

Civil Affairs History and Doctrine:

From Military Government to Interagency Partner

by **Thomas R. Geisinger**

Our military is postured globally to protect our citizens and interests, preserve regional stability, render humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, and build the capacity of our partners to join with us in meeting security challenges. U.S. forces will continue to... conduct global counterterrorism operations, assure allies, and deter aggression through forward presence and engagement.

—The White House, National Security Strategy

The 2014 Army Operating Concept (AOC), “Win in a Complex World,” stresses the need for American military power to prevent conflict and shape future wars as much as win them.¹ To do this, U.S. forces must take advantage of joint and interagency capabilities across multiple domains and create unprecedented levels of coordination among its instruments of national power. The AOC, therefore, emphasizes the need to develop “foundational capabilities that permit effective integration of military, interorganizational, and multinational efforts.”²

While peer and near-peer threats remain the most dangerous considerations in preparing for future warfare, a lower-intensity conflict, such as the one against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), is historically more likely. Such conflicts tend to be population-centric and rely on a mixture of “hard” and “soft” power as well as the cooperation of the Department of State (State) and Department of Defense (DoD).

The U.S. Army Civil Affairs (CA) regiment is a key asset in this series of low-intensity conflicts. CA teams provide a supported U.S. country team or military commander with the ability to stabilize threatened areas, develop productive relationships with key leaders in the civil society in a host nation, and positively impact the perception of U.S. forces and partnered governments.

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CA is a vital tool in a modern interagency effort to develop relationships with local leaders, act as an implementer for development projects, and further U.S. diplomatic objectives. Unfortunately, the CA regiment still maintains vestigial structures and doctrines from its historical mission that render it less effective in the modern security environment. CA reserve component (RC) forces are primarily designed to execute military government missions with a heavy-force mix of specialists in functional roles such as rule of law and public education. Active component (AC) CA forces are generalists who support special operations missions and receive a much lengthier regimen of language, culture, and tactical training.

This paper will illustrate that military philosophy regarding civilians on the battlefield, martial law, and stability operations has undergone significant changes throughout recent American history, and that CA and military government doctrine has not traditionally fit within the prevailing concept and doctrine of U.S. Army warfighting.

Civil military engagement (CME) is the primary mission of the AC CA force. Though this is the most prudent application, given the present national security strategy, CME is a significant departure from historical CA missions. Traditionally, civil considerations fell under the purview of a combat commander and staff alone. This state of affairs only officially changed after World War II when the U.S. Army foresaw the mission of governing millions of people in liberated and occupied territories. Though civil affairs operations (CAO) are now seen as a natural component of military operations (particularly during Phase IV, stability operations), the Army came only reluctantly to that conclusion.

The mobilization required for victory in World Wars I and II and the size of the occupied and liberated populations in Europe and Asia compelled the Army to create a military

government apparatus of unprecedented size and capability. A smaller military government mission in Korea receives much less popular attention but was still successful in bringing a successful transition from Japanese Imperial occupation to democratic rule, however short-lived.³

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In the periods after each of the World Wars, the Army lost interest in the details of governing occupied territory and attempted to distance itself from the subject. The postwar edition of the *Field Services Regulations* (FSR) removed the few paragraphs dedicated to military government, leaving only some excerpts of the Laws of War and Geneva Convention of 1906.⁴ The changes may have been a deliberate attempt not to acknowledge the fact that U.S. troops were committed to the postwar occupation of the German Rhineland. After the Korean military government (and CA operations during the Korean War from 1950–1953), the Army began to doctrinally divest itself of the term “military government” and placed it under the CA mission. Though the force would retain a CA capability within the reserves after Korea (the first time the Army would maintain CA Soldiers during peacetime), their training and readiness levels would not allow them to contribute meaningfully to the 1965 intervention in the Dominican Republic and left them severely understaffed and underprepared for the conflict in Vietnam.

Since the establishment of the AC CA branch in 2006, CA teams have found a new utility, augmenting U.S. diplomatic efforts through CME, with the aim of helping to prevent

and deter conflict in failed and threatened states. Unfortunately, the history of CA doctrine and training do not correlate with its new means of peacetime employment.

Civil affairs and military government usually fall to the Army when the need inevitably emerges after conflict.

Title X U.S. Code enumerates ten core Special Operation Forces (SOF) activities. Though the CA regiment plays a supporting role in several core SOF activities, CAO, specifically, encompasses those operations conducted by CA forces that:

- Enhance the relationship between military forces and civil authorities in localities where military forces are present.
- Require coordination [with] other interagency, intergovernmental, and nongovernmental organizations; indigenous populations and institutions; and the private sector.
- Involve application of functional specialty skills that normally [are] the responsibility of civil government to enhance the conduct of civil-military operations.

These duties involve employment of CA forces during all phases of conflict and throughout the range of military operations and require highly-flexible and rapidly-deployable forces.

Historically, a lack of peacetime emphasis on CA training and a disconnect with the Army's prevailing operating concepts have translated into an unprepared CA capability at the outset of conflict and at the beginning of post-conflict stability operations. This paper outlines the history of CA training and doctrine and analyzes its effects after the outbreak of conflict.

The Problem

Civil affairs and military government usually fall to the Army when the need inevitably emerges after conflict. In the beginning, administration of occupied areas and their populations fell to commanders as an additional duty. Even after the Army realized that CA and military government specialists were required in the aftermath of World War I, it was indifferent toward the field. Because of this lack of foresight, Army CA forces are usually inadequately trained and equipped at the outset of conflict and at the beginning of stability operations, when the importance of CAO/CMO is greatest. In addition, CA training and doctrine has not historically been sufficient to meet wartime needs. This reluctance to commit resources to CA forces in advance of conflict has proven costly. Deep cuts to CA training and readiness budgets in the 1970s through the 2000s rendered the Army's CA force unprepared to assist with the vast responsibilities in governing and stabilizing Iraq. After major combat operations in Iraq ended in 2003, the Army was ill-equipped to address the problems associated with military government, despite having a large number of units supposedly dedicated to the purpose.

The present-day CA regiment is employed in a worldwide engagement mission which, while needed, represents a departure from its traditional role. The 2008 establishment of CME as a U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) program of record presaged a transition for the regiment to assume primarily Title XXII missions to support defense, development, and diplomatic (3D) objectives aligned with national security guidance and the Army's current operating concept. While new CA doctrine, Army Techniques Publication (ATP) 3-57.80, *Civil-Military Engagement*, has accounted for this shift, the regiment, particularly the RC, is not properly structured and trained for CME. Peacetime indifference to CA capabilities and

unpreparedness for stability operations will continue into the future unless the Army takes proactive measures to support its CA forces.

Doctrinal Foundations of Civil Affairs

In order to assess whether Army CA has historically been prepared in peace to fulfill its wartime missions, it is essential to assess how well Army officers and leaders understand the human dimension of their operational environment.

Civil affairs capabilities have developed steadily over time to provide commanders with more options; however, the relatively recent change in the Army's operating concept lends the CA regiment to a larger role in persistent engagement. The modern CA force has evolved in a way that emphasizes military government missions and specialty functions within Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) 38, Civil Affairs. Most of the current force is, therefore, not optimized to conform to current national security guidance, which stresses functions such as security forces assistance, foreign internal defense, and persistent low-intensity engagement. Developing both staff officers and tactical teams that specialize in local population engagement is essential to a modern expeditionary army.

When assessing value in CME, there are useful lessons to draw from the history of the U.S. Army's doctrinal approach to CA and military government. The term military government, first appearing in the Army's 1905 FSR, was defined as the "suspension, by the occupying military authority, of the domestic administration and government in the place or territory occupied; in the substitution of military rule and for the same; and in the dictation of general laws, as far as military necessity requires this suspension, substitution, and dictation."⁵ The term is carefully distinguished in the text from martial law and military oppression and recommends less stringent rule in "fully

occupied and passive" areas.⁶

The 1910 version of the FSR focused almost exclusively on the rights of inhabitants in occupied territory. Commanders were to minimize damage to the population "as far as possible," but discretion for occupational governance was entirely in the hands of the commander and his staff. The Army also recognized the International Red Cross as a humanitarian entity with rights and privileges resembling a modern nongovernmental organization (NGO).

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The 1914 version noted that military police were responsible to "maintain order throughout the area or areas occupied by the organizations to which they have been assigned [and to] protect the inhabitants of the country and their property against violence and prevent excesses of all kinds."⁷

The final 1923 FSR made no substantive changes to the Army's official view of civilians on the battlefield or the lawful occupation of enemy territory.

In 1925, the Army's Command and General Staff College produced *Military Aid to the Civil Authority*, which includes a detailed history of Army support to civil administration and recommended techniques for tactical-level leaders in establishing martial law and dealing with domestic disturbances within the laws of war. Its case studies and scenarios place the entire responsibility for military government at the commander and his staff's discretion.

In 1939, the Army began to seriously consider the possibility of another general war

on the European continent and published FM 100-5, *Tentative Field Service Regulations, Operations*. The manual did not address what are now called stability operations, but it did begin to consider the importance of local populations on warfighting. A section was devoted to the implications of guerilla warfare in rear areas, mostly from the perspective of lawful and organized combatants, and was framed to prepare Army officers to lead guerilla operations as well as oppose them.⁸

In 1943, the first purely CA doctrine in Army history was published. Field Manual (FM) 41-10, *Military Government and Civil Affairs*, advised prospective CA staff officers on basic functions such as protection of cultural monuments and artifacts, lawful use of force in occupied areas, and other administrative duties. In 1949, some of this language changed to advise leaders to actively enlist the support of “native elements to form small constabulary-type units,” although no mention was made of governing or pacifying liberated or occupied zones.⁹

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After the Korean conflict, the Army issued an update of FM 41-10, which remained focused on the responsibilities of a staff officer participating in large-scale, military government operations. Its stated primary objectives are to help the CA officer and his parent unit support military objectives, fulfill obligations arising from treaties, support and implement national policy, and provide for the transfer of responsibility from a military commander to a designated civil agency or government.

In 1962, CA finally appears in Army capstone doctrine, FM 100-5, *Field Service Regulations, Operations*, as an augmentation to unconventional warfare operations. The manual introduced two concepts. The first was the “spectrum of conflict”—cold war on one end and general war on the other. The center portion, limited war, came to characterize most of the conflict in the Cold War era and significantly affects the way commanders view CA and military government forces:

In military operations against irregular forces the civilian support rendered to either our own or allied forces and the irregular forces is often of such importance as to mean the difference between success and failure. Success is dependent upon a definite program of civil affairs and psychological warfare activities to create proper attitudes and relationships with the people in the area both as individuals and as members of the community. The acceptance and understanding of this program by the civilian population are vital to its success. The commander must be provided with the full capability of conducting the civil affairs activities required to accomplish his objective.¹⁰

This iteration of FM 100-5 discusses unconventional warfare and its implications, and CA factors prominently in a commander’s ability to influence local populations, control and recruit from refugee groups, counter an adversary’s attempt at unconventional warfare operations, and defeat adversary irregular forces. CA forces also support a conventional commander with counterintelligence screening and populace and resource control measures. Additionally, the text coined the term “civic action” as any action performed by the military forces utilizing available human and material resources for the well-being and improvement of the community.¹¹

“Situations short of war,” the second concept, was an admission that the Cold War had

artificially suppressed the tendency of conflict to escalate in relation to the means available. U.S. participation in such situations included new doctrinal roles for commanders, such as encouraging and stabilizing weak governments, deterring and thwarting aggression, and maintaining and restoring order to threatened areas.¹²

Expanding on its new approach, the 1968 update to FM 100-5 added support to commanders from other government agencies, such as staff representatives from State, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Instructions for dealing with U.S. diplomats acknowledged the chief of diplomatic mission as the head of any given country team with the advice and assistance of the chief of the military assistance advisory group.

After Vietnam, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command took on a new approach under its first commanding general, William DePuy. Believing that a Soviet direct approach and the potential for high-intensity conflict in Germany was the greatest threat, DePuy's new Field Manual 100-5 focused almost exclusively on combined arms maneuver. The words "special forces" and "civil affairs" are conspicuously absent from the text. Subsequent manuals in 1982 and 1986 carried a similar emphasis on high-intensity, conventional conflict in Europe against a peer adversary as part of the AirLand Battle doctrine.

Two key factors influenced the 1993 iteration of FM 100-5, which reintroduced irregular warfare in the form of operations other than war. First, the breakup of the Soviet Union eliminated the monolithic threat the U.S. had faced for over forty years of Cold War. The resulting diffusion of threats and the lack of a true peer threat widened the possible mission set for the Army. It could now be expected to deploy anywhere in the world to meet a diverse range of requirements. Missions

making their first appearance in Army doctrine included noncombatant evacuation operations, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, and support to domestic civil authorities (now called defense support to civil authorities).¹³

The second factor influencing the 1993 update was the passage of Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986, which among other sweeping reforms, required American military forces to fight under a joint model instead of as separate services. The 2001 FM 3-0, *Operations*, was intended as a transitional document to transform the Cold War Army, a heavy force intended to defeat a numerically superior Soviet peer, into a lighter, more versatile force.¹⁴ FM 3-0 was in some ways an intellectual return to the 1962 FM 100-5, which focused on a more diverse range of missions. For the first time, support and stability operations were linked directly with offensive and defensive operations, and at least doctrinally, placed on par. The CA regiment, already experiencing a high deployment tempo in the ongoing Balkans conflict, was primed to become a more significant factor in the Army's force employment strategy.

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The Modern Civil Affairs Regiment

The events of September 11, 2001, and the ensuing conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq, and around the world as part of Operation Enduring Freedom fundamentally changed the way CA forces were viewed by supported commanders and policymakers. Early in the war, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld questioned whether CA forces needed to belong to the special operations community. Eventually, Army Chief of Staff Peter Schoomaker dictated that all

active-duty CA units would fall under U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC), while all reserve units would fall under U.S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Command (USACAPOC). Known in the community as “the divorce,” the split was largely responsible for the divergent training requirements and capabilities of the two components’ CA forces in the coming years.¹⁵

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Civil-military engagement became a USSOCOM program of record in 2008. By this time, support of Operation Enduring Freedom and the Global War on Terrorism had created a demand for long-term presence, most including a CA team, in dozens of countries around the developing world. The CME program was a way to ensure the long-term health of these missions by providing a funding stream. At the core of the concept is the provision of a low-cost, high value option to military and interagency leaders in threatened and failed states. CA teams employed in a CME role are capable of gaining access to areas too dangerous for State and USAID representatives. Though the program has been active for less than a decade, it has become a cornerstone of the AC CA mission. The 85th CA Brigade, established to support U.S. Forces Command (FORSCOM), has begun to employ its teams in a similar fashion, especially in South America under the Civil Affairs Engagement Program. In the next two years, the 85th CA Brigade will furl its colors as part of Army force structure drawdowns; however, its one surviving battalion, the 83rd, is expected to continue such engagement in support of FORSCOM.

Demands are increasing for RC units to

participate in Title XXII engagement missions as well. There is already a growing body of research and literature on the activities and effects of CA teams operating in direct support of interagency objectives, partially because for several years such missions were driven less by doctrine and more by necessity and informal practice.

In 2013, official CA doctrine for the program, ATP 3-57.80, *Civil Military Engagement*, clarified how existing concepts such as CA core tasks and planning methodology fit into CME. In 2011 and 2012, *Special Warfare* magazine published two articles on CMSE missions. The first, written by John Wishart, discusses his company’s deployment to sub-Saharan Africa and introduces the concept of CMSE missions to a general, special operations audience.¹⁶ Wishart explains how effective CAO/CMO can disrupt the influence of violent extremist organizations (VEOs). The second article by Jeffrey Han and Brion Youtz discusses a company deployment to the U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM) area of responsibility. Han and Youtz address how the civil-military operations center supported individual teams, how the company approached training for deployment, and how the mission was framed within the greater scope of the theater security cooperation plan, to include direct support to country team objectives.¹⁷ Both articles articulate the short-term value of a CA team to a SOF commander in a Title XXII zone. In addition, the articles spark discussion in the CA community about best practices for training and preparing a CA company for deployment to multiple countries simultaneously.

Civil affairs operates with other U.S. government agencies in a unique way. Most DoD elements operate in Title X zones, where the DoD is the lead agency and other agencies support a primarily military effort. Civil affairs units, especially those employed as a CMSE, normally operate in Title XXII zones, where State is the lead agency. This is an important distinction because CMSEs operating in a Title

XXII zone are still subject to normal command relationships with their parent units, as well as the geographic combatant commander who exercises operational control over them. Specific structures differ in missions around the world, but a CMSE in a Title XXII zone is often under the tactical control of a Special Operations Command (Forward) or commander. Still others are placed under Chief of Mission authority, meaning a CMSE is directly answerable to the U.S. embassy through the country team. A CMSE operating in a Title XXII zone normally has several “masters” who may or may not have convergent priorities.

Chris Carr, in his thesis “Civil Military Engagement Program: A Special Operations Solution to Threats Derived from Undergoverned Areas,” discusses the critical role of CME teams supporting State and USAID efforts in semi-permissive and undergoverned areas.¹⁸ He concludes that CME teams are most effective when they are closely aligned with interagency partners in support of a country team’s mission statement, and they sometimes experience limited success because of a lack of synchronization with existing State objectives.

In his thesis “The United States Special Operations Command Civil Military Engagement Program—A Model for Military-Interagency, Low Cost/Small Footprint Activities,” Brent Bartos promotes CME as a cost effective means of maintaining a global SOF presence in possible areas of conflict, drawing conclusions from case studies on the Viet Cong in Vietnam and CMSE missions in Jordan and Bangladesh.¹⁹

In his monograph “Preventing War: Special Operations Engagement in Support of Security Sector Reform” for the School of Advanced Military Studies, Charles Moores extols the value of persistent special operations engagement in lieu of more traditional “episodic” engagements. He focuses these recommendations around the idea that special operations units “can’t surge trust,” and that relationships cannot be built with

host nation military leaders after a crisis occurs.²⁰

In a 2013 essay “Has the U.S. Military in the Horn of Africa Been a Force that Embraces Strategic Knowledge and Perspective in Countering Violent Extremism and Assisting with Sustainable Development,” Stephen Burgess takes a long-term view of Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa’s (JTF-HOA) contributions to State efforts. He is critical of CA efforts, which make up a majority of JTF-HOAs activities in the human domain. He notes that CA teams did not always understand the operational importance of their projects and programs, and that the targeting of their effects was often imprecise. To date, the CA community has not embarked on any internal analyses of its own contributions to U.S. diplomatic objectives and special operations objectives over time in a given country or region.

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The RAND Corporation defines ungoverned areas as “an area in which a state faces significant challenges in establishing control.”²¹ Certainly, many “hot spots” of insurgent activity have become so precisely because there is a governmental vacuum. Yemen is a prime example of this concept. Even before the “Arab Spring” of 2010, the regime led by President Ali Abdullah Saleh was unable to effectively govern or control any region outside of its capital in Sana’a and its primary economic zone, the ancient port of Aden. Government facilities outside these two zones were chronically under-supported by the central government and depended on the largesse of local tribal leadership. These tribal leaders, particularly in

the less-populated, eastern part of the country, tended to be more tolerant of extremist groups who preached violent reform. In fact, when Al Qaeda was pushed out of Iraq following the “Sunni Awakening,” the group reconstituted in Yemen under the Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula brand. The Somalia-based Al Shebaab organization began sending fighters across the Bab al Mandeb into Yemen for training. Thus Yemen became one of the most welcoming places in the world for jihadist groups.²² A similar dynamic plays out in a multitude of other undergoverned areas throughout the world.

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The VEO has proved to be an effective and disruptive challenge to both global security and U.S. national security interests. In 2001, the U.S. was not prepared for a population-centric war. While early conventional engagements in Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003 showcased American dominance in major combat operations, the irregular warfare that followed exposed serious deficiencies in U.S. military capabilities (especially in stability operations) and involved massive, long-term commitments of troops. One of the lasting hallmarks of this unpreparedness was the U.S. government’s widespread use of Commander’s Emergency Response Program (CERP) funds, which by 2010 accounted for fully 10 percent of the gross domestic product of Afghanistan.²³ Compounding the problem, CERP funds were often spent in shortsighted ways that undermined other U.S. or Afghan government efforts. Other scholars have correctly attributed the lack of

Soldiers with appropriate cultural training as one of the core causes of the International Security Assistance Force’s inability to defeat the Taliban and other insurgent groups in Afghanistan.

The Pre-Modern Era of Civil Affairs

Mexican American War

The CA Qualification Course (CAQC) at the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (SWCS) teaches its students that the first true military government mission occurred in Mexico City under the leadership of Winfield Scott in the aftermath of the successful Mexican-American War of 1846–1848. In CA heraldry, Scott is credited as the “Father of U.S. Army Civil Affairs,” largely for the relative peace and stability of the city under his martial law and his administrative skill.²⁴ Scott’s provisional military government was established under the doctrine of military necessity under a combination of customary law and the 1806 Articles of War, by which he felt obligated to safeguard civilians to the best of his ability.²⁵ The Army in Mexico received no guidance on the subject of maintaining order after successful conclusion of the conflict; Secretary of War William Marcy merely cautioned Scott that, “It is foreseen that what relates to civil government will be a difficult and unpleasant part of your duty.”²⁶ As part of his program of martial law, Scott established military commissions and “councils of war” to settle criminal matters involving both U.S. and Mexican citizens. Such commissions were the first established outside the U.S. and issued legal judgments to more than 400 individuals, mostly American soldiers. Scott’s practices came under intense legal scrutiny after the war, and the U.S. Supreme Court denounced his actions in the 1851 *Jecker vs. Montgomery* decision.²⁷ The court ruled that “every court of the United States must derive its jurisdiction and judicial authority from the Constitution and laws of the United States. And neither the President

nor any military officer can establish a court in a conquered country and authorize it to decide on the rights of the United States or of individuals... nor administer the laws of nations.”²⁸ Though the Court softened the blow by acknowledging Scott had acted from military necessity “to assist [in] preserving order in the conquered territory and to protect the inhabitants in their persons and property while it was occupied by the American arms,” clearly the Court felt Scott had overstepped his bounds. Although Scott could have cited his lack of political guidance with reference to post-conflict actions to excuse his actions, there is no evidence he did so.

The American Civil War and the Frontier Army

The U.S. could not have been prepared for the prospect of fighting a war with its own southern states. The Army faced the twin challenges of raising a citizen army to defeat the Confederacy and, eventually, the governance and rule of some 9 million citizens of the rebelling 13 states. To face the latter task, the Army again had to rely on the concept of military necessity and the best judgment of its commanders and staffs. The linchpin of the Army’s administration of civil affairs was the provost marshal. The Army established provosts in every district under martial law, and in many areas they represented the only governmental authority. They maintained order and monitored the activities of the disloyal, administered loyalty oaths, collected fines, arrested rebels, prosecuted criminals, and distributed food to the needy. By and large, the provosts operated fairly, although there were cases of corruption and abuse, especially when they were local men who bore grudges against their secessionist neighbors.²⁹

As the war progressed, the need for centralized control of military government activities became clear. As with previous military operations, treatment of local populations appears to have followed only the guidance

and direction of individual commanders unless driven by negotiated agreements. Even in the case of negotiated treaties such as the 1835 Treaty of New Echota, the Army had considerable latitude in implementing policy guidance. Despite its prime role in “taming the west,” it appears clear the Army as an institution did not ever seriously weigh civil considerations in its campaign planning. Its soldiers were poorly trained for combat, let alone modern CMO. The lack of staff or individual soldier training in CMO throughout this era was lamentable, but was beyond the capability of an underfunded and undertrained frontier army.

The American Expeditionary Force (AEF)...managed to maintain a high degree of peace and order...

World War I

After World War I, the victorious Allied Powers set up a military government to oversee post-war Germany. The American military government in the Rhineland was unexpectedly forced to rule a defeated German population suffering from near-famine conditions. The American Expeditionary Force (AEF), latecomers to the war and inexperienced with foreign military engagement, managed to maintain a high degree of peace and order, especially in contrast to its British and French counterparts. Although the story of American involvement in post-Great War Germany is a successful one and worthy of inclusion in the overall history of the CA regiment, it was not without shortcomings. First, the Army’s military government could not have succeeded without a content German population, given its unpreparedness for the task. The AEF was doubtless helped by factors outside its immediate control. The Americans had not participated

in the war long enough to develop the animus shared between the Germans and the allied British and French forces. German officials and American officers generally dealt fairly and honestly with each other, and their mutual respect prevented the violent protests, disobedience, and reprisals seen in the British and French zones. Because of this trust and relative stability, 90 percent of all governmental functions remained under German control during the American occupation.³⁰ Areas recovering from the strains of war become more stable if their own social and governmental norms are preserved, and local leaders continue to perform as much of the business of government as possible.

The CA regiment, as it was now officially designated in 1949, was still unprepared for the Korean War.

World War II

After its entry into World War II, the U.S. Army was still reluctant to see logical parallels between the Rhineland Government and the planned post-war occupation of Germany. Instead of relying on relatively recent Army experience, the Civil Affairs Division (CAD) recruited academics from around the country to lecture, host seminars at their home universities, and in many cases, put on a uniform and serve as an officer in a specialist role. The University of Virginia's School of Military Government (SMG) curriculum took advantage of the surge in scholarly manpower, using leading academics to instruct officers in the Japanese and German systems of government, economic policy, and history. For the first time, the Army was teaching officers to develop a true understanding of the enemy's culture.

In all, the SMG delivered seven graduating classes in 1943 and 1944, contributing several

hundred graduates to become military governors or CA staff officers. Ten additional universities in the Civil Affairs Training Program (CATP) contributed about 2,000 more, although with a shorter training curriculum. The education and training they received represented the best prepared military government apparatus ever assembled. Applicants almost universally possessed qualifications that made them suitable for CA and military government work; the CAD had a wealth of applicants from which to draw. In 1943, 2,000 military officers were selected for training out of 25,000 nominees. By the time "off the street" civilian recruitment stopped in late 1943, only 960 were selected out of 50,000 applicants.³¹

Korea

American CA and military government operations were enormous in scale. The rule of liberated and occupied populations numbering well over 100 million fell to the Army on three continents. Military leaders finally understood the need for standing forces who specialized in dealing with civilian populations. The CA regiment, as it was now officially designated in 1949, was still unprepared for the Korean War. Post-war personnel and budget struggles hit CA especially hard, leaving CA units with low levels of readiness at the outset of war. Henry Kissinger's review of CA in Korea from 1950-1951 listed four primary deficiencies:

- The need to negotiate CA agreements during the early stages of conflict.
- The importance a single focus of responsibility within the Army for all CA functions, and a single point of contact within the Army for relationships with governments in operational areas.
- The need for CA officers with language capability.
- The need for military commanders and

soldiers to know the importance of civil affairs in attaining military and political objectives.³²

Vietnam

Operating under the 1962 FM 100-5, Army CA entered 1965 with a new approach—civic action—to use available resources to legitimize and strengthen a host nation government, not to perform governmental duties in its place. CA forces deployed to Vietnam in small numbers. Most CA forces at this time were in the reserves, but they were never called to Vietnam. This is in response to lessons learned from the Korean War, where reserve CA officers were thought to be overly politically connected.³³ The details of this decision are ultimately irrelevant; reserve CA did not deploy to Vietnam in any significant numbers. The three active companies that did serve in Vietnam were parceled out to three of the four combatant corps areas, beginning in 1965. They did not go as decision makers and staff officers but as action teams. Their major concern was in assisting the large numbers of internally displaced persons resulting from U.S. combat action.

The training members of the three CA companies received was seriously outdated and focused on the lessons of WWII-era military governance. When deployed, they had to adjust “on the fly” to the tactical CA mission. By all available accounts, CA companies did an extraordinary job of working with local leaders to improve health standards and quality of life in the villages in which they worked, usually doing so with scarce resources. Ultimately, however, they were too scattered to significantly affect the overall strategic effort. The primary contribution would be made by a military and State partnership.

Vietnam was an exceptionally complex conflict fought against a determined enemy able to shift its tactics based on the situation. The Civil Operations and Revolutionary

Development Support (CORDS) program was an acknowledgement of the difficulty of massing friendly forces without the ability to pacify large areas and free them of Communist activity, and the necessity of both civilian and military expertise to do so. CORDS was “bold and innovative attempt to build and operate a truly effective interagency headquarters for pacification even while a more conventional war was being fought by major U.S. and South Vietnamese units.”³⁴ Though CORDS remained under military control within the Military Advisory Command-Vietnam, it retained civilian leadership in key positions. CORDS was not active for very long but was generally effective, largely because it was able to achieve a unity of effort between USAID and military leaders in pacification activities. With CORDS regarded as a successful failure (it did not, after all, succeed in preserving the existence of the government of South Vietnam), the days of a military government operation in the mold of Germany and Japan after WWII seemed to be over.³⁵ Support of friendly governments would henceforth be interagency matters, usually under State leadership with military support.

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Current Civil Affairs Training

Civil Affairs became an active duty branch of the Army in 2006. Prior to the branch’s full activation, there was only one active duty CA battalion, the 96th, which exclusively supported special operations missions and requirements as a part of USASOC. Officers for the 96th were selected for Functional Area 38, and enlisted CA specialists were Special Forces (SF) Soldiers. The training program for AC officers was to attend the CAQC for reservists, at that time a two-week program. Noncommissioned officers

(NCOs) received no additional formal training in moving from an SF position to CA. With the opening of the branch, the John F. Kennedy SWCS designed a new and longer program of instruction, implemented in 2008. Civil Affairs officers would be accessed at the grade of first lieutenant (promotable) and NCOs at the grade of specialist (promotable). They would attend a 43-week course consisting of special operations language training; regional studies training; an enhanced, eight-week, three-day CAQC; and a three-week culmination exercise, Operation Sluss-Tiller, designed to parallel the complex environments and challenging interpersonal dilemmas of “Robin Sage” (the exercise at the end of the Special Forces Qualification Course). With only minor modifications, this 43-week program is still the mechanism by which selected officers and NCOs receive CA training.

Despite an identical branch designation, RC CA officers train to different standards than their AC counterparts.

Reserve CA make up approximately 95 percent of the Army’s inventory. Despite an identical branch designation, RC CA officers train to different standards than their AC counterparts. Special operations language training and regional training are not included. Officers attending CA training at the SWCS integrate with active-duty students near the end of the 43-week CA pathway, during the CAQC. The course consists of 29 consecutive days of training in order to keep all training in temporary duty status. Budget constraints limit the number of days that CA reservists can attend training at the CAQC. In addition to limited training days, the USACAPOC budget also limits the number of officers that can attend training. As a result of these limitations, RC CA units historically maintain a low level of military occupational

specialty qualification.

CA assessment and selection (CAAS) began operating in 2010 to identify active-duty Soldiers for training and assignment in the branch. Designed to test the candidate’s interpersonal skills, intellect, and stamina, the 10-day CAAS regimen replaced the “paper board” used to screen applicants for CA branch transfer assignments from the active Army inventory. Students are placed under physical and mental stress to identify suitability for the demands of special operations missions.

In military government doctrine, U.S. military officers may rule by fiat and edict if they must, as they have legal authority over an occupied zone. As a result, many of the lessons of the past do not apply directly to modern CME activities. A CMSE operating in a Title XXII zone has neither the authority nor the ability to rule or govern and must accomplish its mission by befriending and influencing key leaders. As a result, the special operations CA community must evaluate the effectiveness of its mission sets through the lens of its more recent engagement activities around the world. Though a modern CA Soldier would recognize many of the principles of military government, such as knowledge of and respect for the host nation’s culture, the mechanisms and authorities to accomplish the mission have changed considerably.

Transition, the final step in the CA methodology, becomes especially important in CME missions because most programs cannot be planned, approved, funded, executed and completed without at least one turnover in personnel. The short-term nature of military deployments in proportion to State postings causes a high turnover rate among military personnel, making continuity of effort a critical principle. While this problem is familiar to any CA Soldier experienced with CME, it remains an understudied aspect of the program.

An Interagency Perspective on CME

State and USAID representatives from the Latin America and Asian regional bureaus interviewed for this paper are generally pleased with the quality of the special operations CA personnel they have worked with in the past. CMSEs in Guatemala have proven over several years of engagement to be adept at developing relationships with local leaders, leading one career diplomat to remark that they were “amazed at how generative those conversations [with local leaders] are.”³⁶ At times, however, State and USAID officers perceive the CMSE as acting as members of the intelligence community:

There can be a lack of trust sometimes with USAID officers, who can see CA as an intelligence collection activity. They [State and USAID] wonder why the military is in a country with no war, in civilian clothes, handing out business cards with a gmail.com address...we get in a lot of trouble for using personal emails.³⁷

A CMSE’s interest in small villages as it relates to known “zones of facilitation” is legitimate, as the non-state actors in such zones frequently undermine the legitimacy and stability of the host nation’s government. CMSE projects prioritized toward these zones therefore support USAID and DoD objectives, and the CMSE is not acting as an active intelligence collector. The problem does not originate with the activity itself, but with the presentation. CA Soldiers must be forthcoming to interagency personnel about their missions and objectives and clearly highlight their whole-of-government approach. It is unlikely that defense and development objectives will align perfectly, but when they do, CA teams must seize upon the opportunities presented.

Another barrier to interagency cooperation for the CMSE is preparation. There is often a

stark contrast in education and foreign experience between CMSE and State/USAID personnel. CMSE members are, individually, capable of building and maintaining relationships, but they are not always on the same page when asked why they are in country. One career diplomat with USAID recounted an incident during an in-brief with a CA team. When he asked members about the mission, he received two simultaneous answers—to support Theater Special Operations Command objectives and to provide humanitarian aid to underserved local populations.³⁸

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Transparency is a valuable asset for a special operations CA team seeking to develop access to denied areas. Research suggests that interagency partners, such as USAID, are more likely to develop trust with a CMSE if the team is clear and forthcoming about its role supporting special operations objectives.

The Army Is Not Well Prepared for Civil Affairs and Military Government Responsibilities

Successful military government episodes, such as the Mexican War and the Rhineland, were more a result of adaptive commanders proving they were capable of handling stability operations, than of effective administrative systems and doctrine.

The successes of World War II were attributable to the mobilization of large numbers of academics and professionals to serve as both CA officers and advisors, more than a triumph of existing CA doctrine or the Army’s foresight. Doctrine on the subject of CA and military government, for that matter, did not formally

exist before 1940.

The Korean War found the Army unprepared for the scope of its responsibilities. Though Army CA can claim success in managing the flow of civilians from the battlefield, it failed utterly in working with the Korean government. The U.S. Army Government in Korea (USAMGIK), a bloated headquarters with more than fifty general officers, was unable to effectively coordinate aid during the war. CA suffered a poor reputation, and USAMGIK was seen as both a “general’s graveyard” and “a dumping ground for incompetents”; many CA officers in Korea had no formal training in the discipline.³⁹ Worse, CA officers did not forge productive working relationships with either UN or U.S. civilian development specialists.

Research suggests that effective CA operations have always been key to post-conflict stability...

CA also failed to make a meaningful difference in the Vietnam. Less than 1 percent of CA forces (now almost exclusively in the reserves, as Kissinger had recommended) were ever deployed to Vietnam. Only three understrength companies (the 29th, 41st, and 42nd) saw any action. State and USAID took on a much more prominent role and generally did not seek the help of uniformed CA personnel. CORDS was executed with virtually no participation by CA officers.

The changes in the CA community springing from the passage of Goldwater-Nichols should have resulted in a much more robust capability for influencing local populations and working with non-military organizations such as USAID and various NGOs. Its presence in SOF should have presaged a shift from military government structures and responsibilities to more effectively support for unconventional warfare and foreign internal defense roles. Instead, CA training and

readiness within USACAPOC remained as low as it was during the Korean War. Training courses became steadily shorter as well. At present, only a fraction of CA officers assigned to reserve units have attended the 29-day course to qualify for the MOS.

Research suggests that effective CA operations have always been key to post-conflict stability, but the Army has consistently undervalued (or completely unconsidered) them in the peacetime military. Until fairly recently, civil considerations were not a significant part of Army operational concepts, institutional learning, or doctrine. Finally, the Army has never adequately integrated professional expertise from interagency partners and has rarely recruited such expertise from civilian academia. The Army has consistently found itself unprepared to meet challenges in governing and administering occupied territory and securing conditions for conflict termination. A review of relevant history and doctrine suggests that the Army approach to CA evolved in five general movements:

1. A “pre-modern” era, where control of an occupied civilian population was the purview of the commanding general and his personal view of chivalry or “military necessity.” Coordination with other government agencies was usually minimal. This state of affairs persisted until the Lieber Code placed uniform federal restrictions on northern commanders in the American Civil War and protected occupied populations under the rule of law.
2. A “hard war” era, influenced by the American experience in the Civil War. The increasing violence of the conflict drove harsher methods of population control and governance during the latter half of the war, such as during Sherman’s March to the Sea. The post-war Reconstruction period was a lengthy and bitter experience in martial law in many areas of the southern states. Later

American involvement in the Philippines from 1898–1902 was characterized by harsh control of “uncivilized” local populations as well.

3. A brief period of large-scale military governance and reconstruction following total warfare. This period began with the unexpected American occupation of the Rhineland following World War I. After ignoring the lessons of the occupation, large-scale military government resumed with post-war governance of liberated Europe and South Asia and occupied Germany and Japan, stretching into the early 1950s. American presence during this time was characterized by a comprehensive interagency effort, generally led by the military.
4. A shift in focus to tactical-level CA teams supporting a host-nation government, heralded in large part by major changes to the 1962 FM 100-5, *Operations*. Beginning with U.S. involvement in Vietnam, CA units doctrinally conducted operations to stabilize or pacify rear areas, often in support of unconventional operations. When military government was employed, usually at village level under the auspices of the CORDS program, the leading official was usually a civilian member of the State Department.
5. The passage of Goldwater-Nichols in 1986 included the CA Regiment in SOF and spurred sweeping changes in training, doctrine, and organization. Soon after the overall mission approach of Army CA changed from support of host-nation governments to support of assigned U.S. military commanders. Stability operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, which before may have been military government functions, were now used in support of a sovereign

host nation government, with only short periods of unilateral authority. The Global War on Terrorism and the resultant growth of the AC CA force led to an expansion of special operations CA teams operating in Title XXII zones in “persistent engagement” missions, later known as CME, and a focus on the prevention and deterrence of future conflict by working with partner nations. Such engagement is compatible with the current AOC and figures to continue into the future.

The 2006 creation of an active duty CA branch expanded SOF CA strength from a single battalion to a brigade (the 95th). The change also allowed for more strenuous selection, assessment, and training practices.

...it is imperative that CA practitioners have both a broad base of knowledge in development, as well as a firm grasp of strategic and operational goals.

As Kissinger noted in his study of civil-military activities in Korea, it is imperative that CA practitioners have both a broad base of knowledge in development, as well as a firm grasp of strategic and operational goals. Until very recently, CA has been an unwanted supplementary obligation of military commanders or the unlucky draft of individuals or units into such work. Without trained and dedicated professionals aware of the operational as well as humanitarian implications of their actions, CA work can quickly become “a game of Battleship—random strikes across a blank board with minimal hope of success.”⁴⁰ For this reason, CA Soldiers must undergo lengthy and challenging training, and leadership must select individuals with the intellect and character required to deal effectively with career diplomats

and career fishermen alike.

The current model for the selection, accession, and training of CA officers and NCOs is probably sustainable but will probably exacerbate the divide between the active and reserve CA communities and damage the mission effectiveness of the branch. The 38A (Civil Affairs Officer) MOS training pathway, for example, invests 55.6 weeks in its active-duty officers, including a two-week competitive assessment and selection process at the SWCS. Reserve officers, who are not assessed and selected through the same means, receive 29 days of training and an additional 75 hours of

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distance learning. The significant disparity between training standards for active and reserve CA Soldiers is largely a fiscal issue. USACAPOC does not have the available training funds to match the active-duty standard. As a result, training time for CA reservists is limited to temporary duty status, which obligates the CAQC to train officers to two standards to award the same MOS code. Despite this cost-saving measure, USACAPOC maintains a low level of readiness with regards to MOS qualification; just 312 of its 1,118 authorized 38A positions hold the MOS. The remainder hold a different MOS while training as a member of a CA battalion and receive “on-the-job training.” All of this renders USACAPOC much less capable of supporting CA engagement in Title XXII zones and working effectively with members of the U.S. diplomatic

community and NGOs.

Perhaps more telling, the “training gap” between active and reserve CA officers that share the same MOS is actually widening. Units fed by the active-duty pathway, the 95th and 85th CA Brigades, are requesting additional capability from graduates. In February 2016, Colonel Scot Storey, then commander of the 95th CA Brigade, requested more advanced tactical skills from CAQC graduates.⁴¹ While basic rifle marksmanship is a foundation of Soldier training throughout the Army, SOF CA teams require advanced skills to integrate effectively with Special Forces units. SWCS is currently considering lengthening the CA pathway further to include more tactical training and advanced marksmanship.

SWCS has begun to expand its capabilities to train advanced CA capabilities as well. The Special Warfare Advanced Analytics and Targeting Course (SWAATC) will train CA operational planners to more accurately identify root causes of conflict and instability, integrate CA operations (CAO) into the joint targeting cycle, and better understand regulations that govern the intelligence community.⁴² Available to all SOF MOS codes, SWAATC and future CA advanced skills courses will further widen the training gap between active and reserve CA.

Recommendations

The CA branch can take several actions to address the capability gap between components and posture itself more effectively for engagement. Currently, only active CA Soldiers, concentrated in the 95th and 85th CA Brigades, are trained in conducting engagement missions well. First, the Army should retain the current SOF CA training pathway for generalists and establish a new CA MOS for functional specialists. It is not reasonable to expect that the interagency and joint force will always be able to differentiate between active and reserve CA training standards—a 38A is a 38A where a

supported unit is concerned. Reserve CA Soldiers who receive the shorter training courses should be coded into a new and different MOS, with identifiers to denote functional specialty. Ideally, USACAPOC should be provided the funds to ensure its Soldiers receive full-length training at SWCS; this has been the practice in the National Guard component of the SF Regiment for some time. Barring the available funds to do this, a new MOS to mark the difference in training is necessary.

Second, SWCS should continue investment in the Institute for Military Support to Governance (IMSG). This research has provided evidence, especially from Korea, that a reserve-based CA capability, filled with large numbers of poorly-trained functional specialists, is not effective. The most meaningful development work, beginning from World War II, has been done by civilians from organizations other than the military or by civilians brought into military services for their skills. If husbanded correctly, IMSG has a chance to recreate the latter by recruiting high-end civilian talent to take an Army commission via their Military Government Specialist program.⁴³

Third, all Army CA Soldiers need additional opportunities to interact with interagency partners, most especially USAID. The competitive advantage of CA teams working in Title XXII zones is understanding country team priorities, how CA activities fit into them, and gaining access to semi-permissive or denied areas using that knowledge. CA Soldiers, especially junior officers in leadership and planner roles, must learn to work closely with partners such as USAID from the beginning of their training at SWCS. Many CA units have adopted the practice of pushing junior leaders into the Joint Humanitarian Operations Course (JHOC). This is a good start. SWCS should investigate the possibility of a formal partnership with the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) to create a closer relationship between the two organizations.

SOF CA elements, particularly those conducting missions under the auspices of the CME program, have a unique position within the DoD. No other element is as capable of furthering defense, diplomatic, and development objectives at the tactical and operational levels as the CMSE. Accompanying this unique and valuable role is the requirement to develop individuals and small teams capable of interacting with a wide range of people and organizations and building networks of influence to accomplish their mission.

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As Kissinger noted, a broad base of knowledge is important for CA practitioners. This mission, people-oriented and subjective by nature, defies most efforts to measure its effects. Contrary to a historical CA role, contemporary CMSE missions are not high-volume managers of projects and programs, nor does the DoD intend them to be. Combined with the short deployments of CA Soldiers through individual CME missions, effects become nearly impossible to measure quantitatively. “The agency [USAID] has struggled with this for years. How do you measure a moving target?”⁴⁴ This ambiguity makes it more important that CA teams understand the effects they have on the local population. Instead of acting out of a desire to “do good,” or acting against the first civil vulnerability they come across. SWCS offerings such as the “Operational Design Course” and “Network Development Course” allow tactical-level CA leaders to more effectively target their efforts in support of both interagency and military objectives.

Conclusion

Americans are very competent at fighting, but they are much less successful at fighting in such a way that they secure the strategic and, hence, political rewards they seek. The United States continues to have difficulty regarding war and politics as a unity, with war needing to be permeated by political considerations.

- Colin Gray, “Irregular Enemies and the Essence of Strategy; Can The American Way of War Adapt?”

This paper set out to analyze how the Army (and later its CA branch) has prepared for its obligations in stabilizing occupied regions and treating with local populations. Research analysis suggests that Army CA has undergone significant transformation in its history. Preparing for a full-scale military government, as in historical examples such as Germany, Japan, and Korea, is not in line with current national security or the Army AOC. It is extremely unlikely the Army will ever again take such a prominent role, as the State-led Iraqi Provisional Government in 2003 suggests. In any event, such occupations made heavy use of civilian aid agencies and military officers pulled directly from academia; career military officers do not have a strong track record as military government specialists. Individual commanders have found success as military governors; the institution has not. Instead of assuming unilateral control of a government, U.S. policy for the past fifty years has been to work with and through sovereign host nations. Engagement in the form of security forces assistance, foreign internal defense, and nation assistance are the most valuable uses for Army CA in the twenty-first century.

The active component of the CA branch is prepared for such engagement. But a growing capability gap exists between the active and reserve components. There is a serious issue

with active 38A captains receiving more than 55 weeks of training, compared to less than 9 for a reserve captain in the same MOS. A lack of effective training will hinder reserve CA from answering present and future mission requirements effectively. Worse, the disparity will continue to make interoperability difficult between CA personnel in different components.

The “American Way of War” prefers a quick victory. It is impatient and profoundly regular. Perhaps above all, it is apolitical; Americans tend to think in binary terms of war and peace.⁴⁵ Westphalian states are in a constant state of conflict, armed or otherwise. The Army has not traditionally understood this. Instead, its behavior in the twenty-first century has been more generally consistent with the Prussian way of war—excellent firepower, discipline, maneuver, and logistics (particularly at the tactical level), but strategically deficient. If the Army is to succeed in meeting the AOC’s goal of preventing conflict as well as winning wars and setting favorable conditions for peace, it must understand two important points. First, an expeditionary army of decisive action must have standing CA forces specialized in stability operations, and conventional forces who are capable of shifting from major combat to stability operations. Second, those CA forces must be carefully selected, intensively trained, and ready before the need arises for them.

“Civil affairs” and “military government” are terms that have carried many definitions throughout the Army’s history. Neither, in their original definitions, are applicable to today’s CA role. The current mission set, aligned with the National Security Strategy, is the result of a long evolution in civil-military engagement wherein the U.S. government no longer seeks to take a leading role in the development of a foreign power, but acts “by, with and through” security partners while respecting their sovereignty. The focus of CA teams must change as well. Skill in functional areas is less valuable in an

engagement role than in a military government operation. The ability to operate in semi-permissive environments and open them to State and USAID experts for further aid is the new currency of the realm for CA.

The Army is poised to make its first-ever peacetime investment in a highly trained and deployable CA capability. For most of American history, the Army has willfully ignored the need to stabilize occupied areas until the problem was upon it. Culturally sensitive, linguistically capable, and survivable CA teams are a valuable asset for U.S. SOF and for country teams in failed or failing states. The investment appears to have paid off. Since the 2006 creation of a full active-duty branch, USASOC has built a foundation of highly motivated and intelligent CA Soldiers, capable of working in a variety of roles. The assessment and selection program appears to have had a positive effect as well. In 2015, selection rates were as low as 52 percent. Candidates with poor fitness, oral and written communication skills, or issues working in small teams are screened out during selection. The average GT score of a candidate selected from active duty to attend CA training is 117.⁴⁶ They are trained to conduct all CA core tasks in high-intensity combat, counterinsurgency, CME missions through U.S. country teams, and other missions.

The importance of developing such versatile Soldiers cannot be overstated, given the history of Army CA forces and the current AOC. The demands of the Army SOF community, combined with increasing engagement by the general purpose force in roles such as Operation United Assistance, mean that CA forces can be asked to provide a wide range of capabilities for the nation. The incoming commander of the 95th CA Brigade shared his philosophy on the subject and summarized his views on the long-standing disconnect between CA doctrine and practice in a recent talk given to students at CGSC: “We put a lot of effort into making sure that commanders ‘use’ us correctly. What we need to do is make sure we are well positioned to solve problems for the Army, and success will follow.”⁴⁷ **IAJ**

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