

A SECOND CHANCE: Operation PACIFIC HAVEN

by Robert W. Jones, Jr.



HAVING just returned from an Ulchi-Focus Lens exercise in South Korea, Major (MAJ) Henry J. “Hank” Henry was at home on Saturday morning (14 September) when the telephone rang. Told to come immediately to the 8th Psychological Operations Battalion (8th POB) headquarters, Henry was met by the Battalion XO, MAJ Chris Leyda and the S3, MAJ Tim Longanacre. Together they met with Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Michael Mathews, the Battalion Commander. LTC Mathews gave MAJ Henry a warning order. I was “to take a small team of specialists including my detachment, two civilian analysts from the Strategic Studies Detachment, several tactical PSYOP soldiers, and two soldiers from the Product Dissemination Battalion and deploy to Guam for Joint Task Force-PACIFIC HAVEN,” remembered MAJ Henry.¹ The task-organized unit, called a “Military Information Support Team” (MIST), would support Kurdish refugees fleeing from northern Iraq.² This article explains the psychological operations performed by the 8th POB for this little known

mission, Operation PACIFIC HAVEN, the humanitarian support of nearly 7,000 Kurds in Guam and preparing them for emigration to the United States.

The 8th POB was regionally oriented to the Middle East and Asia/Pacific. Although responsible for Asia/Pacific, B Company received the mission because Company A was completely tasked out for other duties. PSYOP soldiers from two other battalions in the 4th

MIST: A Military Information Support Team (MIST) was a non-doctrinal organization created in the 4th POG to support ambassadors in the U.S. Southern Command’s area of responsibility. The team provided PSYOP support to either an ambassador or to a supported commander. The size, composition, and capability of a particular MIST was mission-specific.⁴

1996, A Busy Year for Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF)



In addition to numerous Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) readiness exercises and training missions, ARSOF units supported contingency missions worldwide. In Europe, ARSOF soldiers supported conventional forces in Operations JOINT ENDEAVOR (Bosnia) and ABLE SENTRY (Macedonia). ARSOF soldiers conducted a non-combatant evacuee operation, ASSURED RESPONSE in Liberia. In the Western Hemisphere ARSOF supported Operation SEA SIGNAL with Haitian migrants in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, while others, primarily 7th Special Forces Group, supported Operation SAFE BORDER, a peacekeeping mission on the Ecuador/Peru border.



ground, he could ask for additional help from the battalion or group if necessary. To cover many contingencies, and to be self-sufficient for at least thirty days, the MIST brought computers, two risographs (high speed presses), two loudspeakers, and a 12-foot video screen and projector.⁸ On Tuesday morning, after a quick predeployment briefing, they joined B Company, 96th Civil Affairs Battalion at Pope Air Force Base. Both elements received no further mission guidance prior to take-off. The two groups boarded a C-141 Starlifter and landed on Guam on the afternoon of 19 September, two days after the first contingent of Kurds had arrived, because of delays en route.⁹ This humanitarian mission resulted from the Kurdish rebellion against Saddam Hussein following Gulf War of 1990-91.

Examples of leaflets used during Operation PROVIDE COMFORT. They were a map of the camp with assistance locations marked; a warning about mines; and rules for receiving aid once the refugees got to a safe location.

After the Iraqi military defeat in Kuwait in March 1991, Kurdish groups in northern Iraq rebelled against Saddam Hussein's government. Saddam Hussein responded with a brutal military offensive that targeted civilians with artillery and chemical weapons to crush the rebellion. Masoud Barzani, the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) leader, said that over three million Kurds had fled into the mountains of northern Iraq and towards

the Turkish border for safety.¹⁰ Having its own rebellious Kurdish minority, Turkey did not allow the refugees to cross the border. Instead, refugee "shanty towns" sprang up in the mountainous border area. In the harsh and unpredictable weather, hundreds died of exposure and sickness. Food, water, and adequate shelter were essential for the refugees' survival. The growing humanitarian crisis forced a United Nations' response.

Psychological Operations Group (4th POG) and two experienced civilian PSYOP analysts from the 8th POB Strategic Studies Detachment (SSD), Dr. Ehsan Entezar and Dr. Joseph T. Arlinghaus, were added to the MIST as an afterthought. The two civilian analysts played critical roles during the operation.³

After receiving his warning order, MAJ Henry immediately contacted Staff Sergeant (SSG) Brad Viriden, his Non-Commissioned Officer-in-Charge (NCOIC) to alert the rest of the soldiers.⁵ Several soldiers were on a funeral firing detail that morning. SSG Viriden caught them as they finished the ceremony. "As we began to turn in our weapons, SSG Viriden showed up with a packing list and a verbal warning order for the deployment to Guam," said Specialist Brian Furber.⁶ A telephone call from SSG Viriden surprised Specialist Craig Coleman. "I had just returned from Operation ASSURED RESPONSE [the non-combatant evacuation from Liberia] and was still assigned to the 9th PSYOP Battalion," said Coleman. "I was not scheduled to transfer to the 8th POB for another week."⁷ The weekend "off" was consumed with packing for the mission.

On Monday morning (16 September 1996) the 8th POB only had a deployment order to Guam. On the surface the mission seemed simple; support the Joint Task Force with PSYOP information products. The rest was left up to MAJ Henry and his team, who had to figure it out. Once on the

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) passed two resolutions in response to Saddam Hussein's actions. On 3 April 1991, UNSC Resolution 687 called for Iraq to give "assurances of peaceful intentions and prohibited the use of weapons of mass destruction."¹¹ Two days later, the UNSC passed Resolution 688, condemning Iraqi actions and asking member states to provide humanitarian aid and support to the Kurds and other refugees in northern Iraq.¹² The United States government responded to the crisis first.

President George H. W. Bush ordered U.S. European Command (EUCOM) to stand up a Joint Task Force (JTF) to



8th PSYOP Battalion DUI



4th POG DUI



One of the many refugee "shanty towns" that sprang up along the mountainous Iraq-Turkey border. Hundreds died of exposure and sickness in the harsh and unpredictable weather.



Kurdish refugees fleeing Saddam Hussein's forces with all their worldly belongings pause for a rest on a road near a refugee camp. The refugees received aid from CJTF-Provide Comfort at the camp. (DOD Photo by JO1 J.D. Dimattio, 4/1/1991)

begin humanitarian assistance operations on 6 April 1991 from Incirlik Air Base, Turkey. When British and French forces joined the effort, the task force became Combined Joint Task Force PROVIDE COMFORT (CJTF-PC). Its mission was to "provide relief to the refugees and enforce the security of the humanitarian efforts of the CJTF as well as the various non governmental organizations attending to the needs of the Kurds."¹³ The UN created a Kurdish "safe haven" in northern Iraq. It became known either as the "Provide Comfort" zone or the "Autonomous Kurdish Region." The zone assumed a *de facto* quasi-independent country status supported by the Coalition.¹⁴ The zone was protected with a Coalition-enforced "No-Fly Zone" to prevent the Iraqis from conducting offensive flights.

On 24 July 1991 Operation PROVIDE COMFORT (OPC) evolved into a second phase called Operation PROVIDE COMFORT II (OPC II). In effect, the northeast portion of Iraq (the ethnically Kurdish area) became a United Nations

(UN) supported protectorate zone. In October 1995, the UN assumed responsibility for the humanitarian aspects of OPC, while the CJTF-PC provided security. "Provide Comfort is a triad, so to speak: a security force for the 3.2 million people in northern Iraq, a deterrent force against Iraqi aggression, and a humanitarian relief effort," said U.S. Air Force Brigadier General John R. Dallager, the co-commander of CJTF-OPC II.¹⁵ The Kurds established a 105-seat Kurdish parliament after 1992 elections in the OPC zone.¹⁶ Humanitarian efforts became secondary to deterring Iraqi attacks on the Kurds. The relative peace and safety in the protectorate zone were broken in the summer of 1996 when internal fighting broke out among rival Kurdish groups.

The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) each had equal power in the parliament. In August 1996, political relations deteriorated into all out fighting. The intensity escalated

In the relative safety of a CJTF-Provide Comfort camp near Zaku, Kurdish refugees fill containers with purified water. Clean water saved hundreds of lives.





Map of Iraq showing the two No-Fly zones and the Kurdish area that became the Operation PROVIDE COMFORT zone.

between 17 and 22 August, when, in a surprise move, the KDP allied with the Iraqi Army to seize the PUK controlled city of Erbil. The city was significant for several reasons: it was the site of the Kurdish Parliament; and the headquarters of the Iraqi National Congress that opposed the Iraqi government. With his new allies, Saddam Hussein launched a 40,000-man force into the OPC area.¹⁷

In response to the Iraqi offensive the CJTF-PC II commander launched air strikes (Operation DESERT STRIKE) against the invaders and ordered all coalition personnel withdrawn from northern Iraq.¹⁸ The Republican Guard and *Mukhabarat* (intelligence service) moved into the void. Opposition leaders and coalition supporters were killed.¹⁹ The air strikes stopped the overt Iraqi offensive and forced a withdrawal, but the KDP and Saddam Hussein had accomplished what they wanted.²⁰

During the five years of OPC, the coalition and Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) had hired local Kurds as interpreters, drivers, and to perform other jobs. Now the local workers were at risk of retaliation by Iraqi and KDP forces. Rather than leave its former employees in a life-threatening situation, the Department of State (DOS) received presidential approval to implement a voluntary evacuation.²¹

The DOS solution was a two-phase operation. First,

Operation QUICK TRANSIT (QT), conducted primarily by the DOS and the U.S. Air Force providing transportation support, would move the Kurdish refugees from northern Iraq to an intermediate safe area for immigration screening and processing.²² The second phase, Operation PACIFIC HAVEN (PH) conducted on Guam, would support the process, including housing, and then get the refugees to the USA or other countries.

JTF Quick Transit (JTF-QT) delivered the Kurds first across the border into Turkey and then to Guam. Simultaneously to receive the refugees, an Air Force-dominated JTF PACIFIC HAVEN, supporting the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), was stood up at Andersen Air Force Base, Guam. The island was selected as an intermediate staging base for two reasons; first, it had recently vacated housing associated with the 1993 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process.²³ Secondly, Guam was a remote secure site to evaluate and process the refugees seeking political asylum.²⁴ The Kurdish

refugees could not “walk out the gate” of the base and find refuge in the United States; they needed documentation to emigrate.²⁵ The two JTFs focused on transportation, housing, and processing, without considering how to prepare the refugees for life elsewhere.

Additional military forces were needed to perform the humanitarian mission on Guam. In the beginning, the JTF PACIFIC HAVEN staff and assets came primarily from Air Force and Navy units stationed on Guam. Significant Army augmentation came from U.S. Army Pacific Command (USARPAC), Hawaii. The 25th Infantry Division sent infantry and military police units as a security force. The Department of the Army tasked the active and the Army Reserve for specialized units and individual augmentees. These were the sources of administration, medical, engineering, public affairs, and linguistic support.²⁶ It took time to accumulate these assets. The Fort Bragg-based Psychological Operations and Civil Affairs units were landing as the other forces converged on Guam.

When MAJ Henry’s MIST arrived in Guam, there was an asset already in place, SSG Carl S. Alerta from the PSYOP Forward Support Detachment in Hawaii. “The notification to deploy to Guam was short-notice ... approximately two hours. About 10 a.m. [Friday 13 September] I was told



Operation QUICK TRANSIT moved the Kurdish refugees from northern Iraq to Incirlik AFB and then to Guam. Operation PACIFIC HAVEN cared for the refugees on the island until they received immigration clearance and left for the United States.

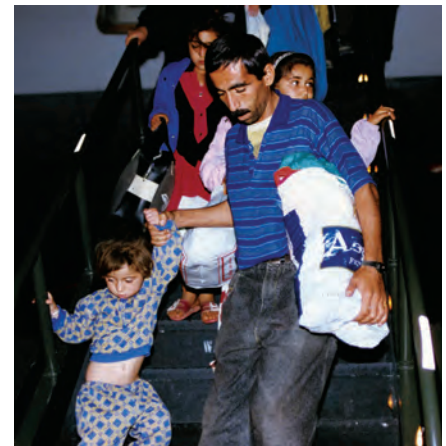
by the J-32 colonel that I had two hours to get my things packed for deployment to Guam,” said SSG Alerta. “This meant that I had to drive to my residence on the other side of the island, pack and return by noon. I accomplished the requirement, but wound up packing a bag full of dirty clothes, since I hadn’t done my laundry.” As it turned out, Alerta could have done several loads of laundry. The U.S. Pacific Command team rushed to the Honolulu airport and then waited for a flight later that evening.²⁷

Until additional personnel arrived, the five-man team was slotted as advisors to the 13th Air Force (JTF-PH), because it had not trained as a Joint Task Force. The five PACOM advisors included a U.S. Marine colonel from J-3 Operations, a Navy Public Affairs officer, a medical operations planner, a Reserve Civil Affairs LTC, and SSG Alerta as the PSYOP planner. “We were included because there were no PSYOP or CA assets on Guam and the JTF staff had no PSYOP or CA planning experience,” commented Alerta.²⁸

SSG Alerta began advising the JTF-PH commander and staff on what the Fort Bragg PSYOP assets en route could do for him. He was also a one-man PSYOP advance party, arranging for billets, finding working space, and setting up transportation. MAJ Henry discovered that SSG Alerta coordinated everything necessary “to get in and get set up for the operation,” said MAJ Henry.²⁹ Four hours after they arrived the MIST was ready to operate.

The DOS planned for a single group of Kurdish refugees. Initially the primary concern of JTF-QT was getting the refugees out of harm’s way. A key planning assumption was that the entire mission would take 30 to 60 days. Once the refugees landed on Guam, the lead agency switched from the DOS to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). On Guam a myriad of government agencies, including the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, helped the DHHS prepare the refugees for emigration. JTF-PC established a Humanitarian Assistance Center (HAC) to coordinate the governmental,

A father helps his daughter down the stairs of a plane. The Kurdish refugees had just completed a 17-hour flight from Turkey to Guam. (DOD photo by PH1 Kurt Lengfield, 9/96)



private volunteer, and non governmental organizations (NGOs) that came to assist.³⁰

In spite of the short preparation time, JTF-PH developed a good reception plan for the Kurds. Once on Guam, they received everything from medical to security screening. Since the initial group of refugees were former employees, and family members that worked for the U.S. Agency for International Development’s Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance and CJTF PROVIDE COMFORT, the 30-60 day processing assumption seemed valid.³¹ How the refugees would be prepared for assimilation in their new country was not factored.

When the commercially contracted planes landed at Andersen AFB, the Kurdish refugees were greeted and given a hot meal. Assigned volunteer escorts helped each family through the reception and screening process, which included customs, medical screening, and an initial INS interview. Buses then transported the families to the Andersen South Housing Area for housing assignment. Once installed, the Kurds began the bureaucratic waiting game tied to an approval to emigrate. Since the Kurds had arrived in extended family groups, they were kept together. As families were cleared, they waited to fill a charter aircraft to go to the United States.³²



A volunteer escort meets a Kurdish refugee family upon arrival at Andersen AFB, Guam. The volunteer would help the family through customs, medical screening, and an initial INS interview. (DOD photo by PH2 Rex Cordell)



A Kurdish refugee boy carries food for his family to his temporary home at Andersen AFB, Guam from the dining facility. The sign on the right assures the Kurds that the food is "Free from Pork," meeting Muslim religious dietary customs. (DOD photo by PH2 Rex Cordell, 19 Sep 1996)



Medical personnel take a blood sample from a newly-arrived Kurdish boy who is being comforted by his father. The medical screening procedures were critical for getting approval to emigrate. (DOD photo by PH2 Jeff Viano)

Andersen South was a furnished housing area for the refugees. The Base Housing Office provided all furniture and household items, from pots and pans to linens. A centralized dining facility was set up in the center of the community to provide three hot meals a day. But, after the first few weeks, Kurdish leaders asked that the families be allowed to cook at home. Food, with special attention to Muslim dietary restrictions, was provided from a central issue site.

MG Dallager named Air Force LTC Elwood Johnson the Andersen South "Mayor," to coordinate refugee operations. In a "four-plex" in the center of the community, near the dining facility and hospital, he established an office with PSYOP, CA, and supply departments in the other three apartments. Co-located with the Kurds in the community LTC Johnson eliminated many issues before they became problems. He hosted meetings with the Kurdish leaders and held open "town hall" meetings for the community at large.³³

Medical care became the responsibility of the U.S. Air Force 36th Medical Group. The USAF brought in a 14-bed mobile hospital from Japan to help with medical screening and medical support of the refugees. The Navy and the Army provided additional medical assets as the operation continued. Every refugee had to receive a complete medical examination, including the required vaccinations. In the process, more than thirty children were born on Guam, automatically making them U.S. citizens.³⁴

One factor that greatly assisted the operation was local volunteer support and donations from the military and civilian communities on Guam. Since many Kurds arrived with little more than the clothes on their backs, the local community's outpouring of goodwill was a godsend. Clothing, household items, toiletries, toys, and other things amounting to \$650,000 were donated, as well over 40,000 volunteer hours.³⁵

To provide for the refugees' religious needs, the Navy sent its first Muslim Chaplain, Lieutenant (Junior Grade) M. Malak Abd Al Muta'ali Noel, Jr., to Guam.³⁶ Air Force and Navy engineers built two mosques in the housing area. While over ninety percent of the Kurds were Muslim, there were also Syrian or Chaldean Christians, so local Christian chaplains provided religious services.³⁷

When the MIST got to Guam, the first groups of Kurdish refugees had been there between 48 and 72 hours. The MIST went into "reaction mode," producing information products as fast as they could to reduce the culture shock on the refugees. There had not been time for pre-deployment training. However, the MIST had a head start: "Our training for Ulchi-Focus Lens had been intense. It helped us develop and refine Product Development Center (PDC) procedures," said MAJ Henry.³⁸ Added to the standing operating procedures they had a solid foundation for all activities.

While MAJ Henry briefed the JTF on his unit's capabilities, the rest of the team assessed the needs of the Kurdish refugees. In reality, the PSYOP soldiers had two target audiences; the refugees and the JTF staff who had



Civilian and military volunteers sort through clothing donated on Guam. The local community donated \$650,000 worth of clothing, household items, toiletries, toys, and other things, as well over 40,000 volunteer hours during the six months of the operation. (DOD photo by PH2 Rex Cordell, 19 Sep 1996).



A sample marriage certificate. One of the duties of the Muslim chaplain was to "re-marry" many of the Kurdish couples to provide them proper emigration documentation.

never worked with PSYOP and did not understand the capabilities. "It became apparent early on that we would need to train the Task Force [staff] on the capabilities/limitations of what a MIST can and should do," wrote MAJ Henry. "We ... turned away requests to translate lengthy pamphlets into Arabic for distribution. Pamphlets require too much time/equipment and translator investment with too little overall return."³⁹ One-page handbills were used to rapidly pass information to the refugees.

The PSYOP soldiers did have a "playbook" based on earlier refugee operations. During Operation SAFE

HAVEN, the 4th POG worked with Haitian refugees (classified as "economic migrants" by DOS and INS) and Cubans seeking political asylum quarantined at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and later on the Empire Range area in Panama.⁴⁰ PACIFIC HAVEN was not a "typical" PSYOP mission; the Kurds were refugees ("evacuees" or "guests" in the JTF parlance). The MIST had to plan a campaign to integrate the Kurds into Western society. "We are not conducting PSYOP on the Kurds. They are guests and we are simply providing information to make their relocation less stressful, which in turn will assist

Aerial view of the temporary lodging for Kurdish refugees, the Andersen South Housing Area, Guam. The housing area initially held over 2,400 Kurds. (DOD photo by PH2 Jeff Viano, 23 Sep 1996)



the JTF Commander in accomplishing his mission," MAJ Henry later briefed.⁴¹ The intent was to provide a smooth assimilation into U.S. society (although not all would be granted asylum there).

The PACIFIC HAVEN conditions were different from most refugee situations. The "camp" was in reality a neighborhood, albeit a temporary one. The Kurds were not living in tents in an isolated area or on the fringes of a war zone, but there were other challenges. "As you can imagine there are a lot of things you have to tell [inform] the people; things like how not to lock yourself out of your house, trash pick up, meal times, medical clinic hours, and where to go if you have a problem," said MAJ Henry.⁴² "The team (including the two PhDs [Entezar and Arlinghaus]) talked to the people, finding out their questions," said Specialist Coleman. "Then, we developed products to help them; things like camp rules, safety issues, how to operate household equipment, etc."⁴³

MAJ Henry and SSG Virden split their time between JTF headquarters and working with the MIST. The entire team, assisted by Drs Entezar and Arlinghaus, worked through the product development process. Specialist Brian Furber recalled, "For the first two to three weeks we sometimes worked 18 to 20 hours a day preparing products and working with the translators."⁴⁴ It took that long to assess and fulfill the immediate needs of the JTF. Once the JTF developed a routine ("battle rhythm"), the MIST schedule became more normal and included physical training.⁴⁵

The MIST became "Joint" with the attachment of Arabic-speaking Air Force, Navy, and Marine linguists. Arabic was a language that the Kurds either understood or spoke. Chief Warrant Officer Two (CW2) Kamran Gardi, a native Kurdish speaking aviator from Fort Hood, Texas was assigned to the JTF headquarters. A TDY order and a plane ticket to Guam arrived soon after Gardi got a call from the U.S. Army Personnel Command to confirm that he did

indeed speak Kurdish. Gardi served as a conduit for the refugee community leaders and the JTF headquarters.⁴⁶

Since the JTF staff had no experience working with PSYOP, the MIST had to show its effectiveness as a force multiplier. The MIST had to demonstrate that its PSYOP information products worked. Effectiveness could be shown almost immediately. A MIST handbill on how to operate an electric stove reduced the number of fire department responses to kitchen fires. Another describing the proper use of the garbage disposal stopped damage to both utensils and fingers. The MIST knew that the information products were simply quick fixes. They recognized that the larger mission was to prepare the refugees for life in their new home.

Dr. Entezar, a former Afghan refugee, and Dr. Arlinghaus understood that there had to be an assimilation program for the refugees. The real JTF mission was to prepare the refugees for "life after Guam." "The trauma of leaving everything you know to go to a country you know little or nothing about is terrifying. Few people will ever know how that feels, and words cannot describe it," said Entezar.⁴⁷ He knew from his own refugee experience that the Kurds needed to gain an awareness of life in America and that meant being a familiar enough with English to survive.

Since the original plans did not envision a new phase of the operation (preparing for life in a Western nation), the MIST recommendation for English as a Second Language (ESL) classes came as a surprise. The MIST was the only element that realized the JTF planning was deficient. When they raised the need, Drs. Entezar and Arlinghaus met only resistance from the JTF staff. But, their attitude dramatically changed when Lieutenant General (LTG) William M. Steele, the Commander of USARPAC visited. He specifically asked about an ESL program. That spurred a sudden interest in funding and personnel.⁴⁸ Civil Affairs personnel assisted Entezar and

Arlinghaus by getting end of year funding for the classroom materials. ESL prompted the JTF to look beyond just processing the Kurds for emigration.⁴⁹

While some Kurds spoke English, the majority of them did not. By chance, the two MIST civilian analysts had experience with ESL programs. Dr. Entezar had earned his PhD in applied linguistics from the University of Texas at Austin. He had taught language, including developing and administering the U.S. Peace Corps Dari (Farsi) language program. Dr. Arlinghaus had taught English in Nepal as a Peace Corps volunteer before earning his doctorate in history. After LTG Steele's visit there was a whirlwind of activity as the two analysts designed a prototype ESL syllabus for the Kurds. The result was a 4-week program with classes running half a day, three times a week. Dr. Entezar coordinated with Guam Community College (GCC) and the University of Guam for ESL materials. The GCC textbook was more practical and was adopted for the Kurdish ESL classes.⁵⁰



A MIST product to help the refugees. The "garbage disposal handbill" helped prevent fingers and utensils from getting chewed up.



Specialist Four Sarah Williams teaching one of the ESL classes. Assigned to the 8th POB and deployed with the MIST, she had been a teacher before joining the Army. As the ESL program expanded more teachers were needed to meet the demand. (DOD photo by PH2 Kevin Tierney)

The ESL program took on a life of its own as JTF support grew. In addition to the two MIST analysts, Air Force, Navy, Coast Guard personnel, and local civilians volunteered to teach. But first, the teachers had to become students. Dr. Arlinghaus taught an introduction to the Middle East, Kurdish culture, the refugee process, and why the people were seeking asylum. Dr. Entezar instructed them in the basics of ESL teaching and provided suggestions on how to relate to the students. After a lot of work over a few short days, the two analysts prepared to launch the ESL program.⁵¹

One task remained, to determine the student's English language skill levels before classes began. In a normal academic situation, this is done with a formal written test. However, since the MIST did not have a test, Dr. Entezar personally conducted five to ten minute interviews with every candidate, before assigning them to a skill level and class.⁵²

The pilot program began on Monday, 7 October 1996, with fifty students in three classes: beginning, intermediate, and advanced. However, a problem arose the day classes began. Entezar was inundated with requests for ESL from Kurds not selected for the first classes. With the increased demand there had to be drastic action. The ESL classes were temporarily halted. After a lot of work training additional teachers and finding classrooms, the greatly expanded program was restarted on Monday, 14 October, as "The Freedom School," with over 300 students in 19



Dr. Ehsan Entezar teaching an ESL class. This program was designed to help facilitate integration into American society. (DOD photo by PH2 Kevin Tierney)

mixed gender classes. As classes progressed, interim tests enabled some students to move into more advanced groups. The expanded program called for Drs. Entezar and Arlinghaus to teach, manage the classes, and develop additional materials to help the teachers and students.⁵³

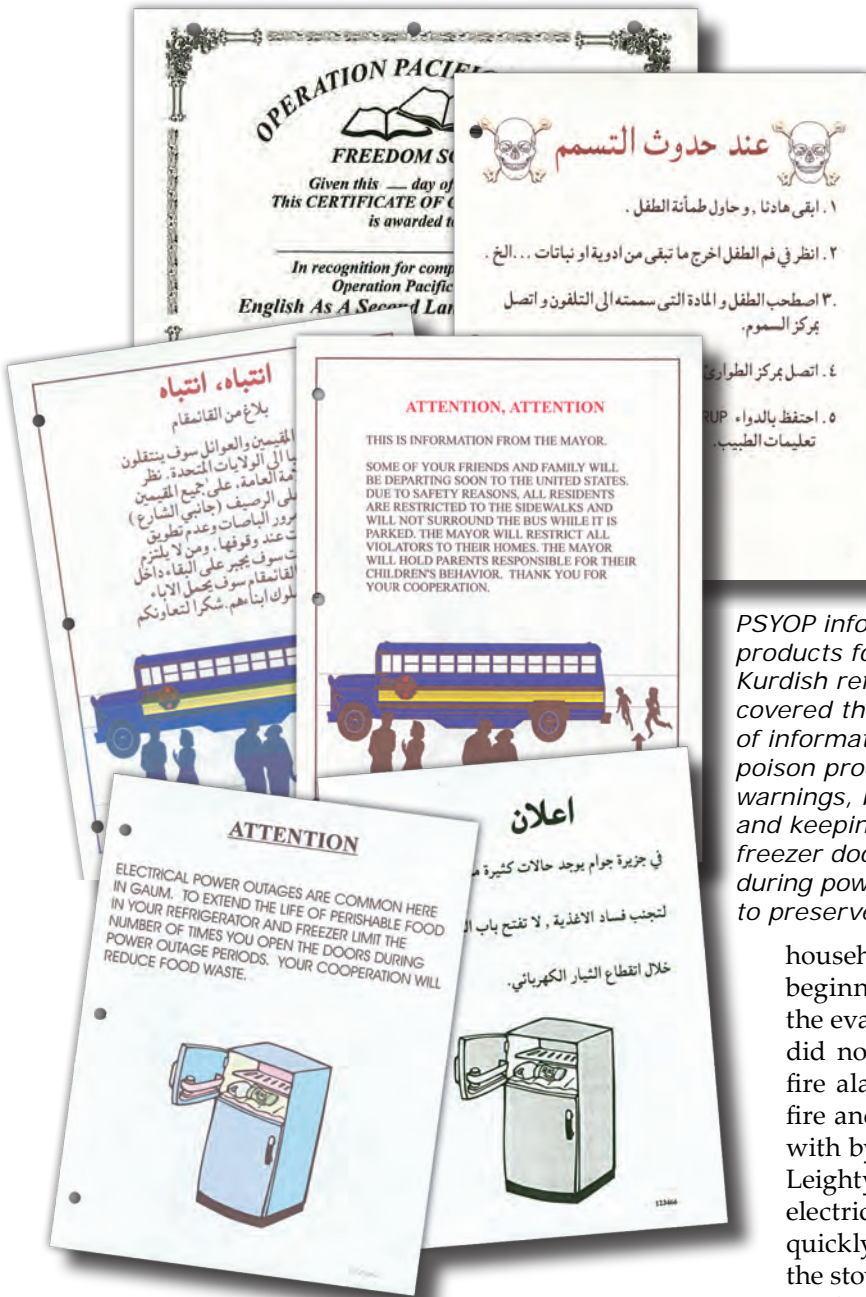
The Kurds received the ESL program with enthusiasm. The classes provided structure to their days rather than just sitting idle waiting for emigration. "Following formal instruction at the day's end we would see the women students assemble children in their driveways, each seated on a box for their family English instruction. They would review what they had learned that day with their kids. It was moving!" said Major Henry.⁵⁴ The MIST provided printed classroom materials and simple English language information sheets for the bulletin boards around the community. Starting with the "Schoolhouse Rock" television program, the MIST expanded the Kurds exposure to the U.S. by installing a 12-foot video screen and projector in the recreation center. "We began showing movies four to five times a day," said MAJ Henry. The movies helped the Kurds learn English and gave them additional familiarity with the United States.⁵⁵

The initial ESL classes graduated just as the first visas to the United States were approved. Once the INS cleared an entire family, they received permission to travel. Sponsors across the United States, from family members to private religious organizations, volunteered to help the Kurds. The states most supportive of immigration were Missouri, Tennessee, Minnesota, and Washington.⁵⁶

Due to other mission requirements, the 4th POG decided to replace the MIST in November 1996. MAJ Henry's detachment was scheduled for a demining operation in Cambodia in early 1997.⁵⁷ MAJ Charles A. Tension had just over a week to prepare the second MIST from the 8th POB for Guam.⁵⁸ The two civilian analysts, Drs. Entezar and



Dr. Joseph Arlinghaus shares a joke with his students while teaching an ESL class. Entezar and Arlinghaus were critical to getting the ESL program started during Operation PACIFIC HAVEN. (DOD photo by PH2 Kevin Tierney)



the DOS concluded that there was “a well founded fear of persecution,” which made them eligible for evacuation.⁶¹ In mid-October 1996, another QUICK TRANSIT Task Force (QT II) was stood up at Incirlik AFB in Turkey, to be quickly followed by QUICK TRANSIT III (QT III) in December 1996.⁶²

The QT II and QT III airlifts more than doubled the number of refugees in Guam. The original PH plan changed, adding to the scope and duration of the operation. The refugees from QT I were still trickling out of Guam, when the first of 4,380 new refugees began to arrive. A second community was established at the U.S. Navy Tiyan Housing Area (formerly part of Naval Air Station Agana) that was vacated as part of the 1993 BRAC.⁶³

PSYOP information products for the Kurdish refugees covered the gamut of information; poison product warnings, bus safety, and keeping the freezer door shut during power outages to preserve food.

Problems solved with the first group of refugees arose again. Fortunately MAJ Henry’s MIST had alerted the new team of the latest arrivals and left copies of their product development sheets and computer files. The new groups of Kurds had to be oriented and informed about the basic living rules. “A simple thing, such as translating instructions on labels of cleaning and

household products was something we thought of in the beginning, so the basics wouldn’t be absolutely foreign to the evacuees,” said MAJ Charles Tennison.⁶⁴ “The Kurds did not understand American technology. If the home fire alarm went off the Kurds did not associate it with fire and smoke. The loud annoying noise was best dealt with by using a broom handle to stop it,” said SSG Cliff Leighty.⁶⁵ Several women even tried to bake bread in the electric clothes dryers. Simple information sheets were quickly printed and distributed, telling the people to use the stove oven.⁶⁶

The information products produced by the MIST were not sophisticated compared to other operations. Instead of taking the time to do free hand drawings, all of the information products were made using off the shelf computer graphics. “We put out a weekly newspaper, household information leaflets, and bulletin board notices to saturate the communities with information,” said Leighty.⁶⁷ Until the Kurds began learning English, the MIST-produced information products were virtually the Kurds’ only source of knowledge. The refugees were surrounded by a radically new culture and information was critical to understanding.

Operation PACIFIC HAVEN was a classroom for both the PSYOP soldiers and the refugees. On Guam, the Kurds had time to adjust to a new life in the United States. The ESL classes were a critical cultural component for the Kurdish assimilation, not just to survive, but to also prosper in the United States. English lessons included practical activities, such as check cashing, letter writing,

Arlinghaus, remained for a few extra weeks to transition the ESL program over to Civil Affairs. The second MIST arrived in time to greet the first Kurds from the subsequent lifts of refugees.⁵⁹

SSG Clifford D. Leighty, assigned to the 4th POG’s Product Dissemination Battalion, was on the second MIST. “As we were checking our bags, I noticed the Fayetteville Airport [luggage] tags were labeled “GUA.” “I asked what that meant and was told the Guatemala [Guatemala City] airport. That would have been a bad way to start the mission. We had to get all the bags rechecked for Guam [GUM],” said Leighty.⁶⁰ The two MIST teams had a one-week overlap to get oriented. It proved critical.

After the initial lift of refugees (QT I), the Department of State (DOS) was flooded with additional requests for asylum. Ten separate United Nations agencies and sixty-three NGOs petitioned DOS to protect their former employees with immigration. After a quick investigation,

The Civil Affairs Mission in PACIFIC HAVEN

To support Operation PACIFIC HAVEN the 96th Civil Affairs Battalion (CAB), the only active duty civil affairs battalion in the Army at the time, received the initial mission. The 96th CAB, a 220 soldier battalion, supported operations and training exercises worldwide. Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Michael Rose tasked his B Company with the mission. Major (MAJ) Patrick A. McCarthy, the company commander, issued a warning order to the company and nineteen soldiers to prepare for deployment.¹ Like the 8th POB MIST, the CA unit had received little information concerning the mission before the flight to Guam.

Arriving a few days after the first Kurds got to Guam, the Civil Affairs contingent established its headquarters next to the Mayor's office in the Andersen South housing area. MAJ McCarthy focused his small force on five areas. McCarthy and the company headquarters reviewed future JTF requirements. His CA teams conducted liaison between the Kurds and the JTF; managed cultural assimilation and assisted with the English as a Second Language (ESL) program; coordinated the distribution of supplies and resources with the Mayor; and assisted the INS on asylum issues.² B Company, 96th CAB worked the first part of the operation, from 18 September to 2 November 1996.

Because of continued worldwide requirements, the active Army CA normally remained on site for 60 days. This gave U.S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command (USACAPOC) time to mobilize Reserve CA forces from the 351st Civil Affairs Command in Mountain View, California. However, individual volunteers came from units across the country.

To meet the requirement unit administrators and operations officers began calling the Reserve soldiers at home and work. LTC Stephan Maxey, a Los Angeles Police Officer, was offered the command of the provisional Reserve unit. LTC Maxey arrived on Guam in late November 1996. CPT Richard Sele volunteered to serve as a CA operations officer in the JTF headquarters, and arrived in October.³

The composite USAR CA Detachment assembled in Hawaii for a mission brief from the PACOM staff before flying to Guam. On the island the Reserve CA personnel began the transition with the 96th CAB soldiers. They were assigned duties based on their CA experience and civilian backgrounds.⁴

The CA Reservists, like the second MIST, were assigned increased duties. The QUICK TRANSIT II and III lifts were beginning to arrive, adding 4,380 more Kurdish refugees to the JTF-Pacific Haven

mission. Taking responsibility for running the ESL program and setting up the new camp in Tijan became two of the top priorities.⁵ The ESL program prepared the Kurds to live in the United States and kept them busy while they waited to emigrate.

The Civil Affairs involvement to Operation PACIFIC HAVEN centered on coordination between the JTF and the Kurds. B Company, 96th CAB, was the "first CA responder" and shaped the battle space for the USAR CA unit. The CA Reservists provided the long term commitment and brought their civilian specialties to enhance mission accomplishment. The composite USAR CA unit remained on Guam until the end of Operation PACIFIC HAVEN in April 1997.

Author's Note: This is a thumbnail sketch of the Civil Affairs mission in Operation PACIFIC HAVEN. The focus of this article was PSYOP. As historical materials become available a fuller recounting of the CA mission will be possible.

Endnotes

- 1 From 1974 to 2006 the 96th Civil Affairs Battalion (CAB) was the sole CA unit in the active Army. In 2006 the 97th CAB activated, followed by the 95th CA Brigade. Ultimately the active duty CA force will be four battalions and a brigade headquarters; B Company, 96th Civil Affairs Battalion supported the U.S. Pacific Command Area of Responsibility; Major Patrick A. McCarthy, Company B, 96th Civil Affairs Battalion, interview by Senior Master Sergeant Robert J. Davis, tape recording, 24 October 1996, Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; Command History Division, Headquarters Pacific Command, Camp H.M. Smith, U.S. Pacific Command History, Volume I, 1997, 120.
- 2 McCarthy interview, 24 October 1996.
- 3 Lieutenant Colonel Stephen E. H. Maxey, interview by Lieutenant Colonel Robert W. Jones, Jr., digital recording, 15 February 2008, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; Lieutenant Colonel Richard K. Sele, e-mail to Lieutenant Colonel Robert W. Jones, Jr., 18 July 2008, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 4 Sele e-mail, 18 July 2008.
- 5 U.S. Pacific Command History, Volume I, 1997, 112, 115; Sele e-mail, 18 July 2008.



96th Civil Affairs
Battalion DUI



351st Civil Affairs
Command DUI



The first groups of Kurds leave Guam after getting clearance to emigrate to the United States. (L to R) Kneeling, partly obscured is the JTF-PH commander, MG Dallager, standing is Rear Admiral Brewer, the deputy commander, and then the lone Army representative, CPT Richard Sele, from the 321st Civil Affairs Brigade.

and grocery shopping. “America has already given them clothes, food, and housing here in Guam. I just do not want them to expect that when they get to the States,” said Dr. Entezar.⁶⁸ At least a few of the Kurds repaid the United States for opening its doors for a new life. CW4 Kamran Gardi, the Kurdish speaking aviator, met several who were working in northern Iraq as interpreters for the U.S. Army during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM.⁶⁹

The deployment to Guam became a PSYOP “classroom.” On Guam, in a secure environment, the PSYOP soldiers could see the entire product development process from start to finish rather than isolated in a forward operating base or a headquarters hundreds of miles from the target audience.⁷⁰ “If I wanted to talk to the people and get their opinion you would just walk out the door and it was just down the block,” said Cliff Leighty.⁷¹ The organization and size of the MIST allowed the soldiers to cross train in other areas to gain additional skills. The MIST was also able to practice tactical information operations, one of the many aspects of psychological operations that is often buried in the bottom of the PSYOP toolbox and only brought out when needed.⁷² ▲

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Endnotes

- 1 Lieutenant Colonel (R) Henry J. Henry, e-mail to Lieutenant Colonel Robert W. Jones, Jr., 20 February 2008, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; **In 1996 the Product Dissemination Battalion was a provisional unit of the 4th POG. It is now the 3rd Psychological Operations Battalion.**
- 2 Henry e-mail, 20 February 2008; **The “Military Information Support Team” (MIST) had become the standard task organized package for the short notice deployments common in the 4th Psychological Operations Group (4th POG) in the 1990s.**
- 3 Henry e-mail, 20 February 2008.
- 4 Department of Defense, Joint Publication 3-53, Doctrine for Joint Psychological Operations, 5 September 2003, VI-5-6; Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-05.50 Psychological Operations, (Draft), 1 July 2007, 6-6; Department of Defense, Joint Publication 1-02, Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, 17 October 2007, A-94.
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- 6 First Lieutenant Brian Furber, interview by Lieutenant Colonel Robert W. Jones, Jr., digital recording, 18 March 2008, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 7 Master Sergeant Craig Coleman, interview by Lieutenant Colonel Robert W. Jones, Jr., digital recording, 12 February 2008, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 8 Henry e-mail, 20 February 2008; Major Henry J. Henry, Company B, 8th Psychological Operations Battalion, interview by Senior Master Sergeant Robert J. Davis, tape recording, 24 October 1996, Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.; JTF – Pacific Haven MIST AAR, 6 October 1996.
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- 26 Department of the Army Historical Summary: Fiscal Year (FY) 1996, 78 <<http://www.army.mil/CMH/books/DAHSUM/1996/ch05.htm>> assessed on.
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- 37 Dr. Joseph T. Arlinghaus, interview by Lieutenant Colonel Robert W. Jones, Jr., digital recording, 6 February 2008, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; Senior Airman Aimee Groben, "A Piece of Heaven at Pacific Haven," *Airman*, June 1997, <http://www.af.mil/news/airman/0697/haven4.htm>.
- 38 Henry e-mail, 20 February 2008; Henry interview, 24 October 1996.
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- 42 Henry interview, 24 October 1996.
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