

The U.S. Army's Countermine Training Support Center and Humanitarian Demining Training Center

In response to former President Clinton's landmine policy directives, the U.S. Army Engineering School formed the Countermine Training Support Center and the Humanitarian Demining Training Center at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo.

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Background

The U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) possesses a mine action resource whose existence is not widely known in the humanitarian demining community. In May 1996, the U.S. Army Engineer School (USAES) at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., established the Countermine Training Support Center (CTSC). In September of that year, the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict (SO/LIC) established the Humanitarian Demining Training Center (HDTC) at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. Both were created in direct response to the Presidential Landmine Policy Directive of May 1996. This document directs "[the] Department of Defense to...significantly expand its humanitarian demining program to train and assist other countries in developing effective



demining programs." It further explains that the "government program is to train the trainers, including equipping the host nations to sustain their own demining programs. The U.S. Department of State [DoS] and the Defense Department coordinate the funding and priorities to meet the demining needs of each individual nation."

CTSC is a countermine training and information center, and although discussed in this article, it is not the focus. The primary subject of this piece is HDTC, the U.S. military's

primary center for humanitarian mine action knowledge and skills. The two centers share facilities and a joint mission statement and provide support to U.S. governmental agencies, international organizations, and other institutions involved in countermine operations and humanitarian demining. Recently, HDTC hosted the author as the first member of an NGO to attend training there.

I came to attend HDTC because of continuing efforts by members of the NGO and U.S. military communities aimed at creating more opportunities for positive interaction and mutual support. The HDTC basic demining course is tailored for each military team attending the course to ensure that the team has the knowledge it needs to conduct a successful "train-the-trainer" program in the host country that includes knowledge of the NGOs working in that country. Richard Kidd, program manager for SAC, said, "By initiating collaborative efforts in the classroom, members of various sectors in the mine



CTSC/HDTC Mission Statement

"The mission of CTSC/HDTC is to serve as training and information centers concerning countermine and demining operations, demolitions, UXO and mine awareness, and booby traps. The centers research the latest lessons learned, tactics, techniques and procedures, and the use of mines by the United States and foreign countries. The centers incorporate acquired information into current lessons and provide innovative and realistic mine training tailored to a unit's needs. The centers also develop training and training aids in support of countermine and demining operations/training."

action community will be much better equipped to interact and cooperate in the field." Collaboration between military and NGO mine action organizations is essential to resolving the global landmine contamination problem with greater efficiency and speed. This collaboration should begin at the training institutions within these communities.

Staffing

CTSC/HDTC has an experienced and diverse staff consisting of eight civilian (including two RONCO contractors) and three foreign military personnel. Two periodically seconded by USAES to support CTSC, while SO/LIC funds the HDTC school and personnel. HDTC staff is drawn from the special operations, explosive ordnance disposal (EOD), combat engineering and commercial communities. The three foreign military exchange personnel, Maj. Griffin and Warrant Officers Estall and Clegg, are from the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Australia, respectively. These instructors have extensive experience conducting humanitarian demining and related operations in countries that include Afghanistan, Bosnia, Cambodia, Estonia, Kosovo, Mozambique, Swaziland and the Solomon Islands.

RONCO

RONCO Consulting Corporation is an international services firm that provides advisory, training, implementation and management assistance to private and public sector clients. RONCO is the only U.S. firm that has developed and uses "free running" explosive detecting dogs (EDD). In August 1999, RONCO was awarded a humanitarian demining contract by the DoS. DoS's Office of Humanitarian Demining Programs (Bureau of Political-Military Affairs) directs RONCO through task orders

for specific mine action services. RONCO was tasked by DoS to provide HDTC with two experienced mine action technicians to serve as instructors. During the author's attendance at HDTC, a large portion of the technical instruction was provided by these RONCO instructors: "Bart" Bartholomew, a former Special Forces soldier, and Clarke George, a former Navy EOD technician. They have conducted humanitarian demining operations in Bosnia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kuwait and Nicaragua. Participation in the HDTC program is an important part of the larger RONCO contribution to the broad range of U.S. government mine action activities.

Training

CTSC/HDTC provides several different mine action courses. These courses are targeted at different audiences, and may be taught either at Fort Leonard Wood or by Mobile Training Team (MTT).

Countermine Course

CTSC conducts a two-day countermine sustainment-training course for U.S. military engineer units preparing to deploy overseas. This training may be provided at Fort Leonard Wood or through an MTT at the unit point of origin. CTSC maintains up-to-date information regarding countermine training, doctrine and mine awareness. This course focuses on military units and personnel.

Mine Awareness Training

Mine awareness training is integrated into both the CTSC and HDTC programs of instruction. However, this training may also be provided as a stand-alone course and is available to all U.S. military and



government personnel deploying to mine affected countries. The training may be received either at Fort Leonard Wood or through an MTT.

Demining

The Humanitarian Demining Operations Orientation Course is a two-week program of instruction aimed at preparing U.S. Army Special Operations Forces (SOF) to train foreign military and government civilian personnel to implement national mine action programs. These SOF personnel travel to numerous countries to train their hosts how to set up and conduct demining operations. The humanitarian demining training team consists of several SOF elements: Special Forces personnel conduct the train-the-trainer portion for host nation deminers, Civil Affairs personnel conduct mine action center training and Psychological Operations personnel conduct mine awareness training. EOD personnel from all U.S. military services are also included if the mission requires their participation. HDTC conducts an average of two courses each month and has trained more than 850 student trainers since inception. Countries that have benefited from the program include Armenia and Azerbaijan (Beecroft Initiative—see page 113), Bosnia, Cambodia, Chad, Djibouti, Ecuador, Estonia, Egypt, Georgia, Jordan, Mauritania, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Oman, Peru, Thailand, Yemen and Zimbabwe.

Practical Exercises

Several practical exercises (PE) are conducted during the course, and students are tested daily by written examination and/or evaluated PE. These exercises follow a similar progression to that of real world mine action operations. The students are tasked to work through a mine contamination problem from initial survey through completion, with everything from mine field accidents to media visits in between. The mine action PE focuses on a specific mined area in the notional country of "Fort Leonard Wood" following a protracted insurgency and is woven into the curriculum throughout the course. According to Col. Barry Shapiro, chief of Joint U.S. Military Advisory Group-Thailand (JUSMAG-THAI), "The Humanitarian Demining Operations Orientation Course has been a key element in the United States' efforts in development of the Thai Mine Action Center [TMAC]. The course has ensured that the U.S. Special Forces instructors and advisors are providing the appropriate knowledge and expertise to the Thai program. Humanitarian demining assistance is an important part of our engagement program with Thailand, and the course has provided a valuable

Special operator working in a training lane during a Practical Exercise at HDTC.



means of maintaining quality control over our efforts."

Training Products

CTSC/HDTC is recognized for production of high quality mine action training aids. The centers develop training products to support mine awareness, counter mine and demining activities. Among these training aids are sets of mine information cards for Bosnia, Korea, Rwanda, Mozambique, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Angola, and Central and South America. Each card has a picture of a landmine on one side and applicable technical data on the reverse. CTSC/HDTC has also developed three-dimensional mine boards. Each set of boards is a country, with individual boards showing several landmines found there. In addition, CTSC/HDTC staff assembles demining toolboxes that include demining hand-tools, inert landmines and mine boards. These toolboxes are provided to Special Forces teams deploying to conduct train-the-trainer missions. Finally, CTSC/HDTC produces inert training mines for recognition and familiarization training.

The Implementers

I attended the HDTC course with an Operational Detachment Alpha (ODA or "A-Team") from 2nd Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne), as well as Navy EOD technicians. Based at Fort Lewis, Wash., 1st Group's area of operation is Asia and the Pacific Rim. The members of this "A-Team" have international experience in countries that include Thailand, Korea and Madagascar. The team worked with TMAC for nearly three months from October through December 2000.

Training provided to TMAC included primary first aid for all personnel and advanced medica



Joe Donahue using a Guartel MD-8 mine detector in the Fort Leonard Wood training lanes. c/o Joe Donahue

(paramedic) skills for TMAC medics. General, technical and clearance survey operations were also taught, as were UXO identification and demolition.

The two Navy personnel attending the course were preparing for a deployment to Yemen. Their commanding officer said, "U.S. Navy EOD technicians support U.S. Humanitarian Demining Operations (HDO) worldwide. Following HDTC training, these technicians are normally assigned as team members of larger SOF contingents sent to conduct HDO in such places as Yemen, Thailand, Vietnam and Bosnia. Navy EOD technicians focus upon training-the-trainer, and work with other military forces and NGOs to meet the demining needs of a given country. The experience of HDTC has significantly increased the sensitivity of U.S. Navy EOD operators to the unique needs of humanitarian operations, and specifically, the teamwork required among host nation, foreign military and NGOs to train and educate local forces to create a safe environment."

Numerous SOF personnel have conducted humanitarian mine action rotations since the program began more than four years ago. These deployments typically last for three months and are part of a "building block" approach to mine action training and capacity building. In other words, a deploying team will build its program of instruction upon

The Beecroft Initiative

To speed the pace of reducing the landmine threat that endangers populations in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, and to strengthen confidence and security in the southern Caucasus, the DoS implemented the "Beecroft Initiative," an innovative multilateral program. Under this initiative, U.S. military personnel conducted simultaneous humanitarian demining training of select groups of Georgian, Armenian and Azerbaijani soldiers and civilians at a military base in Georgia. They taught their fellow soldiers up-to-date humanitarian demining skills, allowing those trained to serve as force multipliers by returning home to train others. Robert M. Beecroft devised this initiative while he served as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs at the DoS, proponent of the Office of Humanitarian Demining Programs.

The DoD Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict (SOLIC - Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Affairs) is charged with overseeing the U.S. military's "train-the-trainer" program. Under this program, Special Forces personnel train foreign deminers at overseas sites in modern humanitarian demining

techniques. To date, approximately one quarter of the world's humanitarian deminers have been trained under this program or at the U.S. Army's Humanitarian Demining Training Center at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo.

The Government of Georgia hosted this innovative training program at the Gori military base near Tbilisi, Georgia. Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan each contributed 20 soldiers and civilians (for a total of 60 students) to be educated regarding modern humanitarian demining techniques by 70 U.S. Army demining experts. The 70 U.S. soldiers were primarily Special Forces operators ("Green Berets") from the 10th Special Forces Group. The U.S. contingent also taught the conduct of information campaigns for support of mine awareness education. The HDTC program is logically structured to cover all mine action subject areas, from "digging in the weeds" to national policy. HDTC standard practice is to teach methods and techniques in accordance with the U.N.-administered International Mine Action Standards (IMAS). Blocks of instruction are rotated among faculty members based upon areas of expertise and experience. Students are encouraged to provide input and comment. Because the primary target

audience of special operators may not have previous mine action experience, HDTC faculty provide broad background regarding policies, standards, area of operation and the sectoral distinctions between the humanitarian, military and commercial mine action communities. Among the blocks of instruction taught are:

- Global Landmine Situation
- U.S. Demining Policy
- International Demining Organizations (Military, United Nations and NGOs)
- International Mine Action Standards (Under development by the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS))
- National Mine Action Org.
- Survey, Levels 1-3
- Manual Demining Equipment and Clearance Techniques (Equipment, planning and execution, and demolitions (including live-fire))
- Program Management
- Explosive Detecting Dogs
- Mine Awareness
- Mechanical Clearance
- Accident Investigation
- Country-specific Brief
- Public Affairs

that of a preceding team, where applicable. One of 1st Group's detachments recently began another deployment with TMAC.

Federal Agencies

HDTC courses are open to not only military servicemen and women, but to members of federal agencies and other organizations. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Special Agent

David D. Baker was recently the first FBI employee to attend the Humanitarian Demining Operations Orientation Course. Asked why the FBI perceives a need to send agents to HDTC, he said, "International operational commitments to investigate and collect evidence on terrorism-related attacks against Americans have significantly increased in areas of the world that have mine problems. The FBI saw a need for a

more formal safety training program for its personnel."

SA Baker said that although the FBI does not conduct demining operations, the HDTC course "was very beneficial, as it provided the FBI with training on the threat of landmines, mine field recognition and emergency action drills if a mine field is accidentally entered." Now the FBI will be better able to coordinate with military, international and NGOs in

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evidence collection and grave exhumations near mined areas. Safely neutralizing landmines around mass graves, without destroying evidence, is an important consideration for national and international law enforcement agencies involved in the investigation and prosecution of war crimes and crimes against humanity. SA Baker, a certified bomb technician and FBI Los Angeles' Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) Coordinator, says that he will now develop a mine awareness and safety course for FBI employees based upon the instruction he received at HDTC.

Forces trained at HDTC leave with a clear understanding of the Landmine Impact Survey process they are likely to encounter in the field. These same teams visit most countries undergoing survey. New Zealand exchange Warrant Officer Fred Estall, an Engineer officer, and HDTC civilian instructor David Cornell, a retired U.S. Army EOD technician, attended the course and provided valuable input.

HDTC reciprocated for the invitation to the Survey Training Symposium by inviting SAC to send staff members to the two-week HDTC

the detachment technician who attended the same HDTC course as the author. The "Team Tech" demonstrated clear familiarity with Landmine Impact Survey procedures. This understanding is facilitating the work of the NGOs involved in the Thai Survey, TMAC and the U.S. government in Thailand.

The potential for other U.S. military humanitarian demining teams to positively influence national and international authorities and humanitarian implementers regarding Landmine Impact Surveys indicates that a SAC presence during HDTC

"I have witnessed the mine clearance handiwork of a number of foreign military personnel trained by U.S. forces that were, in turn, trained at HDTC, and based upon these experiences, I can attest to the exceptional quality, rigor and discipline of the HDTC program of instruction." — Pat F. Patierno

NGOs

In the interest of expanding the understanding of other organizations regarding Landmine Impact Survey, Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation's (VVAFF) Survey Action Center (SAC) invited HDTC to send two instructors to the first-ever Survey Training Symposium in August 1999.

The intent of this invitation was to ensure that Special Operations

course. The author was able to attend in July and August 2000.

While there, he provided a four-hour block of instruction regarding Landmine Impact Survey and mine action in Thailand and Yemen, as he had participated in SAC missions to those countries and was able to share extensive national mine action background with the students. The Special Forces team attending the course was preparing for their deployment to work with TMAC in Thailand, and the two U.S. Navy EOD technicians were preparing for a mission to Yemen. Incidentally, these two divers would be among the initial team to inspect the USS Cole following the terrorist attack in October 2000. The benefits of this joint NGO/military training would become apparent several months later in Thailand.

While visiting the SAC and Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) Survey in Thailand in December 2000, Richard Kidd was able to interact with

classes would be beneficial. SAC and HDTC are discussing the feasibility of creating a formal visiting instructor program.

The Future: Expanding Civil-Military Cooperation in Mine Action Training

HDTC is planning several initiatives for the near future. A five-day humanitarian demining orientation course for international officers is under development. In addition, a train-the-trainer course is planned that will prepare selected members of conventional units to advise commanders regarding unit mine awareness training. A new multi-million dollar CTSC/HDTC training facility was completed in October 2000. The facility includes state-of-the-art classrooms, a booby-trap house representing varying environments and devices, and mine lanes and ranges. Instruction will begin in February 2001 in the new facility. will



■ The new, multi-million dollar CTSC/HDTC training facility at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo.

prepare selected members of conventional units to advise commanders regarding unit mine awareness training.

Similarly, through a participatory presence in the "schoolhouse," mine action NGOs will develop a clear understanding of U.S. military capabilities and objectives in their shared arena. HDTC Director Steve Grzyb, and other DoD and DoS officials have expressed interest and support for this concept, and discussions are under way between HDTC and SAC as to how this might be accomplished. Two of the major international demining NGOs have stated that the idea is one they would support.

Lt. Gen. Robert Flowers, former commanding general of USAES and the current commanding general, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, is one of

the driving forces behind the creation of CTSC/HDTC.

He emphasizes the continuing DoD commitment to the humanitarian mine action community: "Humanitarian demining is clearly an evolving mission area. It is a vital piece of the Army's contribution to the National Security Strategy. The Countermine Training Support Center and Humanitarian Demining Training Center are tremendous venues for equipping our soldiers with the skills and knowledge that they will need to safely and successfully deploy into an increasingly complex international environment. In order to succeed in the humanitarian demining arena, it is critical that the Army work in close concert with other [DoD] agencies and [NGOs] in order to share experiences and exchange information." ■

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