



15 (United Kingdom) Psychological Operations Group  
**Annual Report 2007/08**





# Psychological Operations



- A weapon of mass communication
- A weapon of precision communication
- A line of action to manoeuvre effect



## Foreword by the Commanding Officer

Lieutenant Colonel Jim Suggit

The military philosophy of manoeuvre focuses on an enemy's centre of gravity, the source of his freedom of action, his physical strength and will to fight. Emphasis is placed on attacking enemy cohesion and its defeat and disruption, rather than attempting to take or hold ground.

Psychological operations (PSYOPS) - meticulously calculated and resolutely applied to persuade an enemy, or other authorised target audience, to think and act in a way for our advantage - are a central tenet of Manoeuvrism. The United Kingdom's current and foreseeable commitments on expeditionary missions have given emphasis to the significance of PSYOPS in close, deep and rear lines of action against those who challenge us and also in supporting that which is popularly termed as "winning hearts and minds."



This is 15 (UK) PSYOPS Group's first Annual Report since it attained Initial Operating Capability with new multi-media equipment supplied through MOD DEC ISTAR Project DRUMGRANGE during 2007. These comprise mobile AM and FM commercial radio broadcast systems, TV editing suites and large-volume print production units, together with antennæ, power generators and various other ancillary needs.

DRUMGRANGE has coincided with the Group being brought close to full Establishment manning. The combined circumstances represent a substantial improvement of UK PSYOPS contingency production capability, marking progress towards realizing scales set out in policy and to meeting hitherto identified gaps.

In broad terms, the UK now has the conditional capacity to field two doctrinal multi-media PSYOPS Support Elements - one regular and one reserve, or permutations of both - subject to manning, training and mobilisation factors. The Group has restructured and is addressing evolutionary training for optimal exploitation of new systems and to support other Defence PSYOPS outputs, principally operations and associated external training.

The technology of our new systems creates considerable training obligations. Whilst receiving and training with our new equipments has been of critical importance for future contingency needs - our capacity to be able to respond to the unexpected - our main focus has remained our support to Operations. This support has been through both the deployment of a multimedia PSYOPS Support Element to Afghanistan, manned advanced PSYOPS practitioners from the Group, and by training regular and reserve reinforcements for PSYOPS staff and associated Information Operation functions. These augmentees have been predominantly British, but our students have also routinely included Servicemen and women from NATO, European Union and other partner nations.

In consequence, 2007 has been a particularly busy and challenging year. We expect 2008 to be even more demanding. Enough said.





## Purpose

The purpose of PSYOPS is to influence the perceptions, attitudes and behaviour of individuals or groups of people (the Target Audience) causing them to act in a manner that supports the achievement of the Commander's end-state. This may take weeks, months or even years to implement and achieve. The crucial difference between PSYOPS and most other military activities is that the resultant behaviour of the Target Audience is ultimately consensual. Thus, PSYOPS has the potential to produce enduring results, particularly in the area of conflict prevention and resolution. Whilst coercion is definitely a psychological activity that may lead to short-term effect, once the coercion is removed protagonists might revert to their previous behaviour pattern. By contrast, successful PSYOPS is more subtle and leads to a change in perception, attitude or behaviour. When employed wisely, PSYOPS can lower enemy morale by creating doubts, dissidence and disaffection within its ranks or can provide the means to understand, communicate with and influence the Target Audience. Specifically targeted, PSYOPS can weaken the will of the enemy, reinforce the support of the loyal and gain the support of the uncommitted.

## Definition

The UK defines PSYOPS as:

*'..planned, culturally sensitive, truthful and attributable activities directed at approved target audiences within the Joint Area of Operations in order to achieve political and military objectives'*.

NATO defines PSYOPS slightly differently, which reflects the differing needs of contributing Nations:

*'Planned psychological activities using methods of communications and other means directed to approved audiences in order to influence perceptions, attitudes and behaviour, affecting the achievement of political and military objectives'*.

## Concept

PSYOPS, in seeking to influence the perceptions of the hostile, is clearly an integral part of shattering the enemy's overall cohesion and will to fight. However, its use as an influence weapon in manoeuvre warfare is known, but not well understood. Used imaginatively, and carefully coordinated and synchronised with other political and military activities, PSYOPS seeks to gain advantage over the enemy in the moral and intellectual, rather than (but not exclusively) the physical arena. PSYOPS can also contribute to the protection of friendly cohesion and fighting spirit by maintaining the support of the sympathetic and gaining the support of the uncommitted. In shaping the battle-space, PSYOPS may be the Commander's main means of shaping the moral and intellectual environment and may also be able to assist in shaping the physical battle-space.

PSYOPS generally delivers its 'munitions' in the form of information and ideas, aimed at attacking loyalties, hatreds, fears and misconceptions. PSYOPS aims to break down cohesion by undermining the moral and intellectual links between hostile leaders and their followers, leaving them unwilling to respond or fight effectively. Creating the perception in the adversary's mind that the achievement of his end state is impossible, and attempts to do so will be costly, is fundamentally a psychological activity aimed at creating the perception of his own defeat; In this way PSYOPS, allied to credible force, may even render conflict unnecessary. Dissemination of PSYOPS messages through the written or spoken word, symbology and other visual imagery can all be used singly or in combination, in leaflets, printed articles, radio and TV broadcasts, face to face engagement, the Internet, text messaging and loudspeakers. To be effective, PSYOPS output must be truthful, attributable and credible, empathising with cultural, historic and social considerations, and be sympathetic to Target Audience perceptions to reinforce concerns, fears, prejudices or aspirations. In isolation, PSYOPS is unlikely to achieve real results and must be supported by, and integrated with, the overall Campaign Plan from the outset.



## 15 (UK) PSYOPS Group

Since 1945, various *ad hoc* military and civilian PSYOPS organisations have been formed in the UK to support Operations and subsequently disbanded. Following the Gulf War of 1991, the UK formed a shadow PSYOPS capability called 15 (UK) PSYOPS Group (Shadow). A double-digit prefix number was selected to identify the Group to avoid any confusion with US counterparts; the Roman numeral 15 was chosen, as PSYOPS activities in support of 21 Army Group during WWII were conducted by Amplifier Units numbered 10-14. The Group adopted the stags head formation sign in recognition of the sterling work carried out by the Indian Field Broadcast Units that supported the Chindit campaign against the Japanese in South East Asia. The deer's antlers represent the combat support function of PSYOPS and the antennae associated with radio, a major means of disseminating PSYOPS messages.

15 (UK) PSYOPS Group is the custodian of PSYOPS expertise and exists to *'provide a PSYOPS planning and production capability to deployed UK forces undertaking both multinational and national Joint Operations in order to enhance their military effectiveness'*. Lodged at the Defence Intelligence and Security Centre at Chicksands near Bedford, the Group is a Tri-Service unit under Army command, subordinate to 1 Military Intelligence Brigade, Theatre Troops and LAND. Currently manning is drawn from 37 regulars and 28 reservists from the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Army combat and combat support arms, Royal Air Force and RAF Regiment. Equipped with advanced Print production and Broadcast equipment, the Group is able to plan, produce and disseminate PSYOPS messages without censorship or interference, which is one of the crucial factors that separates the aim and conduct of PSYOPS from that of Media Operations. The Group provides training for PSYOPS practitioners and individual augmentees and is maintained at High Readiness for Operations. The Group also augments the Joint Force HQ and other formation HQs to provide PSYOPS planning support during major Exercises and is an essential element of formation pre-deployment training and mission rehearsals.



The Group has recently restructured to accommodate advanced production equipment, vehicles and the uplift in regular manning, such that the Group now comprises 2 deployable multimedia PSEs, with an HQ element at Chicksands. This brings with it the flexibility to configure a PSE to incorporate appropriate planning and production elements with considerable reach, tailored to meet the demands of a particular Operation.







## Target Audience Analysis

The bedrock underpinning effective PSYOPS is Target Audience Analysis (TAA) linked to timely intelligence support. TAA involves the systematic study of people in order to enhance our understanding of a military psychological environment. TAA is crucial to the PSYOPS Estimate process and aims to: identify Target Audience attitudes, vulnerabilities and susceptibilities, developing lines of persuasion, key communicators and appropriate symbology and media to exploit a line of persuasion.



## Tactical PSYOPS Teams (TPTs)

TPTs enable the tactical commander to directly communicate and empathise with Target Audiences. Although usually found from appropriately trained soldiers within each Battlegroup, TPTs take their PSYOPS direction from the PSE and are a useful adjunct for gathering and assessing atmospherics and other relevant intelligence. In addition to providing PSYOPS advice to unit commanders, TPTs engage with the Target Audience, gather information and disseminate PSYOPS products and assess PSYOPS effects.







## Internal Training

The Group has a robust internal training regime that prepares regulars and reservists alike to become PSYOPS practitioners to meet the many and varied tasks they are required to undertake at home base or on Operations. Personnel are trained in the planning and conduct of PSYOPS, both operationally and tactically, and cross train on the operation and maintenance of specialist Print and Broadcast equipment, as well as developing their physical fitness and core military skills to a common high standard. The multinational nature of contemporary operations also requires Group personnel to liaise and train with allied PSYOPS units in order to enhance UK support to combined operations. Accordingly, Group personnel attend, support or instruct on NATO and other national PSYOPS courses and Exercises.

The Group comprises combat and combat support personnel from all 3 Services. To develop the common level of military skills required when deployed on Operations and Exercises, both regular and reservist personnel undertake Army Military Annual Training Tests and Annual Personal Weapons Test as a basis for development during pre-deployment training; these are over and above single Service requirements. The Group also deploys into the field at home or abroad to conduct a testing Annual Battle Camp to ensure and evaluate individual and team competencies of its regular and reservist personnel.



In order to be able to fight and operate effectively on Operations, often under arduous and stressful conditions, all personnel develop and maintain a high level of physical fitness through regular running and participation in team sports and gym work, leading to formal military physical tests and assessments. The Group also places great importance on personal and leadership development. Opportunities to introduce regulars and reservists to new skills and challenges are exploited wherever possible, including staff rides, driver training, project management and command and staff training. To develop self-confidence, fighting spirit, teamwork and a spirit of adventure, a high priority is given to the organisation of, and participation in all kinds of adventurous training.







## Exercise PHOENIX RISING

*'152 PSE is to deploy into the Task Force AOR to provide PSYOPS effects in order to destroy the enemy's will to fight, convince the indigenous population to cease hostilities and encourage popular support for the establishment of the UN recognised transitional administration as the legitimate Government'.*

Exercise PHOENIX RISING comprised the Group's Annual Battle Camp and was based on the deployment of a full, multi-media PSE to support a deployed Brigade HQ. It was an iterative learning process, providing the first opportunity to familiarise and consolidate with the Group's newly introduced equipment and refresh the military skills required to operate a PSE in the field. Emphasis was placed on teamwork and adapting and

proving the new equipment to achieve best practice, underpinned by development and evaluation of military skills. A success, the Exercise allowed the declaration of an initial operating capability of the new equipment and proved the utility of the Group's reorganisation.







## External Training

The growing recognition of PSYOPS as a key effects enabler and force multiplier has caused a significant increase in PSYOPS support and training requirements. In addition to supporting Operations, the Group provides several other key outputs; PSYOPS education and indoctrination, development of PSYOPS doctrine, capacity building, support to the Joint Force HQ and to deploying formation pre-deployment training and mission rehearsals.

### Military PSYOPS Planners Course (MPOPC)

The bulk of UK PSYOPS training is conducted during the 2-week MPOPC that the Group conducts 4 times each year. This multinational course is aimed primarily at those joining the Group and those others taking up a PSYOPS appointment, including individual augmentees. In addition to providing a comprehensive understanding of PSYOPS principles and procedures, students are exposed to some of the many nuances of PSYOPS planning and employment to prepare them for employment as part of a PSE in support of a formation HQ at the operational and tactical levels. The multinational nature of the course also provides a useful forum for exchanges of ideas and procedures. The MPOC is under constant review to ensure that it best meets Operational needs.

### Target Audience Analysts Course (TAAC)

This one-week course provides a foundation in the fundamentals of TAA, including: psychological profiling; assessment of vulnerabilities and susceptibilities; developing lines of persuasion; questioning and interview techniques; conducting focus groups and surveys; using an interpreter; product testing; and measures of effect collection and analysis.



## Tactical PSYOPS Team Training (TPTT)

This 3-day package is delivered by Group personnel at the Battlegroup location. Training encompasses PSYOPS awareness training and practices counter-PSYOPS, face to face engagement, use of interpreters, measurement and assessment of effects and other skills necessary to engage and empathise with the Target Audience.







# 15 (UK) PSYOPS Group Contribution to Operations

## OPERATION TELIC

From the outset, the Group provided a PSE that eventually located at the Basra Contingency Operating Base in Southern Iraq.

Today the Group trains individual augmentees for the PSE and provides a 'Reachback' capability from Chicksands. Surge support is provided by the Group as required, with periodic in-Theatre rotation conducted by Group Staff.







# 15 (UK) PSYOPS Group Contribution to Operations

## OPERATION HERRICK

Following the PSYOPS planning team that was integral to UK preliminary operations for Helmand Province in Southern Afghanistan, the Group now provides the bulk of the planning, TAA and production elements of the Helmand Task Force PSE in Lashkar Gar, augmented by individual augmentees and TPTs trained by the Group.

The Group also provided the Commander and some production staff at the Regional PSE based at Kandahar Airfield, supporting the Multinational Division HQ, to direct and coordinate PSYOPS across Southern Afghanistan. These posts are now found from Individual Augmentees trained by the Group prior to their deployment.







## 15 (UK) PSYOPS Group Reservists

The Group combines regular and reservist personnel seamlessly into a unified Operational organisation. The role of its reserve personnel is exactly the same as that of the regular cadre; providing staff officers and PSYOPS teams on Operations or in support of Exercises around the world. From the Balkans to Iraq and Afghanistan, reservists have integrated with their regular counterparts both within the Group and in various HQs, national and multinational. Although primarily deployed on Operations and Exercises as PSYOPS generalists, their civilian occupations, ranging from psychologists and marketing executives to technical and broadcast engineers have proven invaluable.

### Training Commitment

The Group's reservists must meet an annual commitment of a **minimum of 19 days**. Further to this, they may volunteer to participate in a wide range of Operations, Exercises, adventurous training and courses, such as those mentioned in this report.

### Employer Benefits

Group members receive training in a range of transferable skills and activities in a comprehensive package of high level training as part of their continuous professional development, including:

- . Negotiation, Mediation and Arbitration
- . Leadership
- . Project Management
- . Presentation and Communication
- . Media Awareness
- . Assessments
- . Report and Proposal Writing
- . Liaison

Group members also benefit from networking, team building, teamwork and fitness training. Many aspects of civilian employment would be enhanced by the individuals trained in these skills.

Entry Age Limits  
(May be waived in certain circumstance)

	Rank	With previous service	Without previous service	Remarks
Officer	Lt/Capt/ Maj	21-50	18-45	Primarily recruited from within the regular/reserve forces but previous civilian experience may allow for direct entry.
Soldier	All	21-50	18-45	

## Recruiting

New applications are always welcome candidates attend the Group's selection process, which takes place over a weekend twice a year. The reserves within the Group are drawn from all ranks of the Territorial Army and the Royal Auxiliary Air Force who have specific professional skills and experience to support the Group, ranging from graphic designers to film editors and radio broadcasters and as well as other vital technical and support trades.

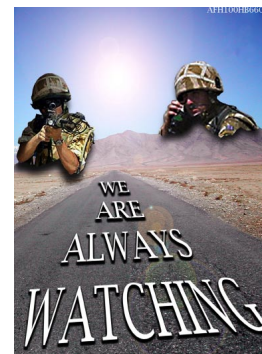






# PSYOPS on Operations Since 1945

1. The Suez Campaign 1956
2. Mau-Mau uprising (Kenya) 1952 - 1960
3. Malaya 1948 - 1960
4. Borneo 1962 - 66
5. Cyprus 1963
6. Hong Kong 1967
7. Dhofar Campaign 1970-76
8. The Liberation of Kuwait:  
Op DESERT SHIELD 1990  
Op DESERT STORM 1991
9. Former Yugoslavia  
Op PALATINE (Bosnia)  
Op JOINT ENDEAVOUR 1995 (Bosnia)  
Op LODESTAR 1996 (Bosnia)  
Op AGRICOLA (Kosovo)  
Op OCCULUS (Albania)
10. Op SILKMAN (Sierra Leone)
11. Op VERITAS (Afghanistan/Pakistan)
12. Op TELIC (Iraq)
13. Afghanistan  
Op ENDURING FREEDOM  
Op HERRICK



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