

# Making Riflemen From Mud

*RESTORING THE ARMY'S CULTURE OF IRREGULAR WARFARE*



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UNITED STATES ARMY WAR COLLEGE CIVILIAN RESEARCH PROJECT

**“MAKING RIFLEMEN FROM MUD”: RESTORING THE ARMY’S CULTURE OF  
IRREGULAR WARFARE**

by

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The views expressed in this student academic research paper are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Army, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.

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Prior to the Second World War, the Army had a deeply engrained facility with and acceptance of what we now term unconventional warfare – raising, training, advising and cooperating with tribal militias, local paramilitaries, and other non-state armed groups. This culture of irregular warfare stemmed from nearly 300 years of American military tradition, from the colonial period until 1941, and was based on extensive experience in cooperating with Native American tribes and individual scouts during the expansion of the western frontier. These traditions of unconventional war reached maturity in the years of fighting on the western plains after the Civil War, and were given ultimate expression in the creation of the Philippine Scouts at the beginning of the twentieth century. Since World War Two the wider military has lost this expertise and comfort with unconventional operations, with the Special Operations community taking on the sole proprietorship of this role. Given the variety of political environments in which today’s conventional soldiers may find themselves, and the current nature of conflicts ongoing and likely to occur in the world, the Army as a whole can and must regain this formerly held culture of facility with irregular war.



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## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

The leaders of regular units engaged in guerrilla operations must be extremely adaptable. They must study the methods of guerrilla war. They must understand that initiative, discipline, and the employment of stratagems are all of the utmost importance. As the guerrilla status of regular units is but temporary, their leaders must lend all possible support to the organization of guerrilla units from among the people.

*Mao Tse Tung, On Guerrilla Warfare*<sup>2</sup>

In the summer of 1899, Lieutenant Matthew Batson was commanding L Troop, 4<sup>th</sup> U.S. Cavalry, during operations in the Philippines. Already recognized as an energetic and courageous officer during the war in Cuba, Batson gained further notoriety after being awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for actions in combat with his troop in July.<sup>3</sup> At the request of his superiors, in late summer Batson submitted a formal proposal for raising a scout company for the First Division's Provisional Cavalry Brigade. The plan called for this company to be recruited from the Macabebes, an ethnic tribal group in Southern Luzon who had long opposed domination by the majority Tagalogs. The Tagalogs formed the backbone and provided most of the leadership for

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<sup>1</sup> The title of this essay is from a line in Rudyard Kipling's 1897 poem, "Pharaoh and the Sergeant," written about the British NCOs attached to the Egyptian Army, who created the force that conducted the reconquest of the Sudan completed at the Battle of Omdurman in 1898. The full line from the poem reads,

"Said England unto Pharaoh, "You've had miracles before,  
When Aaron struck your rivers into blood;  
But if you watch the Sergeant he can show you something more.  
He's a charm from making riflemen from mud."

See Rudyard Kipling, The Five Nations (London: Methuen & Co., 1903).

<sup>2</sup> Mao Tse Tung, On Guerilla Warfare, Chapter 5. Published in 1937. Accessed 3 February 2007, available from <http://www.bellum.nu/literature/mao001.html>.

<sup>3</sup> Letter from Lieutenant Matthew Batson to his wife, dated 24 September 1899, Matthew Batson Papers, 1898-1900, U.S. Army Military History Institute, OCLC 46910883.

the Army of the Philippine Republic, fighting against U.S. rule in the archipelago. The Macabebes' military usefulness had been previously recognized by the Spanish as they faced revolt and unrest prior to the war with the United States; large numbers of Macabebes had been recruited and served with the Spanish forces until their defeat and cession of the Philippines to the United States in 1898.<sup>4</sup>

The scout company proposed by Lieutenant Batson would consist of 100 soldiers, and would be trained and led by officers and NCOs from among the units of the Cavalry Brigade and the First Division. On September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1899, Batson received a memorandum from the division headquarters approving his plan, and he began immediately to raise his scouts, leading them in combat and working to gain approval to raise still more scout companies.<sup>5</sup>

From this small beginning, Batson's Macabebe Scouts and other similar units raised elsewhere in the Philippines would eventually evolve into the Philippine Scouts, forming several infantry, cavalry and artillery regiments composed of Philippine soldiers and fully incorporated into the U.S. Regular Army.<sup>6</sup> The Philippine Scouts are unique in the American military experience, as they are the only large scale "native" or colonial units to ever serve as a conventional part of the U.S. Armed Forces. What is not unique about the Scouts, however, is that the motives, rationale and manner in which they were

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid. See also Philippine Scouts Heritage Society [PSHS], The Philippine Scouts (Copyright 1996, the Philippine Scouts Heritage Society), p. 5.

<sup>5</sup> Extract copy of memorandum dated 1 September 1899, Mathew Batson Papers, 1898-1900, U.S. Army Military History Institute, OCLC 46910883.

<sup>6</sup> PSHS, The Philippine Scouts, pp. 17-22.

originally raised was an accepted, matter-of-fact technique employed by Army leaders for virtually the entire previous history of American armed conflict. This traditional practice of raising, training and working closely with indigenous groups to assist in the prosecution of what we now term “low intensity” military operations began in the colonial period, reached a level of doctrinal maturity during the fighting on the Western Plains and Southwest after the Civil War, and achieved its ultimate expression in the incorporation of the Philippine Scouts into the Regular Army in 1920.<sup>7</sup>

What happened to this traditional practice, which was at one time so implicitly accepted by the Army at large? This practice was once so ingrained in our military culture that the creation of the Philippine Scouts, and their more civilian counterpart, the Philippine Constabulary, excited hardly more debate in Army circles than the adoption of the Lyster Bag in 1910.<sup>8</sup> Raising local troops and working closely with local and tribal leadership to suppress insurgency and lawlessness in loosely governed or newly conquered areas was not carried out by special troops or elite units, but was the norm throughout the Army. Any officer could be expected to either raise local scouts, or work with existing tribal organizations to accomplish his unit’s goals. Yet since the Second World War a connection to indigenous or tribal soldiers has increasingly become the sole province of the Special Forces, and until quite recently the conventional Army has almost totally shunned the idea of such affiliation or cooperation; the exigencies of war in

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>8</sup> See Infantry Journal, Vol. 7, No. 1 (July, 1910) for the article introducing the Lyster Bag – a canvas bag used to dispense purified water. The indices of this journal and the Journal of the Military Services Institution of the United States show relatively few articles concerned with either the Philippine Scouts or the Constabulary – the vast majority of articles cover technological innovations, discussions of conventional operations, and lessons from European Armies.

Afghanistan and Iraq have only just begun to break down the barriers. These developments have occurred in spite of the fact that aside from the relatively brief periods of large-scale high-intensity operations from 1917-18, 1941-45, 1950-54, and the Gulf War of 1991, since 1900 the Army has been operating and will continue to operate more and more in areas and situations where the ability to raise, train and cooperate with local, tribal and other non-state armed groups is, if not a prerequisite, certainly a central factor for military and political success.

The literature on the new nature of warfare since the end of the Cold War is vast and growing. Authors have stressed that large-scale, “symmetrical” combat operations are a thing of the past, and “asymmetrical” warfare is the new paradigm militaries will face in the twenty-first century. This new paradigm of combat or stability operations in what author Thomas Barnett calls the “non-integrating gap,”<sup>9</sup> areas of ungoverned or poorly governed space - places where poverty, criminality and the challenges posed by modernization of traditional societies result in endemic conflict - new strategies and techniques are required for a western military like ours to be successful. As put by Richard Shultz and Andrea Dew in their recent book,

...war since 1990 has, with the exception of Desert Storm and the first phase of Operation Iraqi Freedom, been different from the modern Western understanding of armed combat. But the policymakers and military commanders of modern states – including the United States – have often failed to grasp this new battlefield. Indeed for the policymakers the perception is the reverse – that conventional warfare prevails and thus the United States is more than adequately prepared to dominate the future face of war.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> See Thomas P.M. Barnett, The Pentagon’s New Map (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 2004).

This statement, and others like it, should be familiar to any reader of recent literature dealing with security studies, military science or international politics. These ideas are clearly backed up by the realities in these troubled places, but in their stress on the “new” nature of conflict since the end of the Cold War, they may give a reader cause to miss much of what is not new. Viewed in the context of the almost 400 years of American military history and tradition, asymmetrical conflict, insurgency, stability operations, and constabulary operations in ungoverned or poorly governed space are not new at all – in fact, they are the norm, while the high-intensity conflicts of the mid-twentieth century are really odd episodes that do not conform to the most common experiences of American warfare.

In the ongoing effort to both succeed in our current fights in Iraq, Afghanistan, the Philippines, East Africa and elsewhere, and to continue the evolution of our doctrine and tactics to address upcoming threats, the Army must certainly look to the future. The Army must also, however, look to the past as well, to recapture some of those organizational strengths that have led to success in our long history of low-level conflict. One of these strengths was the institutionalized practice of working with and through local irregular military forces. This practice and the comfort and ease with which the Army at large followed it in the period prior to the Cold War need to be reclaimed Army-wide. The culture of irregular warfare – advising, liaison, training, leading and operating closely with local tribal levies, militias and other non-state forces – must be embraced by

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<sup>10</sup> Richard H. Shultz Jr. and Andrea J. Dew, Insurgents, Terrorists and Militias (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), p. 11.

every part of the Army, and moved out of its current sole proprietorship in the Special Operations Command. This development is imperative now more than ever, given the limited number of Special Forces units and the demands currently being placed upon them – conventional units can, and must be able to conduct irregular operations wherever they are deployed.

This paper will examine both the Army’s historical practice of working with indigenous forces and auxiliaries, and the institutional training programs formerly in place designed to prepare officers and soldiers for roles as advisors, working with both irregular and regular forces. Using these examples, and discussing current operations and the debates surrounding incorporation of local irregular troops into those operations, I will recommend some steps that can and should be taken by the Army in order to restore the culture of generalized acceptance and facility in dealing with indigenous forces.

This essay is not a call for establishment of an American “foreign legion,” or units of “native” or “colonial” troops. It is, rather, an argument for the restoration of one of our Army’s historic strengths. It is almost a truism that the best means of fighting an insurgency is by having the local population do it themselves. Additionally, the human intelligence potentially derived from close contact and cooperation with irregulars can be invaluable for the successful prosecution of counterinsurgency, counterterrorism and other low-level operations. Proven in the wars during the establishment of Western empires and solidified in successful post-colonial counterinsurgencies, these dicta are some that we fail to follow at considerable risk of disaster. In seeking for that which is

new in the post-Cold War operating environment, we would do well to also seek parallels in our own heritage, and apply those strengths which have underlain much of our previous military success.

## **Scouts**

### ***The European and the Indian***

Beginning with the earliest days of European colonial settlement in North America, white soldiers and militiamen worked in close cooperation with native people; learning, teaching, leading and often following Indians acting as guides and scouts. In virtually every instance of warfare in the colonial period, whether in conflict with other whites or with the indigenous people themselves, colonists were allied with or had as auxiliaries members of native tribes. In the pattern of warfare as it evolved in colonial North America, the Europeans learned much from the Indians, adopting clothing, weapons and tactics. The reverse was also true. In addition to such obvious transfers as firearms, some authors even argue that warfare to the point of annihilation – the practice of attempting to completely wipe out an enemy – was an innovation adopted by the Eastern tribes only after sustained contact with and learning from colonists. The virtual annihilation in 1637 of the once powerful Pequot Tribe was accomplished not only by white colonists in New England, but also through close cooperation by virtually all the neighboring tribes as well.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Allen R. Millett and Peter Maslowski, For the Common Defense (New York: The Free Press, 1994), p. 15.

Some of the best known examples of this early collaboration between whites and Indians in war came during the Seven Years War, or as it is termed in North America, the French and Indian War. During this war the previous cooperation between the Huron and the French encouraged and solidified the alliance between the Iroquois Confederacy and the British. Not a single major expedition or combat operation, British or French, occurred during this war without contingents of Indians on either side. The tribes provided scouts and guides, translators, security for settlements and fortified garrisons, as well as larger forces for combat. Acting either alongside European allies, as part of secondary operations in concert with larger movements, or alone as surrogates, the Iroquois and Huron people were a significant part of this major conflict that determined dominance on the continent.<sup>12</sup>

There are two interesting sidelights to this close, almost symbiotic early cooperation between Native Americans and Europeans in colonial warfare. The first is the evolution of what many feel is a uniquely American manner of war, with an almost mythic emphasis on the individual rifleman and a reluctance to adopt the close-order tactics of eighteenth and nineteenth century European militaries.<sup>13</sup> This “frontiersman” way of fighting, along with the creation of special “Ranger” units modeled on Indian formations, for many American military leaders, up to and including General Pershing during the First World War, made the United States Army not only different from its European counterparts, but better.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., pp. 22-46.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., pp. 1-13.

The second aspect of military relationships with Indian tribes is the parallels which can be drawn between the English experience with the Iroquois in North America, and with the native people in their other imperial possessions, like Scotland and India. At the same time that English officers were working with the Iroquois to fight the French and Huron, they were beginning the process of raising the first large-scale numbers of “native” troops for their army, the Scottish Highland regiments. The rhetoric employed by political leaders in Britain when discussing the Highland regiments and the martial qualities of the men who filled them, is very similar to the language used by British leadership in describing their Indian allies, both North American and South Asian.<sup>15</sup> Additionally, the political uses envisaged by men in the British Government for their Highland troops were in some cases very similar to those employed in dealings with the native peoples of America.

Part of the justification for raising marching regiments from among the Highlanders in Scotland was to rid the Highlands of its large population of military age males, culturally accustomed to and enamored of combat – political leaders in London and Edinburgh sought to harness those martial energies by directing them towards Britain’s enemies, outside of Britain. The corollary to this idea was that these men, once

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<sup>14</sup> Gregory Urwin, The United States Infantry; an Illustrated History 1775-1918 (New York: Sterling Publishing Co. Ltd., 1991), pp. 164-170.

<sup>15</sup> See Diana M. Henderson, Highland Soldier: A Social Study of the Highland Regiments 1820-1920 (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers Ltd., 1989), p. 12, for a particularly colorful example of the rhetoric employed to describe 18<sup>th</sup> Century Highland soldiers. The number of examples of language describing Indians as “noble savages,” or conversely as brutes is legion. See James L. Axtell, The European and the Indian (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982) for some essays concerning the complex relationships between white and native peoples in colonial North America.

enlisted in the Army, would serve as hostages for the good behavior of their often rebellious relatives still in Scotland.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, by encouraging Indian tribes to fight against one another, whites exploited divisions between native societies and prevented their unifying against the common threat of European domination. Indians would also therefore dissipate their military strength in internecine quarrels, and not focus that strength on resisting British expansion. Indian leaders who agreed to cooperate with the British were in a sense offering themselves as hostages, for by choosing sides, they sacrificed their ability to act independently and often subsequently needed protection from rebellions amongst their own people.<sup>17</sup> These ideas concerning exploitation of local divisions, cynical though they are, have been carried on in practice, with some success, by Americans throughout the period since; by the U.S. Army on the frontier, as well as in the early twentieth century campaigns in the Philippines, Central America and elsewhere, up to and including the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001.

The myths perpetuated by the British concerning the warlike qualities of native troops, and the resulting advantages to be gained in working with them to accomplish imperial goals, have also colored the discourse surrounding these issues in the United States, at least since the late nineteenth century. Certainly the recent advocacy by several writers for either enlisting in the U.S. military large numbers of foreign troops, or creating formal units of foreign scouts within the U.S. Army - to take advantage of the

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<sup>16</sup> See E.M. Lloyd, "The Raising of the Highland Regiments in 1757," English Historical Review Vol. XVII (1902), pp. 466-469, and John Prebble, Mutiny: Highland Regiments in Revolt 1743-1804 (London: Penguin Books, 1975), p. 33.

<sup>17</sup> Millet and Maslowski, For the Common Defense, pp.11-13

scouting and close-in fighting abilities of these native warriors - is connected, at least in part, to echoes of British imperial attitudes concerning the use of native troops.<sup>18</sup>

### *Expanding the Western Frontier*

After the United States gained its independence, colonial habits and techniques of warfare did not disappear, but were, if anything, more regularized. The national debate surrounding the establishment of a regular army, as opposed to reliance on a purely militia force, was directly connected to the perceived success of American militia in the wars both against the French and their native allies, as well as against the British.<sup>19</sup> The customary practices of working with Indians in the process of expanding the western frontier did not change either.

In the campaigns against the tribes of the Old Northwest, and in the Southern states commanders like Anthony Wayne and later, Andrew Jackson and Winfield Scott, employed local tribes and individual scouts in much the same way as had British and American leaders in the colonial period. During the War of 1812, again both the British and American sides had Indian allies, and both armies used Indian scouts and encouraged

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<sup>18</sup> See Charles K. Dalgleish, "A New 'Lodge Act' for the U.S. Army – A Strategic Tool for the Global War on Terrorism," unpublished paper, National Defense University, National War College, 2005; Carlton Meyer, *Afghan Scouts*, accessed 19 December 2006, available from <http://www.g2mil.com/Afghan%20Scouts.htm>; also Max Boot and Michael O'Hanlon, "A Military Path to Citizenship," *The Washington Post.com*, Thursday, October 19, 2006, accessed 1 November 2006, available from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/10/18/AR2006101801500.html>; also Max Boot, "The Struggle to Transform the Military," *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2005.

<sup>19</sup> Millett and Maslowski, *For the Common Defense*, pp. 45-46, 88-95.

allied tribes to pursue their own ends in attacking rival frontier settlements and enemy troop concentrations. While fighting the Creeks in 1813-14, Andrew Jackson relied heavily on Cherokee allies, with large numbers of Cherokees playing a decisive role in the ultimate U.S. victory and slaughter of the Creeks at the battle of Horseshoe Bend.<sup>20</sup> While fighting the most intense of the Seminole Wars during the 1830's and 40's, the Army used native scouts to assist in tracking Seminole bands, and to provide commanders knowledge about the customs and habits of the Seminoles so that they would be better able to predict their whereabouts and possible courses of action.<sup>21</sup>

In all of these instances, the facility with which American officers, both regular and militia, worked with the tribes is something which we now accept without comment. In fact, at the time these practices were so much a part of the normal, almost doctrinal way of carrying on operations as to be totally unremarkable. In contrast, it would have been a rare officer indeed who would have been so blind as to try to prosecute a frontier campaign during this period without actively seeking cooperation or alliance with local Indian leaders, tribes, or even individual scouts. Virtually every account of military operations from the Revolution to the Civil War, including the Lewis and Clark Expedition, the Creek and Seminole Wars, and the Black Hawk War, includes references to native scouts and allies. As the frontier moved into the trans-Mississippi west, military leaders would find it even more necessary than previously to make alliances with local Indian leaders, enlisting native people in the Army's attempts to subdue the plains tribes,

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 116.

<sup>21</sup> Urwin, The United States Infantry, pp. 56-61

and provide security and the rule of law in the loosely governed and often fractious settler communities.

### *United States Scouts*

During the Civil War, both Federal and rebel forces enlisted Indians into their regular formations, and especially in the campaigns in the trans-Mississippi West, used local Indians as scouts and in similar capacities to what the Army had always done in frontier areas. Additionally, when the Regular U.S. forces left garrisons in the West, local leaders had to increase their reliance on militia forces in order to manage these vast areas. Unrest and violence in the far West increased enormously during the Civil War, such that the U.S. government actually had to divert troops from campaigns in the East to assist in quelling uprisings caused, in part, by inexperienced militia, and by political and civic leaders instigating conflict. A notable example of this kind of violence was the massacre of a southern Cheyenne village at Sand Creek, Colorado; local volunteers took advantage of the absence of Regulars to destroy this local band of Indians, murdering men, women and children. When the Army returned to the West after the war and signed several treaties to end the immediate conflicts, the units garrisoning the West were in many cases were far more sympathetic to the Indians than to the whites.<sup>22</sup>

When the Army returned to its traditional role of policing the largely ungoverned areas of the Western frontier, it began to establish new posts and re-garrison older ones in

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<sup>22</sup> Millett and Maslowski, For the Common Defense, pp. 251-253.

an ongoing effort to avert conflict between white settlers and the tribes. As a part of this increase in Army presence and activity on the frontier, many commanders sought to improve their capabilities in conducting what really amounted to what we would now term low-intensity fighting, or even counterinsurgency. One way they did this was to enlarge and formalize the previous manner in which they had employed native Indian scouts.

When the Army began to recognize the difficulty they would have in subduing the plains tribes and the Apache, they began to look for Indian allies to assist them. In keeping with long-standing practice, many of these allies came from tribes which had been previously displaced or defeated by either the U.S. government or the plains tribes themselves, and who saw alliance with the Army as a mean of recovering a lost position or seeking revenge. By using Indians to fight Indians, again the Army had a powerful tool to divide native opposition and demoralize the hostile tribes – one general opined that one Indian Scout unit was more valuable than six cavalry companies.<sup>23</sup>

In an attempt to formalize the customary, but still haphazard practices of military cooperation with the Indians, the Army asked Congress for formal approval of a scheme to enlist Indians into specifically designated scout units, and provide them pay, allowances and formal discharges like any other soldiers. Consequently, on 28 July 1866, Congress authorized the formal enlistment of scouts into the Army as part of what became the United States Scouts:

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., pp. 254-255.

The President is authorized to enlist and employ in the Territories and Indian country a force of Indians not to exceed one thousand to act as scouts, who shall receive the pay and allowances of cavalry soldiers, and be discharged whenever the necessity for further employment is abated, at the discretion of the department commander.<sup>24</sup>

These scouts were finally absorbed into the Regular Army in 1895 as a formal unit that had its own distinctive insignia like the other branches of the Army; a device of crossed arrows, coupled with the letters “U.S.S.” (United States Scouts), instead of the normal “U.S.”<sup>25</sup> In accordance with the legislation, members of the Scouts enlisted for various periods based on local requirements, from the normal cavalry enlistment of five years, to periods as short as three to six months. Scouts could reenlist, and many were promoted to the rank of Sergeant after long and faithful service. Scouts were enlisted and then assigned to serve in specific areas or Military Districts, and were allocated to units based on operational need.<sup>26</sup>

As stated previously, since the colonial period, tribes would often form alliances with whites in order to either protect themselves or gain an advantage against an enemy. The Scouts who enlisted after 1866 largely followed this same pattern, and came from

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<sup>24</sup> Thomas W. Dunlay, Wolves for the Blue Soldiers : Indian scouts and auxiliaries with the United States Army, 1860-90 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), pp 44-46., and Act of 28 July 1866, 39<sup>th</sup> Congress Session I, Chapter 299 page 333, accessed 9 March 2007, available from <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llsl&fileName=014/llsl014.db&recNum=364>.

<sup>25</sup> This insignia of crossed arrows was ultimately adopted by the Special Forces when they became a distinct branch of the Army in accordance with General Order number 35 in April, 1987. See “Images of Indian Scouts,” accessed 8 March 2007, available from <http://www.army.mil/cmhp/topic/natam/idnsects.htm>.

<sup>26</sup> Dunlay, Wolves for the Blue Soldiers: Indian Scouts and auxiliaries with the United States Army, 1860-90, pp. 44-46.

people who traditionally opposed the tribes at war with the government. Large numbers of Navajos enlisted to serve against the Apaches, and Crows served against the Sioux and Cheyenne. Working against his traditional enemies, the scout who warned Lieutenant Colonel George Custer of the large hostile encampment of Sioux and Cheyenne at the Little Bighorn in July 1876 was a Ree, sometimes identified as being from the Crow nation. In the ensuing battle this scout, Bloody Knife, was beheaded by the Sioux for his troubles.<sup>27</sup>

One of the more notable examples of tribes who fit this pattern of working with the Army against traditional enemies was the Seminoles. The Seminole or Seminole-Negro Indian Scouts are one of the more prominent formal Indian Scout units raised by the Army during the late nineteenth century, and the background of this unit forms an interesting part of the often tragic story of mixed relations between the Army and Indians. After the forced removal in the 1830s and 1840s of the Seminoles from Florida to the Indian Territories (what is now Oklahoma), many Seminoles moved into Mexico to avoid attacks and conflict with the tribes already in that area. A significant number of those who moved into Mexico were Black Seminoles, people who were descended either from slaves owned by the Seminoles, or escaped slaves who had been adopted as members of the tribe. A large part of their motivation for moving to Mexico was to escape being enslaved by whites immigrating into Texas and the Southwest. Some of the Black

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<sup>27</sup> Evan S. Connell, Son of the Morning Star; Custer and the Little Bighorn (New York: Harper & Row, 1984), pp. 12, 14-18.

Seminoles served in the Mexican Army in campaigns against the Comanche and Apache.<sup>28</sup>

In 1870 the Army began negotiations with the Black Seminoles to return to the United States and serve as scouts, principally in campaigns against the Comanche and the Apache. Recognizing their skills and experience in fighting these tribes, the Army offered to relocate the entire community to Fort Clark, Texas, where they could live unmolested. Eventually between 100 and 150 Black Seminoles enlisted in the Scouts, comprising a formal unit by 1872. In 1873 they participated in their first combat action. By the time they were finally disbanded in 1914, the Seminole-Negro Indian Scouts had achieved a distinguished record of success, with four members of the unit being awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.<sup>29</sup>

During the campaigns against the Apache, the Army was able to enlist scouts from several tribes traditionally opposed to the Apache, and many Apaches enlisted as well. These Apache Scouts also achieved distinction, and became such an institution in the Army in the Southwest that they continued to serve as a distinct unit into the 1940s; Apache Scouts performed reconnaissance and security duties during the Mexican Punitive Expedition in 1916, and patrolled the southern border throughout the first half of the twentieth century. The last Apache Scout retired from the Army in 1947.<sup>30</sup> Several

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<sup>28</sup> "Seminole-Negro Indian Scouts," accessed 7 March 2007, available from <http://www.buffalosoldier.net/SeminoleNegroIndianScouts.htm>, and "Seminole Indian Scouts," accessed 7 March 2007, available from <http://www.texancultures.utsa.edu/seminole/seminolescouts.htm>.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

officers who recruited and served with the Apache Scouts in the late nineteenth century under Generals George Crook and Nelson Miles went on to hold important senior leadership positions during the war with Spain, and it was one of these, Major General Henry Lawton, who as the commander of the 1<sup>st</sup> Division in the Philippines authorized Lieutenant Matthew Batson to raise the Macabebe Scouts in 1899.<sup>31</sup>

The record of the Army in prosecuting its frontier campaigns against the Indians is clearly checkered, with many examples of failure and cruelty, along with success and humanity. In this mixed record, one aspect of the Army's frontier operations from the 1780's to the late nineteenth century stands out: an almost unbroken record of dramatic success in working with local, indigenous people to prosecute low-intensity or counterinsurgency campaigns. These campaigns, lasting over one hundred years, were ultimately successful for the Army, and resulted in a widely shared organizational expertise and comfort in conducting what we now term irregular warfare.

This expertise and facility in working with and through indigenous or tribal military forces was so ingrained that there was an institutional expectation that officers

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<sup>30</sup> See Dunlay, Wolves for the Blue Soldiers: Indian Scouts and auxiliaries with the United States Army, 1860-90, pp. 28-30, and Chapter 10 for references to Apache Scouts. See also "Apache Scouts," accessed 7 March 2007, available from <http://www.grenzer.com/11scout.htm>. See also "Images of Indian Scouts," accessed 8 March 2007, available from <http://www.army.mil/cmh-pg/topic/natam/idnsects.htm>.

<sup>31</sup> Major General Lawton served as a Captain in the 4<sup>th</sup> Cavalry during Miles' successful campaign to capture Geronimo, and developed a recognized expertise in negotiation and military cooperation with local tribes. Lawton, through his connection to the 4<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, identified Lieutenant Batson as an intelligent, highly competent officer, and had him seconded to his staff during the war in Cuba. It is highly probable that Lawton was behind some of the initial concepts to raise local tribal scouts in his division's area in the Philippines. See memoir of service, Matthew Batson Papers, 1898-1900, U.S. Army Military History Institute, OCLC 46910883, also Franklin Matthews, "Henry W. Lawton, the Soldier and the Man," Harper's Weekly, 6 January 1900 (accessed 1 April 2007, available from <http://www.culbertsonmansion.com/Lawton/Info/Harpers1900-01-06.htm>.)

would, as a matter of course, immediately establish contacts, alliances, and contracts for auxiliaries with local and tribal leaders as soon as units arrived in an area of operations. These kinds of arrangements were not pursued by a corps of elite or specially trained soldiers - they were made by regular, conventional officers who were merely following customary practice as established through military culture and experience beginning in the 1600's. Following the establishment of U.S. imperial dominion in the Philippines, this tradition and expertise carried over into the twentieth century, and achieved its ultimate expression in the formation of the Regular Philippine Scouts and the Philippine Constabulary.

**“Bullets and Bolos”<sup>32</sup>:**  
**Scouts and Constabulary in the Philippines**

*Irregulars*

When Lieutenant Batson began to recruit and lead his Macabebe Scouts, he was following a pattern familiar to most contemporary Army officers. Batson was not the only officer involved with raising local units or cooperating with Filipino leaders and communities. As soon as combat operations began in the Philippines against the Republican Army led by Emilio Aguinaldo, American commanders all over the islands began to seek local people who would assist in the U.S. effort. Enlisting Filipinos to fight Filipinos in many ways carried on the tradition of using Indians to fight other

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<sup>32</sup> See John R. White, Bullets and Bolos (U.S.A: The Century Company, 1928), a memoir of service in the Philippine Constabulary.

Indians. As stated in a contemporary textbook used at West Point, one of the best methods to oppose guerrillas was to use “forces of a similar character,” and this adage was generally accepted as truth.<sup>33</sup> Filipino assistance to the Army came in many forms aside from providing combat or scout units; thousands of Filipinos worked for U.S. forces as guides, interpreters, laborers, drivers, clerks and intelligence agents. Some of these Filipino irregulars were paid with Quartermaster funds, some from special accounts created by the Philippine command, and others from U.S. officers’ personal funds.<sup>34</sup>

While Batson raised his scout companies, other officers were doing the same in other parts of the archipelago. In July, 1899, the Philippine command established the Manila Native Police, which eventually reached a strength of 625, and made 7,442 arrests in its first year of existence.<sup>35</sup> On the Island of Negros, the military governor, Colonel James F. Smith of the 1<sup>st</sup> California Volunteers, raised an entire constabulary, armed with rifles and patrolling the island against guerillas and criminals.<sup>36</sup> At the same time that Batson was raising his scouts, another unit, Lowe’s Scouts, was operating with the First Division as a mixed Filipino and American organization. Lowe’s Scouts were often paired with Batson’s unit, and had great success in numerous combat operations.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Andrew James Birtle, U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine, 1860-1941, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center for Military History, 1998), p. 116.

<sup>34</sup> Brian McAllister Linn, The Philippine War 1899-1902 (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2000), p. 128.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 128

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., pp. 76-79

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., pp. 128, 143-44.

After the success of Batson's initial efforts with the Macabebes, he was given permission to expand his unit. In a memo dated 16 October 1899, Batson's Brigade Commander Brigadier General S.B.M Young, justified this expansion, writing:

I have no doubt that a regiment of Macabebes, would be more effective than a regiment of volunteers, and would be only about one half as expensive...I have full faith in the loyalty and efficiency of the Macabebes as soldiers. There is as a rule no sickness among them and they can live on the country.<sup>38</sup>

Batson was promoted to Major in December 1899, and continued to recruit. By the spring of 1900, Batson's unit was a full battalion of five companies, and on 24 May 1900, the Philippine Command published a formal order establishing it as the "Squadron of Philippine Cavalry," formed under the auspices of Colonel Wilbur Wilder, 43<sup>rd</sup> U.S. Volunteer Infantry, with Major Batson as Squadron Commander.<sup>39</sup> After an operation on Luzon in April 1900, Brigadier General Frederick G. Grant wrote of the Philippine Cavalry,

In the Macabebe Scouts the United States has a loyal servant who can be depended on to pick out of a crowd of natives, however large, all the insurgents masquerading as 'amigos' and the culprits from other provinces.<sup>40</sup>

The praise given the Macabebe Scouts by Generals Young and Grant was familiar to praise given scouts and units formed from the Indians of the American West, but so were the doubts that many officers in the Philippines harbored about the performance of

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<sup>38</sup> Memorandum dated 16 October 1899, from Brigadier S.B.M. Young, HQ Provisional Cavalry Brigade, 1<sup>st</sup> Division. Matthew Batson Papers, 1898-1900, U.S. Army Military History Institute, OCLC 46910883

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., order dated 24 May 1900.

<sup>40</sup> Linn, The Philippine War, p. 260.

local scouts. From the beginnings of American military cooperation with Indians, officers had been concerned about the use by Indians of tactics that did not sit well with European sensibilities. Traditional Native American customs of warfare which involved the torture or mistreatment of captives, mutilation, and later adaptations like killing of women and children, all militated against their use as auxiliaries. These arguments continued throughout the entire period of frontier warfare in the United States, and many officers' prejudices against native people led them to scorn the use of Indian scouts, in spite of their proven record of success. On the other hand, most successful officers, such as Generals George Crook and Nelson Miles, knew the value of Indian scouts and used them extensively in all of their campaigns.<sup>41</sup>

The debate surrounding enlistment of Philippine locals followed much the same pattern. While always officially defending his men,<sup>42</sup> Batson himself wrote to his wife about his concerns that the Macabebes could be brutal in their treatment of local Tagalogs in the barrios and countryside they occupied.<sup>43</sup> Lieutenant Colonel E.H. Plummer actually asked that the Macabebes be removed from his area of operations after a series of rapes and robberies.<sup>44</sup> In many areas Army units were stretched very thin, and were forced to rely on local Filipino units to assist them on operations, often in spite of serious concerns about their behavior:

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<sup>41</sup> See Millett and Maslowski, For the Common Defense, pp. 12-13, 42-44, and 252-257.

<sup>42</sup> Linn, The Philippine War, p. 260.

<sup>43</sup> Letter packet, Matthew Batson Papers, 1898-1900, U.S. Army Military History Institute, OCLC 46910883.

<sup>44</sup> Linn, The Philippine War, p. 260.

...the police of San Miguel de Mayumo, for example, were adept at hunting down guerillas, but their methods were so brutal that the post commander was warned, "If native police or any other natives are used as scouts, guides, or in any way as part of your force or command, you will be held responsible for their conduct and behavior under G.O. 100 of 1863, and the laws of war generally."<sup>45</sup>

Although the War Department in Washington urged General Otis, the Commander of U.S. Forces in the Philippines, to raise more local units, he disapproved many requests like Batson's due to concerns about brutality, and the loyalty of local auxiliaries.<sup>46</sup> Still, many officers carefully sidestepped regulations about arming locals, and continued to raise police and constabulary units, as well as scouts.

### *Regulars*

When Batson's Scouts were formally constituted as the Philippine Cavalry Squadron, it was as part of a larger process begun by General Arthur MacArthur when he took command from General Otis in May, 1900. One of MacArthur's first acts as commander was to issue General Order 87, which "directed the arming of municipal police and the creation of mounted 'constabulary bodies,' which henceforth would be the 'conservators of the peace and safety of districts, instead of confirming [sic] their

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<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 203-4.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 204, also Birtle, U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine, 1860-1941, p. 116.

operations to areas limited by the boundaries of towns and barrios.’”<sup>47</sup> This order began the process which ultimately led to the creation of large bodies of Philippine troops officered by Americans, as well as the creation of the Philippine Constabulary, which as a paramilitary police force would be instrumental in quelling rebellion throughout the islands well into the twentieth century.<sup>48</sup>

After MacArthur’s order, commanders around the islands began in earnest to raise local scout and constabulary units to assist in suppressing the rebellion, as well as the lawlessness that plagued many places in the Philippines that had never been effectively governed or policed by the Spanish. In Northern Luzon in 1900, Colonel Charles Hood raised several detachments of scouts and in January 1901 he persuaded the Headquarters in Manila to recognize them as the Cagayan Native Scouts, by issuing General Order 4. The four companies of this battalion were commanded by lieutenants from the 16<sup>th</sup> U.S. Infantry, and each company had two non-commissioned officers detailed from the 16<sup>th</sup> Infantry as well.<sup>49</sup> Additionally, under the direction of Luzon’s 4<sup>th</sup> District Commander Brigadier General Frederick Funston, Colonel Lyman W. Kennan raised 100 Ilocano Scouts, and later increased the size of the unit to 240 men in January 1901.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> See White, Bullets and Bolos, for a comprehensive account of the organization, training and operational employment of the Constabulary. See also Birtle, U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine, 1860-1941, pp. 154-158.

<sup>49</sup> PSHS, The Philippine Scouts, p. 6, and Linn, The Philippine War, p. 260.

<sup>50</sup> Linn, The Philippine War, p. 260. Brigadier General Frederick Funston was very experienced and comfortable with irregulars – prior to the U.S. war with Spain he had served as a volunteer with Cuban guerillas against the Spanish. He gained further notoriety when he engineered the capture of Emilio Aguinaldo using Macabebe Scouts; pretending to be guerillas bringing in captured Americans, the Scouts brought Funston and several other officers into Aguinaldo’s camp, and then the *ad hoc* unit killed some of Aguinaldo’s body guard and captured him (Linn, The Philippine War, pp. 274-275).

By early 1901 so many local commanders were raising Filipino units to fight the insurgency that the government authorities in Manila sought a means of regularizing the practice, emplacing policies and rules for how these units were to be recruited, organized, equipped, and administered. In February of 1901, some inkling of what was to come was revealed in a letter to Major Batson. This letter, from the Office of the Chief Commissary, Philippine Islands, sought the benefit of Batson's experience with local soldiers by consulting him on his recommendations for types of rations projected for issue to "large numbers of native troops contemplated in the near future."<sup>51</sup> These questions portended General Order 310, issued in October, 1901, which reflected a recent authorization by Congress to enlist up to 6,000 Filipinos into roughly 50 companies of what was to be termed the Philippine Scouts. These companies of 100 men would all have American officers, selected in many cases from NCO volunteers from Regular Army regiments in the Philippines.<sup>52</sup>

Beginning in 1904 these companies were organized into battalions, and these battalions were then incorporated into the Regular Army during the period of military reorganization following the First World War, from 1919-1924. By 1924, officers in the Philippine Scouts had the same status as that of their counterparts in other Regular units, save that their rank was followed by the initials "PS" (Philippine Scouts), and they could not command American troops while assigned to the Scouts. Soldiers in the Scouts were

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<sup>51</sup> Letter from Office of Chief Commissary, Philippine Islands, dated 21 February 1901, Mathew Batson Papers, 1898-1900, U.S. Army Military History Institute, OCLC 46910883.

<sup>52</sup> PSHS, The Philippine Scouts, p. 5.

treated the same as other Regulars, except that they were paid less than American soldiers – excused by the War Department on the grounds that Filipino soldiers not only did not need the same amount of money that American soldiers did, but that if they were paid too highly, that would cause disruption in the local society and economy.<sup>53</sup>

The process by which these local and tribal levies, militias and scout units became U.S. Regulars is fascinating for many reasons, suggesting much about contemporary American ideas concerning race, military necessity, and larger concerns about imperialism, to name just a few.<sup>54</sup> It is also worth noting that the American experience in creating the Scouts is just a small part of the larger process of late nineteenth century Western militaries raising colonial troops world-wide in areas where they were establishing imperial dominion. Askaris in German East Africa; Moroccan Goumiers and Senegalese Tirailleurs in French Africa; Britain's King's African Rifles and the Queen's Own Corps of Guides all fit into the same category as the Philippine Scouts - soldiers locally raised from tribal or other groups in order to assist in policing new imperial possessions.<sup>55</sup> Virtually all of these types of units later formed the basis of new national armies and police during the post World War Two period of de-colonization.

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., pp. 5-13

<sup>54</sup> For contemporary views on politics, government and security policies in the Philippines, see Francis Burton Harrison, The Cornerstone of Philippine Independence: a Narrative of Seven Years (New York: The Century Company, 1922). Harrison served as Governor-General of the Philippines from 1913-1921. See also Dean C. Worcester, The Philippines Past and Present (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1930). Worcester served as Secretary of the Interior of the Philippines and as a member of the Philippine Commission from 1900-1913.

<sup>55</sup> For descriptions of the events surrounding and the process of raising these and other colonial units, see Thomas Pakenham, The Scramble for Africa; White Man's Conquest of the Dark Continent from 1876-1912 (New York: Avon Books, 1991), and Charles Allen, Soldier Sahibs; the Daring Adventurers who Tamed India's Northwest Frontier (New York: Carroll and Graf, 2000).

For the purposes of this essay, however, it is instructive to note that the story of the creation of the Philippine Scouts tells us much about the deeply ingrained culture of irregular warfare in the United States Army at the time. Officers, in spite of some official discouragement, openly clamored for the authority to raise units which they saw as an absolute practical necessity for conducting a successful counterinsurgency campaign. These officers raised units with, and often without that formal authorization, and also co-opted and armed local police, tribal groups, and even some religious groups all in the name of prudent military wisdom.<sup>56</sup> Officers were also willing to make what many saw as moral compromises in view of cultural differences – recognizing that Filipino tribesmen might not share the same ideas about the Law of War that were held by their American leadership, officers sought to make cultural changes incrementally rather than shun the use of local troops altogether.<sup>57</sup>

Army leaders from Crook to Pershing, from the commander of the Constabulary, Brigadier General Henry Allen, to Leonard Wood, all recognized that, “the successful leader of native troops had to exhibit all the traits of a paternal strongman, sufficiently aloof from his charges to gain their allegiance while demonstrating a genuine concern for their welfare and a respect for their cultural idiosyncrasies.”<sup>58</sup> Once again, this

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<sup>56</sup> One of the more interesting armed groups working with the Army during the counterinsurgency campaign in Northern Luzon in 1901 was the religious sect “Guardia de Honor,” led by Crispulo Patajo. On the other side was the armed Kapunan Society group led by Father Gregorio Agilpay – 300 men from this group were killed in mass assaults against American positions on the nights of 13 and 14 April, 1901 (Linn, *The Philippine War*, pp. 260-261).

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 260 and White, *Bullets and Bolos*, especially Chapter XIX.

recognition and acceptance that cultural change could be made, and should be made in the context of ongoing engagement and cooperation with local forces, stems directly from the Army's long experience with indigenous forces on the American frontier.

The practical experience gained in centuries of irregular warfare on the American frontier was confirmed in the jungles of the Philippines, and the incorporation of these myriad scout units into the regular forces was almost an official afterthought; an attempt to put controls in place to standardize procedures and administrative arrangements, to confirm a situation by regulation that in practice already existed. In this manner of establishing controls, the act of making the Philippine Scouts part of the Regular Army mirrored the progression of formalizing the Indian Scouts, culminating in the creation of the United States Scouts in 1895.

### *Specialization*

From the turn of the century, and until the 1920s when the Scouts became regulars, numerous American officers who had served with them and the Constabulary went on to distinguished careers elsewhere in the military – John Pershing and Leonard Wood are some particularly salient examples.<sup>59</sup> Twenty-five former Philippine

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<sup>58</sup> Birtle, U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine, 1860-1941, p. 155.

<sup>59</sup> Pershing served three tours in the Philippines between 1899-1913, where he was ultimately assigned as the Military Governor of Sulu Province, and worked closely with the Scouts and Constabulary to suppress endemic lawlessness and insurrection among the Moro people. Leonard Wood likewise served as Governor in Sulu before becoming Chief of Staff of the Army. See White, Bullets and Bolos, Chapter XXVII; Urwin, The United States Infantry, p. 160.; and Birtle, U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine, 1860-1941, pp. 159-168.

Constabulary officers went on to become generals in the Regular Army.<sup>60</sup> A fascinating example of this kind of American officer from the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is Colonel John R. White. White is perhaps not entirely typical in his career progression, but in many senses his career represents what many at the time would have considered an enviable mix of experiences. In that he is not unlike many contemporary officers, such as Frederick Funston, who sought out combat duty wherever it was and whoever it was with – White certainly provides a stellar model for the conventional American soldier with a broad range of “regular” and “irregular” service.

Colonel White began his military career as a volunteer in the Greek Foreign Legion, fighting the Ottomans in the Balkan Wars. After leaving Greece, White prospected for gold in the Klondike, and then in 1898 enlisted in the Army for infantry service in the Philippines. In 1901, at the age of twenty-one, like many other serving and former NCOs, he was offered a commission in the newly formed Philippine Constabulary. During his time in the Constabulary he was extremely active, participating in counterinsurgency operations all over the islands, and raised the first Moro Constabulary company in Sulu province. He eventually retired from the Constabulary, only to be recalled to active service for the First World War in 1918.<sup>61</sup>

White’s career exemplifies the ease with which contemporary officers moved from conventional to irregular assignments, and back. The unremarkable nature of this

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<sup>60</sup> Birtle, U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine, 1860-1941, p. 154.

<sup>61</sup> White, Bullets and Bolos, pp. vii-xii.

kind of transition was repeated in the assignment histories of numerous officers of the time. It was, paradoxically, the “regularization” of the Scouts and Constabulary, and the success of some officers in leading them, that began the process of creating a distinction in the Army between those men who worked with “native” troops, and those who did not. It was only when service with these organizations began to be seen somehow as a separate track, different from the normal progression of a conventional career that this specialization appeared. When, for example, in 1924 the Marines were charged with building the Nicaraguan National Guard into a modern, effective military, they worked with the State Department to contract with a retired Army officer to lead the effort. Major Calvin B. Carter was hired because of his experience in training and leading units of the Philippine Constabulary, and the Marines and State Department felt that this experience gave him some unique skills not possessed by the average officer. Carter put his skills gained in the Philippines to work, but met with mixed results.<sup>62</sup>

Major Carter’s employment in Nicaragua is just one example of this process by which officers began to be perceived as specialized in irregular warfare, or in training “native” troops in the years between the World Wars. In fact, by the start of the Second World War, the Army’s widely shared experience and comfort in working with indigenous, local forces, had begun to disappear – slowly becoming the province of officers who had been assigned to the Scouts, had experience with irregulars or service with other foreign forces. In the interwar years, irregular warfare was seen in official Army circles as inconsequential given the existential threat posed by potential large scale, conventional enemies like Germany and the Soviet Union. As a result of this perception,

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<sup>62</sup> Richard Millett, Guardians of the Dynasty (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1977), pp. 42-44.

“small wars” doctrine was given short shrift in military education at this time, and a focus on irregular war or constabulary duties was not seen in professional circles as central to an officer’s development.<sup>63</sup> Prior to and during World War Two, with the dramatic expansion of the Army and the consequent “watering down” of the officer corps with men who had no experience whatever in irregular warfare or local troops, this essentially accidental tendency toward specialization became even more pronounced.<sup>64</sup>

With specialization came a marked reluctance on the part of many “conventional” officers to put themselves in positions where they might need to work with irregulars. Clearly part of this reluctance stemmed from the recognition of potential moral problems inherent in irregular operations.<sup>65</sup> A stark example of this reluctance is provided by Edwin Ramsey in his memoir of fighting with the anti-Japanese guerillas in the Philippines. Ramsey relates how when after the capitulation of U.S. forces at Bataan he and some other Philippine Scout officers escaped capture by the Japanese and linked up with the nascent guerilla organization. During the early period of development of the partisan force, Ramsey describes numerous regular American officers who had escaped

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<sup>63</sup> Birtle, U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine, 1860-1941, pp. 271-272.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., pp. 275-282.

<sup>65</sup> Ramsey relates a particularly memorable instance of cultural differences leading to moral conflict in irregular operations in his memoir: During a meeting with one of his counterpart American guerilla leaders in northern Luzon, Ramsey began discussing the nature of their job. The other American, Captain Charles Putnam, argued that what they were doing was different from any other kind of military leadership, and illustrated his point by describing some of his tribal soldiers: “You see those hills there? That’s the territory of the Igorots and Ilongots. You know about them?...Well what you’ve heard is true. They’re headhunters, and some of ‘em are cannibals. They love Japanese raids, Ramsey; they invite them. You know why? ‘Cause that’s the only time they have full bellies. That’s not military, and it sure as hell’s no job. That’s guerilla warfare, and as far as they’re concerned, I’m no captain, I’m the king.” See Edwin Price Ramsey and Stephen J. Rivele, Lieutenant Ramsey’s War (New York: Brassey’s, 1990), pp. 162-163.

from the Japanese, but refused to take part in the guerilla war – they felt that such fighting was at least in part illegal, and they wanted no part of living as fugitives and working with Filipino irregulars. Ramsey explains that he made his own decision to live and fight with the partisans in part because of the bonds of respect and loyalty he developed with Filipinos while serving in the pre-war Scouts.<sup>66</sup>

In spite of some small numbers of former Scout officers or men with irregular experience achieving high rank in the post-World War Two conventional Army,<sup>67</sup> by the early 1950's the separation between the conventional Army and the Special Operations community was virtually complete. Men who had worked in the Office of Strategic Services with units like Detachment 101 in Burma, raising and leading Kachin tribesmen against the Japanese,<sup>68</sup> and others who either as intelligence officers or combatants were infiltrated into occupied areas to work with partisans, were increasingly seen as a corps of special soldiers with uncommon knowledge. This view was one which would have been rare indeed in the Army only a few years previously. One of these men who worked in unconventional operations during World War Two, Colonel Jay Vanderpool, had a career that in some ways belied the nascent paradigm of specialization, but in other ways exemplifies the contemporary attitudes about irregular war that led to specialization.

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> General Harold K. Johnson, Army Chief of Staff during the Vietnam War, began his career as an officer in the 57<sup>th</sup> Infantry, Philippine Scouts. He was forced on the Bataan Death March with the rest of the regiment, and spent the remainder of WWII in Japanese captivity. See "General Harold K. Johnson," accessed 9 March 2007, available from <http://www.governor.state.nd.us/awards/rr-gallery/johnson.html>.

<sup>68</sup> See United States Office of Strategic Services, Special Unit, Detachment 101, Office of Strategic Services Detachment 101, Nazira, India, 1942-1945, U.S. Army Military History Institute Stacks number D767.6.U56.

During the war in the Pacific theater, Vanderpool was a young artillery officer serving in the 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division G2. As the plans for reconquest of the Philippines began to take shape, General MacArthur's headquarters sent out requests to subordinate units for officers who would be willing to be infiltrated into the archipelago to establish contact with partisans, and coordinate their efforts in support of the invasion.<sup>69</sup> A request of this nature, asking for motivated volunteers from among all units and not specifically assigning specialized soldiers to this mission, is indicative of the pre-war attitudes toward irregular work clearly still held by senior officers in the Pacific.

Vanderpool was one of those who volunteered, and spent months in southern Luzon working with various guerilla groups, including native tribes, Filipinos, Chinese Communists, and the native communist movement, the Hukbalahaps or Huks.

Vanderpool spent much of his time trying to prevent these disparate elements from fighting each other over territory, local power, and resources, and was successful only through the judicious distribution of dollars and the threat of force once the invasion came. Ultimately, he managed to keep them in the fight against the Japanese. After the war, Vanderpool returned to a career in conventional Military Intelligence assignments, until the Korean War.<sup>70</sup>

During that war, Vanderpool's previous experience in the Philippines caused him to be specifically selected to run partisan operations in Korea, managing logistics and

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<sup>69</sup> The Jay D. Vanderpool Papers, 1953-1983, U.S. Army Military History Institute OCLC 47911297, oral history transcript Box 1.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

operational issues for North Korean and Chinese deserters as they conducted raids and sabotage behind enemy lines.<sup>71</sup> In spite of his rather extensive experience in unconventional operations, Vanderpool did not move into the area of Special Operations after Korea, but returned to the conventional Army and ended up working on doctrine and force development for the new branch of Army Aviation, and retired as the Deputy G4, Third Army at Fort Macpherson, Georgia.<sup>72</sup> Even though Vanderpool was able to return to a conventional career, his assignment during the Korean War points out the differences between the pre-World War Two Army's culture of non-specialization, and the beginnings of an institutional desire to have only those officers with special experience or other qualifications work with locals or irregulars. It is highly probable that had the Army's culture of comfort with irregular warfare remained, any young officer, regardless of experience, with the right qualities of leadership and courage would have been chosen to perform Vanderpool's job in Korea – Vanderpool would not have been perceived as having had any kind of unique or special qualification.

By the time war broke out in Korea in 1950, this transformation from a culture of generalized experience, comfort and facility in irregular warfare, to one of specialization was largely complete. The only remaining area where officers who were now officially termed “conventional” could work with non-U.S. forces was as advisors, as part of the burgeoning Cold War system of military assistance to allied and developing countries to keep them out of the Soviet orbit. A review of the programs set up to train officers as

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

advisors during the 1950s and 1960s is useful, showing how what remained in the wider Army's culture of experience with irregular or non-U.S. troops was transmitted to a new generation, in time for the major counterinsurgency efforts in Vietnam. This review can also help to point out some possibilities for a restoration of the Army's widespread capabilities in irregular war.

## **Training for Advisors**

### ***The Military Assistance Institute***

During the height of the Cold War the United States maintained Military Assistance Advisory Groups (MAAG) in a host of countries around the world; some with close, traditional allies such as Britain and France, and many in newer, developing countries. These military advisory groups consisted of officers from all the services, and performed a host of functions, many of which have now been assumed by military attaches and foreign area officers. Some of these functions were liaison, intelligence gathering, supervision of equipment sold or given to countries, and, of course, training and advising a host country's military.<sup>73</sup> In order to accomplish these missions in an era of heightened tension and high-stakes geopolitical competition, the United States relied heavily on this relatively small group of "soldier-diplomats," men whose training and

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<sup>73</sup> Walter F. Choinski, "The Military Assistance Institute: An Historical Summary of its Organization, Program, and Accomplishments 1958-1968," Special Report October 1969, American Institutes for Research, Washington, D.C., in The Henry C. Newton Papers, 191-1975, U.S. Army Military History Institute OCLC # 46832145, pp. 1-2.

experience were critical to ensuring that American interests were served in sensitive locations.

For most of the 1950's there was no special training given to members of advisory groups, perhaps with the assumption that at least most senior officers had extensive combat experience in World War Two, and did not need much more than a briefing on the location they were to be assigned. For example, officers serving as advisors in South Korea during the war there were only given a short manual outlining their duties. This manual included a section admonishing them on the importance of their positions and the necessity to maintain professionalism, while observing carefully all that their Korean counterparts did or failed to do. This manual contained almost nothing about cultural issues unique to Korea, nor did it cover anything political. It also had nothing in it to assist a newly assigned officer with the Korean language.<sup>74</sup>

Clearly this lack of special training for advisors cried out for rectification. Positions as critical as these to our strategic national security objectives required officers with detailed knowledge of the countries to which they were assigned. They also required men who could navigate these sometimes complex cultures while ensuring that the military objectives of international relations were met in the most effective way possible. By the end of the decade Chiefs of MAAGs petitioned the Defense Department to create a program of training for newly assigned advisors, and with that petition the State Department emphasized that skills in international relations were equally, if not

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<sup>74</sup> U.S. Military Advisory Group to the Republic of Korea (KMAG) Advisors Handbook 1 March 1951, Daniel G. Doyle Papers 1921-1962, U.S. Army Military History Institute, OCLC # 47003107

more important for these officers as specifically military competence. Accordingly, in 1957 the Defense Department (DoD) turned to retired Brigadier General Henry Newton to establish a DoD school that would train officers in the skills required to succeed as members of MAAGs.<sup>75</sup>

Newton had a career in the Army training hierarchy, and one of his final assignments on active duty was as the director of the program to train US personnel as constabulary in occupied Germany.<sup>76</sup> The school he created and presided over from 1958 to 1964 was called the Military Assistance Institute, located in Arlington, Virginia. According to the official historical report on the school, published in 1969 after it was closed, the Institute's curriculum included, but was not limited to subjects such as US foreign policy programs and practices; the relationship of the US government to the countries where MAAGs were assigned; how the MAAG system operated and the responsibilities of the different agencies involved in the system, and orientation on specific countries.<sup>77</sup>

Officers who attended the Institute were assigned to a wide range of locations, from Afghanistan and Bolivia, to Iran, Guinea, Norway and Uruguay – 71 countries in all, including, of course, places like Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos.<sup>78</sup> The Institute

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<sup>75</sup> Choinski, "The Military Assistance Institute: An Historical Summary of its Organization, Program, and Accomplishments 1958-1968," p. 3.

<sup>76</sup> Henry C. Newton Papers, U.S. Army Military History Institute OCLC #46832145.

<sup>77</sup> Choinski, "The Military Assistance Institute: An Historical Summary of its Organization, Program, and Accomplishments 1958-1968," p. 5.

provided a detailed course for these officers which lasted for varying times based on the country to which men were to be assigned. Some of the specific topics of courses taught were: the Role of the MAAG Officer in Counterinsurgency; Meeting the Appeal of Communism; USAID/MAAG Field Cooperation; The Interpreter and the MAAG Officer; Techniques of Advising, and Advisor Case Studies. Additionally, each student participated in a detailed country study, which again varied in length and scope based on the location of assignment.<sup>79</sup>

This Institute operated from 1958 until 1968, when its functions were subsumed into the several courses operated at the then U.S. Institute of Military Assistance, later changed and renamed the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (JFKSWCS).<sup>80</sup> In later years when many of the functions of the MAAGs were taken over by Foreign Area Officers, much of what was formerly taught at the Institute was adapted for officers in this position. Brigadier General Newton continued to work for the Defense education establishment until the 1970s, conducting detailed reviews of officer branch schools and the Army's pre-commissioning training programs as part of the Heimes Board on Army officer education.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., pp. 9-10.

<sup>80</sup> Report on visit to U.S. Army Institute of Military Assistance, dated 24 August 1971, Tab G, p. 1. Henry C. Newton Papers, U.S. Army Military History Institute OCLC #46832145.

<sup>81</sup> Henry C. Newton Papers, U.S. Army Military History Institute OCLC #46832145.

While the officers who were assigned to MAAGs and attended the Military Assistance Institute were not supposed to be advisors to tactical units in foreign countries, many acted as such, especially later in the 1960's as the war in Vietnam escalated. The importance of the Institute for the purposes of this essay is that it provides an example of the extensive training and education that was deemed necessary for conventional officers to have before being assigned to work with foreign militaries. Clearly, with the complexities of the international system after the Second World War, such extensive training was needed. There is also no question that given the evolution (or devolution) of the international system since 1991 and the increase in expeditionary involvement of the Army, a similar education is now desirable for the widest possible audience of officers, well beyond the ones now designated as Foreign Area Officers. Other examples exist of the emphasis the Army has previously placed on educating conventional officers slated to work either with foreign militaries or with irregulars; two of these are the successor organization to the Military Assistance Institute, and the training in counterinsurgency at the Infantry School and other institutions during the Vietnam War.

*The U.S. Institute of Military Assistance  
and Counterinsurgency Training*

The U.S. Institute of Military Assistance was the name given to the group of schools operated by the Army at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, where the Army's Psychological Operations (PSYOPS), Civil Affairs (CA) and Special Forces soldiers were trained. As stated previously, this organization took over many of the responsibilities of the Military Assistance Institute when it was closed in 1968, and it was also responsible for training NCOs and officers destined to be tactical advisors to units of the Army of the Republic of South Vietnam (ARVN).<sup>82</sup> This role eventually became one of the more time and resource intensive of its missions. Again, a review of the curriculum of the courses for advisors destined for South Vietnam is useful in pointing out how the Army viewed the advisor mission, and the emphasis placed on preparing conventional officers for that mission. The efforts made in the 1960s to inculcate in soldiers some of the tenets of unconventional warfare that were widely understood and accepted in the pre-World War Two Army were extensive; these efforts led, in part, to a much broader Army-wide understanding of irregular operations which, unfortunately, has generally not survived beyond the generation of soldiers who fought in Vietnam.

In July, 1971 Brigadier General Newton conducted a review and assessment of the Institute of Military Assistance as part of a wider review of Army branch schools and

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<sup>82</sup> Report on visit to U.S. Army Institute of Military Assistance, dated 24 August 1971, Cover Memorandum and Tab G, p. 1-2.

officer education directed by the Commanding General, United States Continental Army Command.<sup>83</sup> This process was put in motion, in part, to assess the changes the Army would need to make when the draft ended and the transition to an all-volunteer force began. In the report of his visit to Fort Bragg, General Newton provided details on the courses taught at the Institute, both the courses strictly for Special Operations soldiers and those for advisors. The courses for advisors were conducted under the aegis of the Military Advisors School, which was, like the Special Warfare School, a separate school making up part of the Institute. The Military Advisors School was responsible not only for training MAAG officers, it also had the responsibility for training conventional, tactical unit-level advisors. At the Advisors School there were six different courses for advisors; training options ranging from the twenty-two week Military Assistance Command and Staff Course – preparation for officers assigned to MAAG positions in international security and military assistance – to the six week Military Assistance Training Advisor Officer and NCO Courses – designed to train officers and NCOs for duty as advisors in ARVN units.<sup>84</sup>

Two of the courses offered at the Advisors School were specifically designed for soldiers who would work within the Civil Operations and Rural Development Support (CORDS) program in Vietnam, where they were closely involved with the South Vietnamese Regional and Popular Forces (RF/PF), irregular paramilitary organizations

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<sup>83</sup> Report on visit to U.S. Army Institute of Military Assistance, dated 24 August 1971, Cover Memorandum.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., and Andrew J. Birtle, U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine, 1942-1976 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center for Military History, 2006), p. 257-258.

providing local security for villages and regions within South Vietnam.<sup>85</sup> By 1969 the U.S. Commander in Vietnam, General Creighton Abrams, had begun to put vastly more resources and emphasis into programs like CORDS, and into the RF/PF in order to refocus the military campaign on local counterinsurgency.<sup>86</sup> It is not hard to imagine, then, that the men who were being sent to Vietnam to serve as advisors for these local forces would understand the importance being assigned to their mission. In the six week course these men attended, they received training in the Vietnamese language and culture, as well as instruction in counterinsurgency doctrine, Vietnam-specific tactics and civic action. These advisor courses were perhaps the most intensive of the counterinsurgency-related training that the Army provided, but were certainly not the only training designed to prepare officers and soldiers for the atmosphere they would encounter in Vietnam.<sup>87</sup>

Starting in the early 1960s, the Army began to spend an enormous amount of intellectual effort on understanding insurgencies and the means to combat them. In addition to establishing libraries and encouraging articles and discussion, the Army leadership ordered in 1961 that counterinsurgency be covered in all levels of officer professional education. The Special Warfare School had the lead in providing draft subject courses that branch schools could use in developing their instruction. After some spotty initial efforts by the military to develop and implement satisfactory programs, in

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<sup>85</sup> Report on visit to U.S. Army Institute of Military Assistance, dated 24 August 1971, Tab G, p. 2.

<sup>86</sup> See Lewis Sorley, A Better War: The Unexamined Victories and final Tragedy of America's Last Years in Vietnam (Orlando: Harcourt, 1999), for a detailed account of General Creighton Abrams' counterinsurgency strategies from 1968-1972.

<sup>87</sup> Birtle, U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine, 1942-1976, p. 257-258.

1962 the President directed in National Security Action Memorandum 131 that all agencies involved in counterinsurgency, including the Departments of State and Defense, USIA, AID, and the CIA, establish counterinsurgency education programs.<sup>88</sup> These programs were to include specific subject areas at all levels of rank and education, including the history and nature of insurgency, insurgent tactics, counterinsurgency techniques and planning, and mid- and senior-grade officers were to receive specific instruction on the country to which they were slated for posting. By the end of the decade, the average officer branch course included up to twenty-eight hours of “pure” counterinsurgency instruction, as well as many additional hours in related subjects.<sup>89</sup>

ROTC and West Point cadets also received instruction in counterinsurgency and unconventional warfare, including history courses focused on past wars in the Philippines, Greece, Malaya and French Indochina. The officer pre-commissioning programs also included patrolling and raiding exercises in summer camps.<sup>90</sup> The Infantry School especially went to great lengths to develop training that prepared officers for the unconventional warfare environment, teaching tactics proven successful not only in Vietnam, but in the Philippines and during the campaigns on the Western frontier as well. According to the school, its career course for captains emphasized that in the tactical realm,

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid., pp. 260-261.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., pp. 260-261.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., p. 261.

The majority of the day-to-day activity...will be small-unit action to locate guerilla forces, secure the population, installations and lines of communication, *train and assist the indigenous paramilitary forces*, and conduct military civic action. (my italics)<sup>91</sup>

Not only did the branch schools, again especially the Infantry School, and pre-commissioning courses emphasize the military and political aspects of counterinsurgency and unconventional warfare, but the Command and General Staff College and Senior Service Colleges did as well, requiring officers to prepare plans for military-political operations, as well as take courses and write papers on historical and modern counterinsurgency operations.<sup>92</sup> All of these levels of counterinsurgency and unconventional warfare leader training in the Army were paralleled by specific training efforts for soldiers and NCOs, including wide dissemination of such things as quick-fire weapons training, patrolling, and interaction with irregulars.<sup>93</sup>

The scope of the training designed to prepare the Army for operations in Vietnam was intensive, and the concepts promulgated by that training were ubiquitous. These training efforts, coupled with combat experience in Vietnam, resulted in a generation of soldiers who had a level of understanding and comfort with counterinsurgency and unconventional warfare that had not existed in the Army since before 1941, and perhaps even before 1918. These men had worked closely with ARVN counterparts, local paramilitary irregulars in the RF/PF and Civilian Irregular Defense Groups (CIDG), as well as with Vietnamese soldiers attached directly to their squads and platoons – the Kit

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<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 263.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 265-266.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 264-265.

Carson Scouts. Unfortunately, one of the many results of the war in Vietnam has been a lasting reluctance, even resistance to the idea of our Army being involved in counterinsurgency or low-level warfare, with an almost exclusive doctrinal emphasis until the last two-three years on large-scale conventional warfighting. This institutional distaste for low-level conflict has persisted in spite of the fact that since 1975 we have been engaged in numerous low-level contingency operations, which since 1989 have been more or less continuous.

The resistance in some quarters of the Army to conventional, or even Special Forces units, conducting unconventional operations – liaison, cooperation, training, equipping and combat advising militias, guerillas or other non-state armed groups – is still widespread and significant.<sup>94</sup> The separation of the Special Forces from the mainstream Army personnel system in 1989 was a contributor to this continued resistance; when Special Forces (SF) officers moved back and forth from conventional assignments to SF assignments, their knowledge, experience and more importantly, their mindset of accepting unconventional warfare had a chance of being spread to the wider Army. There is no question about the necessity and success of the decision to make SF a distinct branch, but with that decision, the Army did lose a valuable process of intellectual cross-fertilization.

This cross-fertilization was dramatic during the war in Vietnam, through the extensive training efforts undertaken and practical experience gained in the face of such a

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<sup>94</sup> 14 February 2007 author interviews with Vice Chief of Staff, and G3-X, U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC).

massive, lengthy counterinsurgency challenge. The results of all these efforts and experiences point out to us today that a restoration of the wider Army's culture of understanding and acceptance of unconventional warfare is clearly possible. The equally clear fact that such a restoration is necessary is borne out by our Army's experiences in Afghanistan, Iraq, the Philippines, the Horn of Africa and elsewhere since 1991.

## **Conclusion**

During the winter and spring of 2006, the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force in Afghanistan (CJSOTF-A) went through a laborious process to demobilize its Afghan surrogate force, called the Afghan Security Forces (ASF). This process involved the largest formal demobilization of U.S. surrogate or irregular forces since 1945.<sup>95</sup> The ASF were composed of a variety of tribal or local militias, anti-Taliban volunteers and Afghan mercenaries. Many of them had been working with the Special Forces since 2001, as they were originally members of the Northern Alliance, the coalition of Afghans which overthrew the Taliban with U.S. help. The ASF provided local security to Special Forces firebases and camps throughout Afghanistan, and prior to

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<sup>95</sup> None of the U.S. surrogate forces in Vietnam, the Hmung and Montagnards for example, were formally demobilized at the close of U.S. involvement there. By the summer of 2006 roughly 3000 ASF soldiers had been formally demobilized in Afghanistan.

2006, were also used extensively to assist Special Forces units in convoy security and small-scale combat operations.<sup>96</sup>

The ASF also provided a deeply important component to U.S. counterinsurgency operations, one which experienced American soldiers have valued and seen as central to success in many campaigns. From the Pequot War in 1637, to the Seminole Wars in the early nineteenth century, the Apache campaigns after the Civil War, and in twentieth century small wars from the Philippines to Vietnam, this component is one of the main reasons American soldiers have always sought out cooperation with local irregular forces. This critical component is human intelligence; the local knowledge of geography, culture, language and personality that any outsider cannot ever hope to have without such cooperation with local forces - this was the very asset provided by the Seminole, Apache, Macabebe Scouts and others that has been lauded by so many soldiers in our past. The ASF were an invaluable resource for local intelligence, one that even the Afghan National Army or police could not provide, since they were nationally recruited forces without the local or sometimes even provincial connections possessed by the ASF.<sup>97</sup>

Given their importance, military value and proven record of success, why were the ASF demobilized? There are a complex set of answers to this question, many dealing directly with concerns held by the Afghan government and coalition command about

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<sup>96</sup> From December 2005 to May 2006, the author was the CJSOTF-A project officer responsible for planning and carrying out the bulk of this demobilization.

<sup>97</sup> The Afghan National Army and Police are centrally trained, centrally controlled, and their units are deliberately kept ethnically and regionally mixed.

non-government militias, sovereignty and legitimacy. Those officers who were involved in planning and carrying out the demobilization understood that there was also another important reason, one which was perhaps not so clearly articulated. It was an enduring discomfort with the existence and military use by the coalition of irregular forces.<sup>98</sup> Questions of loyalty, brutality, cost and effectiveness all played a role in this distaste, much as they have throughout our history of cooperation with and employment of irregulars. Many of the concerns felt within the Army and elsewhere about cooperation with these irregulars had not changed since the operations at Tora Bora and Shalikat in 2002.<sup>99</sup> In spite of these questions the fact remains, however, that these irregular soldiers contributed enormously to the ongoing campaign in Afghanistan. Saying nothing of the fact that in many instances they were the ones who had fought against and overthrown the Taliban, often since then their contribution was the crucial factor deciding between the success or failure of an operation.

This enduring distaste for military cooperation and employment of irregulars is not something that is likely to go away, for many of the reasons previously discussed in

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<sup>98</sup> In the Army's new counterinsurgency manual, FM 3-4, the words "Irregular Warfare" are mentioned only twice, in the Introduction. "Unconventional Warfare" is not mentioned at all – a glaring omission, pointing out this reluctance and the lack of doctrinal emphasis on this deeply important aspect of current operations. The fact that the only joint, Department of Defense-level publication that explicitly deals with irregular operations was only published in draft form in December, 2006, is another indication that the military as an institution is still far from any kind of comfort with this type of mission (Department of Defense, Irregular Warfare Joint Operating Concept (JOC), Pre-Decision Draft Version 0.5, December 2006.).

<sup>99</sup> See Sean Naylor, Not a Good Day to Die: The Untold Story of Operation Anaconda (New York: Penguin Group (USA), 2005). Naylor discusses in this book some of the problems of effectiveness and loyalty evident in the performance of Afghan auxiliaries during the early period of fighting in Afghanistan. See also Charles Briscoe, Richard L. Kiper, James A. Schroder, and Kalev I. Sepp, Weapon of Choice: ARSOF in Afghanistan (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center for Military History, 2005), for an exhaustive account of Army Special Operations Forces in Afghanistan from 2001-2002.

this essay. Neither, however, are the crucial reasons for our Army to continue to work by, with and through just such irregulars. Now more than ever, given the fact that we will continue to operate in areas of poorly or completely ungoverned space - places where tribal or sectarian militias, forces employed by local “warlords” or strongmen, or even the regular or paramilitary forces of host nations hold sway – we need to restore and embrace as part of a wider Army culture this facility and willingness to engage in unconventional and irregular operations.

How can we restore this at one-time enduring strength of our Army, indeed our military at large? There are several ways in which this can be done. The first is through experience – in the last several years an increasing number of conventional officers and soldiers have gained first-hand experience working with irregulars and advising foreign regulars and paramilitaries in our campaigns around the world. The exigencies of the ongoing war have provided a powerful incentive for the wider organization to adopt unconventional policies and procedures which until recently were seen as being the exclusive preserve of the Special Forces. A clear example of this type of spontaneous local cooperation with tribal forces is in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 4<sup>th</sup> Marine Regiment’s work with the tribes in Fallujah in 2004-5. By encouraging and enabling tribal elders to take responsibility for the security of their own local areas, the Marines were able to make great inroads against the insurgency in Fallujah.<sup>100</sup> As an organization, we must continue to encourage local commanders to take these kinds of initiatives, and disseminate the

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<sup>100</sup> Major Philip M. Zeman, USMC, “Operation Iraqi Freedom Mission Breadth,” unpublished paper. Also interview, Major Zeman, 2 March 2007. Major Zeman was the Executive officer, 3-4 Marines during 2004-2005.

lessons they hold throughout all of our units. This type of cooperation should become the rule in our military, not the exception.

The second means for restoring our traditional ability in unconventional warfare is education. Much as in the 1960s, when the pressures of war in Indochina caused the entire government to create an enormous variety of counterinsurgency educational initiatives, our contemporary Army needs to do the same. Instruction in unconventional warfare – the nature of non-state armed groups, the social and cultural structures of local tribes, the realities of conflict in failed states or ungoverned space, methods of integrating local forces into military and civil affairs operations, the list goes on – must take place at every level of officer and NCO professional development, from pre-commissioning programs to Senior Service Colleges. The models provided by the Cold War Military Assistance Institute, Advisor Training at Fort Bragg, and counterinsurgency training in the branch schools during the war in Vietnam can all be useful in creating this educational framework which is necessary to make all of our leaders comfortable with and willing to conduct irregular operations wherever they are assigned.

By providing such an education, the Army can go a long way toward restoring its institutional comfort and facility in dealing with foreign militaries and local armed groups. In the current operating environment there is an increasing probability that young company and field grade officers will find themselves in remote locations and conducting combat or stability operations, with little close supervision and no counterparts from civilian government agencies. Given this probability, it is now more

necessary than ever that we educate all of our officers in the practicalities represented, in many ways, by the curricula of the Military Assistance Institute and its partner organizations in the 1960s. By having the largest possible number of officers educated in these areas, the Army can also ensure that military operations at the lowest levels are far better synchronized with the nation's operational and strategic goals.

The third means of restoring our institutional strength in unconventional warfare is organizational. Each Brigade Combat Team (BCT) should have as part of its structure a staff section specifically designated to deal with unconventional operations. This section, the S3-X, would be responsible for formulating unconventional warfare plans, policies and doctrine. Additionally, each S3-X should have funds available which are specifically designated to pay for the myriad of tasks that are necessarily a part of any complete unconventional campaign – logistics, intelligence, interpreter support, as well as pay for scouts, guides and irregular soldiers. If each BCT commander had at his disposal a trained staff to manage contacts with local armed groups, to direct and advise subordinate units on irregular warfare, to manage pay and to facilitate training, he would have a powerful tool at his disposal. This staff would ensure not only that his units took advantage of the possibilities presented by irregular operations, but that these operations were conducted within the framework of larger plans and within the laws and regulations that apply to such operations.

Officers assigned to a BCT S3-X staff would not need to be Special Forces officers, nor would they need to be exclusively combat arms officers. They would,

however, need to have a level of training and experience in unconventional operations perhaps above that of the average officer. To provide such training the Army should rely on the experts at the JFKSWCS, which could develop a course on the model of the longer advisor courses run at Fort Bragg during the Vietnam War. Officers trained at this course, along with the practical experience in counterinsurgency most officers now have, would assuredly be able to perform the desired function of the staff.

The final means to encourage and preserve a widespread culture of acceptance for unconventional operations is in our personnel systems. Officers should not be “tracked” into an “irregular” career path, or be given a functional area like those for Psychological Operations or Foreign Area Officers. Rather, the largest possible number of officers should be exposed to irregular operations, either as part of their formal military education, or through assignment and experience. Given the ongoing and long-term nature of our commitments in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere, it would certainly be possible to rotate an enormous number of officers through assignments as trainers, advisors or as staff members on Provincial Reconstruction Teams in those countries. Other opportunities for irregular assignments exist outside of Iraq and Afghanistan. Soldiers can be embedded for six to twelve months with regular or paramilitary units from countries within regions of concern to the United States, for example – a potential model for this type of deployment is the yearly rotation of infantry companies from the Guam Army National Guard to Ethiopia, starting in 2004.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Senior Airman Christine R. Martinez, “Guam Guard takes long mission in Africa,” accessed 4 March 2007, available from <http://www.usarpac.army.mil/news/guamguardhoa.asp>.

Much the same as the policies in the early 1990's that dictated Active Duty assignments for training and advisory support to Reserve Component units (AC/RC), or assignments to Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) battalions, policies should be put in place that ensure a maximum number of officers are rotated through these critical training and advisory positions overseas. Clearly, the recent attempts to fill these positions solely through soliciting volunteers have not worked; personnel policies that reward volunteers for serving in these positions are necessary, and a system of mandatory assignments must be put in place. Along with this kind of assignment policy, the Army needs to make language training more widely available, with some level of language training mandatory at all professional military educational levels. Current policies that effectively limit language training to Foreign Area Officers, Special Forces soldiers, and military intelligence personnel can only serve to restrict our capability to operate effectively in areas where close cooperation with local forces, both regular and irregular, is required.

When Lieutenant Batson raised the Macabebe Scouts in 1899, he could not have known that his efforts would be some of the last of their kind in the conventional Army. He most likely would have been surprised at the suggestion that anything he was doing was in any way special or out of the ordinary – his Division Commander, Brigade Commander, and many officers in between had raised scouts and worked with indigenous forces throughout their careers in low-level operations. It could only seem natural that Batson would do the same. In fact, it would have been almost unnatural for Batson and his contemporaries to not raise local units and employ tribal groups to succeed in their

mission in the Philippines. They did employ locals on a large scale, and they did succeed. In order for our Army of today to succeed, we must regain the organizational culture that allowed Batson and his contemporaries to so easily conduct unconventional operations. We have already begun to take small steps towards this end, but establishing the organizational and educational infrastructure required to complete the process must begin now in order for it to have the same positive effect as the Scouts had in our war at the beginning of the last century.

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