilcullen, M.G. Sanders, and D.A. Litton, "The SF Pipeline Review: Voices From the Field," *Special Warfare*, 13(4) (Fall 2000): 6-16.

officers, it is particularly important that officers develop their adaptive capabilities early in their SF careers because the recent increase in mission tempo often places these officers in the field immediately upon leaving the SFQC and entering SF.⁵⁴ In addition, for officers, it is not enough to be individually adaptable. They must also help develop adaptability in their teams by encouraging and rewarding adaptive behavior in the team and by ensuring everyone works together in a coordinated fashion.⁵⁵

Given that adaptability is a critical requirement of an SF officer, it is fair to ask: is adaptability predictable? It is important to understand personal characteristics that serve as antecedents to adaptive performance. Adaptability is often discussed as though it were a personality trait; that is, some people are simply adaptable to changes while others are not. Contributing factors to individual levels of adaptability are personality traits, previous knowledge, skills, and abilities. Relevant personality traits include general self-efficacy, resiliency, openness, achievement motivation, and tolerance of ambiguity. Previous knowledge, skills, and abilities include general cognitive ability, metacognitive skill, problem solving and decision-making skills, interpersonal skill, and awareness.⁵⁶

Due to the results of the study by ARI, SWC modified the SFQC to provide more direct training in the area of adaptive performance. Toward this objective, SWC developed a 3 ½-day introductory exercise on adaptability, specifically tailored to the SF environment and inserted it into the 18A Detachment Commander Course. The exercise is named the Situational Urban Reaction Exercise (SURF). The adaptability course was developed with the intent of better

⁵⁴ Research Report 1831: *Developing Adaptive Proficiency in Special Forces Officers*, 1.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 3.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 3-4.

preparing officers for the adaptive situations they will face during later phases of the SFQC as well as in the field as SF officers.⁵⁷

From analysis of the ARI report, and subsequent actions of SWC, it is reasonable to conclude that SFAS could better serve the SFQC by additionally assessing an officer's adaptability. The 3 ½-day course on adaptability occurs during the Q-Course, and is intended to enhance an officer's adaptability. However, what if the officer has none of the attributes of adaptability?

In response to the ARI findings, SFAS developed the Situational Awareness Reaction Exercise (SARE) and included it in selection during the summer of 2003. It was designed to allow a soldier to perform in a UW exercise without specific guidance and expose him to a probable mission scenario and evaluate his performance. It evaluated the candidates adaptability by determining whether or not he recognized the dilemma, appropriately addressed the dilemma, and offered an appropriate alternative course of action. The SARE exercise was removed by the SWC Commanding General from selection in the summer of 2007.⁵⁸ MAJ Doane suspects that SARE was removed because it attempted to measure a skill set that had not been taught to the officers yet and therefore should not be measured.⁵⁹

SARE was an attempt by the SFAS cadre to evaluate adaptability. In its absence, adaptability is no longer specifically assessed. Re-introduction of SARE or a new concise adaptability assessment during SFAS could identify those officers, which have none of the attributes of adaptability, early in the SF pipeline. SF officers have different cognitive requirements than SF non-commissioned officers. It is logical that they should be additionally assessed on adaptability.

⁵⁷ Research Report 1831: *Developing Adaptive Proficiency in Special Forces Officers*, vii.

⁵⁸ Colin Jorsch, Training Instructor/Administrator A/1/1 SWTG(A), e-mail to Edward Croot, April 1, 2008.

⁵⁹ Major Craig M. Doane, CDR A/1/1 SWTG(A), e-mail to Edward Croot, January 26, 2008.

Training Macro- Special Forces Qualification Course (SFQC)

Outline

After successful completion of SFAS, enlisted soldiers are immediately scheduled for the Q-Course. Officers who have not already attended their Captain's Career Course will attend the Maneuver Captains Career Course (MCCC), a combination of the old Infantry and Armor Career Courses.⁶⁰ At the MCCC, students learn combined arms tactics and operations, develop expertise in infantry and armor doctrine, and advanced aspects of maneuver leadership.⁶¹ Because SF is a non-accession branch, the Department of the Army directs that every SF officer complete MCCC prior to attending the SFQC. This ensures that the officer meets Army military education level requirements, and that they have a working knowledge of conventional Army operations and staff processes.⁶²

Upon completion of the MCCC, the officers rejoin the enlisted soldiers in the SF pipeline. The remainder of the Q-Course consists of four phases: Individual Skills (Small Unit Tactics) Phase, Language Phase, Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) Qualification Phase, and Collective Training Phase.⁶³ The 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne) is assigned the mission of training the SF selectees to standard as entry-level ARSOF soldiers, to fill current and future ARSOF requirements.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ United States Army Recruiting Command, Special Operations Recruiting Battalion, *Special Forces Training Overview*.

⁶¹ United States Army Infantry School, *Combined Arms & Tactics Directorate Tactics Division*, <https://www.benning.army.mil/catd/tactics/index.htm> [accessed December 12, 2007].

⁶² Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-3, *Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Career Management*, 161.

⁶³ USAREC Pamphlet 601-25, *In-Service Special Forces Recruiting Program for Officer and Enlisted*.

⁶⁴ 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne), *Command Brief* (Fort Bragg, NC: 2007), 3.

The Q-Course teaches and develops the skills necessary for the SF soldier to conduct SF operations. Duties in SF primarily involve participation in SO to include the core missions of counter-proliferation of WMD, CT, FID, SR, DA, and UW. Duties at other levels involve command, control, and support functions. Frequently, duties require regional orientation to include foreign language training and in-country experience.⁶⁵

The Individual Skills Phase trains the students on common skills required by all SF soldiers. Training is 12 weeks long and incorporates land navigation (cross-country), small unit tactics, SF Common Tasks and tactics, and Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape (SERE) training. The phase culminates with a SO overview. There is no difference between the officer and enlisted students; they receive identical training with identical requirements.⁶⁶

The language phase conducts language training in a target language determined by the regional affiliation of the student's follow on assignment and culture training for this region. Category I and II languages (Spanish, French, and Indonesian) is 18 weeks long. Category III and IV languages (Arabic, Chinese Mandarin, Tagalog, Russian, Persian Farsi, Korean, and Thai) is 24 weeks long. Soldiers must successfully pass the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT) by demonstrating elementary proficiency in reading, listening, and conversation in the target language in order to advance to the next phase.⁶⁷

The MOS Qualification Phase is the first time within the SF pipeline that officers and enlisted soldiers diverge into separate training by MOS. Each SF volunteer receives extensive training in a specialty which prepares him for future assignment in an SF unit that are designed to operate either unilaterally or in support of and combined with native military and paramilitary

⁶⁵United States Army Recruiting Command, Special Operations Recruiting Battalion, *Special Forces Training Overview*.

⁶⁶ USAREC Pamphlet 601-25, *In-Service Special Forces Recruiting Program for Officer and Enlisted*.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

forces. Enlisted soldier MOS specialties are chosen based on personal background (such as ethnic, linguistic, cultural heritage, and specific expertise), aptitude, desire, and the needs of the SF force. The SF MOS specialties developed in the SFQC are 18A SF Officer, 18B SF Weapons Sergeant, 18C SF Engineer Sergeant, 18D SF Medical Sergeant, and 18E SF Communications Sergeant. Training for all MOSs, with the exception of the 18D which is 46 weeks, is 15 weeks plus two more weeks of MOS-specific functional language terms and tasks language training. The phase culminates with a comprehensive, all MOS, mission-planning exercise.⁶⁸

The Collective Training Phase is the final phase of the Q-Course. During this four-week period, soldiers are trained in SR, DA, air operations, introduction to interagency operations, UW, and planning. The phase culminates with the Exercise ROBIN SAGE, a simulated unconventional warfare scenario conducted in the forests of North Carolina.⁶⁹ SF candidates form training SFODAs that use guerilla warfare techniques to conduct a US sponsored insurgency. ROBIN SAGE is a multi-echelon training event, focused at the SFODA level, but is graded on an individual basis. Upon successful completion of this event, a student will graduate from the course and receive his green beret.⁷⁰

A critique of the training is offered by Major Bruce Swatek in his thesis presented to the Faculty of CGSC in 2002. His research revealed that:

Despite attendance at the Infantry and Armor Captain Career Courses and the Combined Arms Service Staff School, Special Forces captains generally lacked the practical experience to advise and assist foreign counterparts on conventional procedures and equipment at the operational level. Thus, it is applicable to ask, what can be done to ensure Special Forces officers attain a base of knowledge of

⁶⁸ USAREC Pamphlet 601-25, *In-Service Special Forces Recruiting Program for Officer and Enlisted*.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ USAREC Pamphlet 601-25, *In-Service Special Forces Recruiting Program for Officer and Enlisted*.

Joint and Army procedures and equipment at the tactical and operational levels as the military transforms itself and adjusts the way it conducts mission?⁷¹

The larger problem of UW training and ROBIN SAGE was initially proposed in the fall of 1998 by Major General William Boykin, then commander of US Army Special Forces Command. He directed Special Forces Group Commanders to examine the relevance of UW as a mission. The 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne), whose response was not atypical, concluded that UW skill sets had atrophied to the point that troops were far more comfortable conducting SR or DA missions. “After superficial familiarization in ROBIN SAGE, SF soldiers received little clandestine or UW-related training.”⁷²

Major Jeff James, current School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS) student, and former ROBIN SAGE cadre, outlined the problem to this author in an email.

Training in both the officer qualification course and ROBIN SAGE prepared me to conduct both UW in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and FID with the 36th Iraqi Commando on my next rotation. In hindsight, the training could have been better but there was a change in the Contemporary Operating Environment (COE). Our training for FID was based on peacetime JCETs and how to make training plans and deal with a host nation commander, ambassador, and indigenous troops. Our UW training was based on a clandestine, Vietnam type advisory mission but the Pineland scenario was a little sophomoric.⁷³

Colonel David G. Fox proposed similar operational and strategic level training shortfalls of ROBIN SAGE in his United States Army War College (USAWC) Strategy Research Project titled “A Joint and Interagency Unconventional Warfare Training Strategy for Special Forces in the 21st Century”.

The ROBIN SAGE exercise has no interagency involvement and only minimal Air Force participation. The officers and non-commissioned officers receive no instruction on the government agencies that can play a significant role during an unconventional warfare campaign. The exercise focus is at the tactical level, there are only minor attempts to instruct the students on the operational and

⁷¹ Major Bruce R. Swatek, United States Army, *Role of Special Forces Liaison Elements in Future Multinational Operations* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: 2002), 84-85.

⁷² Major Daniel C. Moll, United States Army, *U.S. Army Special Forces Training For The Global War On Terror* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: 2003), 63.

⁷³ Major Jeffery James, former cadre member in SFQC and current SAMS student, e-mail to Edward Croot, December 16, 2007.

strategic significance of unconventional warfare and how it can support U.S. government objectives. Because the community lacks formalized training for officers and non-commissioned officers, this caused difficulties during the initial planning stages and link-up with the interagency elements during OEF.⁷⁴

In 2004 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne) began to rectify the problem by assigning newly promoted Majors as training SFODA advisors for the Collective Training Phase and ROBIN SAGE exercise.⁷⁵ Major James was one of the initial advisors.

When I left my team, I was one of the first officers to work out at ROBIN SAGE post 9-11. All the trainers had a hand in making the scenario more relevant. We knew most of our students would be in combat within a few months after graduation. With a Major serving as the primary trainer for one to three student captains, the officer training became more and more focused on the operational and strategic level. It was emphasized that the NCOs were more than capable of handling the tactical level training. It was the officer's job to work at the operational level with the students and identify those tactical missions with strategic consequences.⁷⁶

COL Fox offers additional recommendations for the Q-Course.

First, incorporate into the course POI the contributions that the interagency and the joint community provide during an unconventional warfare campaign. Second, that when describing and instructing on the phases of an unconventional warfare operation, the duties and responsibilities of the Central Intelligence Agency and the Department of Defense, as prescribed by law, be thoroughly discussed and what actions must be taken if Special Forces units are to be subordinate to the Central Intelligence Agency. Third, that the exercise ROBIN SAGE be updated to include scenarios and ethical situations that our Special Forces soldiers are now facing in Afghanistan and Iraq.⁷⁷

Analysis

Analysis of the interviews and applicable readings reveal that officers receive little operational and strategic level and interagency training during the MCCC, Individual Skills Phase, and Collective Training Phase of the SFQC. 1st Special Warfare Training Group

⁷⁴ *A Joint And Interagency Unconventional Warfare Training Strategy For Special Forces In The 21st Century*, 7.

⁷⁵ Major Jeffery James, former cadre member in SFQC and current SAMS student, e-mail to Edward Croot, December 16, 2007.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ *A Joint And Interagency Unconventional Warfare Training Strategy For Special Forces In The 21st Century*, 11.

(Airborne) has implemented changes to address the training shortfalls, particularly in regard to interagency operations, during the ROBIN SAGE exercise and updated the scenario to reflect the COE. As a result, SF captains are adequately *trained* to be successful SFODA commanders.

However, in regards to the previously described difference between training and education, the question remains: Should the officers receive levels of warfare and JIIM *education* prior to ROBIN SAGE? It is logical to conclude that they should receive this education in order to put into practice what they have learned during the UW exercise. That way, the advisors could assess and correct their performance instead of teaching. The student's are vaguely introduced to interagency operations but require much more. It also appears necessary for captains to continue to attend the MCCC in order to attain a base of knowledge of Joint and Army procedures and equipment at the tactical and operational levels and to interact with conventional army peers. The next chapter will outline and analyze the 18A MOS Qualification Phase to determine if the shortfalls in education are addressed for the officers.

Training Micro– 18A Detachment Commander Course

Outline

The 18A Detachment Commander Course is conducted by Alpha Company, 4th Battalion, 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne).⁷⁸ Alpha Company is assigned the mission of developing critical operational skill sets, problem solving, and leadership capacities in all future SFODA commanders to prepare them for the dynamic operational environment of today and tomorrow. The commander's vision to accomplish this is to introduce and propagate cognizance of the "art of warfare", its dependence on the "science of warfare", its application superiority, and the characteristics that define it. To achieve this vision, the course must cultivate critical thinking, problem solving skills and intuitive decision-making capacity, promote tactical

⁷⁸ 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne), *Command Brief* (Fort Bragg, NC: 2007), 5.

competencies, stimulate growth of interpersonal skills, apprise students of the importance of anticipatory capacities, and steward the development of deliberate aggressiveness.⁷⁹

The desired end-state of the 18A course is to produce a SFODA commander skilled in planning and conducting operations by, with, or through regular or irregular forces to influence or achieve assigned objectives. He should be able to influence special and conventional operations against the asymmetric dynamics of the operating environment across the full range of military operations. He should be skilled in adaptive problem solving within a multi-dimensional environment and a collaborative mission planner able to synchronize and integrate the elements of national power to enhance the decision and execution process.⁸⁰

The 18A Detachment Commander Course is 16 weeks in length and is broken down into three phases: Phase I Introduction to Army Special Forces (one week), Phase II Foundation Training (nine weeks), and Phase III Core Mission Planning (six weeks).⁸¹ Prior to the beginning of Phase I, maneuver tactical proficiency is enhanced at the MCCC and initial portion of the SFQC pipeline. The students begin Phase I with a working knowledge of MOS duties and responsibilities, SF missions and core tasks, the intelligence cycle, interagency support, the national intelligence structure, and greater awareness of cultural implications.⁸²

Phase I initiates a student's thought shift from a tactical focus to operational level effects attainment. It seeks to accomplish this through instructor led presentations, college professor-led political and FID issue discussions, and case study cultural discussions.⁸³

⁷⁹ Alpha Company, 4th Battalion, 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne), *Command Brief* (Fort Bragg, NC: 2007), 3-10.

⁸⁰ Alpha Company, 4th Battalion, 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne), *18A POI Construct Decision Brief* (Fort Bragg, NC: 2007), 10.

⁸¹ Alpha Company, 4th Battalion, 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne), *New POI Sequencing Brief* (Fort Bragg, NC: 2007), 1-2.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

Phase II foundational training occurs in the second and third weeks. It contains instruction in the elements of national power, Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield (IPB), integration of direct and indirect fires, Information Operations (IO), Civil Affairs (CA), Psychological Operations (PSYOP), targeting, USASOC operations update, operational level guest speaker and case study, United States Code Title 10 (US Armed Forces) and Title 50 (US Special Operations Forces) funding and money uses, Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET) methodology, and intelligence collection. Operational level effects based planning considerations are introduced at the beginning of the course in order to provide an initial reference platform that is expanded throughout the remainder of the course.⁸⁴ The fourth week is a block of instruction on the interagency. The instruction focuses on the interagency culture and reinforces the operational level perspective.⁸⁵

Weeks five and six encompasses Advanced Special Operations (ASO) training. ASO is an intelligence collection process skill set. The two-week block culminates with a Field Training Exercise (FTX) that reinforces the principles of ASO. It intends to stimulate the unconventional problem solving learned in the beginning of the course and is a reactive scenario based exercise that teaches the impact of second and third order effects of tactical decisions. It provides a practical exercise to reinforce operational planning considerations and an opportunity for the students to demonstrate this understanding. The focus is not on the mechanics of ASO, but on leading and managing the intelligence collection process, development of interpersonal skills, and cognizance of operational level impact.⁸⁶ Week seven centers on FID training. The students are introduced to case studies, conduct FID topic classes, and are exposed to guest speakers.

⁸⁴ Alpha Company, 4th Battalion, 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne), *New POI Sequencing Brief* (Fort Bragg, NC: 2007), 1-2.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Alpha Company, 4th Battalion, 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne), *New POI Sequencing Brief* (Fort Bragg, NC: 2007), 1-2.

Weeks eight and nine are a break from the formal 18A Detachment Commander Course. The students attend an additional two weeks of language training in their target language focused on MOS-specific functional language terms and tasks. The break in MOS training is to ensure that students continue to build a language proficiency and cultural appreciation of their regional affiliation. The students are required to prepare and teach a military class for a nominal foreign military audience.⁸⁷

Language training is followed by a week of MOS familiarization. The captains are exposed to skill sets possessed by the sergeants of their future detachment. Senior MOS instructors showcase their MOS' capacities and provide tailored instruction to prepare students for subsequent field exercises throughout the SFQC, where MOS exposure will continue. Training includes foreign weapons overview by the 18B committee, demolitions by the 18C committee, live tissue medical trauma training by the 18D committee, and common SF radio system operation by the 18E committee.⁸⁸ Week ten completes Phase II Foundation Training for the students.

Phase III Core Mission Planning begins with a two-week block that focuses on UW training. The instruction provides a greater depth of understanding and capacity to plan and manage efforts in support of UW operations. Expansion of historic and current operational case studies, operational level guest speakers, and instructor led discussions expands the students' knowledge of UW at a point where the students can adequately comprehend the complexity of this core task. The training includes a Global Combatant Command (GCC) oriented MPE and a

⁸⁷ Major Thomas C. Hensley, CDR A/4/1 SWTG(A), e-mail to Edward Croot, November 21, 2007.

⁸⁸ Alpha Company, 4th Battalion, 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne), *New POI Sequencing Brief* (Fort Bragg, NC: 2007), 2.

real world GWOT project in coordination with one of the Theatre Special Operation Commands (TSOC).⁸⁹

Weeks 13 and 14 focus on Campaign Support Planning. It follows the UW training as a logical campaign progression that facilitates comparison and contrast of the two subject areas. Emphasis is on contemporary regional situations that call for a FID based approach. The initial instruction provides numerous case studies in the interest of comparison. It concludes with an MPE that couples tactical level application with operational and strategic effects based planning.

The final week of training is a UW leader FTX. The FTX is a UW based and problem solving reactive exercise. It also serves as a comprehensive skill set developmental exercise that incorporates tactical Command and Control (C2) and operational level effects based decision-making.⁹⁰

It is important to note at this time that the 18A Detachment Commander Course has undergone significant changes in the last year. The preceding course outline is as it currently exists in fiscal year 2008. MAJ Chris Hensley, the commander of Alpha Company, significantly revised the course Program Of Instruction (POI), based on analysis of input from the Small Group Instructors (SGI), Government Service (GS) employees, and recent graduates.⁹¹ He determined that:

The former POI progressed from easy (SR or DA) to hard (UW) but remained entrenched at the tactical level. It did not effectively inculcate the UW mindset and problem solving capability needed in today's operational environment. The modules of instruction were largely treated as separate events and linkages across the modules were not always clear to the students.⁹²

⁸⁹ Alpha Company, 4th Battalion, 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne), *New POI Sequencing Brief* (Fort Bragg, NC: 2007), 2.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Alpha Company, 4th Battalion, 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne), *18A POI Construct Decision Brief* (Fort Bragg, NC: 2007), 12.

⁹² Ibid, 13.

Based on this analysis, MAJ Hensley and Alpha Company concluded that changes must be made. He summarized their conclusion in an email to this author:

Detachment commanders need to be more cognizant of their Areas of Interest (AI) and not just their Areas of Operation (AO). The captains must be able to address operational and strategic level considerations across the DIMEFIL (Diplomatic, Informational, Military, Economic, Financial, Intelligence, and Law Enforcement) continuum. I am trying to instill in these officers the importance of in-depth analysis and the importance of modeling to define and solve problems. I want to teach them how to think and not what to think.⁹³

The initial step taken by MAJ Hensley was to transform the teaching methodology. He refocused the methodology from the discovery learning process to a more stewarded and mentoring approach. He felt that waiting for students to make mistakes wasted a lot of time and did not maximize the amount of time they had to train the captains. The company only had 14 weeks of instruction to accomplish the changes.⁹⁴

Alpha company made four major course modifications. The first was to expand the emphasis on FID from six to fifteen days. An SR/DA FTX was replaced with a dynamic COIN FTX in an urban area offering students interagency, reactive, and dynamic scenarios that replicate current operational level demands on SFODA commanders in OEF and OIF across the DIMEFIL spectrum..⁹⁵

Secondly, the company initiated operational level effects cognizance through refocusing existing POI materials, new MPEs, introduction of mission based case-comparative analysis studies, and the expansion of the scope and depth of the instruction. The intent is to impart an awareness and capacity that enables the students to identify and achieve the operational level effects sought by their commanders. This included the introduction of strategy based approaches to teaching IO, Civil Military Operations (CMO), Humanitarian Assistance (HA), PSYOP, the

⁹³ Major Thomas C. Hensley, CDR A/4/1 SWTG(A), e-mail to Edward Croot, November 21, 2007.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Alpha Company, 4th Battalion, 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne), *New POI Sequencing Brief* (Fort Bragg, NC: 2007), 3.

elements of national power, interagency support and their combined application in FID and UW operations. This process is enhanced by re-focusing the guest speaker program that reinforces strategy-based approaches to problem analysis and methodology for attaining operational level impacts and success. The exposure to guest speakers, Subject Matter Experts (SME), and Psychologists provides an additional point of view and feedback loop to better shape the captain's abilities to operate in today's complex and adaptive systems.⁹⁶

The company next expanded the UW emphasis through the inclusion of additional case studies, SGI led discussions, and increased the depth and scope of the instruction. They now familiarize the students with the United States Army Special Forces Command (USASFC) and USASOC roles and functions by incorporating their current operational updates and regional update briefs. They are achieving connectivity with existing academic institutions that offer UW courses in order to expand their support material base. This affords insight for the students into potentially beneficial subject areas to include the Special Operations/Low-Intensity Conflict (SO/LIC) program at the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS). They also expanded operational group participation in mission back-briefs and core subject vignette presentations in order to expand the student's exposure to operational level problem solving and impact. Finally, they acquired 18F (Intelligence Sergeant) committee participation to provide instruction on existing intelligence areas as well as to highlight their capabilities.⁹⁷

The final course modification eliminated redundant classes that allows for additional training in FID specific areas. This included providing instruction on all common funding authorities and management practices of funds a detachment commander may face, Title 10 and Title 50, Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP), and Operational Funds (OPFUND). The students are also introduced to JCET methodology briefs and guest speakers

⁹⁶ Alpha Company, 4th Battalion, 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne), *New POI Sequencing Brief* (Fort Bragg, NC: 2007), 3..

⁹⁷ Ibid.

and a Special Operations Team-Alpha (SOT-A) (signal intelligence) application overview brief with common intelligence platform integration. The final FID specific course modification changes the focus of ASO training from field craft to intelligence management, direction, analysis, and interpersonal skill development.⁹⁸

MAJ Hensley believes that the changes are a step in the right direction but are limited by the current SFQC construct. His opinion is that 14 weeks is simply not enough time to train the captains to be efficient entry-level leaders in SF.⁹⁹

He proposes that the construct needs change if SF truly wants their future detachment commanders as intellectually prepared for the contemporary environment, as they are physically and skillfully prepared. He believes that:

We should send the captains immediately to an SFQC-led MCCC that meets DA requirements in a more efficient and effective manner after SFAS instead of sending them off to the current MCCC. SF could meet the DA requirements of the MCCC in another acceptable capacity within a reduced time period here within the Q-Course. We could then invest the remaining time in a much more in-depth approach to FID, UW, SOF leadership, and management. University Professors and other SMEs could teach adaptive thinking and problem resolution. We are doing the best we can to improve the course within the current construct but that [construct] needs to change if we are intellectually honest about wanting to optimally prepare our detachment commanders for the future.¹⁰⁰

At this time it is beneficial to outline a new introductory SEAL officer professional development course currently being developed by the Center for SEAL and Special Warfare Craft (SWCC). It is intended to fill education needs they believe a SEAL officer requires, but does not receive, during the current training program. The proposal is for a five-week course to include education on levels of warfare, JIIM, operational design, and National and DOD strategy. It concludes with an operational field trip to one of the theater Joint Task Forces (JTF). The NSWC

⁹⁸ Alpha Company, 4th Battalion, 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne), *New POI Sequencing Brief* (Fort Bragg, NC: 2007), 3.

⁹⁹ Major Thomas C. Hensley, CDR A/4/1 SWTG(A), e-mail to Edward Croot, November 21, 2007.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

believes that this education will enhance the SEAL officer's ability to command a SEAL platoon.¹⁰¹

Analysis

Analysis of the 18A Officer Detachment Course reveals that MAJ Hensley and Alpha Company have made major improvements to the course and have clearly addressed many of the shortfalls in the levels of warfare, JIIM, and critical thinking skills education. The officers are now receiving in-depth operational and strategic level, joint, interagency, and adaptive thinking training prior to ROBIN SAGE. The additional training in FID and UW is certainly positive progress for the community. This allows the advisors (majors that are former detachment commanders) to assess and correct their performance during exercises instead of instructing.

However, MAJ Hensley also raises some new shortfalls with their program of training. Fourteen weeks is simply not enough time. More time is needed to further teach the students how to think and not what to think. Awareness of the operational and strategic environment, elements of national power, joint and interagency operations, and a better understanding of FID and UW is a great start, but is not enough. More time is needed for the officers to receive comprehensive training in areas of adaptive thinking, modeling or design, and problem solving. The students need education on National/DOD strategy and intergovernmental/multinational aspects. Contrary to MAJ Hensley's suggestion, the MCCC should remain a part of their training because of the combined arms education it provides. The additional time requirement should not come at the expense of the MCCC.

The next step in their learning process should be to apply their training with education of the levels of warfare, JIIM, and critical thinking skills to produce the truly adaptive leaders that

¹⁰¹ Bradley Voigt, Training Instructor/Administrator SWCC, e-mail to Edward Croot, February 14, 2008.

SF must have. This enters the realm of ILE at the rank of major and is outlined and analyzed in the following chapter.

Education

Outline

The formal education on levels of warfare, JIIM, and critical thinking for an SF officer begin during ILE at the rank of major. SF officers receive the formal education at CGSC, sister service ILE equivalent institutions, or SO/LIC. They attend the ILE programs post-detachment command. Some introductory education does occur in the 18A Detachment Commander Course as outlined in the preceding chapter but is minimal and does not address some elements of the JIIM and critical thinking. Therefore, this chapter focuses on the SF officer's education in ILE to illustrate what type of education the captains should receive prior to detachment command. It then illustrates a different approach to officer education by the British Army.

ILE Common Core at CGSC is provided through four blocks of instruction. The blocks of instruction are C100 Foundations, C200 Strategic Studies, C300 Operational Studies, and C400 Army Operations.¹⁰² Instruction in areas such as media relations, culture and military operations, cross-cultural competency and awareness, operational law, IO, PSYOP, COIN, and fundamentals of offense / defense / stability operations are presented within the MCCC and Q-Course and will not be discussed here. Also, instruction provided in C400 Army Operations and instruction within C100-C300 in areas such as functioning as a general staff officer, DOD organization and processes, strategic logistics, the Joint Operational Planning Process (JOPPs), and the Field Grade officers' role in the MDMP process fall within the duties and responsibilities of a Field Grade officer and likewise will not be discussed here. The following is an outline of

¹⁰² US Army Command and General Staff College, *Intermediate Level Education Common Core Advance Sheet* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: 2007), 1.

the education SF majors receive that enables them to apply new and creative ways to situations and problems.

C100 Foundations introduces the student to the international security environment (ISE), tactical / operational / strategic levels of war, and full-spectrum operations. These are critical issues that an SF officer of any rank needs to be aware of in order to solve problems in the contemporary operational environment (COE). This block also introduces the fundamentals of reasoning and creativity and links reasoning and creativity to problem solving. It demonstrates that reasoning, creativity, and communication enable problem solving. It intends to achieve an understanding of problem solving as a discipline or field of study and not just to familiarize the student with one model for solving problems.¹⁰³

C200 Strategic Studies introduces the student to strategic concepts, National Security and DOD Strategies, regional strategic concepts, and strategic communications.¹⁰⁴ These are critical areas for an SF officer to be aware of in order to understand how military operations link to national policy as well as operations at the tactical and operational levels of war can greatly affect strategic objectives.

C300 Operational Studies introduces the student to interagency and multinational considerations, joint operations, operational design, and operational art.¹⁰⁵ This instruction gives the student an understanding of how desired and undesired effects within the operational environment connect military strategic to operational objectives and tactical tasks.

After the completion of the Common Core instruction, all SF, CA, and PSYOP officers are enrolled in the SOF studies program. Three SOF advanced studies courses are taken. The

¹⁰³ US Army Command and General Staff College, *Intermediate Level Education Common Core Advance Sheet C100: Foundations* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: 2007), 3.

¹⁰⁴ US Army Command and General Staff College, *Intermediate Level Education Common Core Advance Sheet C200: Strategic Studies* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: 2008), C201 AS-3.

¹⁰⁵ US Army Command and General Staff College, *Intermediate Level Education Common Core Advance Sheet C300: Operational Studies* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: 2008), C300 AS-3.

first course focuses on how critical thinking/critical reasoning contributes to the conduct of special operations and the contribution of SOF capabilities to full spectrum operations. The second course focuses on SOF support in the JIIM environment and SOF interaction with the media. The third course focuses on SOF integration of airpower and SOF campaign planning.¹⁰⁶ Instruction provided in the third course falls within the duties and responsibilities of an SF Field Grade officer. However, the instruction provided in courses one and two is a logical continuation and application of the Common Core curriculum and would be very beneficial to SF officers of any rank.

At this time it is prudent to provide an example of officer education from a partner nation's military that illustrates a different approach to officer education. Major Edward Hayward of the British Army, and current SAMS student, believes that his military truly understands the difference between training and education. As a result, their officer professional development program strikes a healthy balance in training and educating each officer. To begin, Maj Hayward believes that critical thinking skills are nurtured in both the British culture and University systems. Therefore, a British officer candidate already has an appreciation of critical thinking.¹⁰⁷

Next, upon graduation from University, every prospective officer enters a one year officer training program at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (RMAS). The RMAS clearly differentiates between training and education. In addition to normal military skills training, the officer candidates are all educated on the strategic and operational levels of war, theory of war, international relations, military history, and joint operations. Before a British officer arrives at

¹⁰⁶ Michael Czaja, CGSC SOF Education Cell Faculty, e-mail to Edward Croot, February 08, 2008.

¹⁰⁷ Major Edward Hayward, UK officer and current SAMS student, e-mail to Edward Croot, February 11, 2008.

his first unit, he has already been educated on critical thinking skills, levels of war, and parts of the British JIIM.¹⁰⁸

Then, upon promotion to captain, every British officer, to include all United Kingdom Special Forces (UKSF) officers, must complete the Junior Captains Course (JCC) with an emphasis on education and not training. The JCC is in the form of a distance learning package with a whole of government approach. The captains conduct 60-80 hours of education on the British National Security Strategy, advanced strategic and operational level understanding, and elements of the British JIIM.¹⁰⁹

Analysis

The CGSC ILE curriculum outlined above enhances the SF major's ability to understand the situation at the operational and strategic levels of war and how their decisions influence and affect it. They reach an understanding of National and DOD strategy and how strategic guidance is interpreted operationally and achieved tactically. They learn all aspects of the JIIM environment and how SOF can support these efforts in full spectrum operations. Most importantly, they are introduced to creative thinking skills, visualization, and discourse and how to apply this education to operational design and operational art to holistically solve problems. This education is critical for the SF officers to enhance the procedural knowledge they already hold.

As outlined in the monograph introduction, learning has a component of both training and education. The Military Decision Making Process (MDMP) serves as an excellent example of this. Officers are trained on the procedural tasks of the MDMP process. They learn the procedural steps that guide them from receipt of a mission to issuance of an operation order.

¹⁰⁸ Major Edward Hayward, UK officer and current SAMS student, e-mail to Edward Croot, February 11, 2008.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

However, this is not enough. They must be educated on the capabilities of the military units, the weapons systems, and the transportation platforms that are available for their plan. They must be educated on every aspect of the JIIM environment to understand the vast array of other actors that influence and effect the situation. Finally, they must be educated on critical thinking skills, visualization, and discourse in order to apply this collective understanding to synthesize solutions to the complex problems of today's operational environment.¹¹⁰

The logical next question is: If the education as outlined above is critical for learning, should not Captains be introduced to this education prior to commanding an SFODA? MAJ Hensley answers this question in an email to the author of this monograph.

I just finished a class with a new group of Captains on information operations and campaign support planning in which they developed an area of operations support plan as a detachment commander. The complete lack of understanding of these two subjects just coming out of the MCCC demonstrates its ineffectiveness and focused application on developing conventional mindsets in officers. They lack at this point a capacity to generate unconventional innovative thought. They want all the answers to the tests. They want to see every example of every problem so they can form a database of solutions. They find it exceedingly difficult to develop innovative solutions to problems because they have not been educated to think critically.¹¹¹

As presented in the introduction and proposed by the research question, Special Forces detachments clearly cause effects at the strategic and operational levels of war in the GWOT. Therefore, it is imperative that SF detachment commanders possess a comprehensive understanding of the situation at the operational and strategic levels of war and how their decisions influence and affect it. As a result, it is imperative that SF captains receive levels of war, JIIM, and critical thinking education prior to commanding detachments.

¹¹⁰ Robert McClary, SAMS Faculty, e-mail to Edward Croot, February 06, 2008.

¹¹¹ Major Thomas C. Hensley, CDR A/4/1 SWTG(A), e-mail to Edward Croot, February 7, 2008.

Development

Outline

Upon completion of the SFQC, the SF captain reports to an operational SF Group to take command of an SFODA. As previously outlined, the SF captain is a fully capable SF officer based on the training received but may not be ready to command due to a lack of education. It is also possible that the SF captain may need operational experience to enhance his ability to command. For the purposes of this monograph, development includes both education and experience. Therefore, where does a detachment commander obtain the proper education and experience required to maximize his ability to command an SFODA? The following section outlines SF captain development by SF company, battalion, and group commanders upon arrival at the SF Group. It then illustrates a different approach to officer development as conducted by the SEALs.

The expectation within the SF community is that captains will be mentored and developed by their superior officers upon arrival at Group. Any shortfalls in training and education will be rectified by this process. However, according to the results of the questionnaire outlined in the following chapter, this is not the case. In addition, general practice within the SF Group is for captains to immediately take command of an SFODA upon arrival. This affords him no opportunity to gain operational experience by occupying a developmental position within the group prior to command.

COL David G. Fox commanded 2nd Battalion, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) during the initial operations of OEF. He felt that the captains within his battalion were absolutely great at working with the indigenous forces but were not prepared to work with the other agencies of the US government. Agencies like the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI), Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) all played key roles in OEF. Unfortunately, the captains were not prepared to work

with these agencies. In the future, COL Fox recommended that commanders bring members of these agencies, US State Department Political Advisors (POLADS), and other actors within the JIIM to the SF Groups to educate the captains on their composition, assets, and operations. He additionally recommends that an Officer Professional Development (OPD) program be implemented by SF commanders at every level. Finally, he recommends that academics from our university and government institutions speak to the captains on topics that influence the current operational environment.¹¹²

LTC (RET) John LaDelfa, commander of 3rd Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne) from June 2004 until June 2006, described an occasion in OEF when trust of an SFODA commander's ability became an issue. The 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne) commander COL Higgins sent LTC LaDelfa, along with ODA 371 and 375, to broker a cease-fire between two afghan warlords Amanullah Khan and Ismael Khan. Their continued fighting threatened the upcoming Afghanistan Government elections in the west of Afghanistan from Herat to Shindand. LTC LaDelfa believes that COL Higgins felt it was too big a task given the experience level and strategic understanding of the detachment commanders.¹¹³ As a result, LTC LaDelfa remained for over 30 days in the western provinces, over-watching the two SFODA commanders, until the elections. As a result, the peace was maintained but 3rd Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne) was left without a commander for this period.

Lieutenant Commander Joe Bozzeli outlines a different approach of developing SOF commanders used by the Navy SEALs. Upon graduation from the Basic Underwater Demolition School (BUDS), new SEAL officers fill a developmental billet first. They serve as an Assistant Officer In Charge (AOIC) of a SEAL platoon for an entire 18 month cycle (12 months of platoon

¹¹² Colonel David G. Fox, former CDR 2/5 SFG(A), Interview with Edward Croot, February 11, 2008.

¹¹³ Lieutenant Colonel (RET) John LaDelfa, former CDR 3/3 SFG(A), e-mail to Edward Croot, February 10, 2008.

training and a 6 month operational deployment) before being considered for a platoon commander billet. This affords the junior officer the chance to gain valuable command and operational experience under the direction of a senior SEAL officer and serve as an additional selection and assessment tool.¹¹⁴

Analysis

The expectation within the SF community that captains will overcome levels of warfare, JIIM, and critical thinking skill education shortfalls through development by superior officers upon arrival at Group is a fallacy. Based on informal interviews of SF Majors at Fort Leavenworth, few SF commanders conduct adequate professional development programs for their junior officers. Operational tempo time restraints simply do not afford the opportunity for this to happen.

Additionally, the practice of new SF captains immediately taking command of SFODAs ensures that they will not gain operational SF experience via other positions within the Group. The AOIC position held by new SEAL officers within the NSWC provides an excellent example of a system that properly develops future commanders by affording them the opportunity to gain valuable experience without the pressures of command.

Survey Results

A survey of SF Majors attending CGSC and SAMS at Fort Leavenworth during AY 2008 was conducted as part of the research for this monograph. The majors surveyed were captains in the SFQC between the years 1999 and 2001 and served in operational SF groups as SFODA commanders between the years 2000 and 2004. Thirty-five officers were queried and

¹¹⁴ Lieutenant Commander Joseph P. Bozzelli, current Navy SEAL and SAMS student, e-mail to Edward Croot, February 10, 2008.

nineteen responded. Complete results of the survey can be found in Appendix A (Bar Graph Results), Appendix B (Percentage Results), and Appendix C (Additional Comments).

The survey first sought to evaluate their training and education prior to detachment command. In regards to training, 32% felt they were well trained and 37% felt they were very well trained. In regards to education, 47% felt they were well educated and 21% felt they were very well educated.

Secondly, it also queried whether the education received at CGSC would have been beneficial prior to detachment command. In regards to the overall education received at CGSC, 11% strongly agreed, 58% agreed, 5% neither agreed or disagreed, and 21% disagreed that the education provided at CGSC would have improved their ability to command an SFODA in combat. When questioned specifically about critical thinking skills, 11% strongly agreed, 37% agreed, 26% neither agreed or disagreed, and 21% disagreed that those skills provided at CGSC would have improved their ability to command. When questioned specifically about levels of war education, 11% strongly agreed, 42% agreed, 32% neither agreed or disagreed, and 11% disagreed that those skills provided at CGSC would have improved their ability to command. When questioned specifically about elements of the JIIM education, 5% strongly agree, 47% agree, 32% neither agree or disagree, and 11% disagreed that those skills provided at CGSC would have improved their ability to command.

Thirdly, it queried whether development by company or battalion commanders, an Officer Professional Development (OPD) Program, and an academic and government agency guest speaker program would have been beneficial prior to detachment command. In regards to development by company commanders, 26% strongly agreed, 42% agreed, 21% neither agreed or disagreed, and 5% disagreed that this development would have improved their ability to command. When questioned about battalion commander development, 21% strongly agreed, 47% agreed, and 26% neither agreed or disagreed that this would have improved their ability to command. In regards to an OPD program improving their ability to command, 26% strongly

agreed, 42% agreed, and 26% neither agreed or disagreed. In regards to an academic and government agency guest speaker program improving their ability to command, 26% strongly agreed, 47% agreed, 16% neither agreed or disagreed, and 5% disagreed.

Fourth, it queried whether or not exposure to critical thinking skills, levels of war, and JIIM education at the SFQC would help future SF captains command SFODAs in combat. In regards to critical thinking skills, 42% strongly agreed, 42% agreed, 5% neither agreed or disagreed, and 5% disagreed that these skills would help future SFODA commanders if provided in the SFQC. In regards to levels of war education, 21% strongly agreed, 63% agreed, and 10% neither agreed or disagreed that this education would help future SFODA commanders. In regards to JIIM education, 21% strongly agreed, 68% agreed, and 5% neither agreed or disagreed that this education would help future SFODA commanders.

The survey concluded with participants' additional recommendations of how changes to their training, education, or development could have better prepared them for detachment command. The results provide many different ideas as to changes that could be made. In general, there is concurrence that education of critical skills, levels of war, and JIIM could better prepare captains to command SFODAs in combat.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Bradley Graham criticized current SF officers in the Washington Post by stating that “The SO community must develop a skill base that is not just action –oriented but increases their ability to do strategic and operational planning.”¹¹⁵ This sentiment was echoed by Colin Gray in Parameters: “SF officers must be highly educated to think critically across the operational and strategic spectrum in Army, Joint, Interagency, and Multinational realms in order to maintain

¹¹⁵ Bradley Graham, “Shortfalls of Special Operations Command Are Cited,” *Washington Post*, 17 November 2005, sec. A, p. 2.

credibility. A country cannot make a powerful political point with the menace of discrete action if SF are perceived as incompetent or politically chained.”¹¹⁶

SF officers will often lead activities focused on tactical skills and tasks but will have direct or indirect operational and/or strategic level implications. A simple exercise to train a foreign tactical element will challenge the detachment commander when he is faced with high-level foreign commanders or embassy personnel that want to discuss topics beyond the scope of their current activity. The commander is also expected to operate and report environmental factors that go well beyond the anticipated scope of the specified activity.

The following discussion focuses on what may be missing from the process of selecting, training, educating, and developing SF Captains and makes recommendations that could enhance their ability to understand the situation at the operational and strategic levels of war and how their decisions influence and affect it. It concludes with suggestions for future research.

Selection Conclusion and Recommendation

SFAS is selecting candidates that are suitable for SF training. However, it is apparent that SFQC graduates exhibit lower-than-desired adaptive proficiency. The SFQC was modified to provide more direct training in the area of adaptive performance but adaptability is not identified as an attribute assessed by SFAS according to Department of the Army, USAREC, and SWC. Additionally, the California Critical Thinking Dispositions Inventory identifies adaptability, as a component of cognitive maturity, as a characteristic of people who excel at critical thinking.¹¹⁷ As outlined in the ARI study, there are personal characteristics that serve as

¹¹⁶ Colin S. Gray, “Handfuls of Heroes on Desperate Ventures: When do Special Operations Succeed?” *Parameters* (Spring 1999): 14.

¹¹⁷ James J. Messina, Ph.D, “Overview of Critical Thinking” Coping.org: Tools for Improving Your Critical Thinking, <http://www.coping.org/write/percept/critical.htm> [accessed February 08, 2008].

antecedents to adaptive performance.¹¹⁸ Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that SFAS should assess officer's adaptability.

Adaptability should be added to the list of attributes that SFAS follows to assess, examine, and evaluate its officer candidates. In reference to the ARI study, SFAS could assess candidate's personality traits, previous knowledge, skills, and abilities to determine their level of adaptability. At a minimum, SAREs should be re-introduced into selection or a new concise adaptability assessment should be created. ROBIN SAGE for an officer is an exercise in adaptive leadership in an ambiguous environment. Selection of officers that show a propensity for adaptive behavior would ensure the right officers are advancing to the SFQC and produce officers more able to handle the myriad of challenges faced by SF officers in the COE.

Maneuver Captain Career Course (MCCC) Conclusion and Recommendation

SF students that attend the MCCC attain a vital understanding of combined arms tactics and operations, expertise in infantry and armor doctrine, and advanced aspects of maneuver leadership. Attendance at MCCC also ensures officers have a working knowledge of conventional Army operations and staff processes. MAJ Hensley's critique that the MCCC provides little operational and strategic level and interagency training or critical thinking skills is valid. However, this is not the intent of MCCC. The problem is not what the MCCC teaches the students but how that time might be better utilized by the SFQC to cover the levels of war, JIIM, and critical thinking skills.

Major Swatek stated in his SAMS monograph on the future roles of SF: "The SF officers must work with Joint and Army units to increase Special Forces understanding of conventional procedures at the tactical and operational levels and to increase conventional forces understanding

¹¹⁸ U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, *Research Report 1831: Developing Adaptive Proficiency in Special Forces Officers* (Fort Bragg, NC: February, 2005), 3-4.

of intercultural related issues.”¹¹⁹ The MCCC should remain a part of the SF officer’s professional development for both the essential training provided and the vital interaction the SF officer has with Captains in the conventional army. MAJ Hensley’s limited training time concerns will be addressed in a following recommendation.

Special Forces Qualification Course Conclusion and Recommendation

First, due to the many changes incorporated into the SFQC, SF captains are adequately trained to be successful SFODA commanders. However, analysis of the SFQC reveals that SF officers do not receive appropriate training or education in the levels of war, JIIM, or critical thinking skills. The SF captains are not exposed to adaptive thinking or problem solving. They are trained on what to think and not how to think.

The SFQC should increase the 18A training course length beyond the current 16-weeks. This would provide time for the 18A students to learn more on the operational and strategic levels of war, joint operations, multi-national operations, and interagency operations. In addition, they could expose the students to critical thinking skills through adaptive thinking principles, modeling/designing, and problem solving. The Captains could then put their knowledge into practice during Exercise ROBIN SAGE and advisors could assess and correct their performance instead of training and educating the students in the final phase.

Second, as outlined throughout this monograph, SF captains receive an insufficient amount of education on the levels of war, JIIM, and critical thinking skills in the SFQC. Much of the education received by SF majors during ILE would greatly assist SF Captains’ understanding of the situation at the operational and strategic levels of war and how their decisions influence and affect it.

¹¹⁹ Major Bruce R. Swatek, United States Army, *Role of Special Forces Liaison Elements in Future Multinational Operations* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: 2002), 84.

The 18A portion of the SFQC should be extended. SWC should develop a short SF Advanced Course to augment the MCCC. The 18A cadre could enhance the student's application of the MDMP and introduce the levels of war, JIIM, and critical thinking skills. The 18D portion is already longer than the standard SFQC so the precedent already exists. However, if SWC is unable to extend the 18A portion of the SFQC, they should develop a short SF Advanced Course that is added at the Joint Special Operations University (JSOU) to augment the MCCC or SFQC. JSOU is prepared to offer satellite campus locations at Fort Bragg and may consider Fort Benning if requested.¹²⁰ The course could be limited to four to five weeks and offer the levels of war, JIIM, and critical thinking skills education. This approach would be very similar to the new SEAL professional development program. If neither of these options is feasible, then SOCOM should create a joint SOF Advanced Course that is attended by all services that students attend prior to arrival at their first SOF unit. The curriculum would introduce the levels of war, JIIM, and critical thinking skills. JSOU is a more appropriate location and venue for a SOF Advanced Course that takes advantage of all that JSOU offers in terms of references and faculty.¹²¹

The course should focus on the operational and strategic levels of war, the National and DOD strategy and how that strategic guidance is interpreted operationally and achieved tactically, aspects of the JIIM environment and how they can support these efforts in full spectrum operations. It should also introduce them to creative thinking skills, visualization, and discourse and how to apply this education to operational design and operational art.

If this approach is unsupportable by SOCOM, USASOC, or USASFC, a mobile training team (MTT) should be formed by JSOU. The MTT could rotate to each of the five active and two National Guard SF Groups. The curriculum would be identical to the SF Advanced Course

¹²⁰ Joint Special Operations University, *Meeting the Challenges of SOF Education: The Future Direction of JSOU* (Hurlburt Field, FL: 2008), 28.

¹²¹ U.S. Army G-3, *Integration of Army Special Operations Forces and Conventional Forces in Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom: Considerations for Future Operations* (Fort Bragg, NC: February 2005), 107.

as outlined in the previous paragraph. The MTT approach would address operational tempo and funding concerns. Each new SF officer would be required to attend the MTT within the first year of arriving at Group.

Development Conclusion and Recommendation

Proper development of the new SF captains is not occurring by additional education or experience opportunities. The existing gap between training and education must be addressed not only within SWC. The operational SF Groups must have a role in the SF officer's learning process.

The SF community must find a way to educate, or enhance the education, of the new officers post SFQC. Each Group commander should develop and enforce an OPD. The program could be delegated down to battalion and company commanders. It must include, at a minimum, the levels of warfare, elements of the JIIM, and critical thinking skills to fully prepare SF captains to command SFODAs. Additionally, valuable operational experience should be afforded to the captains by positioning them first as company executive officers or other developmental positions within the group or by adopting a similar assistant-detachment command program similar to the SEALs.

Overall Conclusion

The improvements proposed above to the process of selecting, training, educating, and developing SF captains will enhance the SF captain's ability to understand the situation at the operational and strategic levels of war and how their decisions influence and affect it and increase their effectiveness to create intended operational and strategic effects. The SF captain will be better prepared to achieve his given mission and will improve the SF communities performance as a whole.

Suggestions for Future Research

The first suggestion for future research begins with the question do SF officers command too early in their career? Not only is there a question of their education and experience, but there may also be a problem of a differential in rank structure, at equivalent command levels, between the SF officer and conventional US military peer commander or state department counterparts.

Is it possible that the captain does not have sufficient rank to avoid marginalization by a Brigade Combat Team (BCT) Commander (colonel / O-6) or an ambassador (four-star general equivalent) when attempting to justify his mission and methods necessary to operate within their Area of Operation (AO) or Area of Responsibility (AR)? Is it also possible that the ability of SF officers to plan, support, and execute special operations in support of the GWOT could vastly improve by increasing one rank level per command position and changing the traditional SF officer professional timeline?

Could a captain better serve the conventional army and SF by serving as a conventional company commander, attending the SFQC, and then serving two years as an assistant detachment commander? Would majors be better prepared to lead detachments at the operational and strategic levels, and/or represent US strategic objectives while conducting JCETs, with the valuable operational level experience and after receiving the ILE education? Could lieutenant colonels be more effective company commanders, battalion executive officers, and battalion operations officers after serving in a joint assignment as senior majors? Could colonels be more effective battalion commanders after receiving their Senior Service College education? Would brigadier generals more effectively represent Army Special Forces Task Forces (ARSOTF) or Joint Special Operations Task Forces (JSOTF) with parallel major general Division commanders within theatre?

A second suggestion for future research begins with the question should cadets in West Point Military Academy or the Reserve Officer Training Course (ROTC) receive introductory

education in critical thinking skills? As outlined previously, the British education system introduces their university students to critical thinking. In Maj Hayward's opinion, this gives them an early foundation into solving complex problems. An early introduction to these skills could better serve the entire Army.

A third suggestion for future research is an extension of the second suggestion. As outlined previously, the COE forces all officers, to include lieutenants, to exercise operational and strategic level awareness. Therefore, should US Army lieutenants receive education on the levels of warfare, JIIM, and critical thinking skills during their introductory training? Again, the British military system provides this education in both the RMAS and JCC.

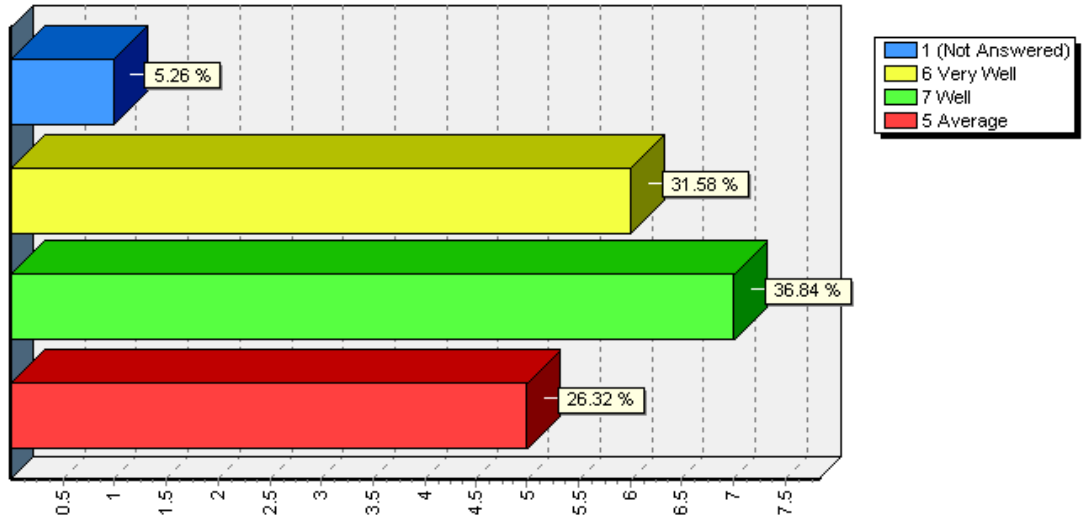
A fourth suggestion for future research is a comprehensive look at whether or not adaptability can be learned. As outlined above, adaptability can be predicted and is a critical attribute each SF captain must have. The question remains, if an individual possesses no key attributes of adaptability, is it possible that he can become adaptable through education?

The final suggestion for future research is whether the MCCC is achieving their objectives. MAJ Hensley feels that the captain's he receives from the MCCC are inadequately prepared to conduct the MDMP process. The question becomes, does the MCCC accurately prepare captains for the COE?

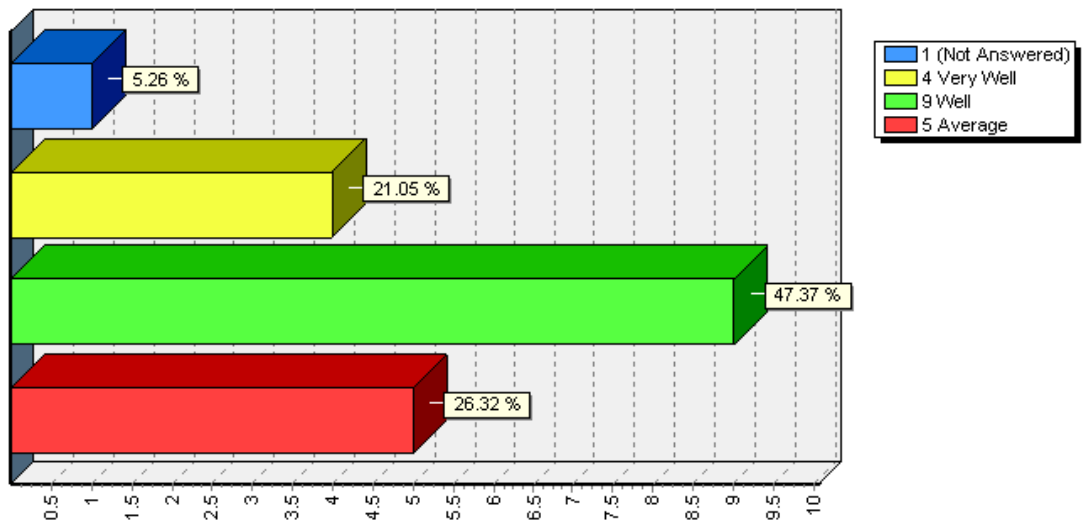
APPENDIX A

Survey Results Bar Graph: Preparation of United States Army Special Forces Captains

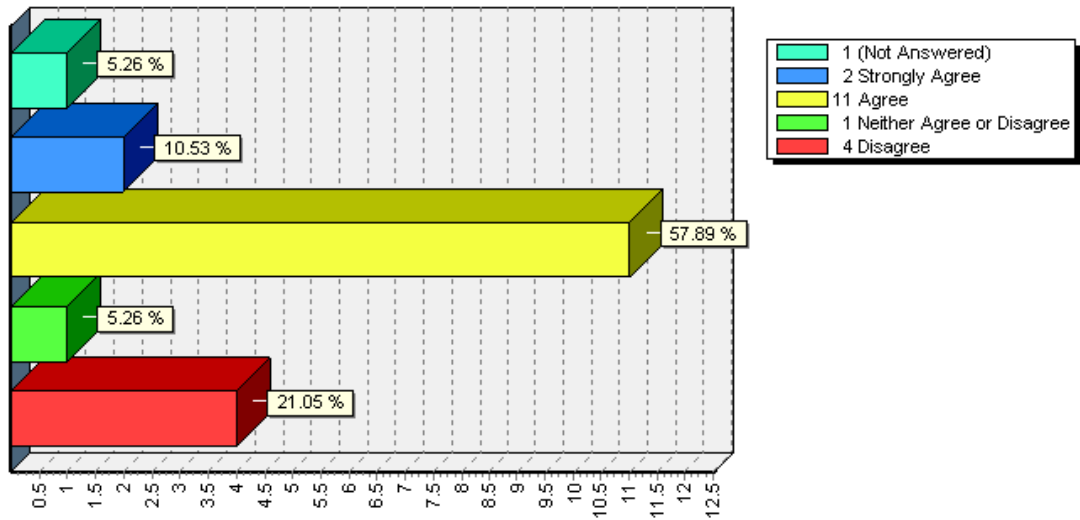
Overall, how well were you trained to command an SFODA in combat?



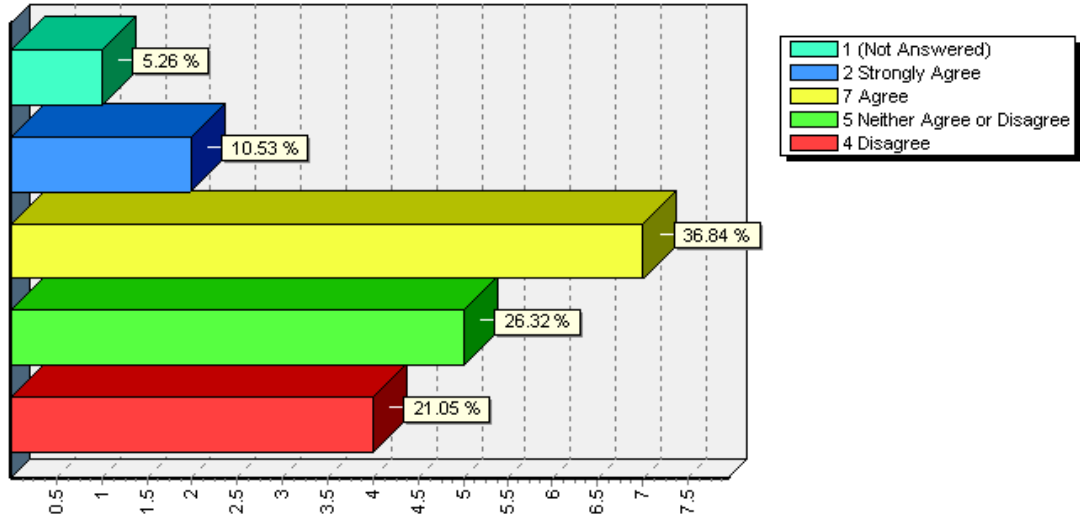
Overall, how well were you educated to command an SFODA in combat?



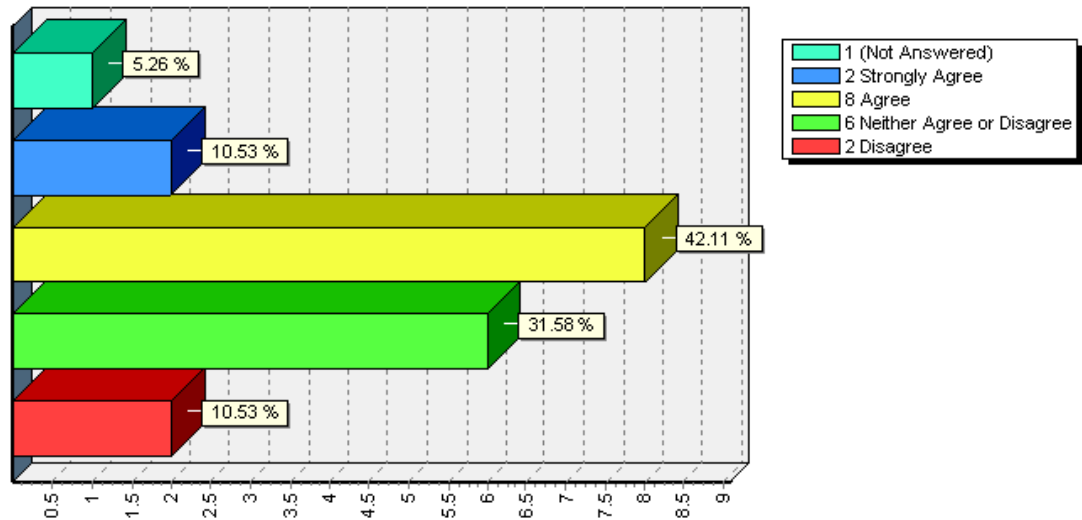
The education provided at CGSC would have improved my ability to command an SFODA in combat.



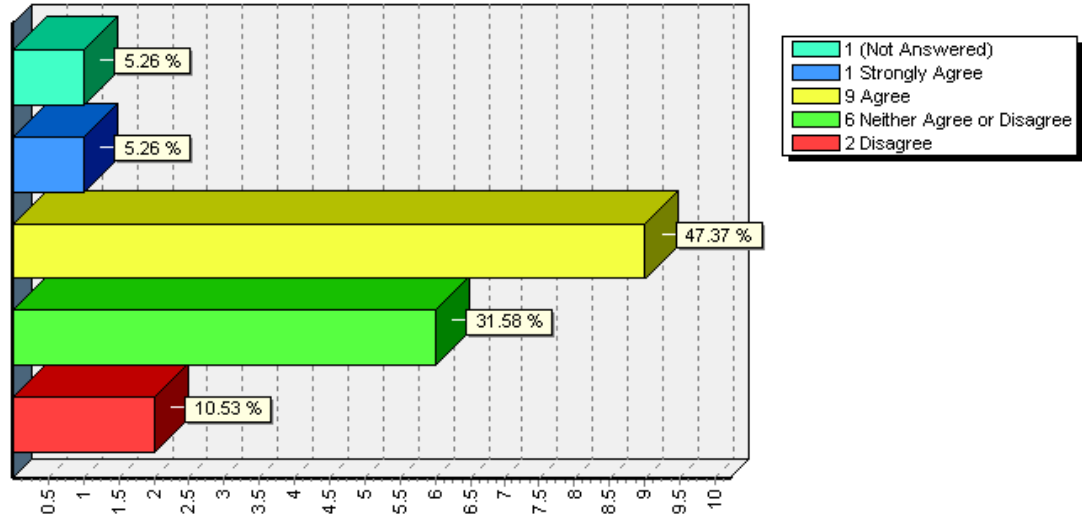
The critical thinking skills provided at CGSC would have improved my ability to command an SFODA in combat if received prior to taking command.



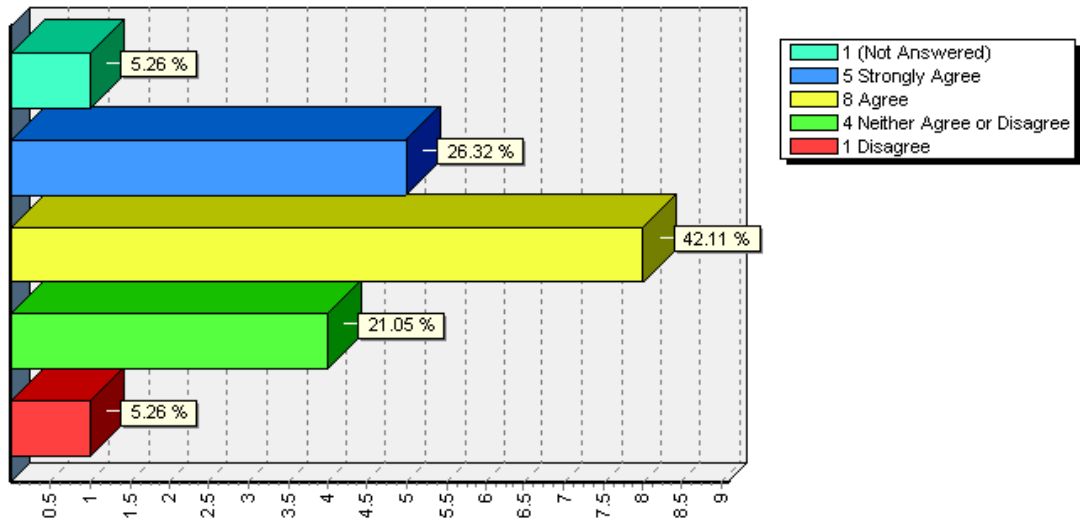
Levels of war (strat/op/tact) education provided at CGSC would have improved my ability to command an SFODA in combat if received prior to taking command.



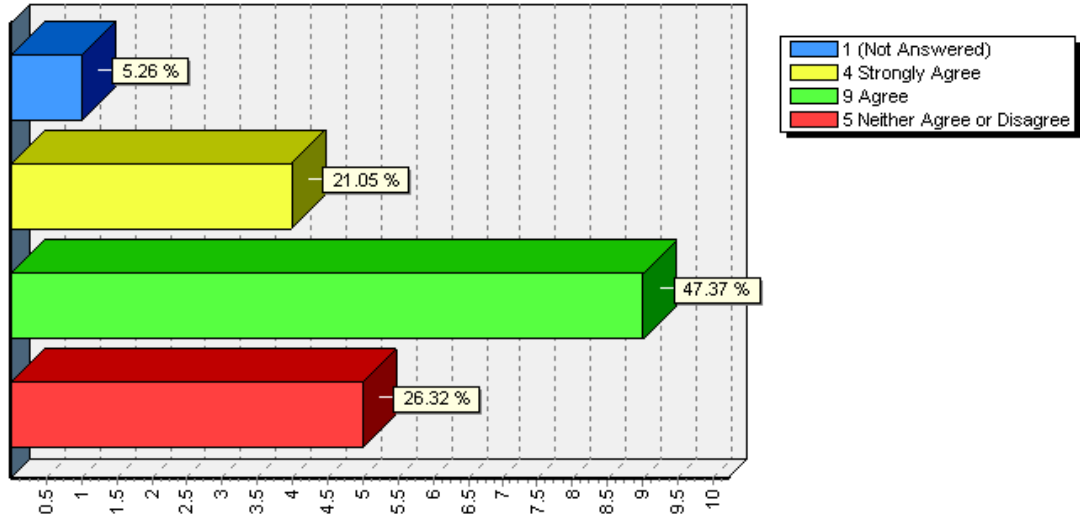
Elements of the JIIM education provided at CGSC would have improved my ability to command an SFODA in combat if received prior to taking command.



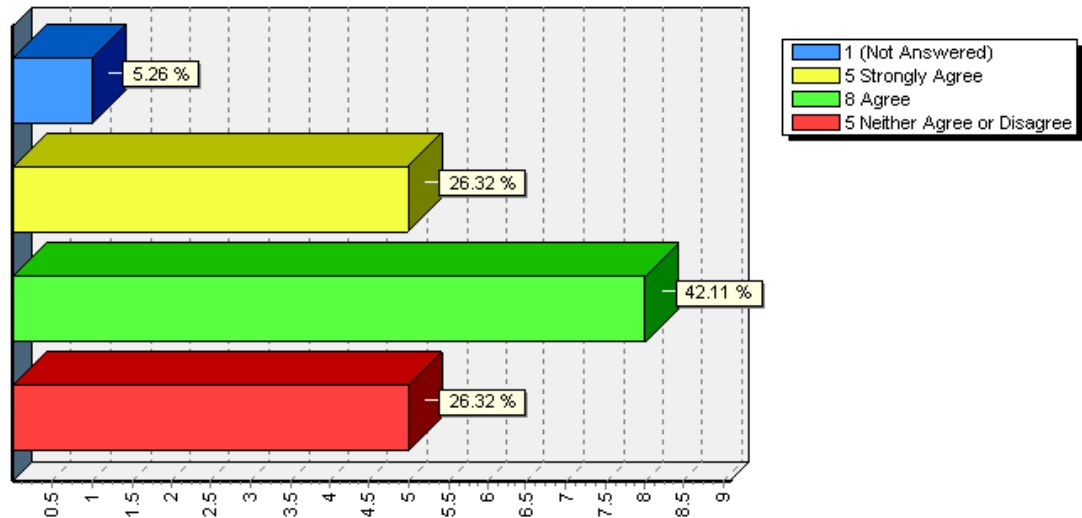
Development by my company commander would have improved my ability to command an SFODA in combat.



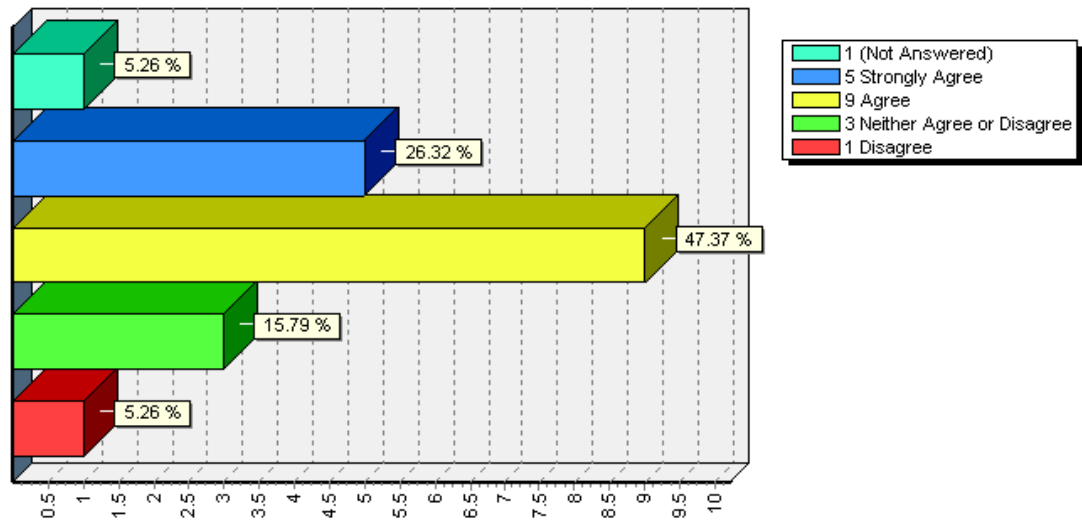
Development by my battalion commander would have improved my ability to command an SFODA in combat.



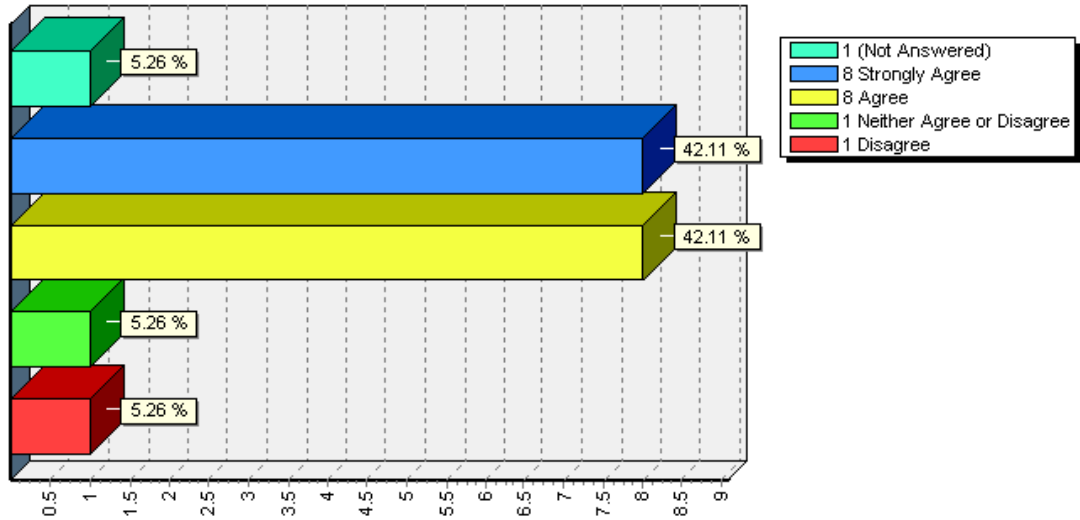
An OPD program would have improved my ability to command an SFODA in combat.



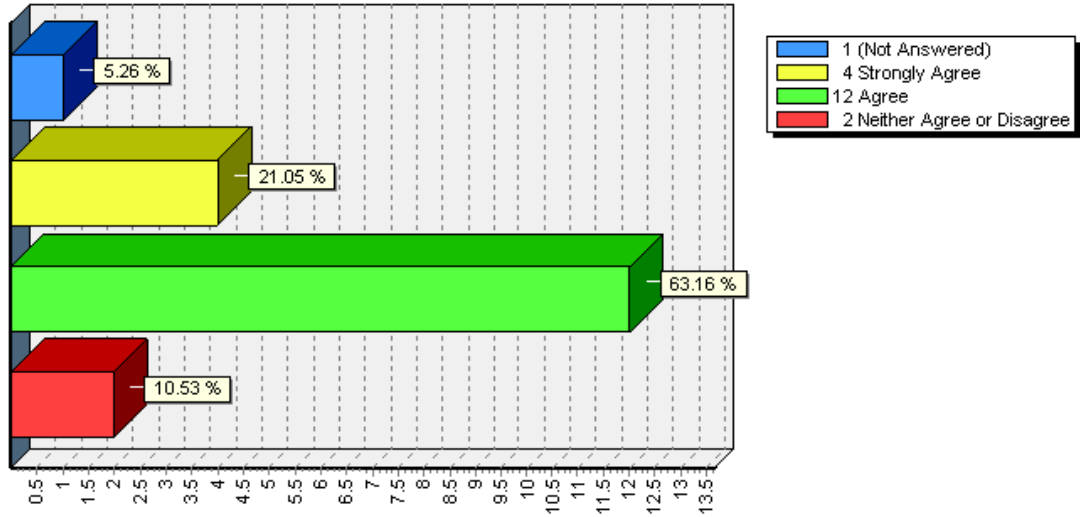
An academic and government agency guest speaker program would have improved my ability to command an SFODA in combat.



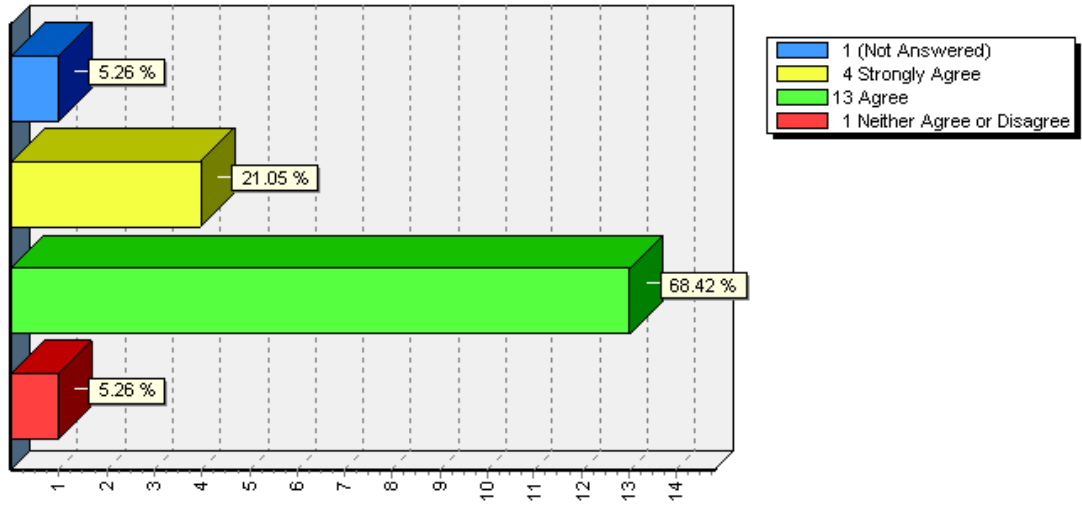
Receiving the education of critical thinking skills at the SFQC would help future SFODA commanders in combat.



Receiving the education of levels of war at the SFQC would help future SFODA commanders in combat.



Receiving the education of the JIIM at the SFQC would help future SFODA commanders
in combat.



APPENDIX B

Survey Results: Count and Percent

Overall, how well were you trained to command an SFODA in combat?

(Not Answered)	1	5.26 %
Very Well	6	31.58 %
Well	7	36.84 %
Average	5	26.32 %
Total Responses	19	100.00 %

Overall, how well were you educated to command an SFODA in combat?

(Not Answered)	1	5.26 %
Very Well	4	21.05 %
Well	9	47.37 %
Average	5	26.32 %
Total Responses	19	100.00 %

The education provided at CGSC would have improved my ability to command an SFODA in combat.

(Not Answered)	1	5.26 %
Strongly Agree	2	10.53 %
Agree	11	57.89 %
Neither Agree or Disagree	1	5.26 %
Disagree	4	21.05 %
Total Responses	19	100.00 %

The critical thinking skills provided at CGSC would have improved my ability to command an SFODA in combat if received prior to taking command.

(Not Answered)	1	5.26 %
Strongly Agree	2	10.53 %
Agree	7	36.84 %
Neither Agree or Disagree	5	26.32 %
Disagree	4	21.05 %
Total Responses	19	100.00 %

Levels of war (strat/op/tact) education provided at CGSC would have improved my ability to command an SFODA in combat if received prior to taking command.

(Not Answered)	1	5.26 %
Strongly Agree	2	10.53 %
Agree	8	42.11 %
Neither Agree or Disagree	6	31.58 %
Disagree	2	10.53 %
Total Responses	19	100.00 %

Elements of the JIIM education provided at CGSC would have improved my ability to command an SFODA in combat if received prior to taking command.

(Not Answered)	1	5.26 %
Strongly Agree	1	5.26 %
Agree	9	47.37 %
Neither Agree or Disagree	6	31.58 %
Disagree	2	10.53 %
Total Responses	19	100.00 %

Development by my company commander would have improved my ability to command an SFODA in combat.

(Not Answered)	1	5.26 %
Strongly Agree	5	26.32 %
Agree	8	42.11 %
Neither Agree or Disagree	4	21.05 %
Disagree	1	5.26 %
Total Responses	19	100.00 %

Development by my battalion commander would have improved my ability to command an SFODA in combat.

(Not Answered)	1	5.26 %
Strongly Agree	4	21.05 %
Agree	9	47.37 %
Neither Agree or Disagree	5	26.32 %
Total Responses	19	100.00 %

An OPD program would have improved my ability to command an SFODA in combat.

(Not Answered)	1	5.26 %
Strongly Agree	5	26.32 %
Agree	8	42.11 %
Neither Agree or Disagree	5	26.32 %
Total Responses	19	100.00 %

An academic and government agency guest speaker program would have improved my ability to command an SFODA in combat.

(Not Answered)	1	5.26 %
Strongly Agree	5	26.32 %
Agree	9	47.37 %
Neither Agree or Disagree	3	15.79 %
Disagree	1	5.26 %
Total Responses	19	100.00 %

Receiving the education of critical thinking skills at the SFQC would help future SFODA commanders in combat.

(Not Answered)	1	5.26 %
Strongly Agree	8	42.11 %
Agree	8	42.11 %
Neither Agree or Disagree	1	5.26 %
Disagree	1	5.26 %
Total Responses	19	100.00 %

Receiving the education of levels of war at the SFQC would help future SFODA commanders in combat.

(Not Answered)	1	5.26 %
Strongly Agree	4	21.05 %
Agree	12	63.16 %
Neither Agree or Disagree	2	10.53 %
Total Responses	19	100.00 %

Receiving the education of the JIIM at the SFQC would help future SFODA commanders in combat.

(Not Answered)	1	5.26 %
Strongly Agree	4	21.05 %
Agree	13	68.42 %
Neither Agree or Disagree	1	5.26 %
Total Responses	19	100.00 %

APPENDIX C

Survey Results: Text and Paragraph Responses by Question

Question 1: What ideas do you have for addition or change to the existing training and education that you received as an SF captain that could help future SFODA commanders in combat?

- More critical thinking, reasoning and rapid decision making experience/ education.
- More emphasis placed on the education of officers by looking at history and understanding examples of successful army campaigns as well as looking at different great thinkers and understanding and appreciating their thoughts and views to better grasp the different prisms from which the world is viewed.
- Provide a better understanding of the various (and complex) command and control issues for TSOC and JSOTF elements. SF Captains receive practical, tactical experience in the Q course, but only a theoretical introduction to the operational and strategic levels of command. This 'theory' can be quickly forgotten and inhibits a deeper understanding of the role the SFODA may play in a GCCs theater strategy or national strategy.
- I do not know what TTPs are currently being implemented into the training cycle, but obviously it is imperative that the numerous vignettes that are out there would be instrumental in developing future ODA CDRs to critically think. In addition, I would recommend planning cycles that incorporate conventional forces as this is how we are doing business now in the COE.
- Provide SFQC students a clear understanding of where their operations fall in respect to national objectives. Provide a better understanding of command

relationships when deployed (who is OPCON / TACON to whom for example if applicable).

- Stressing the necessity of the social sciences particularly sociology. Social skills and critical thinking are a fundamental requirement for a Special Forces soldier but most critical for the commander. I suggest any basic philosophical or psychologically based curriculum that easily presents a critical thinking method that is applicable in many different situations. All this would stress that the most important combat tool that a Special Forces commander (soldier) possesses is his mind.
- To give a temporal point of reference: SFQC 6/01 - Lang 10/01 - SERE 11/01 - Group 01/02; Deployments ISO OEF-P (TL), OIF (Staff), OEF-A (BDOC). Introduction to Joint SOF - Capabilities / Limitations / How to integrate them (uses, requirements I would have to provide, what I can expect from them) / how they operate (e.g. SEAL sqd = 8 pax, SEAL PLT = 16 pax; SEALs do not have 18F type capability, but use a N2 instead). Emphasis on Legal aspects of UW / FID / etc... - Sniper team in AF, RE-XXX RE-investigated for incident, OPFUND incidents. OGA support - other than the D.C. trip (CIA, NSA, NGA) what other organizations are available that can support me (e.g. JWAC). How does my team fit into the overall picture? Being at Bragg, they could easily sit in on a couple of World Wide Updates (WWUs) or receive a USASFC(A) Operations, Intelligence and Training (O&I) brief to provide familiarization.
- I don't know what the course is like at this time, it's been along time since I was there. I signed into my group on 9-11-2001, and at that very moment, everything changed for me.

- Need a better understanding of the following: 1. The linkage and relationships between different aspects of economics, infrastructure, security, and human terrain as it pertains to COIN, UW, CT etc. 2. More specific training on the JIIM environment as it pertains to SOF operations. 3. Education on the bigger picture - campaign planning (not necessarily how to do it but an overview) as well as national and regional strategy and how you tie in. 4. Human terrain - sociology, anthropology etc and more depth in your particular AO. 5. Graduate level education on intelligence operations and targeting - enemy networks etc. 6. Need to master UW and how SOF can or will be utilized in the future security environment
- Interagency / Better understanding of other SOF forces / Authorities of conventional forces over SOF / Embassy functions / Government / Town and City Infrastructure
- In my opinion three things would have been good to get during the SFOQC: 1) Advanced Marksmanship/CQB, 2) more training on the nuances of UW (emphasizing cultural savviness, creativity, and "big-picture" topics- strategy, campaign planning, etc.), and 3) more training stressing cultural savviness in general and the importance of it. CQB skills are something that I think should be basic for all SF soldiers and waiting until you arrive on a team to do SFAUC is a little too late- especially today when we deploy all the time and a student could be in combat days after graduating the course.
- UW training- ROBIN SAGE and planning exercises- are invaluable, but I felt no-one really explained why SF had that as a core competency- THE core competency- and I also felt that no-one explained why it takes an SF soldier to do UW, the savvy aspect of it all- how it takes a true Quiet Professional who can

operate on his own and with extreme situational awareness and multi-cultural acumen, and how one has to understand how actions at every level affect the overall strategic goal- and how the strategy of UW should be developed. I think overall UW strategy can oftentimes be used at even the local level to understand how teams can build stability and even COIN successes at lower levels. Many SF students seemed to me to be attracted to the CQB aspect of SOF and didn't really understand UW, the importance of UW- and how it correlates to so many other things SF does, and how really intellectually "sexy" it is- on a par or even more so as CQB and the other door-kicking aspects of SOF. Lastly, I thought the CQB aspect of many SF soldiers' attraction to SOF clouded their ability to see the importance of cultural savviness. There were some students who couldn't build rapport with visiting foreign students- and it made me cringe to think what they would do overseas. Again, tying cultural acumen with UW would have helped- but also stressing the difficulties in building rapport, the importance to do so, and ideas on how to do so would have gone a long way towards building an appreciation towards a key aspect of SF capabilities. Another way this could be accentuated is by having PhD's in psychology and anthropology to talk to small groups about what makes different groups of people tick. In addition, educational credit for these types of classes and exercises would also go a long way- maybe even paying for and requiring attendance at local night-college classes- or bringing in professors to teach creditable classes in courses that would help build cultural and psychological savviness.

Question 2: What ideas do you have for addition or change to the type of development that you received as an SF captain that could help future SFODA commanders in combat?

- I felt that SF captains were for the most part left to develop themselves. Surely the first 6 months to a year were team-centric and the team warrant and team sergeant were instrumental during this period. After that, however, it seems that SF Company Commanders rarely, if ever, gave good future career advice or "big-picture" types of talks/OPD's, etc. There was little development in terms of SF officers getting together and talking about future threats, how things were being run at the time, theories on UW, FID, and COIN, the future of SF and SOF, etc. I felt that SF Captains should be allowed to be team-centric-especially during the first 6 months of their command, but that after that- and sometimes during- there should have been more offered by the Company commanders towards OPD-like activities.
- More exposure to interagency, academia, and private industry through fellowships, exchange programs, and TWI. Also better Joint development early. Extensive cultural awareness and an understanding of the "big picture". I also think it is very important to understand the history of the target country in order to truly grasp the situation.
- What assets are available? SOCOM Lesson's Learned, Special Operations Debrief and Retrieval System, Statement of Requirements (specifically, how to fill them out with the proper justification to ensure that they are approved by USASFC(A) and USASOC), SOT-A / B capes / lms / etc (should also be an intro to these assets during the SFDOQC).

- How does my team fit into the overall picture? Receive the slide package of the USASOC World Wide Update (WWUs) or USASFC(A) Operations, Intelligence and Training (O&I) brief to provide familiarization. Overview of the campaign plan WRT OEF-A / OIF by the Executive Agent (3rd SFG(A) / 5th SFG(A)) - (e.g. prevent disconnect WRT opening / closing of A-camps in OIF).
- Definitely OPD sessions that are founded on mentoring by field grade officers that facilitate discussion and learning between field grade commanders and company grade commanders. Break the paradigm of little or no mentorship in a SF group and allow an environment of learning.
- Unfortunately, little was done to increase further development as an ODA commander. Certainly, IA training and OPD type seminars would assist in development. I would again look at integrating conventional scenarios as a developmental tool.
- Introduce new captains to the different agencies that SF routinely interacts with, and how their goals are similar as well as conflicting. If by himself in an austere environment and without any previous exposure, a new captain may confuse the goals and objectives of the (familiar) IA individual with those of his BN or Grp commander, thereby decreasing his effectiveness towards the overall SF mission (saw it happen, almost happened to me when working with OGAs... we're all American's right? Helping this guy at the expense of my own mission can't be wrong).
- I will attempt to incorporate my unit with local universities to allow my soldiers the ability to understand and see how the world is viewed by different elements of our society outside of the military. Frankly, there just wasn't enough time to establish an effective formal program. More informal development from leaders

would have been helpful, but the leaders at the time did not have the relevant operational experience necessary to develop their captains.

Question 3: Please provide additional thoughts you may have on the training, education, and/or development of the SF captain that could help future SFODA commanders in combat.

- I like the debate that goes on in CGSC. For a few years now the Army has recognized the need for debate and the questioning of the way we are doing things- in light of the GWOT and OIF. This debate and questioning is good for long-term learning and development. I think this type of education should be more encouraged of SF students and that debating and hearing different opinions, reading about different subjects, and talking through current issues would do a world of good for SOF- which increasingly seems to be dogmatic towards certain traditional positions. SF must learn to criticize and question as the Army is doing now in order to stay relevant and avoid the "DA-focused" units from keeping the (perceived or real)lock on SOCOM and SOF ideas they seem to enjoy today.
- I believe critical thinking was stressed during the Q-Course. Things like the CARVER matrix forced students to think about what the real "problem" or issue was and find a way to solve it, thinking "outside the box". Depending on the lane walker at ROBIN SAGE some students got more of this and some just got
- Covered in last remarks - could be much more effective - break out of traditional military preparation techniques - seek SMEs and practices from JIIM and private industry.
- I think it's very important for future detachment commanders to understand that their primary job is not CQB. I also feel that officers interested in becoming SF officers need to know and understand what they are really signing up for. Also a detachment commander needs to understand that he is only going to be an A

team leader for two years and then it is over. Lastly, the optempo is very high, and the NCO's need to be taken into consideration when the "new detachment commander" is putting together his agenda.

- Since SF CPTs work in an inherently joint environment, more (and earlier) focus on joint operations / interoperability - e.g. how does the Air Force think, why are they focused on the O-O-D-A Loop, what is the OODA Loop, what influences Navy thinking, what service culture-isms should they be aware of "Tactical operations with Strategic implications" sounds great, but what does it mean? CPTs need to know what this means, outside of 2nd and 3rd order of effects.
- More in-depth intro to ASOT (what can it do, what can it not do, what is allowed / not allowed, how does it overlap / fill gaps in the CFSO / how can I leverage the CFSO to fill ASO gaps).
- Foreign Disclosure orientation - what can be given, what cannot be given, how can I give, whom can I give to Reinforce the field grade mentorship/training at the last phase of SF training (ROBIN SAGE). That environment is perfect for completing the last element of education necessary for a new SF officer. ROBIN SAGE provides a situationally based, real world environment that facilitates the application of critical thinking.
- The SF officer qualification course must provide and reinforce a critical thinking method within the officer curriculum.
- As already mentioned...integration of JIIM.
- More focus on general knowledge above the tactical level focused on strategic relations and grand strategy.

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