

Canadian
Forces
College

Collège
des
Forces
Canadiennes



HUMAN INTELLIGENCE AND THE CANADIAN ARMY

Lieutenant-Colonel Stephanie C. LeBlanc

JCSP 47

Service Paper

Disclaimer

Opinions expressed remain those of the author and do not represent Department of National Defence or Canadian Forces policy. This paper may not be used without written permission.

© Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, as represented by the Minister of National Defence, 2021,

PCEMI 47

Étude militaire

Avertissement

Les opinions exprimées n'engagent que leurs auteurs et ne reflètent aucunement des politiques du Ministère de la Défense nationale ou des Forces canadiennes. Ce papier ne peut être reproduit sans autorisation écrite.

© Sa Majesté la Reine du Chef du Canada, représentée par le ministre de la Défense nationale, 2021..

CANADIAN FORCES COLLEGE - COLLÈGE DES FORCES CANADIENNES

JCSP 47 - PCEMI 47
2020 - 2021

SERVICE PAPER – ÉTUDE MILITAIRE

HUMAN INTELLIGENCE AND THE CANADIAN ARMY

By Major Stephanie C. LeBlanc

“This paper was written by a candidate attending the Canadian Forces College in fulfilment of one of the requirements of the Course of Studies. The paper is a scholastic document, and thus contains facts and opinions which the author alone considered appropriate and correct for the subject. It does not necessarily reflect the policy or the opinion of any agency, including the Government of Canada and the Canadian Department of National Defence. This paper may not be released, quoted or copied, except with the express permission of the Canadian Department of National Defence.”

Word Count: 2,525

« La présente étude a été rédigée par un stagiaire du Collège des Forces canadiennes pour satisfaire à l'une des exigences du cours. L'étude est un document qui se rapporte au cours et contient donc des faits et des opinions que seul l'auteur considère appropriés et convenables au sujet. Elle ne reflète pas nécessairement la politique ou l'opinion d'un organisme quelconque, y compris le gouvernement du Canada et le ministère de la Défense nationale du Canada. Il est défendu de diffuser, de citer ou de reproduire cette étude sans la permission expresse du ministère de la Défense nationale. »

Nombre de mots : 2.525

HUMAN INTELLIGENCE AND THE CANADIAN ARMY

AIM

1. The aim of this service paper is to analyze and recommend options for how best to synchronize Canadian Army (CA) human intelligence (HUMINT) collection efforts within the broader Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) HUMINT landscape. The implementation of minor adjustments will serve to better integrate the capability, thereby improving the effectiveness of HUMINT contributions to the overall intelligence picture.

INTRODUCTION

2. Canadian doctrine defines HUMINT as, “a category of intelligence derived from information collected from and provided by human sources.”¹ Low-level HUMINT gathering was a highly valuable intelligence source employed by Canadian battle groups during peace support operations in the 1990’s.² During Canada’s subsequent period of commitment in Afghanistan, HUMINT collection became increasingly formalized. Specialized HUMINT training qualified select personnel to execute more advanced source operations than those typically conducted in the 1990’s. This enhanced layer was superimposed onto the low-level collection that still occurred.

3. HUMINT encompasses the processing of information from another human for the purpose of fulfilling the commander’s information requirements (IRs).³ While the contribution of other means of collection help to inform a more rounded, all-source intelligence picture, this paper will consider only the HUMINT discipline. The broad

¹ Department of National Defence, B-GL-357-001/FP-001, *Land Force Information Operations Field Manual: Intelligence* (Ottawa: DND Canada, June 2001), 7.

² Army Lessons Learned Centre, “HUMINT during Peace Support Operations,” *Dispatches: Lessons Learned for Soldiers* 8, no. 1 (2001): 3, http://armyapp.forces.gc.ca/SOH/SOH_content/B-GL-050-000-FT-003%20%282001.1-EN%29.pdf.

³ Department of National Defence, *Land Force Information Operations*, 116.

progression of the Canadian HUMINT capability will be explored from its infancy to today, offering context to the development of the specialty-trained element. The two main functions of HUMINT will be delineated, linking low-level contributions in each to the respective specialist elements. Gaps in both training and familiarity with the function will be identified. The paper will close with recommendations for how best to tie the CA into the broader HUMINT domain, to the mutual benefit of each.

DISCUSSION

4. Building on the low-level successes in Bosnia-Herzegovina, emphasis on HUMINT collection grew significantly in the late 1990's and early into the Afghanistan era.⁴ CAF members applied, underwent selection, conducted HUMINT training, yet remained in their trades and returned to their units, awaiting an opportunity to employ their skills. Small teams were formed for deployments and then returned again to their units on completion of their tour, thus constraining meaningful advancement of the capability. Higher-level authorities were limited during this period. Joint Task Force X (JTF X) was subsequently established in 2009 under Canadian Forces Intelligence Command (CFINTCOM),⁵ allowing for greater expansion of the discipline within the CAF.

5. JTF X is "responsible for the provision of strategic, operational and tactical HUMINT resources in support of DND/CAF programs and operations."⁶ The collection

⁴ Jessica Davis, "From Kosovo to Afghanistan: Canada and Information Operations," *The Maple Leaf* 6, no. 3 (2005): 39, <http://www.journal.forces.gc.ca/vo6/no3/doc/informatio-01-eng.pdf>.

⁵ Ian MacAlpine, "Joint Task Force X Receives Funding for Indoor Firing Range," *The Kingston Whig-Standard*, November 23, 2018, <https://www.thewhig.com/news/local-news/joint-task-force-x-receives-funding-for-indoor-firing-range>.

⁶ "Joint Task Force X: Conducting Human Intelligence Operations Worldwide," *The Maple Leaf* 19, no. 4 (April 2016): 8, <http://intranet.mil.ca/assets/DefenceTeam/docs/en/news/tml/2016/04-en.pdf>.

of HUMINT on Canadian citizens is not permitted,⁷ and therefore the function is only utilized in a deployed context.⁸ As such, JTF X is responsive to the requirements of the force employers of operations abroad. As specialized CAF HUMINT is a finite resource, it cannot be present in every theatre of operation. Strategic decisions regarding which theatres will receive such support must be made, beyond the sole influence of the CA.

6. Even when formally trained operators are not in a given theatre, there is still significant benefit to be derived from low-level HUMINT gathering. This harkens back to the organic “social patrolling” collection employed in Bosnia-Herzegovina.⁹ Anyone who has frequent contact with the local population, or who travels regularly off the base or camp has excellent potential to inform IRs.¹⁰ The mere existence of more advanced capabilities (whether present in that theatre or not) does not obviate the need for more foundational collection. Every soldier is a sensor and “can make a contribution to the intelligence picture, regardless of primary task in theatre.”¹¹ Yet while low-level HUMINT is tremendously valuable, insufficient training is offered to CAF members to guide them in its conduct.

7. HUMINT is comprised of several sub-disciplines, the two dominant ones being source handling and interrogation. Source handlers gather information from willing

⁷ David McGuinty, *Special Report on the Collection, Use, Retention and Dissemination of Information on Canadians [...]*, (Ottawa: National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians, 2020), 20, https://www.nsicop-cpsnr.ca/reports/rp-2020-03-12-sr/special_report_20200312_public_en.pdf. Strategic debriefing is an exception to this constraint, and is regulated by stringent authorities limiting its occurrence.

⁸ Department of National Defence, B-GJ-025-201/FP-001, *Canadian Forces Joint Publication CFJP 2-1 Intelligence Operations* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2017), J-2.

⁹ Lisa Elliott, “Finding a Balance: A Study of the Canadian Army’s Approach to Human Intelligence in an Asymmetric Environment,” (master’s thesis, Royal Military College of Canada, 2005), 13, <https://search-proquest-com.cfc.idm.oclc.org/dissertations-theses/finding-balance-study-canadian-armys-approach/docview/305388911/se-2?accountid=9867>.

¹⁰ Army Lessons Learned Centre, “HUMINT during Peace Support Operations,” 6.

¹¹ Elliott, “Finding a Balance,” 104.

individuals who possess knowledge that is of intelligence value,¹² whereas interrogators endeavour to obtain such information from unwilling sources.¹³ Prior to 2016, the interrogation course was only open to Intelligence Operators or Officers, but is now open to all trades.¹⁴ The source handler course has always been available to all occupations, and as of late 2020 has been established as its own trade (00392 - Source Handler Operator). This will deepen the pool of deployable operators, but may reduce exposure of the capability to the CAF population, possibly decreasing general awareness of the function's existence and utility.

8. Training to support the low-level acquisition of information from unwilling sources exists presently in the CAF. The Canadian Forces School of Military Intelligence offers a five-day tactical questioning (TQ) course to members of all trades. It trains non-Intelligence personnel in “the first questioning and screening to which a [prisoner of war] PW is subjected to obtain information of immediate tactical value.”¹⁵ This low-level HUMINT interaction affords the benefit of acquiring cursory information in the field before the source is potentially handed to an interrogation team for subsequent systematic questioning. This natural linkage between the low-level collection activities and the specialized interrogation function has been employed successfully within the CAF for

¹² “Joint Task Force X: Conducting Human Intelligence Operations Worldwide,” *The Maple Leaf* 19, no. 4 (April 2016): 8, <http://intranet.mil.ca/assets/DefenceTeam/docs/en/news/tml/2016/04-en.pdf>.

¹³ “Human Intelligence: Changing the Face of the Modern Battle Environment,” *The Maple Leaf* 18, no. 3 (March 2015): 5, <http://cfintcom.mil.ca/websites/Resources/cdi/carousel/ML%20-%20March%2015.pdf>.

¹⁴ *Interrogator Assessment Centre 2016* (CANFORGEN 082/16 JTF X 003/16) 031439Z May 16). The course is open to all trades except: Chaplain, Military Police Officer, Military Police and Conduct After Capture Instructors.

¹⁵ Department of National Defence, B-GJ-005-110/FP-020, *Prisoner of War Handling Detainees and Interrogation & Tactical Questioning in International Operations* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2004), 4-1.

nearly two decades.¹⁶ The rapidly gained initial information supports the development of the tactical picture. Often the TQ stage determines that interrogation is not required, thus reserving the limited specialized resources for when they are most needed.¹⁷ No similar such low-level training or established link between initial interactions with willing individuals and specialized source handling currently exists within the CAF.

9. The sheer volume of interactions with locals that troops routinely experience suggests that it is statistically more likely to obtain information from willing sources than from relatively infrequent opportunities with captured PWs and detainees. A poll of thirty-nine United States (U.S.) Army HUMINT Warrant Officers supports this reasoning, indicating that 60.5% considered source operations the most important task that falls to their trade, compared with 0.5% believing interrogation was foremost.¹⁸ Accordingly, it stands to reason that there would be more to gain from shifting CA efforts toward preparing members for low-level intelligence collection from willing individuals. Further, the sheer size of the CA compared to the pool of specialty resources calls for soldiers' involvement in the process.

10. Low-level information gathered can stand alone as a contribution to the intelligence picture, or the source might be fed into the established specialized source handling capability if it is present in that particular theatre. As with TQ, the goal is not exclusively to hand off a contact to specialized HUMINT operators, as not all sources

¹⁶ David A. Charters, "Canadian Military Intelligence in Afghanistan," *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence* 25, no. 3 (2012): 482, <https://doi.org/10.1080/08850607.2012.652533>.

¹⁷ Department of National Defence, *Land Force Information Operations*, 141.

¹⁸ Walter A. Gonzales, "Does U.S. Army HUMINT Doctrine Achieve its Objectives? What Have Iraq and Afghanistan Taught Us?" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2013), 68, <http://hdl.handle.net/10945/32827>.

have the potential to provide significant, meaningful intelligence. However, in casting a wide net, the likelihood of developing valuable relationships increases.

11. JTF X currently provides on-demand sessions of tailored Interviewing, Debriefing and Elicitation training to a unit within the Canadian Special Operations Forces Command, but not to the CA. While the sessions include some elements of TQ as well, it covers a range that encompasses more of the breadth of HUMINT capabilities. The U.S. Marine Corps also offer similar low-level introductory training for its members, which has also proven beneficial to its organization.¹⁹

12. Another important factor in maximizing HUMINT productivity is to ensure awareness to increase its utility in operations. Intelligence is a command-driven function and therefore the commander is at the core of a mission's intelligence focus.²⁰ If a commander is ignorant as to how HUMINT should be employed, or its value, it will not be exploited to its fullest potential. This issue was observed as long ago as Bosnia-Herzegovina, where the "lack of awareness and, therefore, support for a properly functioning intelligence architecture meant that much intelligence, especially HUMINT, was lost."²¹ This general unfamiliarity among non-Intelligence members remains extant. Chronic deference to technical means coupled with lack of understanding of HUMINT's effectiveness has been viewed as a barrier to embracing the vital contribution it makes.²²

13. This point applies to the full range of HUMINT activities. Therefore, the decision to task troops already conducting patrols to perform low-level collection, up to the

¹⁹ Elliott, "Finding a Balance," 78-79.

²⁰ Department of National Defence, *Land Force Information Operations*, 15.

²¹ Elliott, "Finding a Balance," 81.

²² Bernd Horn, "From the Cold War to Insurgency: Preparing Leaders for the Contemporary Operating Environment," in *The Difficult War: Perspectives on Insurgency and Special Operations Forces*, ed. Emily Spencer (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2009), 207, http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_mdnd/D2-248-2009-eng.pdf.

decision to include specialized interrogators and/or source handlers in the table of organization and equipment (TO&E) is affected. Restrictions on the number of personnel who can deploy on a mission are often imposed, so every component must fight to justify their demands. If a commander has no exposure to HUMINT, the likelihood of its inclusion is dramatically reduced. The CAF training system needs to ensure that junior officers, who may one day become commanders, have better awareness of the intelligence function and how best to employ it in theatre.²³

14. Similar value is gained when non-Intelligence officers fulfil key staff roles, and are advising commanders. They are in a better position to promote the value of HUMINT if they have been acculturated. In the same vein, an increased return on investment results when junior officers leading patrols have a holistic view of how their tactical actions fit into the broader intelligence picture. Existing knowledge of HUMINT's utility, alongside improved communications with unit Intelligence staff further support this aim, and enhance patrol planning.²⁴ Increased knowledge among senior non-commissioned officers further supports the broader employment of the function. This also increases buy-in from the soldiers themselves, and facilitates better flow of intelligence.²⁵ Education across the board, specifically targeting the officer corps enhances application of the capability.

CONCLUSION

15. The utilization of HUMINT in the CAF has grown from mostly low-level, though valuable collection efforts in the 1990's, to the development of an established unit

²³ Elliott, "Finding a Balance," 83.

²⁴ Department of National Defence, *Land Force Information Operations*, 135.

²⁵ Elliott, "Finding a Balance," 105.

employing a specialty-trained HUMINT capability. As a result, the mentality has shifted to a reliance on specialized interrogators and source handlers in favour of continued low-level collection. The CA must not simply be an intelligence consumer, but also a contributor. The two tiers must work together to form a holistic intelligence picture, to aid in satisfying the sense function. The CA's population is sizeable and it faces frequent exposure to local populations while deployed. These factors demand increased participation in collection. A better all-around understanding of the HUMINT capability by commanders and their staff would increase its application, enabling an improved intelligence picture as a second-order effect.

RECOMMENDATIONS

16. The broad recommendations of this service paper are twofold. An absence of training in low-level HUMINT collection has been identified. The first recommendation urges the implementation of formalized training for CA members to enhance low-level collection opportunities. The second seeks to address the lack of awareness of the function and its utility among non-Intelligence members.

17. While low-level interactions involve astute observation and basic conversation skills, there is far more to consider than just being attentive and personable. Just as TQ teaches the legal parameters of the questioners' actions, a basic source handling introduction course should do the same. This would ensure that well-meaning soldiers are aware of constraints and what is permissible given their lack of specialized training. It should also teach skills to maximize potential outputs of these interactions. If this course is taught by Source Handler Operators, this will support the forging of early linkages between CA members and the specialized component.

18. Further, while competencies can be taught, outcomes would benefit from the application of discretion in which soldiers are nominated for such training. Those chosen should already possess conversation skills and be at ease interacting socially.²⁶ As HUMINT collection is valuable in a broad array of theatres, such instruction would not need to be tied to theatre-specific pre-deployment training and could be offered at and time. Training in the maximization of low-level interactions will benefit CA operations where specialized resources are not present, and will enhance those where direct linkages are possible.

19. Non-Intelligence commanders, staff and soldiers need not be experts in the intelligence collection process. However, outcomes do benefit greatly from them having an understanding of their role in the cycle and knowledge of the range of intelligence capabilities available. The breadth of HUMINT's function and the significant potential it bears to aid in the fulfillment of IRs is not well known or understood across the CAF. Given its utility in such a vast array of operational theatres, the CA would stand to benefit from increasing awareness of the capability among its personnel. Members of the Intelligence branch themselves can support such a campaign from a grass-roots level within their units and formations. More formally, courses such as the Army Operations Course could benefit from briefings by members of JTF X, and the inclusion of scenarios employing HUMINT. Minor systemic changes can easily result in a better understanding of the value of low-level and specialized HUMINT, bringing the function from a niche capability to one of mainstream utility.

²⁶ Kevin R. Wilkinson, "Unparalleled Need: Human Intelligence Collectors in the United States Army," (master's thesis, United States Army War College, 2013), 5, <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA590270.pdf>.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Army Lessons Learned Centre. "HUMINT during Peace Support Operations." *Dispatches: Lessons Learned for Soldiers* 8, no. 1 (June 2001): 1-29. http://armyapp.forces.gc.ca/SOH/SOH_content/B-GL-050-000-FT-003%20%282001.1-EN%29.pdf.
- Canada. Department of National Defence. B-GJ-025-201/FP-001. *Canadian Forces Joint Publication CFJP 2-1 Intelligence Operations*. Ottawa: DND Canada, 2017.
- Canada. Department of National Defence. B-GL-357-001/FP-001. *Land Force Information Operations Field Manual: Intelligence*. Ottawa: DND Canada, 2001.
- Canada. Department of National Defence. B-GJ-005-110/FP-020. *Prisoner of War Handling Detainees and Interrogation & Tactical Questioning in International Operations*. Ottawa: DND Canada, 2004.
- Charters, David A. "Canadian Military Intelligence in Afghanistan." *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence* 25, no. 3 (2012): 470-507. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08850607.2012.652533>.
- Davis, Jessica. "From Kosovo to Afghanistan: Canada and Information Operations." *The Maple Leaf* 6, no. 3 (2005): 33-42. <http://www.journal.forces.gc.ca/vo6/no3/doc/informatio-01-eng.pdf>.
- Elliott, Lisa. "Finding a Balance: A Study of the Canadian Army's Approach to Human Intelligence in an Asymmetric Environment." Master's thesis, Royal Military College of Canada, 2005. <https://search-proquest-com.cfc.idm.oclc.org/dissertations-theses/finding-balance-study-canadian-armys-approach/docview/305388911/se-2?accountid=9867>.
- Gonzales, Walter A. "Does U.S. Army HUMINT Doctrine Achieve its Objectives? What Have Iraq and Afghanistan Taught Us?" Master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2013. <http://hdl.handle.net/10945/32827>.
- Horn, Bernd. "From the Cold War to Insurgency: Preparing Leaders for the Contemporary Operating Environment." In *The Difficult War: Perspectives on Insurgency and Special Operations Forces*, edited by Emily Spencer. Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2009, 193-229. http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2020/mdn-dnd/D2-248-2009-eng.pdf.
- "Human Intelligence: Changing the Face of the Modern Battle Environment." *The Maple Leaf* 18, no. 3 (March 2015): 5. <http://cfintcom.mil.ca/websites/Resources/cdi/carousel/ML%20-%20March%2015.pdf>.

Interrogator Assessment Centre 2016. CANFORGEN 082/16 JTF X 003/16, 031439Z
May 16.

“Joint Task Force X: Conducting Human Intelligence Operations Worldwide.” *The Maple Leaf* 19, no. 4 (April 2016): 8.
<http://intranet.mil.ca/assets/DefenceTeam/docs/en/news/tml/2016/04-en.pdf>.

MacAlpine, Ian. “Joint Task Force X Receives Funding for Indoor Firing Range.” *The Kingston Whig-Standard*. November 23, 2018.
<https://www.thewhig.com/news/local-news/joint-task-force-x-receives-funding-for-indoor-firing-range>.

McGuinty, David. *Special Report on the Collection, Use, Retention and Dissemination of Information on Canadians in the Context of the Department of National Defence and Canadian Armed Forces Defence Intelligence Activities*. Ottawa: National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians, 2020.
https://www.nsicop-cpsnr.ca/reports/rp-2020-03-12-sr/special_report_20200312_public_en.pdf.

Wilkinson, Kevin R. “Unparalleled Need: Human Intelligence Collectors in the United States Army.” Master’s thesis, United States Army War College, 2013.
<https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA590270.pdf>.