



Implementing Blended Learning in the Bundeswehr General Staff Candidates' English Course to Meet the COVID-19 Challenge

Lt Col (ret'd) Mike Barnett



LGAN Blended Learning

- Background
- Problem
- Original Plan
- The Plan
 - Residential Phase
 - Home Study Phase
 - Home Study Products
- Lessons Identified
- Summary



Background

- LGAN Language Course – Phase A
(50 Students)
 - 12 week SLP course 3332-4443 (Apr – Jun)
 - 4 weeks' leave (Jul)
- LGAN Language Course – Phase B
(48 Students)
 - 1 week Command & Staff College 'Staff Ride'
(Aug - week 1)
 - 3 week military specific language element
(Aug – weeks 2 – 4)

Problem

- LGAN Phase A
 - all English teaching staff required (7 groups)
 - All other English courses cancelled (Apr – Jun)
- LGAN Phase B
 - ‘Staff Ride’ cancelled
 - 3 week military language phase extended to 4
 - 3 SQEP military instructors (only 3 groups)
 - Other English courses required to run
 - Class sizes to be no larger than 8

Original Plan

- LGAN Phase B SOTR:
 - Provision of a 3 week military English phase to include:
 - Tactical English
 - Staff Duties in Multinational Organisations
 - Tactical Terminology
 - Military Briefings
 - Planning Exercises

in order to prepare LGAN students for the tactical element of the course in Hamburg.

Original Plan (2)

- Phase B Design:
 - 3 week CAST Type Exercise (operational planning)
 - 3 x syndicates, 3 x military instructors
 - Crawl, Walk, Run
 - Weeks 1 & 2 – Op planning within syndicates as 1* HQ Staff
 - Week 3 – 2 Planning cycles incl. execute (Blue, Red, Green Teams)



The Plan (1)

- LGAN Phase B broken down into two distinct elements:
 - 2 week residential phase
 - 2 week home study phase
- Residential Phase
 - First 2 weeks of original plan (Crawl, Walk)
 - Slobovia scenario adapted to suit truncated requirement
 - Afternoon syndicate work required



Residential Phase

- First two days: Refresh general military vocabulary incl planning lexica, effects, tasks
- Remainder: Series of short military exercises designed to highlight key military planning processes whilst simultaneously reinforcing important military vocabulary
- Focus on individual and group work simulating a military staff (G1 – G9) incl. SPG/OPG
 - Staff Appointments



The Plan (2)

- Home Study Phase
 - Different to residential phase due to overlap
 - But to include Staff Duties, Planning Problems etc
 - Had to be relevant and of interest
 - Students had already completed SLP exams
 - No Impact on attendance at Staff College
 - Utilised Moodle Platform
 - Tutorial Support/Feedback Requirement



Home Study Phase

- Basic Staff Skills
- In-Tray Exercises
- Command, Leadership and Management
- Conflict Studies
- Deployed Healthcare
- Medical Ethics
- Strategic Trends & Security Threats
- Arguing the Operating Environment

The screenshot shows a user interface for a learning management system. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'Meine Kurse' and 'Deutsch (66)'. Below that, a dashboard lists several course modules:

- Basic Staff Skills**: Includes sub-modules like 'Time Management', 'Mind Mapping', 'Learning Styles Explained', and 'How do I learn?'. A note states: "Who we are all lifelong learners, these are just some ideas you may find useful!"
- In-Tray Exercise - Planning Problems**: Describes three basic tasks: solving a problem, drafting an admin instruction, and producing a joint DEU/UK sporting activity. It includes a 'Reference Material Folder' with 'Examples Staff Duties Exercise', 'Injured Party', 'Eastern Delight', 'Eastern Challenge', and 'Exercise Winter Aid Planning Problem Interactive Video'.
- Command, Leadership, Management**: Explains that in the military, the prime surrogate is the ability to lead. It includes sub-modules for 'Toxic Leadership', 'What is Leadership?', 'Operational or Non-Operational Command', and 'The Ten Diseases of Leadership'.
- Musicians of Mars - NEW**: A short story written to emphasize critical synchronization tasks, combat leadership principles, and factors for consideration for company/team commanders.
- Conflict Studies - UPDATED**: Includes sub-modules for 'Forgotten Decisive Victories', 'American Civil War', and 'American Civil War'.

Each module has a 'Bearbeiten' (Edit) button and a 'Tabelle' (Table) icon. There are also 'Aktivität oder Material anlegen' (Create activity or material) buttons for each module.



Home Study Products

Powerpoint Briefs



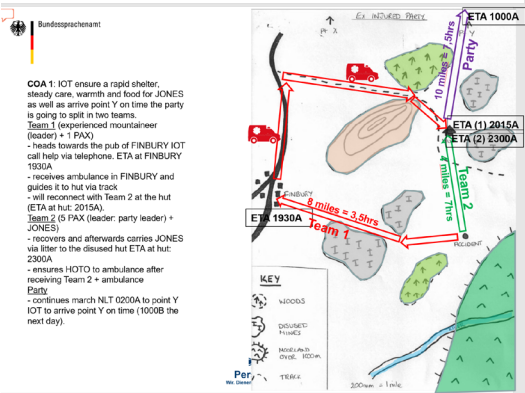
Falklands 1982



Conclusions/ Recommendations

1. Lessons learned from GBR:

- Develop own COA/IOT to be prepared in case of
- Establish/ maintain the intelligence capabilities IOT to gain information about actual and potential threats, in particular if you cannot rely on allies
- Air and sea superiority should be established IOT to conduct a ground force operation
- Supply is the key to success
- Low number (6) of submarines can ensure maritime supremacy
- Proliferation cannot be prevented completely - be prepared to fight against your own weapons!



IRTB Briefs

19 Aug 20

Reference: 1. Report "Battle of Mosul (2003)"

Issue

1. To elaborate lessons learned from the Bundeswehr from US Army led approach into Iraq.

Recommendation/ Conclusions

2. German Armed Forces are not ready for any kind of invasion.
 - a. German doctrines are still valid.
 - (1) "Speed of action is a weapon": Operational tempo is the key for operational initiative.
 - (2) Avoid minor street battles by bypassing.
 - (3) Maintenance rest is important for combat power.
 - b. Supply and service as close as possible behind maneuver units.
 - c. Improve artillery/air assault capabilities.
 - d. Establish/ Improve higher level exercises.
 - e. The victor writes the story.

Timing

3. N/A

Background

4. **Context.** In what follows is a summary within the deduced conclusions from an elaboration of the report "Battle of Mosul".

5. **There is only one main effort.** The bottom line is that the Federal Armed Forces are not in shape of conducting any kind of invasion, however the German doctrines, basically based on experiences made during WW II, were confirmed in that campaign; consequently they generally can be assessed to be still valid. The key to success of the preliminary offensive operations was the persistent focus on the main effort, which was approaching direction north to Bagdad, without wasting time and power in minor unimportant skirmishes.

Short Papers

The necessity of Special Forces in western armies ¶

¶

In recent months, there has been a sharp discussion in Germany about the necessity of Special Forces in the German Armed Forces. The discussion was triggered by a series of problematic incidents within Germany's Army Special Forces "Kommando Spezialkräfte" (KSK). It started with a macabre welfare party for one of the KSK's company commanders in 2017. During this party the participating soldiers were accused of throwing pig's heads against a wall in a "Vikings Game" and performing other doubtful acts. A female civilian guest filed a complaint against some soldiers and charged them with showing the "Hitlergruß" by raising their right hand. This symbol is forbidden in Germany due to its relationship to the Third Reich. Furthermore, she complained about Nazi music which was allegedly played during that party. The investigations started right after the allegations and lasted almost three years. Some soldiers were dismissed and the media reported about the events. ¶

In 2018, connections were found between a suspected right-wing terrorist in the Bundeswehr and some KSK soldiers. These connections led the investigators into the so-called prepper scene and they could reveal a network of preppers in Germany with connections to Military and Police Special Forces including KSK soldiers. Afterwards the "Militärische Abschirmdienst" MAD, Germany's military secret service, increased his investigations in Calw, where the KSK is located, and found and dismissed other soldiers who were accused of being Nazis. ¶

But there were two major incidents in the past half year which attracted public interest: The first incident was linked to the search of the private house of a KSK soldier who served almost 20 years in the unit. The search was conducted by the German Federal Police and the officers found a lot of Bundeswehr ammunition, Bundeswehr explosives and a Kalashnikov assault rifle there. The soldier was arrested immediately and accused of illegal possession of weapons. The second incident was the answer to a so-called Small Request of the German left-wing party "Die Linke" regarding the loss of ammunition within the KSK. The request revealed that the Special Forces were looking for about 60,000 rounds of ammunition and some explosives that have disappeared. ¶

All those incidents within the last years which were linked to the German Army Special Forces sparked a heated debate across the German society about the necessity of



Lessons Identified (1)

- Time Intensive
 - Material generation
 - Support – video, email etc – requires a dedicated tutor
 - Feedback
- Investment
 - Moodle – limited versatility at times
 - Utilisation of alternate SCORM Software
 - Adobe Captivate
- Standard
 - Students at a solid SLP 3 to 4 level allowing a broader spectrum of activities



Lessons Identified (2)

- Copyright Issues
 - Short period to resolve
 - Alleviated through utilisation of links to defence resources on YouTube etc.
 - Instructor contacts extremely useful
- Portability of products
 - i.e. utility of products generated to create learning experiences for those in quarantine
- Longevity
 - Students requested continued access to the DLP in order to complete exercises, read materials or watch videos they hadn't had time to attempt during the home study phase

Summary

- Both phases well received by students
- Success was based, at least partially, on a relatively uniform high level of English
- The groups represented a broad branch experience – CA, CS and CSS – good for staff cross-pollination.
- Focus was on practical training during both residential and home study phases