



Cultural Training in Defence



cds

Defence
& Security



The UK's 2020 Integrated Operating Concept, updated in the June 2023 Command Paper: 'Defence's response to a more contested and volatile world', recognised that changes in the information and political environments now impact not just the context but also the conduct of military operations. The notion of war and peace as binary states has given way to a continuum of conflict, requiring the UK to prepare its forces for more persistent global engagement and constant campaigning, moving seamlessly from operating to war fighting. An audience-centric approach that recognises that people are at the heart of competition is required; it is their decisions and behaviours that determine how competition is conducted and resolved.

The UK's Armed Forces, working with the rest of government, must think and act differently. They will become more present and active around the world, operating below the threshold of open conflict to uphold values and secure interests, partner friends, and enable allies, whether they are in the Euro-Atlantic, the Indo-Pacific, or beyond.

The February 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine signalled that above threshold open conflict in Europe is back. For the UK this meant a return to working intimately with allies and partnering forces at small, medium, and large scales of effort, and a re-focus to the Balkans, Turkey, North Africa, Egypt, and the Sahel, especially as climate change and climate refugees accelerate.


Within this context, CDS DS understands that high readiness units operate and train globally; for the Rangers, JCTTAT, SFAB, and 77 Brigade this is business as usual. However, this requirement is again spreading across the UK's Armed Forces. Cultural Intelligence, Cultural Understanding (intra and inter), and Cultural Risk are key components of international operational effectiveness. Developing cultural capability in support of decision making, influence, inter-operability, defence engagement, and organisational reputation is critical.

Since 2018, CDS DS has worked with numerous Services, organisations and subject matter experts to further build and deliver cultural understanding, and we have assembled an impressive network who are crucial to our delivery success.

As a result of this research, analysis, and experience, the following pages group our key culture thinking, themes and objectives. Units can identify their requirements by reviewing the list, and we can work together to construct a bespoke cultural training progression to:

- ① develop the 'soft skills' that are essential to engage with other cultures;
- ① give operators the knowledge to be able to anticipate and deal effectively with unpredictable situations; and
- ① give commanders and planners the tools to analyse and evaluate information and audiences to independently apply cultural deductions in support of military effect.

The aim is to provide students with a generic cultural foundation appropriate to their operating level (strategic, operational, or tactical) from which to improve operational effectiveness through enhanced cultural intelligence and understanding of cultural risk, whilst furthering their intellectual development.



Richard Bradley
Managing Director
CDS Defence & Security

¹ UK Gov "Global Britain in a Competitive Age" Integrated Review 2021, the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy; the UK Government's vision for the UK's role in the world over the next decade and the action they will take to 2025.

Knowledge based competencies

Understanding Culture

Define and understand what culture is, your own and other cultures. Cultural theory and understand the influences of bias. Critically analyse and evaluate what distinguishes other cultures from your own. Subjects covered can include:

- define culture
- understanding narratives
- research and analysis
- the Importance of history
- cultural intelligence

Intergrated Audience Centric Approach (IACA)

Understanding Integrated Action. An audience-centric approach recognises that people are at the heart of competition; it is their decisions and behaviours that determine how competition is conducted and resolved. Cultural Intelligence, Cultural Understanding (intra and inter), and Cultural Risk are key components of international, operational, and organisational effectiveness. This course element emphasises two key IACA components: Cultural Understanding and Regional Understanding and the impact of the cultural advisor to Baseline Audience Analysis and Mission Audience Analysis across the audience spectrum.

- Developing cultural capability to inform the IACA
- Supporting decision making, influence, inter-operability, defence engagement, and organisational reputation
- Behaviour change planning and targeting
- Development and testing of informed COAs to ensure undesirable effects and risks are understood.
- Leveraging the appropriate levers of power simultaneously for greatest effect.

Social Organisation

Understand different types of social groupings including kinship, ethnicity, race, gender, family, and tribes, issues around these and how they can impact military operations. Examine how a group or society is formed and how it is influenced by rules and norms. Subjects covered can:

- group formation and organisation, identity, markers, status, and leaders
- diaspora and stratification
- ethnicity and National identity

Political Systems

An introduction to different political models, understanding where power can be held, how, and by whom. An understanding of the nature of a group's political organisation, the roles of ideology, institutions, figures and justice systems. Analyse where power and authority sit in a group and how this is likely to influence operations. Subjects covered can include:

- political systems and ideologies
- socio-political organisation, institutions
- political power and the role of the State
- justice and security

Economic Organisation

Understand how competition for resources drives conflict and dictates how people live. Overviews of economic systems and different cultural views of goods, different money, and services. Demonstrate an ability to assess transactional relationships between groups and societies. Subjects covered can include:

- economic systems, policy and values
- attitudes to work and divisions of labour
- vice and ownership
- corruption and influence

Beliefs and Values

Understand how to critically analyse history, religion, social values, and other belief systems, and how these impact the operational environment. Develop a framework to interpret events and what is considered normal in different societies. Different value systems should be understood, including different interpretations of concepts like equality, honesty, and loyalty. Different belief systems and religions should also be understood to a reasonable level. Subjects covered can include:

- education
- values and cultural dimensions
- beliefs and religions
- beliefs and religions

The Environment

Understand how behaviour is influenced by the physical environment. Analyse and evaluate the effects of geostrategic position, climate, land, urban conditions, and overall physical geography on culture and society's infrastructure. Understand the information environment, including how people perceive culture and are influenced through narratives via social media and other online platforms. Understand cultural triggers, influence, and sensitivities that sit under the surface. Subjects covered include:

- geostrategic position, boundaries, and interventions
- influence of terrain and climate
- influence of urbanisation
- influence of natural resources
- the importance of the information environment and its influence

Operationalising

Consider the factors within an operational context. Use selected regional case studies to reinforce learning whilst also analysing:

- gender and human security
- trauma informed practice
- working with/through linguists
- culture and operational planning
- mentor (senior) partner force personnel
- coach partner force personnel
- effective feedback/debriefing



Skills based competencies

Communication and Interpersonal Skills

Adapt methods of communication to different environments and understand how different societies interpret body language and other areas of non-verbal communication differently. Understand the importance of rapport building, negotiation, and influence. Subjects covered can include:

- interview skills
- communicating effectively (written and verbally), sifting information, forming clear messages, and delivering a succinct 'elevator pitch'
- understanding cultural barriers to communication, using military examples
- the information environment

Building good relationships

Understand the importance of relationship-based trust. Use a range of soft skills to build good relationships. Subjects covered can include:

- neurophysiology, personality types and EQ
- active listening, and listening with the intent to understand rather than reply
- negotiation
- stereotyping and bias
- building rapport
- body language
- building networks
- conflict resolution/holding a difficult conversation

Methodologies of unpicking cultures/cultural theories

Use a framework to explore and unpick a culture and identify where the risk will lie as a result. Subjects covered can include:

- use of Hofstede Cultural Dimensions for country comparisons, including collectivist versus individualistic approaches, long term versus short term orientation, and power distance
- use of Erin Meyer's 8 scales to break down culture; these include how feedback is delivered, task-based versus relationship trust, low/high context communication, and issues around how time is perceived
- use of the CDS DS Cultural Aide Memoire to support investigations into the main 5 cultural lenses (as covered above), comparison of the key factors in order to provide commanders with a well thought through brief

Managing Cultural Risk

Appreciate the importance of cultural risk (high/medium/low) and developing the subsequent mitigations. Subjects covered can include:

- high level of awareness of the cultural risk that exists when various cultural actors are far apart on the scales/continuums
- communicate this risk to all SP in a way that resonates, ensuring they show appropriate levels of respect, are aware of the likely areas of conflict and compliment, and avoid cultural faux pas

Attitudinal/behavioural factors

An appreciation that how you look and behave has a direct impact on those around you. Being self-aware, knowing your 'triggers', strengths, and areas for improvement with regards to how you act in stressful environments and in unfamiliar cultures. Subjects covered can include:

- understand how your behaviours impact others and identify personal strategies to ensure positive outcomes
- cultural intelligence
- personal influence
- demonstrate emotional intelligence and how to manage this in yourself and others in order to gain influence
- barriers to human performance

Formative Practice

An opportunity to assimilate, practice, and confirm understanding, techniques, and processes in a safe, non-judgemental environment. Subjects covered can include:

- focused case studies to desired area of operations
- fire-side chat with expert guest speakers
- live exercise to plan, engage, analyse, and brief on groups from fringe cultures
- senior officer briefing following analysis



Debbie Sims

Debbie is a seasoned training designer and deliverer within the military and civilian arenas. Delivering leadership and high performing team training on a regular basis to the NHS and other agencies, she is also a performance coach and NLP practitioner who has worked with a variety of organisations. She has extensive knowledge of emotional intelligence, building good relationships, conflict management and mediation, and is able to overlay these on to any context in order to affect behavioural change and ensure positive outcomes.

She was the Lead Designer and Deliverer to the Military for the RAF Central Flying School's Enhanced Instructional Techniques courses which focused on developing the instructional skills of Flying Instructors. Debbie delivered training on this course on motivational factors, stress management and how to tailor training to the needs of the individual. She has led on all the CDS DS Cultural Advisor Courses where she demonstrates her high level of knowledge around cultural factors, where the risks lie, and what key areas can tend to cause discord, particularly those that are behaviour related.

An expert on the importance of emotional intelligence (in particular empathy) and active listening, Debbie can deliver insightful and contextualised training so that individuals are fully aware of the importance of how their behaviours impact those they interact with and lead/manage. Betari's Box model, neurophysiology and the 5 domains of EQ are subjects she trains others in regularly. Tied in with this is a greater understanding of the individuals within the team, and her workshops explore conflict and compliment in personality types which leads into an appreciation of difference, rather than a fear of it.

She has demonstrated the ability to take the needs of the customer and develop high quality training that is engaging, challenging and relevant, invariably receiving a great deal of positive feedback. Bringing to life the key learning objectives is something Debbie takes pride in and this has been a key factor in the success of the courses Debbie has led.

Dr. Mike Martin

Dr Mike Martin is a War Studies Visiting Fellow at King's College London, where he speaks and writes on conflict. He also works with governments, militaries, and other organisations around the world, helping them to understand and navigate conflicts. Mike often comments in the international media about conflict, geopolitics, and military strategy.

Mike began his career as a (Pushtu-speaking) British Army officer where he pioneered, designed, and implemented the British Military's Cultural Advisor programme. This programme took Pushtu-speaking British officers and trained them to build relationships with Afghan notables in order to understand and influence the society



in which the UK military was operating. During this period, he also worked as an advisor to four commanders of the UK's Task Force Helmand, advising them on local population dynamics.

He subsequently read for his PhD at King's College London on the history of the conflict in Helmand province, Afghanistan, which later became a critically-acclaimed book *An Intimate War*. Mike then worked in Somalia and Myanmar where he established a programme that focussed on helping multinational clients understand and navigate the social, political and cultural environments in frontier and conflict-affected markets. He later held two senior global management positions in the cross-cultural leadership NGO Common Purpose, and spent time working at the UK Government's Stabilisation Unit.

These broad experiences of conflict encouraged Mike to write another book, called *Why We Fight*, which explores the evolutionary psychology of warfare, and was recently re-released in paperback.

Dr. Alice KÖNIG

Dr Alice König is a Senior Lecturer at the University of St Andrews. Alice's research falls into three distinct areas: intellectual history/the history of science; intertextuality, socio-literary, and cross-cultural interactions; battle narratives and the representation of war.

A Roman historian by training, she specialises in the study of cross-cultural interactions in the ancient world. The Roman empire was an extraordinarily multi-cultural world, with an extraordinarily multi-cultural army, and some of its cultural and military encounters with other peoples/nations continue to influence the nature of certain conflicts today, as well as the stories that we tend to tell about them. Far-removed from modern operational environments, the Roman Empire offers a refreshingly unfamiliar set of case-studies for trainees to develop their understanding of core aspects of the course.

Specifically, Dr König draws on ancient material (a) to develop experience in 'reading' culturally alien terrain, (b) to draw out some 'universals' about conflict itself and human habits of visualising/responding to/narrating war, and (c) to explore the significance of deep history, not just recent history, for understanding the dynamics of any given situation. Drawing on her academic background, she provides training in research and analytical skills, and uses carefully selected texts (including ancient battle narratives and military 'handbooks') to teach important principles about the construction and delivery of operational narratives.

Dr König also runs an interdisciplinary research project called 'Visualising War', which examines habits of narrating and imagining war in different periods and places, and how representations of war influence real-life mindsets and behaviours.

Her Visualising War podcast spans nearly 3,000 years of history, from ancient Greece to the

21st century, and discusses cultural attitudes to conflict in many different parts of the world. In her teaching, she draws on ancient material to shed new light on modern and future challenges.

James Smith

James ('Jim') Smith served as a regular commissioned officer and is now in the Army Reserve. Previously a Forward Observation Officer, FST Commander, and JTAC, he conducted Op Tours in Iraq, Africa, and the Gulf. He has also served as SO2 G7 in HQ Spec Inf Gp and then later the Army Spec Ops Bde, as well as a CULAD and Human Security Advisor.

James spent 6 Years in the United Arab Emirates Army as an OC, training Pan Arab forces from the Middle East and North Africa MENA including Yemen, KSA, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, Kuwait and Libya for Operations in Afghanistan, Libya, Somalia, and Yemen. He also has 5 Years operational service with an African Police Force conducting internal security operations as well

as training Police and Para -Militaries. He has worked with US Special Forces specifically 19th Gp SFG (A).

As a trained UN Human Protection Advisor, James writes for Good Governance Africa, a policy think tank, and has advised and written on Security Implementation in the Human Domain for Government Gazettes for an African Government. He instructs Cultural Practitioners' Courses to UK JCTTAT, UK Search and Rescue, UK Police and to NATO Security Force Assistance Centre of Excellence based in Rome.

James speaks Zulu, Afrikaans, and Conversational Arabic.

Angus Cameron

Angus Cameron MBE served 34 years in the Regular Army, before serving 5 years in the Army Reserve.

He recently left the Royal School of Artillery where he was Assistant Commandant. During his Service he completed 7 operational tours, including Northern Ireland, The Middle East, Cyprus, Bosnia, and Afghanistan. His last tour was spent with the US Marine Corps mentoring senior Afghan divisional officers. On his return he assisted the British Army's PDT team delivering lessons on working with the ANA/ANP and is an advisor on the employment and use of linguists.

He also served in the UK' Regional Command and was involved in operations in support of foot and mouth, flooding, firemen's' strikes, and the transfer of Service wounded from the operational theatre into the NHS for which he was appointed MBE.

Later years were spent in the manning and individual training domain. More recently he has worked as a Programme Manager for civilian companies delivering a myriad of Service-related training, leadership, coaching and team-building projects. His MA thesis was on mentoring senior officers' leadership.

Chris Conrad

Following a commission in the British Army, Chris joined the Police, working predominantly specialist operations, nationally and internationally.

His particular area of expertise is that of communication and de-escalation. An experienced crisis and hostage negotiator, having undertaken training at both the Metropolitan Police and with the FBI at Quantico, Chris is an expert communicator. He has provided bespoke

training to industry, to the health service, the Police, the Military, and other Government departments. With over 30 years service, half of which as a front-line negotiator, he is able to relate academic lessons with relevant operational stories.

He is highly travelled on behalf of Her Majesty's Government, concentrating on providing security assessments for both people, processes, and

property, incorporating a holistic overview of threat and risk. He has undertaken numerous assessments for Governments across the Middle East and Pakistan and considers the tactical as well as the strategic Pakistan and considers the tactical as well as the strategic

The theme throughout all of Chris' career is that of operating in crisis and uncertain environments.

Simon Mann

Simon Mann was schooled at Eton College, then served for 10 years in The British Army where he saw action in the Scots Guards and the SAS, in operations in Northern Ireland and elsewhere. Having left the Army, with qualifications in programming and Systems Analysis & Design, he started two IT businesses: in combat intelligence, and in electronic security. These took him to the Persian Gulf and to West Africa. Simon rejoined the British Army for the first Gulf War, joining the staff of General Sir Peter de la Billiere, for a further two years.

Simon briefly became an oil and gas exploration executive until the Angolan guerrillas, UNITA, brutally plunged their country back into civil war. In response, Simon and others formed Executive Outcomes (EO) and turned around the Angolan war, taking the MPLA government side, recognised by the UN as freely and fairly elected, to victory. In Angola Simon held the rank of Brigadier General in their Armed Forces, Forças Armadas Angolanas.

Having also started DiamondWorks PLC, Simon and EO went on to win the Sierra Leone civil war, restoring the government and democracy in the process. Simon and others also founded the company Sandline at this time, later to become well known for the Papua New Guinea army coup incident, and for the Arms to Sierra Leone scandal, one that resulted in the resignation of Robin Cook as Foreign Secretary.

Using that experience, he has created and provided ILM standard training to Her Majesty's Government, the UAE Ministry of Interior, global clothing brands, IT companies, sports, and car industries, with each delivery tailored to their particular need.

Having built three diamond mines from scratch, two in Angola and one in Sierra Leone, on time and budget, Simon - in 1997 - retired from DiamondWorks to live in Cape Town.

Simon played a role in the run up to the invasion of Iraq in 2003. He wrote papers that were going up to the UK Prime Minister, papers that were engineering ways to ensure that the invasion did take place.

Then Simon was to re-emerge - in 2004 - as the leader of the notorious failed Coup d'Etat attempt against the tyrannical President of the oil rich West African country of Equatorial Guinea. After five and a half years in two of Africa's toughest prisons, Chikurubi Maximum Security, in Zimbabwe, and Black Beach, in Equatorial Guinea, Simon won a pardon. He had somehow survived those years, but then had to cope with the emotional adventure of returning home.

Now, after much third-party writing and speculation, Simon is ready to speak: about his life, about what he has learnt, and about what really happened in 2004. His autobiography, Cry Havoc, was published in October 2011. Simon is an expert in topics such as Sub-Saharan Africa, Risk, Leadership Mental survival, Corporate logistics in harsh places, Private Military Companies, and Privatised Warfare.

Nicola Lester

Nicola is a leading exponent and specialist in Mental Health and Psychological Trauma with many years of experience in providing training, consultancy, supervision, and direct clinical support to a range of organisations in the UK and overseas. These include: victims services (including rape crisis, child victims of crime, and terror victims), traumatic bereavement services, private security services, the NHS, and the military.

As a senior lecturer at Leeds Beckett University, Nicola delivered teaching to undergraduate and post-graduate students, and provides professional mental health courses and specialist psychological trauma and traumatic bereavement education. As a senior Operational Manager, she led on the development and delivery of the Soldiers in Mind bereavement service. This included responsibility for the overall clinical and

operational management of the service, and the development and delivery of a high quality, specialist traumatic bereavement service.

Nicola holds a MSc (distinction) from the University of Chester in Psychological Trauma, a PhD in Politics and International Relations from the University of Cardiff, a certificate in Mental Health in Complex emergencies from Fordham University, New York, and has completed Doctoral training at York University's Post-War Reconstruction and Development Unit.

Nicola has authored many publications for organisations including RUSI and The Lancet relating to trauma and bereavement in hostile or conflict-affected environments, the military and Blue Light organisations. In 2017 she was short-listed for the HRH The Prince of Wales Award for Integrated Approaches to Care for developing practice with bereaved families.



Ibrahim Kabia

Ibrahim (Ibs) was born in London into a Sierra Leonean family and from the age of 8 Ibs and his family lived in Sierra Leone. Here, he experienced parents from two tribes which distrusted each other, alongside religious tolerances which saw Muslims and Christians living in peaceful co-existence, including inter-marriages, celebrating each other's festivities, and politics free from religious influence. Encouraged by his family Ibs travelled widely and familiarised himself with the county's culture, socio-economic issues, and politics.

Aged 19, Ibs returned to Britain to do a degree in Economics at Kingston and followed that with an MSc in Management Science at London University's Imperial College of Science and Technology. In the late 1980s, alongside working as European Economist for an investment company, Ibs joined the Territorial Army and commissioned into the TA in 1993. He was mobilised for a staff job on Op TELIC in 2004. Following this, in 2005, he was selected for a 15-month tour with the British led International Military Advisory and Training Team in Sierra Leone. Here, he was "triple-hatted" as Logistic Adviser to Sierra Leone's 5th Infantry Brigade,

Second-in-Command of the training team embedded with the Brigade, and ad hoc adviser on the culture and politics of Sierra Leone and the wider region to Commander IMATT (also MA to the country's President) and his colleagues.

Ibs was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and was later again deployed to Sierra Leone in support of Op GRITROCK. Here he was initially the Liaison Officer to the Sierra Leone Government, then re-deployed first to reinforce the fight against Ebola in Sierra Leone's north west, before later taking command of the Ebola Response Centre in the strategically important Bo District.

During a meeting of British Forces and NGOs trying to figure out the absence of satisfactory traction against Ebola, Ibs had his "epiphany" when he realised the abundance of good intentions in the room were not matched by an understanding of the people and environment. His epiphany made even stronger his resolve to support and promote understanding of culture.



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