

Mission Afghanistan

Swedish Military Experiences from a 21st-Century War

Editors

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This book is a result of research on military professionalism conducted within the framework of the Swedish Armed Forces Research and Technical Development Programme.

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Now when I was a little chap I had a passion for maps... At that time there were many blank spaces on the earth, and when I saw one that looked particularly inviting on a map (but they all look that) I would put my finger on it and say, 'When I grow up I will go there.'

What redeems it is the idea only. An idea at the back of it; not a sentimental pretence but an idea; and an unselfish belief in the idea — something you can set up, and bow down before, and offer a sacrifice to. . .

The mind of man is capable of anything—because everything is in it, all the past as well as all the future. What was there after all? Joy, fear, sorrow, devotion, valour, rage—who can tell?—but truth—truth stripped of its cloak of time. Let the fool gape and shudder—the man knows, and can look on without a wink. But he must at least be as much of a man as these on the shore. He must meet that truth with his own true stuff—with his own inborn strength. Principles won't do.

From *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad

Preface

by Peter Tillberg

The images and words in this anthology are from Swedish personnel – let us call them soldiers, even though journalists and priests and not least officers of different rank are among them – sharing their experience of serving in Afghanistan.

The idea behind this book is to present a multitude of concrete examples that we can all learn from. The experience gained in Afghanistan can of course not be automatically transferred to us by only reading a book. Rather, pictures and stories should, above all, be regarded as gateways to and means of learning about military professionalism tested in real-time situations. These particular cases and examples enable us to develop our understanding, imagination and ability to conceive of what operating in crisis and conflict environments may be like.

Every soldier has a story. They have, in their professional and everyday lives, gained experience from many different areas. The soldiers we meet in this book have ended up in various places and situations and have encountered people with dissimilar values and different kinds of knowledge. They have been in numerous situations and have visited a variety of places. Their involvement in different contexts has taught them how concepts are shaped in interaction with others. Their prosperity and adversity have enabled them over time to develop military professionalism based on memories, experience and knowledge. All of this has formed them into the unique individuals and professionals they are today.

Still, the question remains: what and how can we learn from these examples?

In our conversations with the soldiers, we sometimes ask where, when and how they learned one thing or the other. It is then pretty obvious that a combination of education, training and practice has contributed to their skill and their ability to handle situations professionally. However, in the next breath, they claim that genuine military knowledge and skill do not sufficiently explain what being a true military professional means. It takes something more; it is about having a situational understanding, familiarity and a well-developed judgement.

Though such knowledge seems crucial to mastering, or even understanding, the practising of the military profession, it is difficult to actually tell when and how such knowledge is achieved. This is partly because

methods and procedures to identify and gain this kind of knowledge are rarely as developed as for other kinds, which, in turn, is due to such knowledge not being easily measured or calculated. It is also hard to find a clear cause–effect relationship with regard to human action. Applying too narrow a concept of knowledge here thus might make us miss the objective. Rather, we need to establish methods and models that personally as well as organizationally expand our understanding of different kinds of knowledge. Since professional skill is to a certain extent practical and contextual knowledge primarily manifested in action, a step in the right direction is to very much focus on particular examples where concrete action can be studied in relation to a real situation.

In the following pictures and narratives, we will find people who face complex situations in their professions. This means, among other things, that they operate in environments where their actions are met by another's independent actions. Hence, in a complex situation, there is rarely a self-evident answer to how to act but rather a number of alternatives to consider. There is an indeterminacy, and solutions to a problem are often a product of the circumstances rather than of a set of rules or principles. The information available is often insufficient, and the people on whom the soldier is dependent do not necessarily share the latter's perception of reality. Planning has to be gradual and decisions and actions re-evaluated constantly. An important conclusion is that the military profession needs a deeper understanding of how complex situations differ from complicated, simple, or chaotic ones.

Mastering complexity is a completely different skill to just conducting warfare designed to defeat an enemy. Military professionalism indeed requires knowledge of violence and its use but also an ability to extricate oneself from a spiral of violence and to start negotiating or even cooperating. The soldiers say that it might sometimes be necessary to use violence to prevent a course of events from escalating into chaos, but violence is never the final solution or the ultimate goal of a mission. Actually, it is all about using every means available to disentangle oneself from a destructive situation and promote more constructive solutions. The ability to handle complex situations requires personal training but also an organizational ability to utilize experiences. The capacity to organize this effectively is crucial to, and almost characteristic of, a modern military professionalism.

The importance of experience-based knowledge in the development of a professional corps is widely accepted among members of the Swedish Armed Forces. For some twenty years, they have supported the elaboration of methods and procedures where this kind of knowledge is at the heart. It

is primarily about employing different scientific methods to make military professionalism, epistemological perspectives and alternative courses of action visible, making us all aware of the nature of the complex situations that a professional soldier must handle. These are situations requiring assessments and where they continuously need to use their judgement to choose between different courses of action. The result of this process can lead to success but also to ineffective efforts, failure or even fiasco. The research, which takes experience-based knowledge as its starting point, seeks to produce better descriptions and a deeper understanding of how the military profession leads to effective action and meets the needs for progress and how failures and undesired results can be avoided or turned into lessons learned. *Mission Afghanistan* is thus a product of such efforts.

Using concrete examples, the images and words from these projects aim to explore what is required of a soldier serving overseas. Concepts like tacit knowledge, risk-taking, leadership, judgement, use of force, courage and responsibility have served as gateways to the exploratory dialogue and writing. Also, topics not specifically related to serving overseas have been examined and discussed: How can Swedish soldiers develop their ability to judiciously interpret what they and those around them take part in? How can we learn from our own and others' experiences? What experience and knowledge gained from the mission in Afghanistan can help strengthen the national defence capacity?

Mission Afghanistan: Swedish Military Experiences from a 21st-Century War is the third anthology in a series of books focusing on different aspects of military professionalism in complex situations encountered during an overseas mission. The 2008 book *Mission Abroad: Military Experience from International Operations* includes forty-one documents written by military personnel with experience from operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Liberia, Congo, Kosovo, Georgia and Angola. In 2013, the second anthology, *Mission Commander: Swedish Experiences of Command in the Expeditionary Era*, a book of interviews with seven Swedish senior officers, was published.









The Layout of *Mission Afghanistan*

You are about to meet Swedish military personnel who in their own images and words illustrate challenges confronted in Afghanistan. They describe situations where they have faced dilemmas different from those they had been trained for, situations never imagined, let alone foreknown, yet ones where they have had to see what needs to be done and to do it simultaneously, where few solutions, if any, are obvious, and where only sound judgement is of any help. The developments are ambiguous and changeable. Yesterday's fact may not be so tomorrow, or even today; these are situations where the accuracy of the actions taken cannot be determined until afterwards, if ever.

The book's narrators are all Swedish. Still, there is of course nothing particularly Swedish about facing dilemmas, ambiguity, danger and hardships – or having success for that matter – on an overseas mission, and neither is caring for your unit, missing your family or having relatives anxiously waiting for you. The events depicted here all have something very contextual and yet something almost universally human about them. Actually, the very purpose of this book is to give an insight into and an idea of situations the reader has not necessarily experienced. Though definitely of historical value, *Mission Afghanistan* is not a Swedish history book. Another nation's soldiers would, a reader might suggest, have made other assessments or decisions and acted differently in certain situations, but that just provides the opportunity to ask why.

We start this journey with three pieces by the reporter and author Anders Sundelin, who since the 1960s has travelled around, and written about, Afghanistan. These pieces describe a trip undertaken in 2004, i.e. at the initial phase of the Swedish mission in the country, and form a multifaceted horizon against which the stories emerge.

The second part of this book is intermixed with quotes and pictures, while part three comprises the soldiers' own narratives. One section is also dedicated to relatives putting into words their experience of having their loved ones on an overseas mission. The selection and composition of pictures and texts aim to present a multitude of perspectives and situations into which a reader can gain an insight.

Part four of this book is more in-depth. An interview with Lieutenant Colonel Martin Liander focuses on a particular part of the Afghan campaign, namely the work with the Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams (OMLTs). This task involved working with and supporting the Afghan

National Army (ANA); in other words, spending day and night with the unit you are to mentor. The chapter 'If you meet a man in a cage', by Lotta Victor Tillberg, highlights the importance of systematic reflection for the development of military professionalism.

This publication is based on material gathered during different research projects conducted by the Swedish Centre for Studies of Armed Forces and Society (CSMS). The narratives presented here are mainly from two writing seminar series undertaken in 2012 and 2014 respectively (Appendix 1 & 2). The series was conducted using the dialogue seminar method, a scientific method for analysing the influence of experience on professional skills development. In total, some twenty people, most of them officers of different rank, from sergeant to lieutenant colonel, have participated in the seminars.

The selection of narratives has also been inspired by discussions that arose between researchers and military professionals at three CSMS conferences on military professionalism and overseas service:

- 'Mission Abroad: Military Experience from International Operations', held in 2012 at the Royal Institute of Technology (KTH) in Stockholm (Appendix 3).
- 'Military Experience from Afghanistan: With One Eye on the Future', held in 2013 at Södertörn University (Appendix 4).
- 'Modern Military Professionalism: Experiences, Challenges and Possibilities', held in 2015 at KTH (Appendix 5).

Ever since the first Mission Abroad conference held in 2008 (Appendix 6), their aim has been to serve as an arena for dialogue and the exchange of experience between researchers and military professionals. On the whole, the themes and ideas that have emerged from these conferences also resonate in this publication.

Some quotes in this book are from the film *Preparing for the Unknown: Military Leadership*, by Peter Tillberg, Jörgen Hildebrandt and Lotta Victor Tillberg. The film can be accessed at <http://www.csms.se> and is the result of a research project on military leadership.

The pictures have been published with the consent of their owners. (See page 303 for more information.)

Appendices

Appendix 1: The invitation of CSMS to ‘Mission Afghanistan – Experience Forum about Military Professionalism’, held at Royal Institute of Technology (KTH) in Stockholm, August-November 2012.

Appendix 2: The invitation of CSMS to ‘Experience Forum about Military Leadership’, held at KTH, May-October 2014.

Appendix 3: The joint invitation of CSMS, KTH, the University of Gothenburg and Swedish Armed Forces to conference ‘Mission Abroad: Military Experience from International Operations’, held at KTH, 17-18 January 2012.

Appendix 4: The invitation of CSMS to conference ‘Mission Abroad: Military Experience from Afghanistan – With One Eye on the Future’, held at Södertörn University, 4 December 2013.

Appendix 5: The joint invitation of CSMS and Swedish Armed Forces to conference ‘Modern Military Professionalism: Experiences, Challenges and Possibilities’, held at KTH, 8 September 2015.

Appendix 6: The invitation of the Swedish Defence University (SDU) to conference ‘Mission Abroad’, held at the Royal Dramatic Theatre in Stockholm, 13 October 2008, and the SDU in Stockholm, 14 October 2008.

About the Swedish Centre for Studies of Armed Forces and Society

The Swedish Centre for Studies of Armed Forces and Society (CSMS) was founded in 2011 as a forum for promoting and exchanging research on and experiences of the military organization and profession. By ‘exchanging research and experiences’, we mean contributing internationally with a Swedish perspective and Swedish experiences, and nationally helping, in various ways, the Swedish Armed Forces to benefit from international experience and research on military professional practice. When CSMS was established, research focused on military professionalism had already been going on for many years, and based on these experiences, a number of prioritized research themes were formulated:

- To examine and describe different perspectives on the relationship between the military profession and organization.
- To shed light on how structures and power relations affect military professional practice. The focus is on internal organizational relationships but also on external relationships, such as democratic control and civil–military relations.
- To investigate the importance of practical and experiential knowledge of crisis and conflict environments.
- To examine the development of military experience and forms of exchanging experiences of military professional practice.
- To examine aspects of modern military professionalism, with a focus on legitimacy, control, transparency, professionalism and responsibility.
- To investigate and describe experiences of civil–military relations both in Sweden and in international contexts.

A fundamental idea behind the establishment of CSMS was, and still is, that research on military institutions is best conducted using a cross-university, cross-organizational and interdisciplinary approach as well as communicating with the international research community. CSMS thus adheres to the tradition created by the Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society, which was established in 1960 by Professor Morris Janowitz of the University of Chicago. CSMS’s multidisciplinary research aims to contribute with new knowledge of relevance to practitioners, researchers,

government agencies, organizations and civil society. The range of perspectives is just as important as well-founded dialogue and critical reflection. CSMS comprises researchers, practitioners and students from various organizations, seats of learning, institutions and academic disciplines. The starting point for CSMS's activities (research projects, conferences, courses, lessons learned forums, etc.) is that independent multidisciplinary research on military organizations is a necessary contribution to democratic influence over military activities.

A particular focus of CSMS's work concerns the Swedish Armed Forces' skills supply; in other words, how should officer and soldier training be designed to meet, for example, the new information and personnel demands? An important question is what does 'modern military professionalism' mean in a Swedish context.

Writing as a Method of Reflection

The material for this study has been produced using methods from *participatory research*, a research tradition with a practice-oriented focus. This approach entails letting the researcher, in collaboration with practitioners who have knowledge and experience of a certain profession, explore a phenomenon of common interest. In the book *Mission Afghanistan*, Swedish military personnel who have served in Afghanistan were invited to write about their own experiences. These texts have then served as the basis for dialogue and critical reflection in which colleagues and researchers have participated. The method chosen was based on a practical epistemological perspective. One of the aims here is to come as close to the primary source as possible. Those invited to write about their experiences had to choose their words with precision. Writing about your experiences is a different process from quickly answering a question or hastily expressing an opinion you cannot expand on, and it means taking a risk. The person writes reflectively and accurately if they know that what they are writing will be examined by fellow soldiers who have also served in Afghanistan, can pose critical questions and know themselves what it was like. They consult their diary entries, revisit their correspondence, speak with loved ones and colleagues, look for e-mail conversations and look at photographs. The contributors to this book have searched their memories for what mattered, for what was important. They do not exaggerate; instead, they are cautious with their words and with the details.

What happens to the skills supply and professionalism when both the threat and the security requirements change? Moreover, when new organizational conditions are to be taken into account? One way of approaching these questions is to study military experiences. What challenges have military personnel faced in both international and national contexts? What were the problems? What was required of those who were to deal with them? Which experiences are relevant to incorporate into developing a 'modern military professionalism'? What contribution should a country's armed forces and their personnel make in a society like Sweden today? These questions are important and topical, and their significance has both increased and changed in light of international developments in recent years. The Swedish Armed Forces' societal role has gone from peripheral to a central part of the solution to many of the challenges Sweden is now facing. We believe that a thorough and in-depth description of lessons learned – with many examples side by side – is a necessary starting point for a valid discussion about the military profession and professionalism.

After the wars

Three Accounts of Afghanistan by Anders Sundelin

1.

Everyone is talking about water. They are talking about drinking water. They are talking about dishwater, washing water, rinsing water, water for the animals and water for the fields (particularly water for the fields). They are pointing to the ditch you need to jump over when you enter the village, pointing and talking about water that no longer exists. They recount that they tried to direct water from the stream further away, but the dam burst, and they haven't tried again. They don't know how to do these things. They have no money to buy mortar, bricks, pipes or whatever they would now need.

What they have done instead is dug a trench along the mountainside, just twenty or thirty centimetres deep, put in a seventy-five metre or so plastic pipe, braced it with stones and then buried it. It took three weeks. Everyone in the village helped out.

So now they have drinking water. They have dishwater, washing water and rinsing water.

Water for the animals.

It is only a trickle.

There is obviously more water further down in the ground, better water, but they can't get that deep using their spades. They are of course digging into rock. They don't have any tools. They don't know how to do these things. They are farmers...no, not even farmers; they are sharecroppers, tenant farmers. They hand over two-thirds to the landowners and are allowed to keep a third for themselves. They could do with a well, a pump, but no one has been here and seen how things are for them. They haven't even been promised anything.

– Frogs, they say and turn up their noses.

They have seen frogs jump into the pipe and disappear inside. They can't do anything about it. They don't know whether this will make the water worse. In any case, they need to drink the water. It is disgusting anyway.

What they do instead at night is pray for rain.

All of Afghanistan's farmers are praying for rain. The drought has now plagued them for five years.

The village is called Dahaeri Naudi. It lies in the northern part of the central Afghanistan region of Hazarajat. The people are called Hazaras, a Mongolian people with an obscure past, feared and oppressed, poor as church

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They hand over two-thirds to the landowners and are allowed to keep a third for themselves.

”

mice. Like the other old men, Ewas Ali is squatting on the ground where the small village opens up towards the mountain. They are sitting here because they don't have that much else to do now that winter is drawing in over the mountains: chatting, contemplating, looking out across the valley and seeing a glimpse of the river flowing down there, a few kilometres away; ice-cold, fresh mountain water, but it means nothing because the wheat needs to grow in their fields.

– We have a river but no electricity, says Ewas Ali, as a kind of summary of the situation.

He is dressed like the other old men on the ground, somewhat brownish and drab, also grey, presumably ingrained dirt, holey, although here and there a loud acrylic sweater or a slightly oversized knitted cap or a pair of odd woollen gloves; clothes that look like they were picked up at a third-rate clothes collection point. His face is just as tanned as the others', his hands just as chapped and his body just as thin. Yet Ewas Ali has seen paradise.

He spent six years in Iran with his entire family. He put up with the Russians, he coped with the civil war, but the Taliban exhausted his patience. The Taliban regime gradually turned into a nightmare for most people. However, for the Hazaras it was like burning slowly in the fires of hell, because they are also a religious minority; they are Shiites, this religion of sorrow and pain, worshippers of Ali, the prophet's son-in-law and cousin who lost the power struggle after Muhammad's death. Ewas Ali, who was used to being regarded as and treated like the dregs of society, took his wife and children with him to Iran when he realized things would now be worse than ever. For him, things turned out better than ever.

He got a job on a chicken farm in Isfahan; the farm was mechanized; the work was undemanding; buttons and levers. You could eat off the floor. The owner was kind to those who did their bit, and Ewas Ali did that. Isfahan, he says smiling, was paradise on earth. It had everything: potatoes, rice and bread. You could put on the light at night there if you wanted, and he didn't even think about water.

But he nevertheless returned home once the Taliban had fallen.

No one forced him, not at all, although he probably feels deceived.

Ewas Ali returned because it was claimed that returnees to Afghanistan would be given a bit of land, a house and a tent from the United Nations while waiting for the house to be built. Two grown-up sons and a daughter remained in Isfahan, but Ewas Ali and his wife and four children left Isfahan on a bus that took them to the border. There they got to sleep in a tent, were given a blanket to sleep under, were provided with a meal and in the morning were given a yellow plastic container to take home with them.

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He put up with the Russians, he coped with the civil war, but the Taliban exhausted his patience.

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They came here because there was water. A small river flowed here, and they built their houses just above it.

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Some people were also given a tent, but when Ewas Ali asked for his, he was told there were no more. They had to hand back the blanket. Any land? No. And the house? The same there. Still, the yellow plastic container is good for carrying water.

That is why Ewas Ali is now sitting on the ground with the other old men, unemployed and at a loss, with a consuming hunger in his stomach. Yesterday, he ate potatoes and a little bread and drank a couple of glasses of tea. It will probably be much the same today, he thinks. Others have returned to Iran; some have made their way to Pakistan and on to Kabul, but not him. This time he is staying.

– This is my home, he says. Even if things are worse for me, I’m at home here.

Thirty-five, forty or perhaps fifty years ago, they moved here from a village not far away: they followed one by one, family after family, because the water over there was running out. Eventually, it did. They came here because there was water. A small river flowed here, and they built their houses just above it. Here meltwater cascaded down the mountain throughout the spring and half of the summer. They were certainly poor; they were Hazaras, but water was something they no longer needed to think about.

Now the women of the village are squatting around the trickle.

They come in the morning, just after sunrise, with yellow plastic containers in their hands, lugging yesterday’s dishes, plates and bowls to wash. They slowly fill the plastic containers with drinking water. They wash the dishes in the icy-cold puddle. They also wash shirts, socks, shawls and cloths there. They sit bunched together, brushing and rinsing, rubbing and rinsing. They have no washing-up detergent, no washing powder. Their hands are soon red and stiff, frozen, so they must take a break every so often: rubbing their hands warm again, blowing on them, shaking them backwards and forwards in the sun slowly climbing in the sky.

2.

He is not as big as you would think after seeing a picture of him, not as broad, not as stout. He is definitely no more than 170 centimetres tall, slim, with small hands and feet. He has a kind smile and an expectant gaze. He has laughter lines around his eyes. His well-groomed beard has turned grey. He looks both older and younger than his 57 years.

He is sitting on a chair a bit higher than the others’, also more comfortable, turned facing the visitors.

The visitors sit in two rows facing each other, with small tables in front of them. Tea and bowls of white, twisted sweets are on the tables.

He hardly says anything. He listens, nodding occasionally. His gaze rests on the person talking.

The visitors in the garden are speaking.

A young man in a white turban now gets up and says that he comes from Shindand. He says that thieves are prowling around at night in his home district. No one knows who they are. They break into houses and steal, then disappear. They are armed.

– We can't defend ourselves, he says. How can we defend ourselves?

He repeats the last thing numerous times, and in several ways: we are unarmed, defenceless, vulnerable.

Another man, an older man, from another district, gets up and tells a complicated story about a stolen motorbike. A commandant – this is how he introduces himself – tells how someone has run off with his twenty-eight sheep. He says that he does not know who the thieves are; even if he did, he would still not do anything about it. How is it, he asks, that some people have weapons while others don't? Why does the government disarm the population but not these thieves?

Several people speak up now, get up and tell their tales of misery and unhappiness and how much better things used to be when Ismail Khan was the governor of Herat. Everyone unabashedly talks about that, in loud and distinct voices, as if it were obvious that what they have to say is important, even if the account is long and complicated. It looks like most of them are farmers, with soiled turbans, chapped hands and well-worn galoshes on their feet.

Ismail Khan, who has been sitting quietly, listening to the visitors the entire time, says that all this is dreadful to hear. It is awful. He asks:

– Do you think I should accept the offer to become a minister in Kabul?

– No! cry the visitors. No, no, no!

There are many stories about Ismail Khan. The best known – it can be found in every book about Afghanistan's modern history – is when, as an army captain, he refused to shoot at a crowd of demonstrators and instead turned the weapons on the communist regime and its Soviet advisers. This was in March 1979. The Herat uprising had repercussions all the way up to the Soviet Politburo, which observed the course of events nervously and finally understood that it was losing control of the situation in Afghanistan; however, the uprising also spread to other places in the country, to other army units. It showed that the resistance was rooted in the state machinery, among those who were supposed to maintain order. Regarding the Herat uprising, Professor Barnett R. Rubin writes: 'It was the disintegration of the army rather than the initial military strength of the insurgents that allowed

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He says that he does not know who the thieves are; even if he did, he would still not do anything about it.

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the resistance to spread in 1979'. Ismail Khan was to become a prominent figure in the resistance movement.

There is another story:

During a reception, the mayor of Herat leans over to Ismail Khan, now the provincial governor, and whispers, 'Shall we also serve Coca-Cola?'

Almost twenty-five years have elapsed between the stories, during which Afghanistan has been invaded, occupied, torn apart, tyrannized and invaded again. Over these twenty-five years, Ismail Khan has found time to be the leader of an uprising, a guerrilla commander, a fugitive, a prisoner and a governor. He has been put to the test. He recently lost his eldest son in an attack. These days he is nothing. Now President Karzai has removed him as governor. Now his old subjects stream in through the two well-guarded doors to the city-centre palace, on Ismail Khan Street, with an armed sentry also on the street corner, to tell him of their misery, to tell him that he is the only one for them.

Ismail Khan is a nobody. However, in the large verdant garden on this cool morning, men on foot, dressed in camouflage gear, with Kalashnikovs on their backs, look around attentively; plain-clothes men move around a short distance away with their mobile phones constantly ringing, and the great palace made of marble and stone is his, as are the fleet of cars, the flowerbeds and the servants. A warlord without a public function; one of the biggest warlords, perhaps the biggest, perhaps the richest, perhaps the best armed, but also the most complex.

When the Soviet Union pulled out of Afghanistan and the victors were to divide the spoils, he opted out of the equally fruitless and endless discussions. He kept his distance from the civil war that tore the country apart, just as he has maintained a healthy distance from the party leaders in exile and the foreign powers that often controlled the resistance movement. Instead, he concentrated on his affairs. On losing the initial skirmishes with the advancing Taliban, he decided to dodge them instead of entering into battles that would have devastated Herat. He became a fugitive in Iran. However, he attempted to organize the resistance against the Taliban and was betrayed, imprisoned and tortured; he then managed to escape and began collaborating with the United States, and together they rid his home district of these Taliban, who felt so alien in Herat, the city once regarded as more modern, free and civilized than the rest of Afghanistan. (The Swedish author Torgny Sommeliuss stood on a rooftop here forty-five years ago and was convinced that he would land in cotton wool if he jumped.) This is how Ismail Khan established himself as the indisputable ruler in the west:

the Lion of Herat became the Emir of Herat, with 35,000 armed men and a huge income from customs duties on imports from Iran and Turkmenistan.

Foreign aid workers left here extolling the safety of women, stability, the efficiency, the cleanness of the streets and parks.

Blocks of flats were built here for the refugees returning home, the streets were asphalted, the electricity worked around the clock, a community park was constructed (with fighter aircraft and helicopters as decorations). Both boys and girls went to school here. Afghanistan's only working traffic lights can be found here and are, by and large, obeyed.

According to an Amnesty International report, 'a climate of fear' prevailed here: women avoided meeting men in public, university students dared not discuss political issues, and the newspapers and radio programmes were government lackeys. Herat was characterized as a 'closed society without deviating opinions and with no respect for law and justice'.

Here was a governor who actively opposed opium cultivation, invested in public works, encouraged his subjects to each plant a tree and got them to do so. Finally, having also listened to the women's stories – they are assembled in a hall inside the palace – and to further complaints from the men, he says that's enough now; he has no more time. He now needs to prepare for tomorrow's journey to Kabul and promises to take all the complaints there, present them, and those assembled know that he will be meeting President Karzai and he will fulfil his duty. So they dart up from their chairs and rush forward to him, encircling him, kissing his hands and feet and trying to get his attention because they didn't get time to before. They pass handwritten notes to him, documents, and one boy succeeds in getting him to extricate himself from the group of people, and together they go away to a bench and sit down. The boy talks and talks, says that he has no money, nowhere to live and no work. Ismail Khan listens patiently to his story, then gives him a name and address, tells him to go there, send Ismail Khan's regards and ask for a job.

He has promised an interview in the evening, at nine o'clock, but it is actually eleven o'clock by the time he finally enters one of the palace's bedrooms; it has five cut-glass chandeliers in the ceiling and beautiful hand-knotted rugs. Here not only the foreign reporter awaits him but also over thirty of his closest men sitting along the walls, on the floor: former provincial ministers, old friends, guerrilla commanders, senior officials, the kind of people who now work for him. There are fewer turbans than in the morning, and more mobile phones. The men stand up when he arrives and sit down once he is seated; they bandy words for a while, joke and laugh about bygone

days and how different everything is now, but there is silence when Ismail Khan bows his head for an instant to dry away some tears with a handkerchief he has been holding in his hand.

He has promised an interview, which he gives in the presence of those gathered.

He believes that people's safety is the most burning issue. He criticizes the authorities for having begun to disarm people. He agrees that security was not good during his time as governor, 'but now there is no security whatsoever'. He believes that people must be able to protect themselves with weapons while there is no army to do this. He says that neither he nor Karzai can do anything about this problem while this army does not exist. He supports the American troop presence, precisely because of this security situation. Once this issue has been resolved, they can leave Afghanistan.

He doesn't want to talk about his role in the jihad. He doesn't want to reflect on the ideas he had about the future when he was a thirty-two-year-old army captain. In his account, there is no 'I', only a 'we'. Afghans are Muslims, and Muslims are against communists, and that is why the Afghans rebelled against the communists. Afghans have always stood up for their independence, and that is why the Afghans refused to surrender to the invading Soviet troops.

– We are Afghans. We fight to the end. We are prepared to make great sacrifices. We are conscious of our history. That is why we did what we did.

He doesn't know why Karzai removed him. Yes, he voted. He doesn't want to say whom he voted for.

He ends the interview there. Now he must retire to his bed. Early tomorrow morning he will travel to Kabul to meet the president, who removed him and presumably did so because Ismail Khan allowed the enormous customs revenue to remain in Herat, but perhaps above all as a test and a warning to the other warlords: just you wait, one day you will disappear too!

The old lion has not yet reacted. He is biding his time.

3.

In a hall on the upper floor on the right when you get up the staircase at the far end of the empty corridor, they are trying to put together the pieces from the devastation. They work in silence. They work with brushes and toothbrushes, scalpels and scrapers. They clear, clean and expose, attempting to see what is what, carefully joining piece to piece, failing and trying again.

Two of them each wash part of a stone relief in a washtub filled with water and detergent. The relief is only about twenty centimetres tall; if you

bend down closer, you can see a row of small, exquisite Buddha figures in the lotus position. No one knows where the rest of the relief could be.

It reminds you of a wartime operating theatre, but without the groaning and screaming. In here, there is a different kind of pain. Hopefully the war is over.

If you ask any of the men around the tables a question, they look up quickly from what they have in their hands, answer kindly but monosyllabically and have already resumed their work by the time you pose the next question.

The Taliban are said to have destroyed three thousand objects here at the National Museum of Afghanistan.

Eighty of these have been repaired.

Everything is to be repaired.

Moreover, thousands of objects have been stolen and need to be searched for around the world.

In addition, about five hundred objects have not been destroyed but have been soiled and well worn after a decade-long lack of maintenance.

– We will not be finished anytime soon, but at some point in the future, says Omara Khan Masoudi.

He is the director of the National Museum of Afghanistan and takes time to answer questions. He does this with surprising assurance, often with a smile. He has served this museum for twenty-six years and as its director since the fall of the Taliban. The museum was regarded as one of the most important in Central Asia.

Afghanistan was a cultural crossroads, a melting pot of people from all points of the compass and a battlefield. The Silk Road passed through this place; empires succeeded one another here: Greeks, Turkmen, Mongols and Persians; Alexander the Great was here, Genghis Khan, Tamerlane. East met West, combining, for instance, to create the Greco-Bactrian Kingdom in the first century CE. It was here Buddha was first depicted in human form. The National Museum of Afghanistan was thus home to Buddhist frescoes from the Bamiyan Valley and statues of Buddha from various places in Afghanistan but also Roman glass, a Greek stone tablet, Hindu ivory and marble sculptures and unique Islamic art.

Now Afghan restorers are performing their Sisyphean task, guided by Italian and British experts flying in and out, giving presentations and sharing sound advice while the work goes on. UNESCO is involved, as are the British Museum, the Americans and the Japanese. The Afghans get on the bus at half past seven, get here at eight, get back on the bus at four o'clock, five days a week. This is the third year they have been doing this. They work

“

It reminds you of a wartime operating theatre, but without the groaning and screaming. In here, there is a different kind of pain.

”

“

*On a table, lined up in a row,
lie remnants that have not
found a match: hopelessly
alone, with an uncertain
future.*

”

by the light from the high windows, and this is the only light they have because the National Museum of Afghanistan has no electricity. They work with their coats on, in woollen sweaters and jackets, because it is cold in here.

On a table, lined up in a row, lie remnants that have not found a match: hopelessly alone, with an uncertain future. All the abandoned fragments and chips, such as a finger, a nose and an earlobe, have been collected in small wooden boxes.

Dressed in his nice dark-blue suit, Omar Khan Masoudi is sitting one floor down, with the tape-recorder on low (a female singer is singing in Persian), and says that when the Taliban came in September 1996, he breathed a sigh of relief.

– It wasn’t that bad. Things became calm around here. They didn’t disturb us.

The civil war was the low point.

Between 1992 and 1994, the staff couldn’t even make their way to their workplace. Here in south Kabul, the battles raged between the mujahideen government forces and the then anti-government groups; so today, in what was the New Town not that long ago, a place where city met countryside, with walled-in palaces and modern villas, verdant gardens and poplar groves, not a building remains intact, not a street free of bomb craters. On the hill opposite the museum stands the Darulaman Palace like a haunted castle, gutted and defiled, surrounded by barbed wire and fencing, guarded by soldiers behind sandbags and light machine guns.

On 13 May 1993, Omar Khan Masoudi was sitting in his office at the Ministry of Interior Affairs when he heard the news on the BBC that the National Museum of Afghanistan was on fire.

– That was a sad day, he says. I’ll never forget it.

He was sitting less than ten kilometres away and could do nothing. A rocket had hit the upper floor, which burned to the ground.

In 1995, the battles subsided and the staff rushed to their workplace. They recorded every object, noting what was missing. They began to transfer the collections that could be moved to safe places like the Kabul Hotel and the Ministry of Interior Affairs. There they were locked in the cellar. Then came the Taliban.

Omar Khan Masoudi participated in some of the discussions the Taliban regime held on the figurative non-Muslim art at the National Museum of Afghanistan. He tells how these discussions went on for two or three months and how he tried to have some kind of dialogue with the authorities and attempted to find arguments for his and the museum’s cause. In the

end, when Mullah Omar [the Taliban leader] gave the order for its destruction, there was nothing more he could do.

On one of the tables in the hall to the right in the now-restored and newly painted upper floor, among the brushes, scalpels, tubes of glue, rubber gloves and plastic tubs, stands a 50-centimetre-tall brown and white Buddha statue with well-preserved features and closed eyes. They have almost succeeded in piecing it back together again. A bit of the chin is missing, the mouth has gone, and the lower part of the body is perforated as if repeatedly hit with some sharp object. When they can do no more, the statue will be exhibited down at the entrance. Some of the other pieced-together objects already stand there to welcome the visitors. This is a crumb of comfort in this country, which, following twenty-five years of war and terror, finds itself in a situation that most resembles walking across a mine-field.

“

He was sitting less than ten kilometres away and could do nothing. A rocket had hit the upper floor, which burned to the ground.

”







“ *Why can't I breathe? Someone grabs me and shakes me. Come on now, breathe! shouts the soldier who has released me from the mozzie net, the tent-like mosquito net. He is absolutely right; I need to get a grip of things now, but why am I shaking so much?* ”













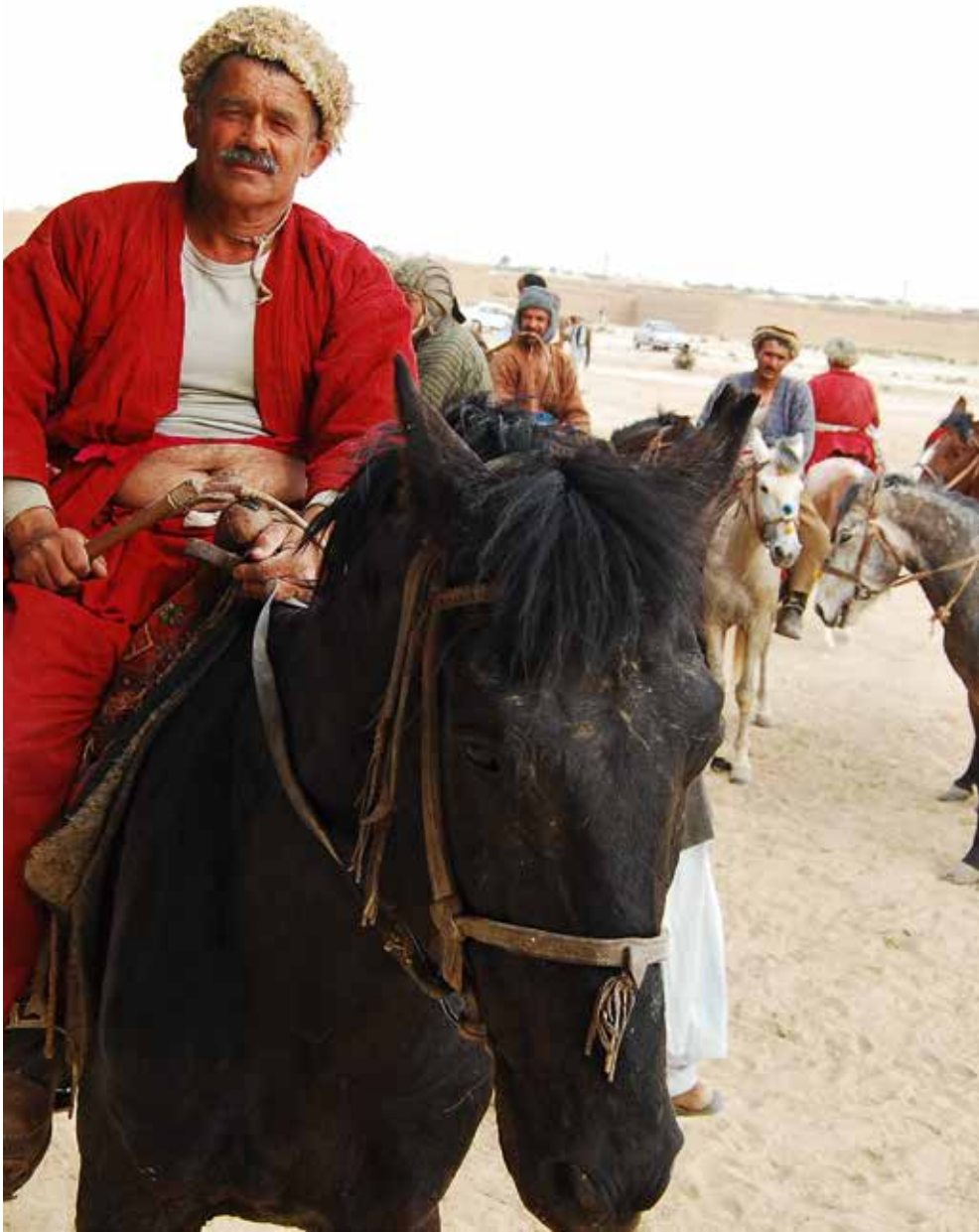


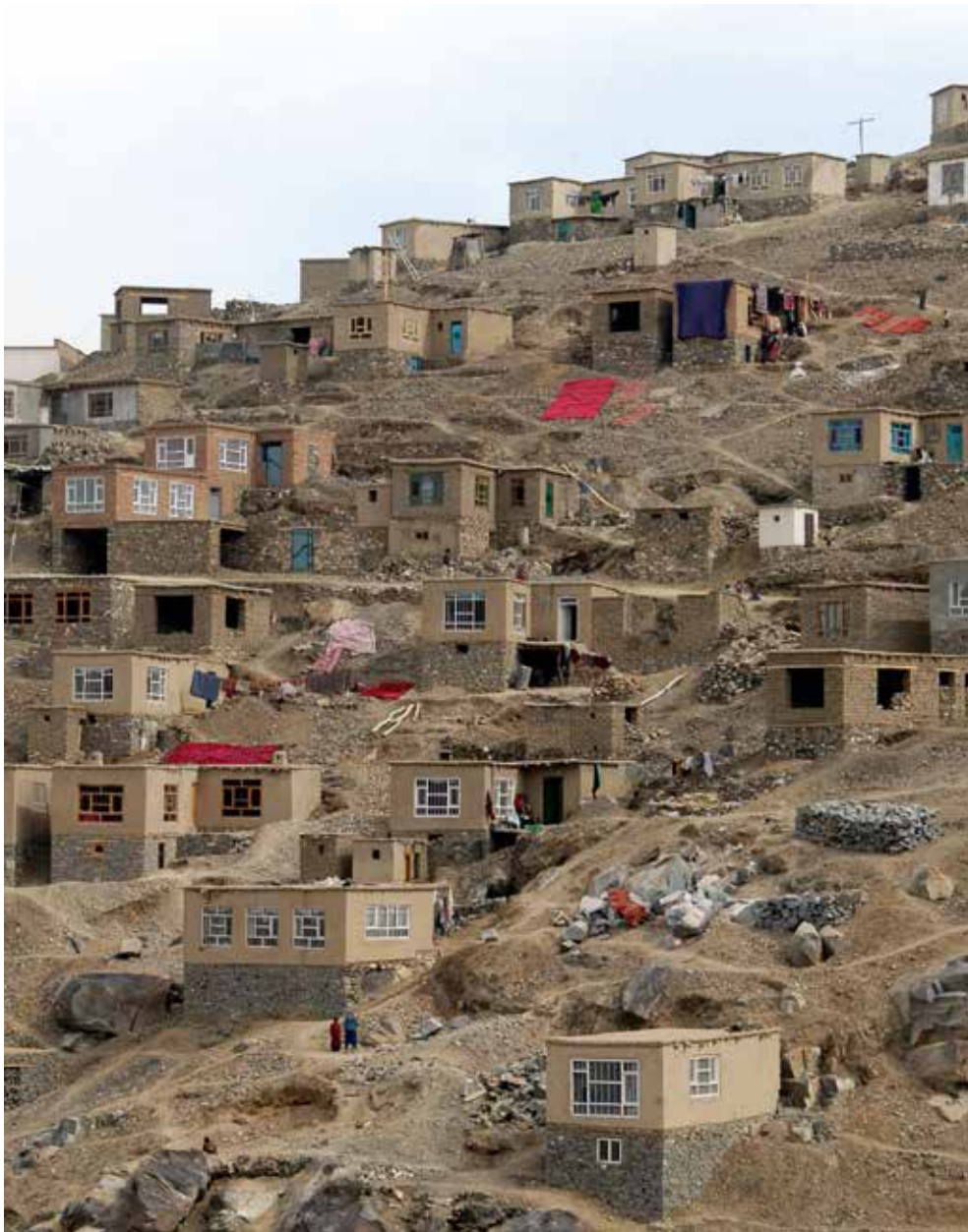
“ *Can our different worlds ever meet, meet in such a way that we contribute to security and reconstruction?* ”









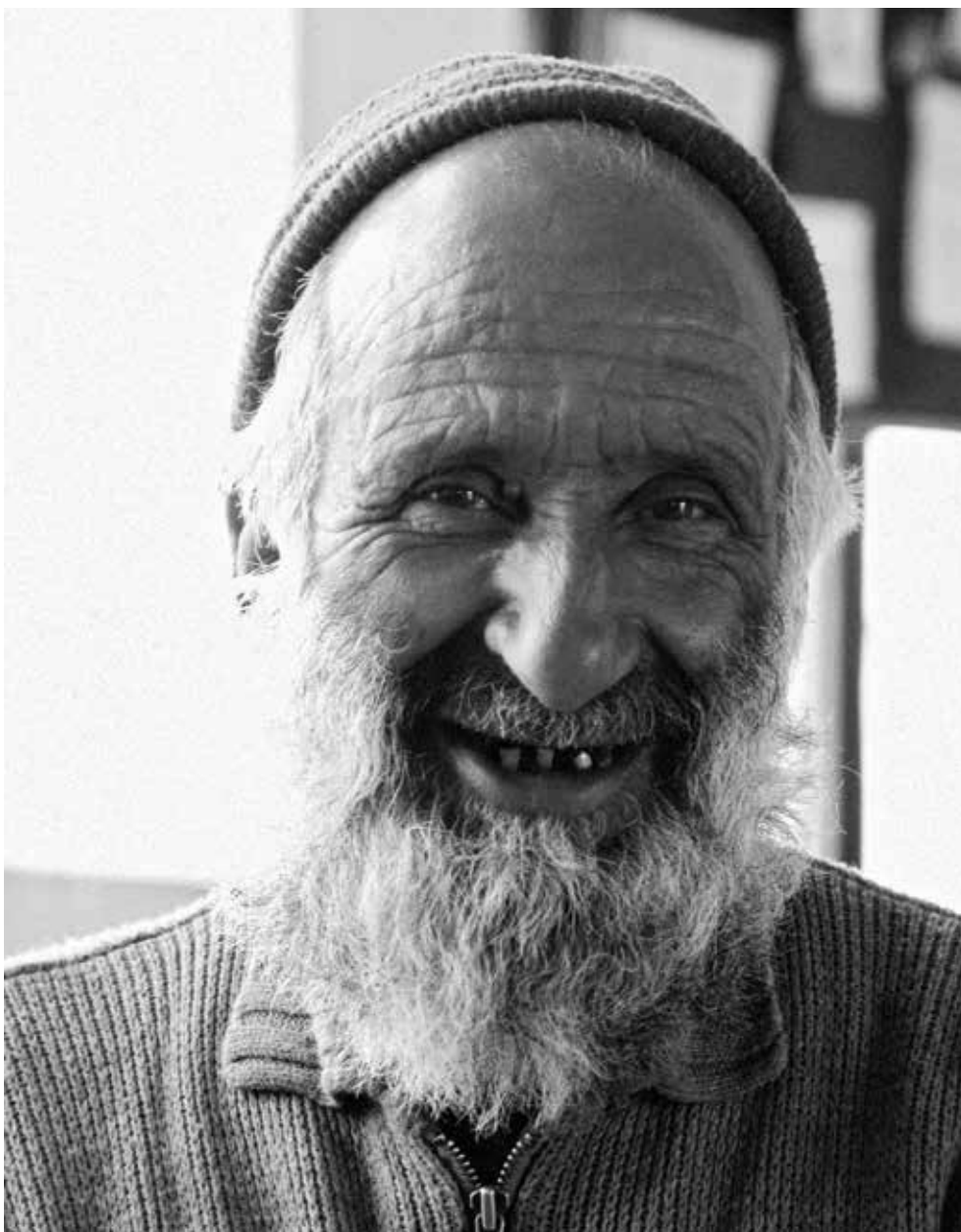


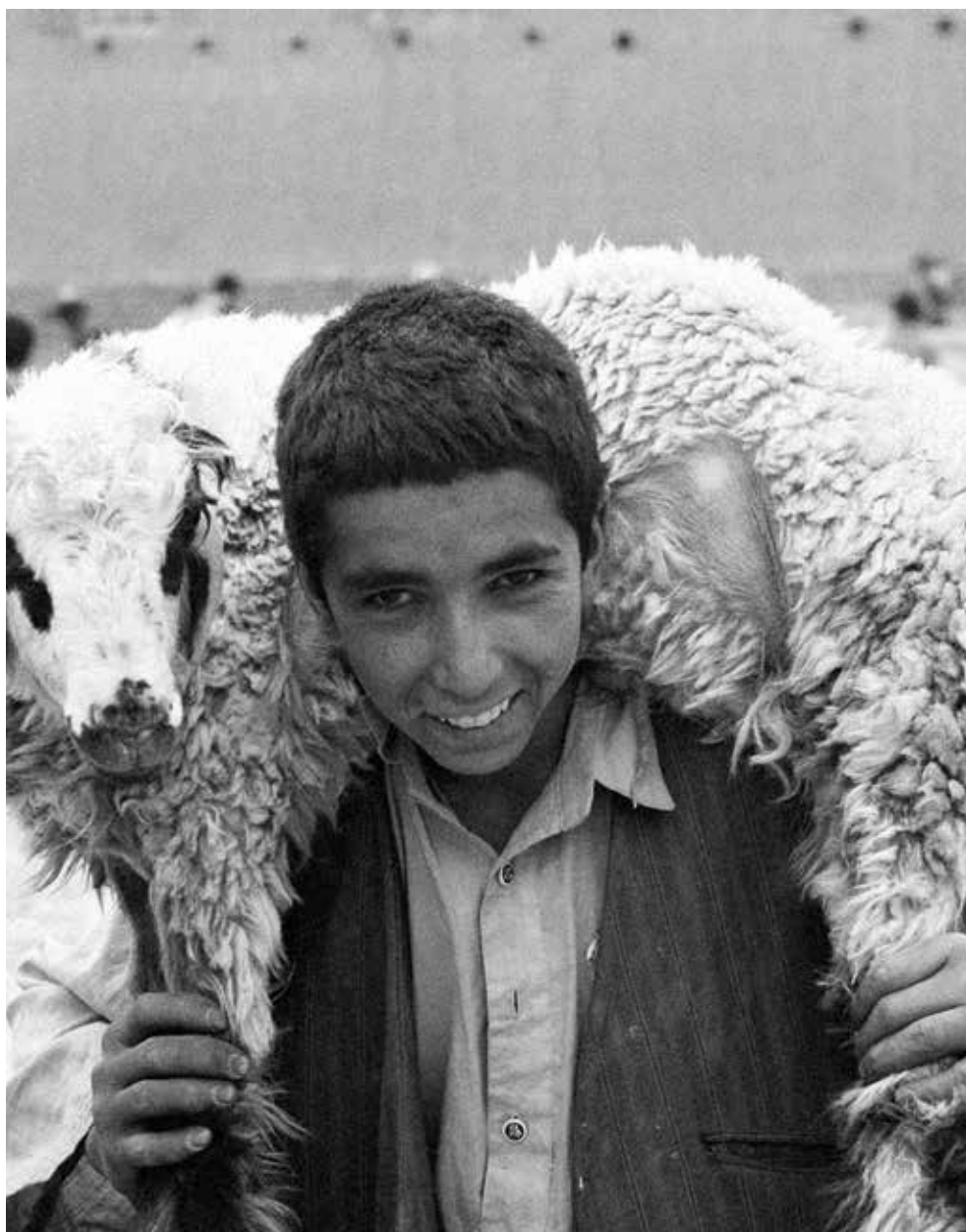


“ *It is strange how I try to group people based on something irrelevant. I carry my prejudices and can't control them, but sometimes I get a jolt, and meetings like these change my self-image a bit.* ”







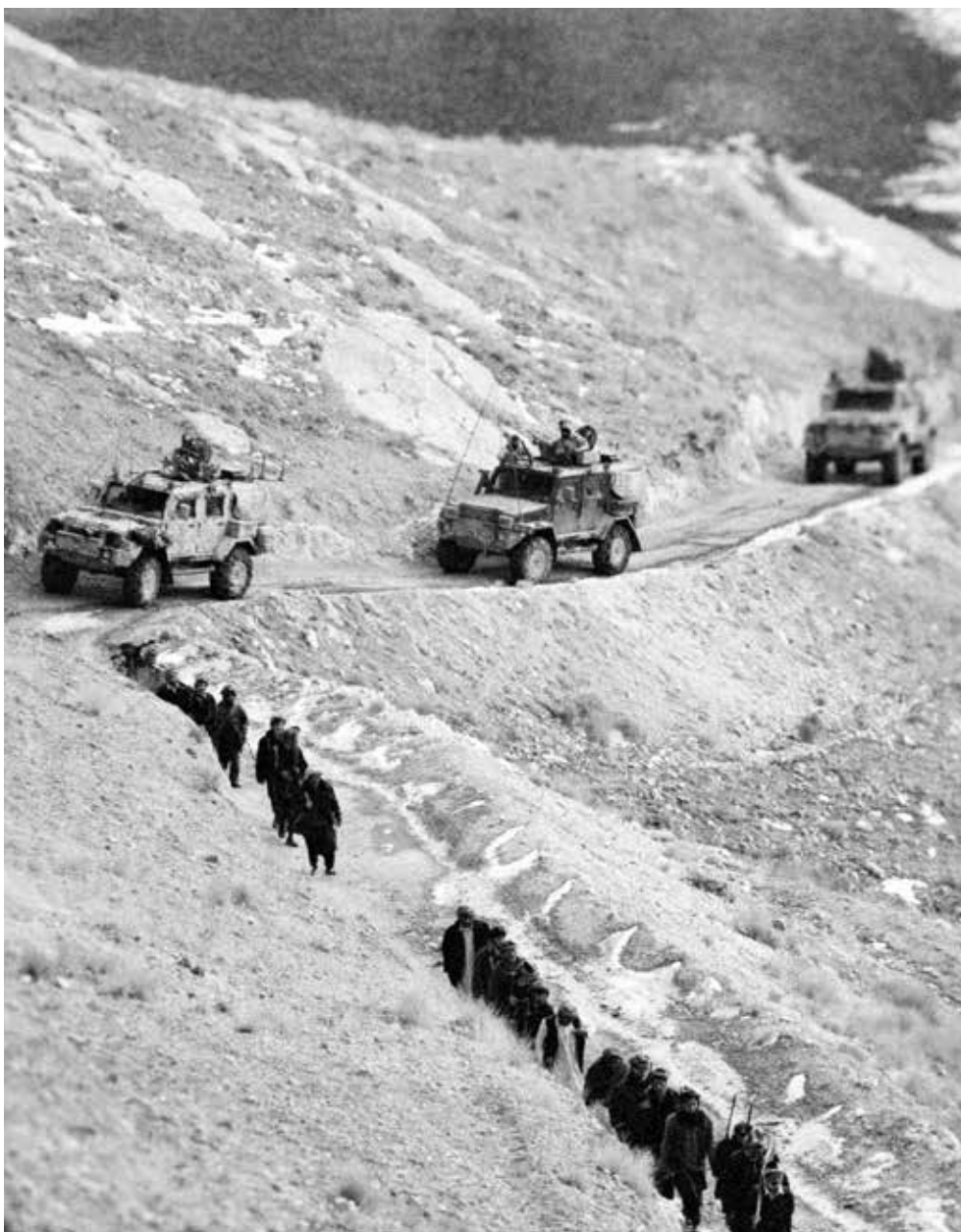


“ *I think the fact that we were always with them meant they saw us in a different light. They knew that invariably we went out with them, and gradually as we conducted joint operations, they knew that we stood alongside them even when things were at their worst.* ”

















“ *But what if it is a suicide bomber...
Slowly, the car starts rolling towards
me. I'll make my decision when it's
50 metres away. If I shoot him and
I'm wrong, there will be a hell to
pay, the signaller smelled a rat. If I
don't shoot and it is a suicide
bomber, I'll die as the signaller who
misjudged the situation...* ”





“ *I was very much affected by the shooting and deaths of two Swedish soldiers. It was then reality hit home. Every time something happened that we, for instance, heard on the news, he phoned home and said he was totally fine. It was then we had a chance to ask questions. Since I’m a believer, I prayed to God to protect him every day.* ”











“ I would certainly not have made as successful decisions when I was thirty as I did when I was fifty-two – having had much more life experience and probably a few failures behind me as well. If you don’t trust your gut feeling, your inner compass, you will get stuck, you will not have any success. After all, it’s all about daring to take a risk. Not excessively, but to chance slightly. ”













“ You can’t prepare for everything. You may have a clue about how things are, but you never know the whole truth. What was true yesterday about a place or an enemy, is not necessarily true today. Then you have to, with the fragments you know, build a picture of the reality and stay with it. Then you have to work it, penetrate it, convey it and determine that this is at state. ”













“ It took time before he started talking about his more difficult experiences. I had the feeling he got angry or irritable when I asked questions. I became afraid to ask, and we began to grow apart. The closest I got to the ‘centre of events’ was probably when I got to read a text for one of the writing seminars he participated in. It means a lot to me to share his experiences, even though it was a tough thing to read. ”





























“ *Who has done all of this?
Who has desecrated this
body? Who has been here?* ”

The Initial Contact

by Joakim Svartheden

The World Trade Center crashes to the ground. The United States tracks down the enemy to Afghanistan and decides to, with a minimum of effort, make short work of al-Qaeda as well as the Taliban. At first, the light footprint strategy seems to succeed; the Taliban flee Kabul, but pop up all over the country. It is then obvious that life in vast Afghanistan goes on out in the provinces and that the democracy the Western powers intend to establish here has no institutions to rest upon. By then, their troops had already hastened there, and Sweden makes sure to be among the first.

A decade later, they are still on Afghan soil. Sweden is assigned responsibility for a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in the northern corner of the country. Somewhere under foreign command, Swedish units suddenly find themselves at war, virtually daily. A Swedish soldier tells his story:

The first time I advanced in West of Mazar-e Sharif, I was astonished by the eyes of the children and the adults on the roads and in the fields. Never before had I seen evil with such clarity. Probably they knew we were newcomers and wanted to affect us, for they softened up as time went by, but at that moment, there was hatred and contempt in their eyes. It felt most awkward when the children were doing it. I became convinced that we were the enemy.

The initial contact with Afghanistan has been an encounter with a new, yet, in many regards, very old, world, with ethnicities, languages and customs so incomprehensible and distinct at the same time. Locals who are equally at home handling rocket launchers and ancient farming implements, who master modern telecommunication systems and still believe that aircraft can read their minds; farms where little children take part in slaughtering the cattle; streets where no women are to be seen; fields where the hemp is blowing in the wind. Breathtakingly beautiful expanses and unbearable heat.

It has also been an encounter with a different kind of professionalism, with officers who despite their youth possess far more combat experience than their Western counterparts. And yet they cannot read, not even something as basic to the art of warfare as a map; officers who without the slightest hesitation punish their colleagues in front of their allies; officers who

have their vehicles advance over the grounds with no consideration for the civilian population.

Above all, it has for many of the Swedish military personnel been a definitive encounter with what the profession entails in its most extreme form – the first armed contact and with that, killing or even death itself.



In the Absence of Restlessness

by Pär Thornell

During the day, our local interpreter has been behaving oddly. He is disinterested and very anxious. It also turns out that he has been frequently using a mobile phone which he has with him. Unable to check what the interpreter is saying or whom he has been calling, I decided to confiscate his phone. The interpreter expressed his concern about not having his mobile, but it was an easy decision for me. He was probably also under the influence of marijuana and was far from reliable.

A little later in the day, I receive a very unexpected report that the interpreter has fled from our fortified position way out in the countryside in the enigmatic environment where people live in conditions that could perhaps be likened to how we used to live in the Iron Age. He has jumped over barbed wire and obstacles, triggered alarm mines and set off for the nearest village. How will we cope out here without being able to speak the language, I think to myself and already start thinking about what the procedure would be just to get a new interpreter sent to us from our main base. But we send a report to the senior commander informing him that the interpreter has absconded from the site. I suggest waiting to see whether he returns of his own accord before we start searching the area. We begin the search using a reconnaissance unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV).

Suddenly we are under well-aimed fire from a machine-gunner about six hundred metres away. The bullets land at the feet and fly over the heads of three or four of our soldiers who are attempting to see where the firing is coming from. The atmosphere becomes both nervy and focused. I hear one of the soldiers say, 'The interpreter must be behind this; he'll pay for this!'

Since there are civilians both in front of and behind the enemy, it is impossible for us to return fire. This cannot or ought not to have anything to do with the interpreter fleeing, I think to myself before the operator diverts our reconnaissance drone to check what kind of battle is going on immediately to the west of us and, as soon as possible, resumes looking for the interpreter. While I observe Afghan police vehicles on our drone's monitor, one of the section commanders radios me to report that three rocket-launcher men are advancing upon a curtain of trees four to five hundred metres away. He asks whether they can open fire.

I'm on the opposite side of our fortified position and don't have the same view as he does. For some reason, we can no longer observe using the UAV. Why didn't the infantry section open fire? They had both the opportunity and permission to do so. Was there a reason why they couldn't take

responsibility? Were they in fact long Afghan spades on the shoulders of those detected and not rocket launchers at all? Were they perhaps Afghan police in civilian clothing or the village militia? Were there civilians between our soldiers and the target, and beyond? I ask over the radio while running towards their side of the fortified position: 'Are they a threat to us?' 'No,' he replies. 'You do not have permission to fire on the detected rocket-launcher men!' I command.

The village elder, who incidentally lives in the area where the shooting came from, tells us afterwards that he is grateful that we did not open fire. He believes it could have been plain-clothed policemen advancing to reinforce the police, or the enemy quite simply wanting us to open fire and set fire to the fields to demonstrate that ISAF is destroying things for the people by making their chances of a harvest go up in smoke. We are aware that in his statements the village elder is perhaps in actual fact protecting the enemy, but we cannot do much more than have specially trained personnel assess this information. However, we get several perspectives on what our opening fire might result in. So the village elder is indirectly influencing us.

Before everything has totally calmed down, the interpreter comes running back after having been away for barely an hour. The soldiers show their anger and want to perform some kind of medieval punishment on him. After the baptism of fire, we have the platoon formally line up, gather our thoughts and senses with a simple ceremony and sing the national anthem in honour of the Swedish National Day [6th June]. Work in the fields and the nearest villages comes to a complete halt. The people living here gaze up towards our hill and listen in astonishment. The sound of machine-gun and rocket-launcher fire and road bombs has now been replaced by a song of Northern European origin. A succession of notes that the villagers' auditory canals have perhaps never experienced. Ceremonial singing and inner reflection have taken the place of expressions of fear, violence and anger.

We manage to replace the interpreter the following day, and he is later discharged.

Sit in Your Seat and Do Your Job!

by Henrik Nestow

A thunderstorm?! It must be a thunderstorm!

TAKE COVER! Someone shouts.

Damn, I'm actually in Afghanistan! It must be that mortar they briefed us on before we travelled out here. I'm stuck in a bloody mosquito net! Damn, soon grenade number two will be arriving. I'm going to die now, wrapped up in a bloody fishing net!

– Come on, Blomman [Flower; a play on Henrik's former surname], you need to get the hell out of here, make an attempt! Ah, the zip was undone; someone has released me. Why can't I breathe? Someone grabs me and shakes me.

– Come on now, Blomman, breathe! shouts the soldier who has released me from the mozzie net, the tent-like mosquito net. He is absolutely right; I need to get a grip of things now, but why am I shaking so much? On with the body armour and helmet; all the other equipment is lying in a heap where my bed recently stood. Where the hell are my night-vision goggles? The section commander calls out to me.

– Blomman, get the interpreters into the carrier! I dash the ten or so metres to the interpreters.

– Al, Akh, get inside the APC! I get myself into the carrier and get stuck behind my own seat, the commander's chair. No matter how hard I try, I can't get myself into my seat. After a bit of searching, I get my headset on and try to call up the platoon commander, but I get no answer. I do, however, succeed in getting hold of the acting company commander and finding out that we have a casualty who will soon be evacuated by helicopter but that the others are okay!

I begin to feel really weird, not panic-stricken, but really on edge. I find myself sitting behind my seat and thinking how crazy it must look. I try again to get my body to end up in the right place, but my brain refuses. It is as if it's saying, 'If you sit up there at the front, something bad is going to happen.' I then ask the driver to order me to sit in my seat. He looks me over in a very confused way but, after a few seconds' wait, says, 'Sergeant, sit in your seat and do your job!'

Twenty-Six Days in Darzab

by Pär Näslund

I've been in Afghanistan for just over a week when we are tasked with mentoring in Darzab. We are not to bring any vehicles, and we have scarce information about the place. How do we solve this? We aren't trained for foot patrol, let alone in alpine terrain. What kind of equipment and how much should we bring? I don't feel good about this; I feel exposed – how will I feel being there? We are alone, far away from everybody else, in a role we are not trained for, together with Afghans I've neither seen nor met. The plan is for us to stay in Darzab for ten days.

We're finally heading off in the helicopter. My heart is beating a little more than normal. I have some doubt about whether we, and I, can accomplish our task. I feel my stomach tightening. I feel apprehensive and my fear makes me wonder what I have got myself into. Other feelings reside in me as well; this will be exciting too. How is my partner doing at home? What can I tell her about our mission without letting her know what we are exposing ourselves to? I'm sweating and I'm cold and my throat is dry and the helicopter is cramped. Why isn't there more space? I'm getting a bit pissed off. I feel something cutting my gluteal muscle as my legs are going numb since I can't move because of all those weapons, luggage and others' legs intertwined between the seats. How long before we reach our destination? Why don't we have any means of communication so we can talk to the crew? Why is it like this?!

Now we're landing. Get out, hurry! Shit, what a lot of sand there is, forcing its way into my mouth. Where am I to go? There's a soldier waving, trying to communicate with me! Damn, my throat is dry, and I was already thirsty. Obviously, I'm sweaty too, because I can barely see through my protective goggles, which have misted over and are full of sand stuck to the glass. Now I'm close to him; I hope he's the commander! He yells at me, 'Welcome to Darzab!' I get a brief handing over that ends with the commander shaking my hand and saying, 'Have fun!' The helicopters take off, and the Finns disappear over the horizon. Here I stand with my mouth full of sand, a dry throat, thirsty, wondering where we are. I gather the others around me, kneel down and brief them on the situation. I start to feel really lonely, and my responsibilities dawn on me. My pulse is racing; I can feel it pounding. I'm the one now making decisions. Where should I start? It'll have to be something simple: 'Load the vehicle and get your packs on!'

The ten days turn into more. We often get ready to depart, but it is twenty-six days before we are finally sitting in a Chinook helicopter leaving Darzab.



Search Through the Brush

by Henric Roosberg

The previous evening, our platoon fought its first battle. This is no epic battle; nothing that will change history. It was an exchange of fire, a skirmish at the edge of some clay-brown farmhouses, nothing more. In the bigger picture, it would perhaps have made no difference if it hadn't even taken place at all. But for me and us, it had mattered all the same. For thirty seconds we did everything here that we had been training to do for several years. It is here that I fired my machine gun at another person.

Go and search through the brush. See if any bodies are still lying there.

The sun has risen now; it is warm, but not too warm, and there is a pleasant breeze. I've taken a leak but not a dump, had a drink but not eaten breakfast, and now, for the first time, I'm going to see a person I have killed. Now I feel empty, not scared, not tired, desensitized. Empty but more expectant than indifferent.

As if I've put all decisions about feelings on hold until I find out more. However, a feeling pierces my chest like a thin metal wire, a feeling of anxiety, not of shame. On the contrary, I acquitted myself well yesterday, and Erik thumps me on the back. The vehicle gunner looks tired. He looks up from his hatch; he has dark circles under his eyes and he is resolute. He is furious at one of the infantry soldiers who was happy about being given the search task. The gunner looks at the soldier with contempt. He can't be heard above the roar of the engine, and I have swapped my crewman helmet for my ordinary one. You can see that he's swearing. The evening before, grenades from his gun knocked down a large part of the wall and covered the left-hand side of the brush with thousands of ball bearings. During the night, it was reported that bodies were hanging over one of the walls. He moves backwards and forwards in the turret.

We leave the vehicles and begin our advance. We advance in a line towards the brush in front of the group of farmhouses. I go straight towards the pointed conifer that could be seen so well in my night-vision goggles. The shooter was lying under here. I have an idea how it is going to look even though that place and here are worlds apart. During my national service one snowy winter, the officers showed what it looked like when you fire 5.56 ammunition into a drum of warm red fruit syrup. The force of impact thus produces overpressure; the bullet begins to wobble and flatten out inside the target. That is why the entry hole is a small one and the exit hole a large

one. We stood there then in our fur caps and oversized white mittens and inspected the fruit syrup's conical distribution in the snow.

But there are no bodies lying under the tree now. The tree has been shredded to pieces and perforated by my bullets. There are several cartridges lying there but no bodies. Further back, behind a protruding wall full of cracks from machine-gun fire and fragments from the 40 mm cannon, lie bloodstained cloth rags.

It's Too Damn Close

by Anders Eckerberg

There goes the radio antenna on my back, snapped by a bullet. I make a radio check by giving orders:

– *All Quebec, this is Quebec Lima. Decision: with one platoon in support, attack deep up to Echo Charlie to evacuate their wounded personnel. Order: Alpha Quebec: support from fighting position. Charlie Quebec: ATTACK! Quebec Lima 2: Evacuate wounded personnel at Echo Charlie. All end over – Alpha Quebec out – Charlie Quebec 2 out. – Quebec Lima 2 out.* After that, I hear my deputy giving a few short, detailed evacuation orders.

I look back; Charlie Quebec is advancing. Shit, we risk being run over by our own side. I look at the intelligence officer and she looks back. She understands: the Afghan National Police (ANP). She gets up, runs as fast as she can and forcibly lifts away terrified ANP soldiers who now risk becoming mashed to a pulp by the recovery vehicle's tracks.

'Marksmen at the end of the road, out'. It is the vehicle commander of Echo Charlie. I hear his gunner open fire. Three or four machine-gun bursts. It is too close for his cannon to have an effect. I take up a firing position and fire four times two shots with my assault rifle at the same target. Weapon check, magazine, mechanism, check left, right, back, cover, side-ways movement.

'Charlie Quebec, this is Echo Charlie, taken out four or five shooters, the end of the road, loaded injured soldier, returning to firing position by the road'. Enemy fire has subsided.

The intelligence officer and I bound back to what we take to be cover at the little white house by the road.

At the house, I meet up with my forward air controller. He reports that we now have two attack helicopters coming in. He asks me to direct the helicopters to the enemy's latest combat position. Traces of smoke from the flair gun again. *Fire support*. At the same time, we need to establish that all the ANP soldiers have withdrawn. *Cooperation with lateral units*. The ANP simultaneously opens fire in a completely different direction than where we came from. *Intelligence service*. In the midst of this, the air ambulance helicopter arrives to take my injured soldier away. *Health service support*. The ANP loads a dead soldier of their own onto a platform. *Burial duty*. Someone makes me aware of an ANP soldier jumping on the chest of a dead enemy he has dragged along with him. *International law*. I see that Echo

Charlie's infantry section has mounted its combat vehicle. They look a bit exhausted. *Leadership*. I look around and understand why in the 1990s we always did exercises involving chaotic elements.

Now it is no longer possible to do everything right, only to do as little wrong as possible.



My Body Language Is My Only Tool

by Liridona Dauti

TAKE COVER!

It is the sound of a shell that makes me shout ‘take cover’. First, a shell, followed by intense suppressive fire. The sound of the shell is distinct from the sound of the bullets. It is a whistling sound that pierces our ears and remains there for a while: a sound impossible to like. My company commander and I are the ones who have now taken cover. Without giving much thought, I have started counting the number of shells passing by, but the impacts beside me are bothering me somewhat.

This might have been an ordinary exercise had it not been for two crucial differences: we sustain real injuries and the Afghan National Police (ANP) is to lead this operation.

The major and I take turns kneeling in the hope of observing the enemy. Damn. With my vision, I can’t make out any enemy; my hearing takes over to designate a target. Designating a target using my hearing during heavy firing proves difficult, very difficult. Make a fresh attempt; make out something hostile at the same place where the children were playing four minutes ago. The radio transmission confirms my observation. Good. This is at the same time as the shell impacts continue on my right-hand side, and this bothers me. The high-speed shell impacts continue to rain down. Move a little to the side. The shell impacts next to our new firing position continue. Typical. I smile a little to myself and think somewhat jokingly that it is good to be on the right side of the border. Repositioning, new firing position. But the same thing again, shell impacts, but now on my left-hand side. At some point here it feels as if all the sound of firing has melted into one. A wall of noise that becomes the norm, and now I only react to changes in the repeated sound waves. The noise has become a background to what is happening now, and the noise no longer disturbs my senses.

Against all logic, the next instant I am fighting to make myself as big and tall as possible. I must make contact with the recovery vehicle, Mike Lima. It is behind us on the edge of the field. Contact. Good. Now it is *only* a matter of clearing the field of ANP soldiers who lie strewn all over the place in a protective position in front of the vehicle. Here only the international language exists: clear and confident body language. I need to get my message across forcibly since the soldier is lying face down. The real problem is not the language confusion; it is the fear that his eyes betray, round his taut mouth and the position of his head when my arms force him to look up. It is like having to shake life into a very deep sleeper. My body language is my

only tool. I want to say, 'You can feel safe,' even though his companion is lying injured and lifeless on the field.

When the ANP soldier turns around and looks at me, I show him with a nod in which direction to advance and cast an encouraging wink to confirm that he is doing things right. I repeat this process with a number of ANP soldiers before I can finally give the all-clear to Mike Lima.



What If They Blame It on Us?

by Bo Rahmström

In the dead of night, our posts suddenly notice helicopters circling above us. We identify ourselves on the ground-to-air frequency. No response. We make another unsuccessful attempt. Who are these people? And what are they doing here? We certainly haven't called for air support. After about ten minutes, the helicopters disappear without identifying themselves.

We receive information that during the evening there had been heavy fighting in a long valley beyond the village and that the helicopters had taken part in the battle. According to Lieutenant Freidun, who had been working together with the chief of police, there are nine bodies still in the valley. Unclear who they are, but not personnel who had been involved in defending the police station during the day and evening. We definitely need to go there to check and to document that the situation is as the information suggests. I do not deem the situation regarding the bodies to be time-critical, that is, we don't need to make our way into the valley in the dark but can wait a few hours until daylight.

When it gets light, parts of the convoy roll on into the valley. Fantastically beautiful, I think to myself. The picture soon changes, however. Come to a terribly mangled body, the cranium totally collapsed. Take out my camera and take some pictures. Fredrik climbs out and helps me. The column then continues on its way. We find more bodies and we document. Suddenly I am aware of a pair of light-blue surgical gloves lying on the ground beside each body. What are they doing here? How have they ended up here? Why do many of the bodies have no shoes on their feet? Why were they thrown to the ground beside the bodies?

We find a terribly mangled body. Dawns on me that the Afghans call him 'The Foreigner'. I look again and realize that I'm not only looking at a terribly mangled body but one that has also been desecrated. Who has done this? Who has done all of this? Who has desecrated this body? Who has been here? If ISAF units have done this, I probably have a breach of international law around my neck. Wonder how keen that organization is to deal with a case like this?

What if we get accused of this? How do I prove it wasn't us? If we toy with the idea that these individuals were killed during an ISAF operation by another unit and that there could also be doubts as to whether international law was adhered to. How likely is it that they will come forward and claim responsibility? Then it will be just me left.

Us and Them

by Lisa Lanevik

I become humbler as the years go by and realize I have quite a few preconceptions.

We were in a meeting with the women from the province. It was very informal, and we had our female interpreter with us, who tried to act as a bridge between the provincial council's popularly elected members and us. I guess the interpreter thought we said funny things at times. I don't know whether she interpreted us word for word or if she tailored her words to make it sound not as clumsy. At one point, I asked something like: 'Does your father choose whom you are going to marry?' I must have had a facial expression, tone and body language that revealed what I really think of a woman's right to make her own decisions. She answered: 'But my daddy wants the very best for me and for me to be happy.' At some point in our conversation, I was given something to think about. Of course the father is the head of the family, but that does not automatically mean he will abuse his wife or marry off his daughter to an unkind, wealthy man.

Sometimes we felt worlds apart – my presuppositions are so different from hers – but quite often, I felt an affinity, like when we spoke about how hard it can be to make your voice heard in a man's world. *We* are Swedes and *they* are Afghans, but at the same time I could feel that *we* are women and *they* are men regardless of nationality. Or *we* are the goodies and *they* are the baddies. It is strange how I try to group people based on something irrelevant. I carry my prejudices and can't control them, but sometimes I get a jolt, and meetings like these change my self-image a bit.

When we left the meeting and headed back to the camp, the situation was tense. Intelligence had been received about enemy activity in a particular area we had to pass. It was dark and quite late in the evening. We were driving in two vehicles. There were three of us in my vehicle. I was sitting alone in the back with my always-primed weapon. It was quiet in the vehicle, and I went over different scenarios in my head. We come under fire, the driver hit, what do I do? The vehicle destroyed, what do I do? We hit an IED, I'm injured, what do I do? The driver knocked out, communications down, what do I do? The vehicle in front of us doesn't come back to us, what do I do? Where is my phone? Where is the radio? Where do the others have their phones if mine doesn't work? Who was out there? What did the women on the province council know about the matter? Whose family members are out there? Who is good and who is bad? And what are we? Are

we good or bad? What am I doing in Afghanistan? Why am I here? Can I help anyone?

After a long journey, we rolled into town. We were not out of danger yet, but we had passed the troubled area without any problems. Soon we would be back at the camp and safe again. The uneasiness I had felt during the journey in the vehicle slowly began to subside. We didn't come under fire, and I didn't need to start looking for my colleague's phone, but my head was still swimming with some of the questions when we were sitting in the mess an hour or so later. What are we doing here and is our presence actually helping the Afghan people? I thought about what one of the women on the province council had said to us previously: *Your being here makes us stronger*. It may be the case that it makes more people feel stronger, perhaps it gives them the strength to continue to work towards democracy. Maybe we made no difference, but I made up my mind that it would have to suffice if we only made one Afghan woman or man stronger.

The Afghan National Army Signal School

by Jan Almgård

Since there is no interpreter available, I make my own way to one of the classrooms at the Afghan National Army Signal School to see how the training is going this afternoon. All the instructors are sitting a diagnostic English test elsewhere. On entering the classroom, I am greeted by total chaos. Several soldiers are involved in a fist fight. They are so caught up in the scuffle that they do not even notice my arrival. I pull myself together and shout, 'Sulah dar Afghanistan', which in Dari means 'peace in Afghanistan'. The soldiers freeze. I tell them to sit down. They inform me that their teachers are away doing an English test.

The soldiers become curious and ask how I learned Dari; I give them a little explanation and then take the opportunity to ask them where they are from. It turns out they descend from practically all the major nationalities of Afghanistan; in other words, they are a mixture of Tajiks, Uzbeks, Turkmen, Hazaras and also many Pashtuns. When I ask how their reading and writing training is coming along, they proudly show me that they can write their names. I then write mine on the blackboard, which the slightly giggling soldiers then pronounce. The Pashtun soldiers, all of them coming from the eastern border districts adjoining Pakistan, suddenly say they find it odd that I have not learned the major language, Pashtu, instead of Dari. I answer that, to the best of my knowledge, Pashtuns often master Dari, so there is no need for me to learn Pashtu at the moment. All the soldiers in the classroom start laughing hysterically, and I can hear some of them whispering to each other: 'I bet he's a Muslim.'

After one of the graduation ceremonies, my Canadian commanding officer and I remain on the parade ground to watch the soldiers be divided up into different Kandaks (battalions). The name, number and assigned Kandak of each soldier are announced. Soldiers and friends alike who have struggled together during training are suddenly to be separated. They hug each other and wait at different spots in the barrack square. This all happens very quickly. All of a sudden, a soldier does not want to join the assigned Kandak. He simply refuses; an argument erupts. The officer responsible for dividing them up yells at the soldier, but the soldier just keeps on arguing. The officer then runs up to the soldier and slaps his head three or four times

with the palm of his hand. The soldier flinches and goes to the assigned Kandak. The Canadian lieutenant colonel and I look at each other. He then says: 'It's their army; they decide how to solve their problems.'



The On-Screen Command

by Stefan Linder

We are just about to complete yet another reconnaissance mission along the desert road and have talked to local policemen at several of the checkpoints we have passed. My platoon has just conducted a security halt; it is getting dark. We prepare for night combat and are soon to proceed to Camp Northern Lights (CNL). When I look at the computer screen, I see that I have received another message:

TO: DQ FROM: BA
TEXT: FYI 40 INS GATHERING
IN VILLAGE XXXX AT GRID XXXX

A quick glance at the map. *Okay, it's no more than six kilometres from here, but forty insurgents, that's not a small force, even though I have a mechanized platoon. The question is what Bravo Alpha, my company commander, wants me to do.* I brief my platoon and give the order to observe in the direction of the village, awaiting orders from Bravo Alpha. *Does he want me to engage and defeat this force, or is this just a briefing to keep me away from the village? My current mission is still to make it back to CNL.* I start writing a reply: 'I can advance towards the village and try to identify the enemy, or should I proceed as ordered back to CNL?' I then prepare myself mentally for a new mission. *What do I do if I get orders to defeat this force? What direction of advance should I choose? From where can I get a good view of the village?* But I receive no reply, just confirmation of delivery. I brief my platoon once more and gather from my vehicle commanders that my platoon wants to know what we are going to do: engage or disengage? I get more and more irritated and then write that I will proceed to CNL. Then I finally get an 'OK' from Bravo Alpha. *Is that all? What the hell is this; don't they realize this is for real?! Briefing, decision, orders – this is what we drill into every single section commander; how difficult can it be?!*

A month later I get a message on my PC DART [a communication system used by the Swedish Armed Forces]:

TO: DQ FROM: BA
TEXT: AQ TIC AT GRID XXXXXX
DQ LINK UP WITH AQ

My platoon and I are north of the Balkh River, and the coordinates tell me that Alpha Quebec has engaged in combat in a village on the south side of the river. I cannot get any direct radio contact with the commanding officer of Alpha Quebec, only via a signaler deployed at the patrol base, "The Hill". However, I understand from the signaler that it is full-on combat, not just some shooting. I brief my platoon and make a quick assessment together with my third-in-command. I decide we are to move down to the river and recce a fording site and proceed towards the village and Alpha Quebec. The other alternative, advancing to the nearest bridge, would probably take us at least four hours. Once I have made the decision and given the orders to advance, I give the meaning of the DART message no further thought; I just try to solve the task, one I actually have given myself. It is indeed a briefing about what has happened and an order for what to do that I have received, but none of the combat tasks I have been trained for have been termed 'link up with', let alone in English. So, in the severest of situations, when an adjacent platoon is in combat, I receive an order to interpret as I think best. The only meaning of 'link up' I know is from my pre-mission training, namely a rescue team brings back soldiers cut off from their units. I soon found out in the mission area that people casually use expressions like 'patrol' or 'link up' for all kinds of tasks meaning you are to 'go somewhere' and 'do something to someone else'.

Just over an hour later, my platoon and I have attacked over a water-course and carried on for another two kilometres, through narrow passages and a number of cannabis fields, and now I have just destroyed another irrigation system. I can now observe the village where Alpha Quebec has been in combat, but they have disengaged and are currently on the opposite side of the village. *Wait a minute, what are you really doing here and on what command? What did Bravo Alpha actually want you to do? Didn't you overreact just because it was Alpha Quebec again?* What is more, we have dragged our medical section's armoured personnel carrier like a caravan behind a combat vehicle. This is because a personnel carrier's terrain accessibility is not in the same league as a combat vehicle's. Having to tow the medical section while under attack in order to reach our engaged adjacent platoon seems to be regarded as a better and safer option than the medics being passengers in our combat vehicles.

What if we had ended up in combat and had had injured soldiers, how would I have explained that? 'I was to conduct a link-up'. 'Very well, but that doesn't mean seizing ground, supporting disengagement or defeating the enemy in the village'. Of course I briefed Bravo Alpha on my intentions, but

all I got was an auto-receipt. Did that mean Bravo Alpha approved my plan of action or is still considering alternative courses of action?

I have always been very particular about all our platoon members using the correct command and control terminology. Many found it a little too stiff and formal at first, but I carefully explained my reasons for this; the orders must follow an unbroken chain of command all the way from the Swedish parliament, via our government, right down to the shooter, who is to have a proper fire for effect order. In this way, the shooter can feel a professional pride over having a first round hit rather than wondering whether killing the person in the sights was the correct thing to do. If commanders start coming up with their own tasks and making throwaway comments like 'Can you hit him over there behind the tree', I am convinced the shooter's feeling is quite different with a formal fire command: 'The tree, Right, RPG shooter. Canon – Fire!' Then it is clear to the shooter that this is for real and that all commanders take full responsibility in this situation and make the decision to neutralize the enemy. But that presupposes that I, as platoon commander, have been given a proper combat task and a clear order for what my platoon is to carry out.

The Commander and the Captain

by Omar Saab

What do I do to drive my troops forward during our mission? We are good alright but could definitely shift up a couple of gears in our development. I have the feeling I cannot really provide that; it takes something else. My thoughts mainly concern keeping the soldiers pumped up and on the ball, maintaining their drive and not getting stuck in a comfortable mission routine. I see what I regard as a solution to this, namely giving responsibility for our team to one of our soldiers, not line management responsibility or command responsibility, or something like that, but responsibility for setting a good example and getting the others to follow him. Just like a football captain who shows up early to trainings, gives 100 per cent and peps the others up to do the same, who helps his teammates and does some extra training on his own. As their commander, I am supposed to be that good example, which will help to some extent, but when one of their own sets such an example, it will rub off on the others.

How should I convey this? Do I have the right person in mind? After our discussion, my deputy and I make a decision.

The soldier in mind has currently served for a couple of years and has already been on a mission. He is one of the best in the field of technical services. In my opinion, he is treading water in terms of his development: he has a lot of knowledge but needs a push. My deputy and I talk with the soldier in question and give him the responsibility to take a step forward and show our team the way; to be that older, experienced soldier who got the others to follow when it was hard work, people were whining, or it was slow going.

After a while, our soldier starts getting out of bed earlier, coming up with new solutions, preparing his gear in exemplary fashion, helping the others if necessary and getting them to shape up when needed.

How come? And what do you do when there is no obvious candidate? Should you appoint someone or don't bother and hope for the best?

To me, this is a huge part of military leadership: making sure you share enough responsibility to make teams and, most of all, individuals grow; inspiring courage and supporting the determination to pick yourself up after a failure; daring to try something new by using a person's experiences and ideas.

A Female Shura

by Mona Westerlund-Lindberg

We are going through countryside where heavy spring rain has ruined the roads. Four ISAF soldiers, all of us women, each with our own field of expertise, are about to meet with women in a village. Our group consists of a doctor, a gender advisor, a military interpreter and me, a chaplain. Back home, the doctor and I have civilian occupations and are used to meeting people. At the same time, a Finnish Military Observer Team is to meet with the key male villagers.

Outside this village, some of our own came under armed attack during a joint patrol with the Afghan National Police. Two Afghan policemen were killed.

What is our task? To meet with these women and hear what they have to say that may be of interest to ISAF. I understand that right now we are part of the mission to strengthen the position of women but also to gather information.

We sit down in the open area among the traditional houses with cupola roofs. Our visit is organized as a *shura*, with blankets and cushions on the ground and tea in pots. Sitting before us are women of different ages, with weather-beaten faces and colourful clothes; most of them are observing us curiously. We can tell that one of the women has been appointed to answer our questions and has been told what to say. A man moving around within earshot is watching us closely and trying to butt in on our conversation. Standing behind the women is another man, dressed in black clothes, sporting a black turban and giving dirty looks. There is at least one of the Finnish soldiers nearby. The skies are getting darker, and a thunderstorm is in the air.

We ask our questions about the night when shots were fired outside the village. The women say they know nothing about it but tell us that the children were afraid. The latter I believe to be true.

After just a little while, a torrential thunderstorm erupts. The women see to it that we take shelter in a clay house. Our doctor starts to inquire about the health of the women. She gives some of them pills for their symptoms. 'What are you doing here; you are going to die soon anyway!' One woman says, quite disrespectfully, to an older one. How do these women perceive each other? Incidentally, it is impossible to guess the age of someone who gives birth at a young age and lives under a burning desert sun.

The men outside are obviously extremely put out by having lost control when we disappeared into the house together with the women. One of

the men says through the loophole: 'your boss says you have to leave now!' Since we have radio contact with our boss outside, we know for a fact he has said nothing. We eventually walk to our cars once the thunderstorm has passed, whereupon we are spat at by one of the men.

Having driven for hours, what came out of our meeting with the women in the village? Was it perhaps extremely useful for them to arrange a *shura* that focused on their story? Does it make any difference to them meeting female Westerners? What do they really think of us? Can our different worlds ever meet, meet in such a way that we contribute to security and reconstruction? Or did we just upset the males in charge of the villages out there?

I felt rather frustrated after this meeting. I would have liked to approach the women in a different way than time – and the thunderstorm – permitted. If we had important questions to ask, I believe we should have let the women begin by telling us about their everyday lives, perhaps showing us fireplaces and wells. After a while, we could have gradually broached the day in question. On the one hand, I am the Swedish force's chaplain, and on the other, I jointly interface with Afghan society.

The Battlefield and the Chessboard

by Joakim Svartheden

Chess: the king of strategy games, where every piece is a part of the army; the strict formations breaking up when the battle starts; a strategic mind and a tactical eye, analysis versus intuition, planning and parrying, captured key figures and lost positional advantages – constant dilemmas about sacrificing some to gain something else. The chess master and the field commander both have come to constitute the symbol of the strategist and invite constant comparisons.

In a way, chess seems the perfect metaphor for the execution of military command and control.

However, no matter the number of possible parallels between the battlefield and the chessboard, an armed conflict is not a game of chess. The modern conflict is not an encounter between two distinct parties, where the lineup is a given and every move is overt, where the pieces move in certain directions one by one, where the rules are clear, where draws are offered and cheaters never prosper. Put simply, warfare is not black and white.

The chess master does not have much in common with the commander responsible for the lives and limbs of the troops during, before and after a mission in Afghanistan; nor with the signal officer temporarily on guard at the main gate who has to quickly decide whether the driver slowly approaching is a visitor or a suicide bomber; nor with the intelligence officer who under heavy fire has to use clear body language to get terrified policemen into cover; nor with the platoon commander who has to determine whether the battery package in the hands of a child is a toy or an improvised explosive device; nor with the platoon commander who does not know whether the message received is basic situational information or a direct combat order; nor with the chaplain who wonders whether the radio message heard means it is time to turn the refrigerated container on; nor with the mentor who has to advise whether the pain relief can be administered to the wounded locals or kept for any of their own; nor with the company commander who while advancing behind the local units he is to support finds himself ruining roads, bridges and crops; nor with the company commander who has to tell battalion headquarters that the orders given simply cannot be carried out; nor with the company commander who wonders whether he has just sent his men to a certain death; nor with the uniformed, ponytail-sporting liaison team trying to get their shawl-clad, veil-wearing fellow sisters to say if there are any insurgents in the neighbourhood; nor with the staff officer who cannot obtain emergency communications

systems seeing as they are to be used for tests and training in Sweden; and nor with the battalion commander who has to reinterpret the rules of engagement ever since his unit was provided with combat vehicles.

All these uniformed professionals who have to make every effort to grasp at all who is fighting whom, for what reason and with what means and mandate, who in a split second must tell a friend from an enemy. With all due respect to blitz chess...

The chess master's figures do not move in any unexpected direction; they do not become paralyzed by acute stress reactions; they do not spread rumours, bad-mouth their superiors, nor question the reasons for launching or aborting a mission. They do not have to search through brushwood for men they have killed nor look through telescopic sights while people get torn to pieces and scattered in the wind by their missiles, and nor therefore refuse to obey fire orders as the mission draws to an end. They will not be stopped by the wind and weather nor hunger or thirst or a lack of fuel or ammunition. And they do not come back from leave with money, clothes and toys for the needy. And their mothers and fathers do not wonder in what condition their loved ones will return.

The chess master hardly needs to explain his moves to some politician, hold a position somewhere else for diplomatic reasons, ask for clarification of rules and mandates or balance the necessity of information with the need for secrecy.

Maybe that is why nations that produce chess masters still have not won a war in Afghanistan?

The Women's Prison

by Mona Westerlund-Lindberg

The women's prison holds women of different ages and their children. A couple of women from ISAF come to visit together with Anja, who is working with Finnish development aid. Finnish funding has financed the new prison building replacing an old earthen-floored clay house. Here are women who are accused of having committed adultery or, like the main character in the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, murdered their husbands. Teenage girls are imprisoned for offences that in a Swedish family would at most warrant a Friday-night curfew.

What do you say to these women? Perhaps you can talk a little about their children? But not all of them have children. 'I used to have a baby', one of the women says, 'but my husband's other wife killed it'. From a local women's organization, we learn the sex and ages of the children inside this prison. The children now receive bags of clothes we think will fit. A couple of young boys are very proud to wear their caps. One mother complains that someone else's child got a better dress. The female prison guards make it clear to us that they too have children at home.

We are not supposed to get involved in humanitarian aid; we are on a different kind of mission. Yet it is difficult to face people in Afghanistan without sharing. One winter's day, one of our guys gives his woollen socks to a barelegged little boy. Another day, banana boxes full of thick knitted socks and mittens arrive at our post office from the mother of a veteran. While on leave, many fill up their holdalls with outgrown children's clothes. 'If I get to see an Afghan boy in my son's outgrown sweater, my time here has not been in vain', someone says. (But a baby down here should not wear a romper suit with a smiling skull pattern, which is so popular in Sweden.) A Muslim family in Sweden has collected money for people in need that they have given to their soldier son to take with him.

Humanitarian aid is a difficult matter. For whom are we doing this? For real or imagined needs? To make ourselves feel better? Or simply because we are human?

We Have No Need for Adventure Seekers

by Mattias Otterström

Responsibility and judgement are two words I can easily associate with our profession. As commanders, we are assigned varying degrees of responsibility, for training, for finances and for human lives. Making rational decisions requires sound judgement. To me, responsibility and judgement go hand in hand. As you grow in maturity, so does your judgement. When you are regarded as mature, you will be given more responsibility. So, what role does courage play in our profession? Throughout history, there are many examples of soldiers having performed their duty with courage and bravery. But what is showing courage and what is simply doing your job?

To me, a brave person is someone who can leave their comfort zone and overcome fear. This person stands up for a cause and has clear, good values. They put other people's lives before their own. They are not found in the second echelon, letting others face the responsibilities and the consequences. They do not flinch from confrontation but accept the consequences of decisions made and actions taken.

So, what role does the ability to overcome fear play in all this? Years of theoretical and practical training have pushed the boundaries of our own fear. We are put through exercises designed to push our boundaries. We study our opponents and their capabilities in order to learn how to take action and operate. All this to build our knowledge and confidence. This means we have often been tense and afraid but have overcome our fear and pushed our boundaries forward one step. But does this mean we have stopped being brave? No, it does not. We do not stop being brave if we still understand that it is okay to feel fear. There is nothing shameful about the fear sometimes felt, but we can, with the help of experience, knowledge and comradeship, control it.

These are the qualities that the Swedish Armed Forces should look for in their present and future commanders. Commanders able to comprehend others' fears as well as their own will also be capable of processing them and thereby infusing others with courage. These commanders can make rational decisions and take full responsibility for them. They do not make foolhardy decisions with potentially grave consequences. They will not do something for the thrill of it but see the seriousness of our profession. Also, future soldiers will require courage to accomplish their tasks, because in our profession, showing courage and just doing your job go hand in hand.

Anyone considering joining the Swedish Armed Forces must realize that fear will present itself in various situations, but it is okay to feel fear and it can be overcome.

We do not need adventure seekers. We need mature people who realize that our profession may be dangerous.

‘Hey, that little kid, Alfie... How brave he is! He dares to say he doesn’t dare to fight!’*

* From one of the Alfie Atkins children’s books.



Who Is Mentoring Whom?

by Bo Rahmström

How should I mentor a forty-year-old Afghan officer with twenty-six years of service? What is my mandate? My responsibilities? My motives? What method should I use? What does it take to achieve good mentoring?

And what really is Mustapha's need for mentoring? 2010 minus 26 equals 1984, i.e. right in the middle of the Soviet–Afghan war; in other words, Mustapha has probably only ever known an Afghanistan at war. He started out as a fourteen-year-old with a Kalashnikov in his hand in the Panjshir Valley and worked his way, via the General Staff College, up to Kandak commander, battalion commander, though he is currently a Kandak executive officer. He has probably experienced more years as a battalion commander than I have had hours in that position. My hours spent in a country that witnessed the deepest peace, his years...

Mustapha says he needs me, but it is not obvious to me for what. He is better than me at most things. He is Afghan and knows the languages, the culture, the history and the social codes. Furthermore, he has solid combat experience. Sure, we can discuss section-, platoon-, company- and battalion-level tactics, but what can I bring to the table? I have no experience that can match his, and our discussions about combat experience take more the form of imparting his experiences and ideas to me, i.e. he is mentoring me. What do I have to offer him at all?

We spend a lot of time together. Gradually, it becomes clear to me what I could offer Mustapha: a great deal about how we do things in Sweden, how our society and families work. Mustapha has many questions about what I think is important when children grow and evolve into grown-ups in today's society. I wonder a lot about Mustapha's childhood, or rather his lack of one. Mustapha prefers not to talk about this; when he tells his story, it generally begins in his twenties. Human dignity is a recurring topic in our conversations. I can give him ideas and influences of a life unaffected by wars since this is something Mustapha has never experienced.

During the planning of a major Kandak operation, it becomes clear that it will be carried out when the Swedish Operational Mentor and Liaison Team is on leave. My self-confidence is not exactly at its peak; I feel as if I am letting Mustapha down by taking part in the planning but not in the execution. I take courage and try to influence him. It is obvious that he is resting on past planning achievements; he has done this kind of operation many times before:

- *What kind of operation will be carried out?*
- A logistics operation.
- *What kind of operation was it last time?*
- Search and arrest.
- *What are the most important things to do in the upcoming operation?*
- That we get there with the supplies and can relieve the personnel.
- *What were the most important aspects of the last operation?*
- Surprise, timing and speed.
- *In terms of risk-taking, how do the operations differ?*
- I don't understand.
- *Risk-taking, for instance considering human lives. How long does it take to replace a fallen soldier?*
- That question has many answers.
- *Tell me.*
- Well, it depends, from a few minutes to eighteen to twenty years.
- *How many died or were wounded during the last operation?*
- Several dead and wounded.
- *Due to what?*
- Mostly due to the soldiers and officers being too eager, and with that, combat and traffic risk-taking increased.
- *Because time was crucial to surprising and capturing the enemy, the 'dushman'?*
- Yes, it was important to coordinate our troops so that the dushman couldn't escape.
- *How urgent will it be this time?*
- Not urgent at all, really.
- *How many dead and wounded do you consider a reasonable number for this operation?*
- None at all, it's just a logistics operation. It doesn't matter whether we get there one day or the other.

When does a mentor's ambition get in the way of the mentoring? Mentoring, to me, is about meeting; it goes beyond the purely physical meeting. Such meetings require an interpersonal relationship. Such a relationship, which aims to get people on the same wavelength in order to trust each other, takes time to build.

I often think of Mustapha. He and his colleagues made me a better person. I hope he remembers me as well. I want to believe that is the case. After the last operation, Mustapha became ill and was hospitalized for weeks. I had given up hope of bidding him farewell before I went home for good.

With little time remaining on my last day in Sheberghan, he returned, however. He had discharged himself from hospital, driven his Corolla the 120 kilometres from Mazar-e Sharif, with the catheters still in his arms, his drip feed disconnected but lying in the back seat. We got a few minutes together before our successors were to transport me to Camp Marmal.



You Will Be Back, Won't You?

by Fredrik Dauti

It began so innocently: Afghanistan, an experience richer. An opportunity to test your ability in an environment where professional and personal skill are put to the test.

Of course she should go; I had no doubts. I even encouraged her. 'It's perfect for your professional development! Imagine what stories you will come home with. You will have experienced so many fascinating events!'

Home-made road bombs, suicide bombers and insurgents with a supernatural driving force to kill foreign soldiers. Had I bargained on this? It was in the back of my mind; we spoke about it sometimes. The risks were mitigated and glossed over. The Swedish Armed Forces have good equipment, safe vehicles and access to advanced medical care. Did she constantly underestimate the risks or was it me? Both of us or none of us.

After six months' training in Stockholm, it was time. We thought we were ready. I had my work in Sweden; she had her job in Afghanistan. We had a plan; if the unthinkable were to happen, there was an envelope in a bookshelf.

She could phone me; I could only phone her via a military attaché in Stockholm. Sporadic texting. She said, 'I'm out in the field again. I can phone again in a week or two.'

My time passed slowly; it was mostly boring. Something was missing; we as a couple were missing.

I wanted to know everything. Ignorance is anxiety; knowledge is power. Facts I can relate to, anxiety breeds anxiety.

'We drove over a mine', she says. 'Are you injured?' I wonder. 'A gashed eyebrow. It looks like I've been in a fight'. I breathe a sigh of relief; could have been a lot worse. I feel calm, but my thoughts well up. Why was everyone unscathed in her vehicle? A couple of weeks previously, one of her colleagues had to return to Sweden after his foot got crushed when a road bomb went off. Will he ever be able to walk or run again? What if something happens to her?

The phone rings: *We've been in a battle; I'm okay. We have a very seriously injured soldier. He was evacuated by helicopter. He is on his way to Uppsala University Hospital. I'll be home to you a day later than planned. I'm staying a night in Uppsala on the way home on leave.*

She took the risks; I was at home in safe Sweden. She was on duty 24 hours a day for 7 months; I was working weekdays and had Saturdays and Sundays off. Although my life was a breeze compared with what rested on

her shoulders, I am not ashamed to admit that I did not feel well. I was worried and sleeping badly. I just wanted her to come home.

Eventually, she did come home. The envelope in the bookshelf lay untouched the entire time. She didn't suffer any permanent injuries. The time apart from each other was a strain, but we have become more close-knit.

Was it worth all the worry? Was it worth all the risks?

Questions that cannot be answered with a simple yes or no.

The big question is who we would be if we had not experienced the emotional roller coaster that serving overseas involves: both for those in Afghanistan and those back home in Sweden.

The Relatives' View

Going far away and doing dangerous things do not take place in a vacuum. Someone goes; someone else remains at home. The decision to serve overseas not only affects the person going. As one soldier put it: 'The hardest thing for me was the contradiction between on the one hand my desire to do what I believe in, what I want to do and on the other hand what I expose myself to and what that means for my nearest and dearest. I could see when I was to go how tough it was for my parents, my sister, my partner and my kids. Then it was very hard to go and it provoked many thoughts'.

How do veterans handle their domestic relationships? How do they deal with worries and questions? What information do they share and what do they keep to themselves? What means of communication is used and what importance does it have? The strategies have been different. One person phoned home frequently and talked for a long time; they needed to hear their family members' voices. Another preferred correspondence, the opportunity to carefully put thoughts into words, writing and rewriting; a real voice was too intimate. Some veterans phrased it as distance is essential for yourself and for those at home. The closer you got to going home, for leave or for good, the harder it became to stay in touch, some of them said. Longing was something that risked wrecking your concentration and thus had to be controlled in order not to affect the mission in Afghanistan. A peculiar expression was coined, H.I.H., Hemma I Huvudet, literally translated 'Home In Head', i.e. mentally back home in Sweden.

When we got to hear about the soldiers' different strategies for handling their nearest and dearest at home, we became curious about how the latter perceived the Afghan mission. What kind of experiences did they have? We asked that question in a letter sent to the relatives of the participants in our experience forums:

Dear xxx,

You have received this letter because you have a relative or family member who has been on a military mission in Afghanistan.

As part of the Swedish Armed Forces' knowledge development regarding serving overseas, the Swedish Centre for Studies of Armed Forces and Society (CSMS) carried out the project Experience Forum Afghanistan in 2012 and 2013. With a focus on military professionalism, the project aimed to make experiences from international military missions visible.

During the writing seminars we have held together with soldiers and officers with experience from Afghanistan, it became apparent that the attitudes of the participants' nearest and dearest before, during and after the mission differed. This attracted our interest. Since their support is a decisive factor in this context, we would like to invite you, the relatives, to also contribute to this project with your experience. This is completely voluntary, but we cannot emphasize enough how valuable it would be for us to hear about your experiences and reflections [...].

Some questions were attached to the letter:

When your relative was in Afghanistan,
how did you stay in contact?
how did your communication work?
how did you deal with your worries (if you had any)? Or other thoughts and feelings?
did you tell everything about what was happening at home or were you selective about the information?

Homecoming:
Have you talked about your relative's experiences from Afghanistan?
If so, about what and in what way?

Afterwards:
What has been the most difficult thing about having a relative on an overseas mission?
Is there anything you would do differently today?
Is there anything in particular you would like to add or highlight in this regard?

Here is a selection of responses.

One partner answered as follows:

X talked with me about wanting to apply, both at the time of applying and when he had finally received the request to go. In my view, he made the decision himself to apply but was anxious that it should be a joint decision. Though I had mixed emotions about his participation, I supported his decision the whole time. It was so obvious he wanted to go, and I didn't want

to throw a spanner in the works of his participation. It may have been theoretically possible to stop him taking part, but I never wanted to stand in his way. Not supporting him in doing something he considers most meaningful is simply not an option. Perhaps not having children together helped.

He kept in contact all the time, and we had a special 'Afghanistan mobile phone' that he called and sometimes texted before calling. I felt communication was a difficult thing. He only wanted to hear my voice and to hear that everything was fine. I had other needs and most of all, I was sad that we couldn't talk 'for real'. We solved the problem by e-mailing each other. In retrospect, knowing what he had to deal with, I realize it was difficult for him to meet my needs. I felt as if our relationship was put on hold. I often tell my friends that it is like being single without being interested in someone else. Looking back, I know he was fairly selective about his information, both to protect me emotionally and for secrecy reasons. The conversations are pretty weird at times.

It took time before he started talking about his more difficult experiences. I had the feeling he got angry or irritable when I asked questions. I became afraid to ask, and we began to grow apart. The closest I got to the 'centre of events' was probably when I got to read a text for one of the writing seminars he participated in. It means a lot to me to share his experiences, even though it was a tough thing to read. Today, I'm not as afraid to ask. The most important thing to me is hearing what has made an impression on him and understanding what he felt like in different situations. That makes me feel as if I am involved.

A mother of a veteran writes the following:

PRIOR: As far as I can remember, he stated a year in advance his intention to go to Afghanistan. He was determined from the very beginning that this was what he wanted to do. I objected to this and argued how dangerous it was and that he could not go, and so on. It is easy to paint a worst-case scenario prior to something like this, but he could not be persuaded. Instead, he explained matter-of-factly how well-trained and prepared he was. After all, this was what he had been trained for. So, I could do nothing but support him in his decision. Furthermore, his then fiancée had served in Somalia. We talked a lot, and she supported me.

DURING THE MISSION: He phoned home frequently. Talking was very easy. You got snapshots. He sent postcards and e-mails.

WORRIES: I was very much affected by the shooting and deaths of two Swedish soldiers. It was then reality hit home. Every time something

happened that we, for instance, heard on the news, he phoned home and said he was totally fine. It was then we had a chance to ask questions. Since I'm a believer, I prayed to God to protect him every day. The two times he was on leave at home in Sweden were also precious. The Swedish Armed Forces website for relatives, where we received updates on the situation, was a great asset too.

HOMECOMING: Great relief and gratitude that everything went well. He could talk about his experiences; he showed pictures and explained things. He was still the same.

AFTERWARDS: The hardest thing was knowing what a vulnerable position he was in, that anything could happen, that the Afghans were not to be trusted, that he was so far away. I would probably react the same way today. Ten years ago, he was in Kosovo and that went well. The mission in Afghanistan, however, appeared far more difficult and dangerous.



The Soldier's Mother

by Pär Thornell

On Family Day, our soldiers' and officers' loved ones could see their uniformed sons, daughters, life companions or parents and their unit. The equipment and vehicles are on display, and as it should be, the unit conducts a ceremonial parade, and the commanding officer as well as lower-level commanders give morale-boosting speeches to the troops. Such a parade should, in my view, be both informative and comforting but also show discipline and that tangible, ageless and easily recognizable 'military unit'. To me, this was, for various reasons, an important day, but unfortunately my parents could not attend because of something as banal as a severe cold. My partner and my brother were there, and I remember it was useful to hear about their impression of the unit but also that of other relatives. It was interesting to meet my soldiers' and colleagues' relatives, but there was a certain encounter I particularly remember.

While standing outside one of the barracks where people are circulating, I feel my shoulder clasped pretty firmly, and the following words are uttered:

– You are the one I want to see!

It is the mother of one of my soldiers along with his father. I know the soldier well because he did his military service at our unit two years ago. He is one of the most capable soldiers I have had the honour to train. He is self-confident and comes across as stable. He has all the qualities to work well in our platoon and is a very quick learner. I am not sure his parents take the same view. My soldier's mother gives me a worried, sad, heartbroken look. For a long time, she looks at me critically while keeping her hand on my shoulder.

Now is the moment of truth. The murmur of the people around fades as my mind begins to focus on a serious talk. My soldier stands next to his parents and is obviously not entirely comfortable with this situation. His mother asks me if I am 'the boss' and how old and experienced I am. The soldier's father stares at me with some kind of observable hopelessness in the way he comports himself, with restrained attempts to hide his worries. It is quite obvious that they have prepared themselves for this meeting and that they are pretty nervous.

In retrospect, I realize that this situation was one of the toughest I have experienced in my entire career. I cannot remember whether my relatives were present or if I was on my own; in any case, I felt rather lonely. There I

was being held accountable in front of the soldier's mother and father, and they quite reasonably wanted someone to take full responsibility.

I emphasize what has been said several times, that we and the soldier have been trained for this and that the soldier is eminently suitable. But nothing I say will be enough; you can feel their anxiety. My soldier becomes even more uncomfortable and starts squirming. The soldier's father is finally able to voice his and his wife's greatest concern: 'But what happens afterwards when you come home, who is responsible then?'

I explain to them that the Swedish Armed Forces even have a responsibility for their personnel post-mission. However, I leave out the fact that I will take personal responsibility for my soldiers. The moment is too intense, and they are overly worried. I just say that I will do my utmost. I do not know if I would have given the same answer today, but this experience was quite an eye-opener for me.

Epilogue:

The soldier did an excellent job in his team and served in our company after this mission. He went on another mission just a year after our rotation and is now back home safe and sound. When a colleague of mine asked me for a reference for this soldier, time stopped for a while. I was reminded of this soldier's mother. I cannot remember her face, but I do remember the unforgettable look in her eyes.

“ *I need to get my message across forcibly since the soldier is lying face down. The real problem is not the language confusion; it is the fear that his eyes betray, round his taut mouth and the position of his head when my arms force him to look up. It is like having to shake life into a very deep sleeper.* ”









“ She took the risks; I was at home in safe Sweden. She was on duty 24 hours a day for 7 months; I was working weekdays and had Saturdays and Sundays off. Although my life was a breeze compared with what rested on her shoulders, I am not ashamed to admit that I did not feel well. I was worried and sleeping badly. I just wanted her to come home. ”













“ *The best leaders I finally found during my military service. I realized that you can't be an expert at everything, but they were generally good at many different things. And there was something somewhat undefinable, I found some kind of trust for their attitude to what we did. That I think I have, subconsciously, brought along. I think the confidence they projected pushed me a bit further.* ”





“ *The mind set needed in training on risk-taking is that the will to succeed is greater than the fear of making mistakes. That’s a big call for the training organization, the environment surrounding the trainee.* ”









“ *And what are we? Are we
good or bad? What am I
doing in Afghanistan? Why
am I here? Can I help anyone?* ”





“ Sometimes we felt worlds apart –
my presuppositions are so different
from hers – but quite often, I felt
an affinity, like when we spoke
about how hard it can be to make
your voice heard in a man’s world. ”











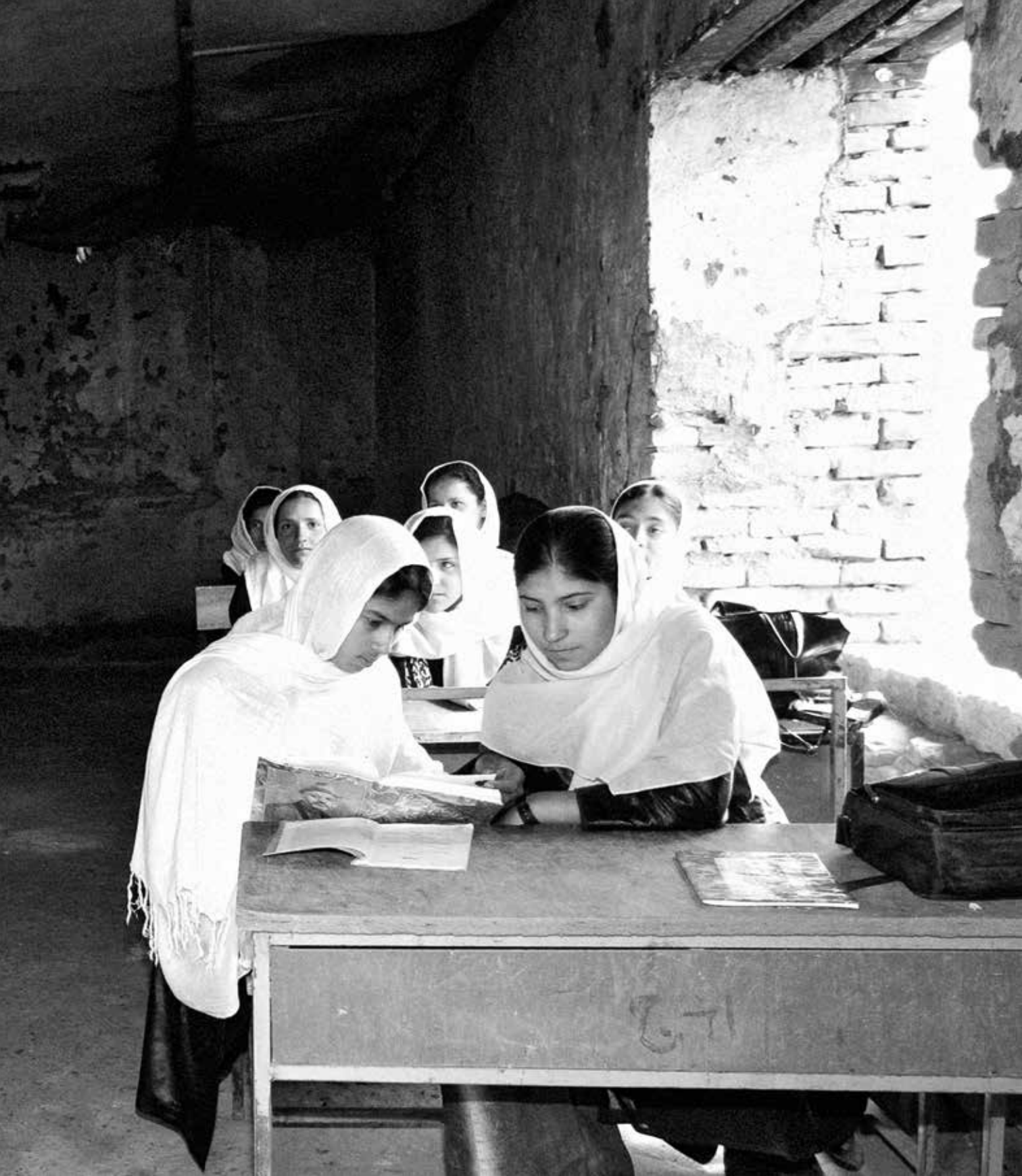


“ *There are everyday signs you can see with the naked eye. When you see little girls with just simple kerchiefs on their heads and Mickey Mouse bags on their backs on their way to school, that means something.* ”









“ Was it worth all the worry? Was it worth all the risks? Questions that cannot be answered with a simple yes or no. The big question is who we would be if we had not experienced the emotional roller coaster that serving overseas involves: both for those in Afghanistan and those back home in Sweden. ”

















“ *It’s all about learning to live with your decisions. At that moment, now and in the future to come. It’s most likely about breaking a number of rules. – What will my relatives then think about me? What will my colleagues think about me? Why do I take the risks I sometimes take? What do I want to achieve?* ”









In-depth Section

Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams

An Interview with Martin Liander

Lieutenant Colonel Martin Liander was interviewed by Lotta Victor Tillberg on 28 April 2014 at the Swedish Armed Forces Headquarters, Stockholm.

Background

Since 2007, the Swedish Armed Forces have been supporting the development of the Afghan National Army (ANA) by participating in the Operational Mentor and Liaison Team (OMLT) programme. The OMLT mission is to train, support, advise and work with the ANA. The programme's aim is that by supporting the ANA, the latter can, in turn, develop a greater capacity to work towards stability in the country. Their mission includes coordinating, supporting and participating in ANA operations. The OMLTs are assigned to different ANA command levels. Sweden has contributed corps, brigade and battalion mentors to the ANA 209th Corps. For the battalion mentors, it entailed living and staying with their unit. This means that Swedish military personnel spend, by and large, all their waking hours with the ANA section they have been tasked with mentoring.

Lieutenant Colonel Martin Liander was commander of the Swedish OMLT 2nd Kandak (2nd Battalion) as part of FS 19* and served from May 2010 to December 2010.

*What were you doing before you were appointed the OMLT commander?
How long before you knew of your appointment?*

I was recruited to the post in September, and preparatory training began in December the same year. At this time, I was serving on the Swedish Joint Forces Command's Army Tactical Staff (ATS) and was, among other things, working on instruction and training for our overseas missions. Within this framework, I had been involved in developing the Swedish application of the OMLT concept from the NATO policy document known as CONOPS (Concept of Operations). Based on this, we created a Swedish policy document, one that specifies the unit structure, what we call the *Order of Battle*. It contains how many people should be involved, what kind of people they should be, the endurance the unit needs to have, what equipment, etc.

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This means that Swedish military personnel spend, by and large, all their waking hours with the ANA section they have been tasked with mentoring.

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* 'FS' was the prefix given to Sweden's ISAF contingents, starting with FS 01.

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*They hadn't liked the
advice they had been given,
so they quite simply slit the
throats of their advisers.*
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Is the OMLT mission something the Swedish Armed Forces have done in a real-time situation before?

No, not in this manner. The OMLT concept was new, produced specifically for Afghanistan, but historically there are variations that resemble this where also Sweden has been involved and contributed. The OMLT concept is largely based on the previous lessons learned by the Americans when using advisers embedded in others' armed forces. Some of these experiences date back to, for instance, the Vietnam War, while others come from earlier support for the Northern Alliance during the civil war in Afghanistan. Even the Russians [*sic*] employed a similar concept, for example during their occupation of Afghanistan. These 'advisers' have not always been a success. One of the Afghan officers in the unit I was mentoring told us a little anecdote about when he was a soldier during the Soviet occupation. Their unit had been assigned Russian [*sic*] advisers who were to get them to track down and kill the Afghan mujahideen warriors. They hadn't liked the advice they had been given, so they quite simply slit the throats of their advisers. Unfortunately, at the time of our mission, there were too many recent stories about NATO's efforts, which made this story rather frightening for us.

What kind of start-up time did you have?

The preparatory training was six months, and prior to this, I recruited my unit. We had around three months for recruitment. I could handpick the people we selected. During the preparatory work, we also began looking at the significance of the tasks and how we should interpret them. What does the mission involve? Our mission was to mentor the Afghan unit. Mentoring itself does not involve any combat tasks, but the mission was to be performed during the planning, execution and evaluation phase of an Afghan-led combat operation. What would this mean for us then? We had to perform rather extensive analyses of both our tasks and which method we would follow. We also devised for the mission a threat and risk management tool so as to perform risk assessments during ongoing operations. Other things that took up a lot of preparation time were the logistics. Our OMLT was to be autonomous and spread over at least three locations. This turned out to be four. Then as commander, you have to consider how to delegate authority within the unit and how to allocate personnel and materiel resources. We quite rightly ended up with a solution characterized by directive control where the majors who were company mentors were given far-reaching authority to manage their assigned soldiers and equipment.

How many in total?

There were forty-four of us in total, and they were split into two main categories of personnel, namely mentors and support. The latter consisted of close protection sections, a medical unit, logistics personnel and radio operators, all of whom were tasked with giving support within their field to the personnel mentoring the Afghans. The mentors were divided up and attached to the Afghan battalion staff and the various companies. In addition to these forty-four Swedish officers and soldiers, there were twelve Afghan interpreters. These were young, locally recruited lads who spoke decent English, and so they could interpret for us. They had no military training, we think... As I mentioned earlier, our unit was established to be autonomous; in other words, we would, in principle, manage entirely on our own for a long time in the field. Within NATO, all logistics are a national responsibility. For our part, Sweden had chosen to procure support from other nations, and only regarding certain things were we directly supported by the Swedish contingent. We received no support at all while in the field, which limited our endurance to what could be carried in our vehicles. We bought certain provisions and fuel locally from the Afghans. Our field endurance was approximately ten days (this period, however, depended on what kind of task we were to carry out) before we needed to fill up with water and fuel. This meant that we had a 'normal rhythm' of spending ten days in the field and then replenishing and recovering for two days. This varied a great deal, however, particularly because of the many times we ended up in combat. We nevertheless learned at a very early stage in our mission that we needed to get by on our own using what we had. *Travel light, freeze at night* was what the soldiers called the concept.

It sounds like your role was to act as the hub?

No, I wouldn't quite say that. Obviously, as commander, I am responsible both for my personnel and for ensuring we carried out our assigned tasks, but I decided to take a very strong directive control approach. I commanded by assigning tasks and allocating resources to my immediate subordinate commanders. Once this was done, my role was primarily supportive, but as I indicated before, this was only half of my job. Already when we were analysing our tasks back home in Sweden and linking these to the personnel resources we had been allocated, I realized that my task was two-fold: I was a unit commander, and I was also to mentor the Afghan battalion commander. Others in my unit had to assume these two roles as well, for example those selected to be company mentors; not very easy when,

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for instance, you ended up fighting during an operation. This placed great demands on both my subordinate commanders and me to quickly change hats during an ongoing operation; not very easy when you are under fire. It wasn't only the officers who had dual roles. In many cases, the soldiers came to act as both trainers and mentors to the Afghan soldiers. This was a necessity since it turned out that the Afghans' level of knowledge and training was significantly lower than expected, and we simply didn't have enough mentors. By utilizing the soldiers' knowledge and skills, I obtained twice as many instructors and trainers. They did an excellent job of training Afghan soldiers in using vehicles and arms. This was, however, not entirely without problems since many of our Swedish regulations, for instance on skill at arms training, do not permit a soldier to supervise firing live ammunition. This can seem odd seeing as, for example, a section commander is tasked with conducting live combat. It took me an eternity to bring about a formal decision authorizing them to oversee firing range practice; so long, in fact, that I decided the matter myself and informed my senior commander of this. This clearly showed that sections of our armed forces, not to mention our elected representatives, back home in Sweden did not understand the deployment environment we were to operate in and that the rules and regulations produced to support conscript training could not be applied here. My understanding was that politicians had viewed these support missions in Afghanistan as pleasant enough. Swedish personnel instructing and training the Afghans and possibly giving a bit of good advice every so often. This is extremely odd seeing as the decision once taken by Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Anna Lindh, made it very clear the deployment environment in which we were to operate.

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This relationship is, of course, based on sharing the same hardships, and they are not always pleasant.

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How do you think the Afghans felt about you as mentors?

If you look at it from the Afghan perspective, they end up having to be willing to accept advice and instructions from someone called a mentor. Then it is necessary to have a certain type of relationship. This relationship is, of course, based on sharing the same hardships, and they are not always pleasant. This was an assumption our analysis identified. If we plan something with the Afghans and then aren't with them when they execute it because it's too great a risk for us, then we are back at square one, and they won't want us there. We also noted that the more difficult the situation we ended up in together, the greater the confidence the Afghans had in us. However, the tricky question was always how big a risk should we take in order to carry out our tasks.

Was this something you already had from home?

As I previously mentioned, we already drew these conclusions during the planning stage at home in Sweden. Moreover, our predecessors had identified this as a lesson learned. Perhaps I can see a lack of direction from senior commanders regarding the threats and risks in the deployment environment in which we were to operate. I know that we have now developed our pre-mission threat and risk assessments, but I have never seen a formal risk assessment for an OMLT. So no one was directing me on when or when not to accompany the Afghans. The decision was entirely mine. I always involved my personnel when we did the assessment, however. A risk management method that we produced during the preparations provided us with some support. I felt these decisions were very difficult, and I know that my subordinate commanders felt the same. In fact, they often had to make decisions for their own units. I normally delegated this authority when we split up into subunits. It is impossible to be elsewhere on the battlefield or in the staff headquarters and decide when a mission is too risky to complete. Sometimes my subordinate commanders used me, however, to make the decision not to allow them to participate in a certain mission. By doing so, we reduced the risk of ruining their relationship with their Afghan counterpart.

When you got there, were you sought after by the Afghan units?

Both yes and no. Meeting new people and forming new relationships are always demanding. We were now the second group of Swedes to come, and our predecessors there had actually only really just got started. We got a good handover from them, and we could start interacting with our counterparts pretty quickly. The others hadn't managed to get much done, possibly just one large-scale operation together with the Afghans. They had neither ruined nor developed very much, so we had rather a lot of scope. The Afghan commander, my battalion commander, was a bit of a scoundrel, but he was very proud of having his own mentor. That means you are a someone down there, and only a certain few battalions received this support.

You could also imagine it being the opposite, that it was the units not up to the task that needed mentoring?

No, you must clearly understand that developing units in Afghanistan takes place very slowly. Often they take one step forward and two steps back, and you have to start again. The battalion we were given had been deemed suitable by NATO, which was also the case with the other units. So

they had already done an evaluation and knew that it could have an impact on this battalion.

And the Afghan battalion commander you were to mentor, what was he like when you met him for the first time? Did you hit it off?

Yes, I had actually been there before; I had previously been in Afghanistan for just over a year. I was quite familiar with the culture and well informed of the prevailing circumstances.

You were able to sound credible when having a discussion?

Yes, I'm quite sure of that. I had been recruited for this mission due to my previous experience. Experience but also age itself are very important in the Afghan culture. Our OMLT had an average age of 44, and there was a reason for this: young officers and soldiers find it considerably more difficult for their views and ideas to win the day. Of course not all my personnel had previous experience in Afghanistan, but together with professional knowledge, this was one of the more important selection factors when recruiting.

Part of the problem for the Afghans was conforming to the American concepts. You see, Afghan units are not trained to NATO standards. The tactical regulations, planning methods and operational concepts were based entirely on the American national model. An important part of our preparations was learning the American methods. This was a prerequisite for being able to help the Afghan battalion later. Unfortunately, many American methods are bureaucratic and complicated, which perhaps doesn't suit us Swedes very well and definitely not the Afghans. It is important, however, to point out the necessity of having the same instructions and structures to keep to. All these American procedures and the filling in of numerous forms were, however, something of an Achilles' heel for the Afghans. If a form wasn't filled in properly, you couldn't, for example, get any ammunition for the battalion. For the Americans, and for NATO too, this was also a way of, for instance, counteracting corruption. It is not uncommon for Western support, even civilian, to go straight into the black market. This behaviour could now be kept in check by the filling in of copious forms signed by commanders at various levels and also countersigned, for example, by us in the OMLT; in other words, traceability was very important, and if you didn't adhere to established procedures, you simply had to do without. This could have very serious consequences, with combat-deployed units not getting provisions or fuel because of incorrectly filled-in papers. Although the bureaucratic ideas of both the United States and NATO were basically good, they had probably underestimated the Afghan culture. Afghans don't draw

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Unfortunately, many American methods are bureaucratic and complicated, which perhaps doesn't suit us Swedes very well and definitely not the Afghans.

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up plans like we do in the West. Most Afghans come from farming communities where the primitive economy and bartering are the instruments they use. Survival of the fittest, namely taking from those who are weaker, is also a method both civilian and public sector Afghans use.

If their food runs out during an operation, they think nothing of taking melons or other crops from a nearby field. The OMLT often had to deal with this type of situation by, for instance, giving the battalion commander money to pay the farmers. Getting the Afghan military to understand that their behaviour was essentially a form of plundering proved very difficult. Power was a natural part of leadership, both within and outside their own organization. When holding discussions, we often had to skirt around the actual problems and find other motivators to get the Afghan soldiers and officers to change their behaviours. The argument that a farmer treated properly is more inclined to tell them where the ‘dushman’ (enemy) is was often much more successful.

[...]

Our principal mission, mentoring the Afghans, wasn’t an ordinary combat mission. The main purpose was to provide advice during both the planning and implementation phases of the Afghan missions; in other words, we did not decide what would be carried out, but we gave them advice on how to best go about it. We were also able to support their missions by putting ISAF resources their way. This was called ‘partnering’. Quite often, partnering thus enabled us to provide advanced resources, such as air support and mine-clearing capability, for the Afghan plans. The basic idea was, however, that the Afghans would still conduct their operations autonomously, but the reinforcements would reduce the risk of suffering their own losses. Unfortunately, ISAF often failed to provide support, the primary reason being national restrictions imposed on units, which, for example, prevented units from a certain country from being in specific areas. These were often where there was a major threat or where it was so inaccessible that the medical chain couldn’t be guaranteed. Unfortunately, it was frequently the case that the Afghan units were conducting their missions in precisely these areas. American units were mainly the ones supporting the Afghans. You often get the impression in the media that the Americans are not very popular in this part of the world, but in the Afghan armed forces, it was the opposite. The Afghans saw the Americans as both helpful and brave. I can personally underscore that without their help my unit would have suffered losses.

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If their food runs out during an operation, they think nothing of taking melons or other crops from a nearby field.

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We had our own water and provisions with us because we couldn't use anything available locally for sanitary reasons.

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What was an ordinary day for you?

My starting point was in an old Chinese road construction camp in Jowz-jan Province that was now the Afghan battalion command post. It was quite near a large town, Sheberghan. We were living in tents but also had access to a stone building where the conditions were a bit better during the baking summer. The basic concept for all OMLT personnel was that they stayed with their Afghan counterpart all the time. In practice, this meant that my unit was eventually spread across a number of locations. The Afghan battalion's area was, unfortunately, very big, which meant up to 100 kilometres between the bases, which, of course, made logistics provision and communication difficult. All our sites had extremely poor living conditions. During an inspection, the Surgeon General said, 'If the Swedish Armed Forces intend to stay here for a long time, very extensive work will be required'. Because the environments were so wretched, we needed to have everything with us. We had our own water and provisions with us because we couldn't use anything available locally for sanitary reasons.

How did you stay in contact with each other? When I am interviewing servicemen who have been deployed, a commonly held view is that they have found communication and liaison difficult.

We had a very complex communications system that included everything from radio transmitters to satellite communication. It almost always worked, which did not necessarily mean that we had communication. The geographical conditions and satellite availability were two defining factors in this context. We also had some problems communicating with others. For instance, we had inadequate communications with senior commanders. We had access to the hardware, namely a NATO-compatible radio, but we did not have the codes. All these factors meant that we very often used mobile phones, but seeing that the adversary partially controlled the networks, we had to avoid speaking about classified matters. We often used the mobile to call up someone and then switched to encrypted communications. This also meant that we did not have to detail personnel to look after numerous radio systems out in the vehicles. We texted a lot too; in other words, we sent encrypted texts via satellite or radio.

[...]

We soldiers are generally critical of a lot of our equipment, and this is bound to have something to do with the dangerous environment we are expected to operate in. No one wants to come to any harm due to inadequate

materiel. I think that Johanne Hildebrandt [a Swedish war correspondent and author] captures this particular phenomenon well in her book *Krigare* [Warriors]. Our materiel and our support systems had numerous inadequacies: problems with ammunition supplies, water supplies and totally expended weapons to name just a few. As a consequence of this, we had to adopt a problem-solving attitude. There was quite simply no other way to do things than to find solutions to the best of your ability. We solved many problems ourselves right there and then with my commander's blessing. I already knew him well and felt that I had far-reaching authority to make the necessary decisions, many of which were probably above my decision-making level, but the extreme situation led me to make decisions. It was often a matter of our own safety. No one has commented negatively on this, either at the time or since, even if in some cases this actually involved direct departures from the rules and regulations. For instance, I took the decision to replenish and modify certain weapons systems, which would normally fall outside the authority assigned. I can show this by way of an example. This picture shows the result of one of these decisions. [Shows picture] We continuously needed to maintain and repair our weapons systems. For the OMLT, Sweden had decided to procure this support from the Americans.

If you look at this weapon, you'll see it's an ordinary Swedish Ksp 58 machine gun, but we have such old versions that when I visited the Americans who were to service our weapons, they laughed and said that they hadn't seen this type of weapon since the Korean War. They hadn't seen the fitted wooden butts for forty years. The Americans themselves have in fact had this weapon for decades but decided to gradually modify it. I took the decision that some modifications were to be carried out and certain damaged components were to be replaced with newer parts from modified materials. Among other things, the Americans fitted scope brackets and a thermal sleeve for the barrel.

Then we had this weapon [shows picture], the Ksp 88 heavy machine gun. Sweden purchased these at the end of the 1980s to mount on our assault craft. This would, however, prove very useful even in Afghanistan. Unfortunately, their accessories and spare parts were not delivered to us as a complete weapons system, for instance we lacked consumable parts and maintenance equipment. When servicing our weapons, the Americans rejected twelve of our fourteen machine guns due to wear and tear and slapped a firing ban on six of them. As part of these repairs, I decided to modify the weapons, including fitting a flash suppressor to reduce the flash so that it didn't interfere with the IR sight.

We sent over a hundred written lessons learned reports home to Sweden,

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They hadn't seen the fitted wooden butts for forty years.

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which is an important procedure in a change decision-making process. To ensure the traceability of any decision made, I required all officers and soldiers to send in lessons learned reports that included identified lessons learned. Each change was preceded by a decision documented in the combat log and accompanied by a report that went home to Sweden via the contingent commander.

Another kind of equipment that caused considerable problems was our vehicles. The assigned RG-32M Galten armoured vehicle, nowadays the TGB-16, was brand new and immediately after procurement was deployed in Afghanistan. We were the first to be assigned the new, modified model, fitted, for instance, with a turret. No one had previous experience of these vehicles, and they had a number of teething problems that caused us plenty of trouble. These vehicles had not been available during pre-deployment training, and we had used an earlier version that had to serve as the basis for drafting the necessary Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for how loading, the Order of Battle and armament options should be managed. As it turned out, this SOP would be subject to change as the vehicles assigned had completely different requirements and properties. As well as a number of technical and practical failings, such as the doors not locking, the gear-boxes overfilled with oil, and the weapons not fitting in the turret mount, we received several technical orders from the Swedish Armed Forces Headquarters that had very serious consequences for us, one of which included a restriction on carrying a spare wheel and jack for the vehicle. Because the vehicle was overloaded, we were simply not allowed to bring the spare wheel and jack with us in the vehicle. Initially, the solution was to take these along on a trailer behind the vehicle. After the first battles, this solution proved not very successful, however. As our unit only had a few trailers and we were often advancing on very narrow roads, these became precarious sections to go on with the 70 kg spare wheels. This became particularly evident when under fire. I then decided that all vehicles would have their spare wheels mounted. I reported back home my decision and the reason for this and then received a more flexible order that didn't micromanage what could be brought along in the vehicle but restricted the kerb weight. This would probably also be a major restriction if you decided to check the weight of all personnel and loads. It is reasonable to assume that we were always driving around with an excess load, but the alternatives meant the personnel taking too great a risk. We also encountered several problems with driveshafts and springs breaking probably due to this increased load. Much more serious were the cracks that formed around the turret ring on the roof of the vehicle. We reported our observation, and the response from back home was that we

were forbidden from having turret-mounted machine guns. We had just returned to base from a number of large-scale battles when this order arrived. Very aware of the safety risks that continuing to use unarmed vehicles would entail for my personnel, I decided to cancel all OMLT work. In the wake of my report, things became quite turbulent at the National Contingent Command. I got a call from the ATS, which fully understood the dilemma and accepted the exemption I had requested in my report, with the proviso that the vehicles would undergo a specific check each time they were to be used.

You have to weigh the risks against the advantages the whole time. All of these weapon and vehicle problems had the soldiers grumbling a bit. I felt, however, that the personnel had great confidence in how I was dealing with these problems. My previous experiences of serving on the ATS meant that I had a good knowledge of the decision-making processes at Swedish Armed Forces Headquarters and also had a personal relationship with the decision makers there. Having been involved in specifying the vehicle requirements made things a whole lot easier too. On balance, I would still say, however, that it was the right decision to deploy these vehicles despite all the teething problems, and praise goes to General Grundevik and his staff for obtaining them in record time. Having been in and used these vehicles in over thirty firefights, I'm absolutely sure that they are one of the contributory reasons why I got all my personnel back home to Sweden with me.

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In the wake of my report, things became quite turbulent at the National Contingent Command.

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What other tasks were a problem?

We had devised an OMLT plan before travelling down here, and it stood the test to all intents and purposes. However, it met with some resistance, for instance among the rest of the Swedish contingent. Complicated chain-of-command relationships combined with our SOPs differing from those of the other Swedes in many respects.

What was the problem with that?

It often starts somewhere down at the soldier level. ‘Why is she allowed to and not me?’ The Swedish contingent commander’s leadership was challenged when the rules for, for example, the PRT (Provincial Reconstruction Team) soldiers did not apply to us. It was perhaps not so easy either to explain why the OMLT was not completely subordinate to the contingent commander like all the other Swedes. Small details easily become big things for the soldiers in an operational area.

I felt that many of the problem areas that became big things within the Swedish contingent, also within ISAF as a whole, never occurred in my unit. We had none of these endless discussions on the equipment load, the

alcohol policy and what type of games console should be part of the deployment welfare package. The deployment environment my soldiers were to operate in was probably a contributing factor. These things were just not important to my personnel. The time between our operations was used to look after the equipment and our bodies and souls, so there simply wasn't any 'time off'. Plus, one of my hobbyhorses has always been 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it', meaning that I just didn't raise these various so-called problematic topics. The PRT's reality simply didn't correspond to ours. I think this played a part in a split emerging between our units.

I think other things exacerbated these more rudimentary things, and these perhaps played a bigger part in creating the split between us and the contingent. One of these things that was an actual problem for us was our Afghan counterpart's view of RC-N (Regional Command North) and the Swedish contingent. It was intended that the Afghans would conduct operations with RC-N, known as partnering. The Afghans were also designated to lead both the planning and implementation. Our battalion was to primarily conduct operations with the Swedish PRT. The Afghans quickly formed the opinion that the PRT always pulled out of these intended operations, particularly if things could be dangerous. Of course it wasn't as simple as that, but the Afghans couldn't understand how a PRT with responsibility for an area could impose restrictions on itself which prevented the unit from, for example, operating in parts of its designated area. The consequence of this was that my personnel rolled out along with the Afghans, but the PRT soldiers stayed on base. These factors definitely did not strengthen relations between my soldiers and the PRT personnel.

This must also have impacted on you? Swedes are Swedes?

I think the fact that we were always with them meant they saw us in a different light. They knew that invariably we went out with them, and gradually as we conducted joint operations, they knew that we stood alongside them even when things were at their worst. I assume that things happen to people when you share the experience of over thirty firefights together.

It sounds like a lot of it has to do with relationships? Both internally and externally with NATO and ISAF?

If you look again at the mission, you will understand why: 'mentor and support, plan and implement, evaluate operations performed by an Afghan infantry battalion', combined with bringing about partnering with other ISAF units. The mission is basically a duty of trust, and good relations are a prerequisite for this.

It is a gigantic mission...

Looking at things retrospectively, I completely agree with you, perhaps too big? If I'd known what I know now, I might not have taken the mission on. I would have definitely had a humbler attitude towards its magnitude. At the same time, it's important to point out that this is one of the best things I have ever done, and it has certainly developed me professionally.

I understand that you also had time to do many more tasks than simply following the Afghan battalion commander?

The task was, as I have already said, multifaceted, and the mentoring, which was certainly the main duty of more than half of the personnel, was based on many other tasks being carried out in parallel. The supporting units' tasks – close protection, medical care, logistics and liaison – involved equally great, if not greater, challenges. The tasks of different service branches often overlapped, and our supporting soldiers had to, for example, act as instructors and mentors to the Afghan soldiers. In times of larger-scale combat, the mentors often had to switch to leading the Swedish support units. What was decisive for whether the latter task was to be carried out was primarily based on whether or not the Afghans had won their battle. If things don't go so well, and the opponent gains the initiative and thereby constitutes a direct threat to our units, then the agreement with the Afghans was that we would suspend the mentoring and form a Swedish combat unit. This unit could then support the Afghans in their combat and, for example, call in air support.

There were, of course, lots of other ordinary unit tasks that had to be done continuously where everyone had to contribute seeing as we were, as previously mentioned, autonomous. We handled everything from maintenance duties to debriefing discussions with combat-fatigued personnel.

How long has it been since you returned home from this mission?

2010. So that's four years ago.

If you think back now, what was the most difficult? Or the most trying?

By far the most difficult thing was being the commander in charge when you're not where the action is. Where it was impossible to provide the support I knew was needed. I can give an example. I got a call from a company commander who was in combat and had been for a long time. We had been in continuous contact. But now I found out that they were running very low on ammunition and had no more water. So I contacted ISAF and RC-NORTH, to which I report, but they inform me that they can't fly because

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By far the most difficult thing was being the commander in charge when you're not where the action is.

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the weather is too bad. I also phone the Swedish PRT, but it can't do anything either. So I decided to contact the Americans with whom we had previously worked well together. I spoke to the American colonel who was the CAB (Combat Aviation Brigade) commander; he answered directly: 'You only have to say the word emergency and we will fly there,' and they flew straight away. American personnel consisting of two joint terminal attack controllers were helicoptered in to direct the air-to-ground combat. Ammunition and water were supplied. The American combat duo reported to my company commander and explained that they had been tasked with supporting our withdrawal from the area. The Americans also detailed three attack helicopters that escorted us all the way back to base. They deployed an armed escort, a helicopter on each side of the valley and a helicopter in front. As a commander, being in those situations, before finding a solution to the problem, is by far the most difficult. When you are totally helpless and all possible solutions have been exhausted.

You describe when you are actually at a distance from the problem as being the most difficult.

That is what hurts the most. When you are a commander and are in charge and start to hear in the voices that things are really bad out there. The subordinate commanders start looking for your support when all their possibilities have been exhausted, and they want me to come up with a timely solution to save the entire situation. And I can't really give them anything. In this particular case, things actually resolved themselves. However, I think that we have sometimes, rather naively, gone into situations where we don't have the resources ourselves. And I think that the Alliance has a cowardly streak, with certain nations hiding behind national restrictions that in fact prevent them from delivering what they're supposed to. There are more cases like this. This particular incident wasn't so unpleasant, but we had another situation that was not really combat related, apart from the unit being in enemy-controlled terrain. A vehicle accident occurred where one of the vehicles overturned. Overturning in this kind of vehicle need not be terribly dangerous in itself, provided that all personnel are strapped into the vehicle, but since we were on a combat footing, the turret was manned. When the vehicle turned over and ended up on its roof, he [the gunner] was crushed between the turret edge and the ground. The soldier, who unfortunately was also our platoon medic, sustained severe crushing injuries to his arm. Of course this happened in an area where many countries, including Sweden, had decided that their own units were not allowed to operate.

Are you there when this happens?

I'm not at the scene; I'm at an Afghan base about forty kilometres away. The vehicle overturns, and they report into me at the base. They report that one person is seriously injured and that it is the field medic, which hampers his ability to administer simple first aid at the scene. They request an immediate evacuation. The roads to their position are really bad, making it take longer to advance but, above all, putting the evacuee under great stress. I request medevac but am informed that it is not permitted to fly into the area given the nature of the threat, but they can fly to the base where I am. I realize then that we need to carry out the evacuation ourselves. There are two vehicles with crews at the scene, one of which has overturned. One person is severely injured and needs to be evacuated immediately. How do I get all this back? I can't leave three men by a vehicle in order to let five men drive forty kilometres away to drop off the casualty. Then three men will be left alone right in the middle of enemy territory. Previous experiences had shown that it would take about ten minutes before word from the local population would reach the enemy that we had not moved and were having a problem with our vehicles; in other words, it will be ten minutes before we are under fire, that's how bad things were. ISAF's lack of understanding and its inability to decide to support us meant that my personnel, and me personally, became very agitated and angry. When formal regulations that someone has drafted no longer stand up, you have to, as a military commander, be prepared to review earlier decisions and to act. A NATO unit is in a very difficult situation with injured personnel, and the nature of the threat is severely hostile. The situation was in fact so serious that initially we didn't know whether or not our soldier would survive. As I already said, I ended up driving there myself. I gathered together the few mentors I had at the base and had to take some of the unarmed vehicles we had. We had previously requested, as we always did, a quick reaction unit to go out with us since there were only five of us at the base, me and four other men. We had a large-scale operation elsewhere. So we phoned up the Swedish base to find out whether they could make anyone available. Then the commander there said no because they weren't allowed to go into this area. We still went. When we passed the so-called cutoff point, the place where we normally assembled other supporting units in the event of an emergency, two combat-ready Swedish vehicles were waiting there. The section commander radioed that he was ready to advance. He had personally disobeyed his senior commander's order not to support us.

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Why did they go with you? Because they knew the people out there? Did they know them?

Yes. They did the same as the Americans. ‘Just say the word emergency and we’ll be there.’ Perhaps they were thinking that the next time it could be them injured out there. The fact that we knew each other and that we were all Swedes probably played a part in the section commander’s decision to disobey the instructions given. I think it is courageous to stand up for what you believe is right and am always proud of Swedish soldiers and officers who can demonstrate the ability to take action in difficult decision-making situations.

You said earlier, ‘Wherever the ANA goes, we go’, but the ANA is known for being unpredictable and changeable. How did you approach that?

Many people have that image, and it is certainly relatively true. I feel, however, that the relationship we had succeeded in building up with our counterpart meant that we could influence their decisions. We could get them to devise good enough plans that they then followed. Sometimes we had to make shadow plans when we identified weaknesses in the plans that the Afghans didn’t want to change. This was an important method of masking identified weaknesses in the Afghan plan with a view to minimizing the risks. My contact with the Swedish officer mentoring the Afghan brigade commander, a command level above us, was an important form of support for us. The brigade mentor could, for example, call me up and tell me what information my battalion would be getting from the brigade and point out weakness and risks identified at this senior level. I could then use these tips in my relationship with the battalion commander and in that way prevent the greatest risks. The Afghan battalion commander listened to us. He wanted us with him because he then knew that with us in tow he was getting more combat units, planes and other useful things. It was like a symbiotic relationship between them and us. Conducting joint operations was generally good. Obviously, it was always a bit scary knowing that you are rolling into combat; you are not indifferent to it.

You have previously spoken about how rules and reality sometimes were at odds. Do you have an example of this?

I’ve already mentioned a few when I spoke about rules for soldiers to conduct skill at arms training, but there are more examples. One I remember clearly concerned the storage of classified equipment, codes, classified documents, etc. Already back in Sweden, I had pointed out the impossibility of maintaining the same storage regulations as at home. We never

resolved the problems prior to our rotation to Afghanistan. A security inspection of my unit criticised us for violating existing regulations. One criticism was that I didn't have guards by the vehicles containing classified material. I explained how it was impossible with a four-man crew to have a permanent guard around the clock. We then received the order that classified material should be removed from the vehicles and stored in a safe. This was, of course, not a practical possibility either, as the readiness to move that I maintained wouldn't permit this; besides, I didn't have a safe. I heard nothing about this for a few weeks until one day the Afghan battalion commander called me and said that a Swedish convoy was outside the base and wanted to come in to deliver equipment. I was a bit surprised seeing as neither stocks nor equipment had been delivered to me in the four months we had been deployed. Into the base rolls a splinter-proof lorry escorted by an infantry platoon. I was even more surprised when I accepted the delivery: a 200 kg safe and an environmental container, the kind of sorting system with drawers for batteries, combustibles, etc. You become quite irritated when you see how the delivery priorities are based on some formal administrative thinking. To maintain a level of protection at our deployment site, I had ordered protective equipment, ammunition and building material. Nothing had been delivered, but then out of the blue, a safe and an environmental container arrive. Outrageous.

There were other types of cases that involved regulations which were more self-imposed but produced by individuals with no understanding of the environment in which they were to operate. Where they drafted very detailed SOPs that, from an individual functional perspective, described an exact course of action for a given situation. Apart from the problem that these kinds of detailed courses of action can rarely, if ever, be applied to reality, the functions weren't coordinated; in other words, different interests clashed. One experience we had of this concerns dealing with IEDs. Two SOPs provided instructions from two perspectives on how discovered IEDs should be dealt with. One prescribed how to act when encountering mines so that specially trained personnel could disarm them at the scene. The other dealt with rules and regulations on how to secure evidence at a discovered IED location. We ended up in a situation where one of my vehicles had set off an IED and had detected one right beside it. We followed the normal procedure of reporting to the Swedish PRT, which was responsible for the area. The response they got was that the unit should remain there, secure the terrain and await orders in accordance with the SOP that prescribed how to act when encountering mines. So my unit was to secure the terrain until the PRT dispatched a mine clearance team to detonate the IED

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at the location. But of course no one would ever come out to them because they were in the area the Swedish contingent had put restrictions on. My company commander reported that because of the firing going on, they had to continue ahead, and he intended to act in accordance with the other SOP and disarm the IED at the scene and take it back to base. The PRT repeats its order to secure the terrain and await further orders. As a consequence of the order, my soldiers who have just had an IED explode and are in combat are to remain there: eight men in this hellish terrain. The order was obviously wrong, and whoever issued the order also wasn't authorized to give it. Now, the company commander, who was the on-site commander, was too hardened to fall for something like this. The upshot was a so-called 'nothing heard', which indicated that he hadn't been able to make out the order.

Disobeying an order requires, I assume, the moral courage to dare to do so. Or having the inner morals that say that you should do something else?

I believe this issue has fundamental problems: some commanders think you can give an order in advance that will cover a very dynamic combat sequence, and they then think they should be providing leadership by controlling the battle using means of communication at some headquarters far from the centre of events. This doesn't work. An approach like this only produces obsolete orders that commanders in the field have to disobey. It gets even worse if you are also labouring under the delusion that you can write an SOP beforehand that regulates in detail how an on-site commander should act in certain typical situations. An actual event is hardly likely to correspond to such a typical situation. We had decided to take a different path with a more delegated approach where the on-site commander had far-reaching authority to make decisions in the situation in question. The senior commander had more of a supportive role once the operation had commenced. As for our own SOPs, they were considerably more flexible and did not restrict our commanders' leadership. I would call them generic in nature.

Explain what is meant by generic.

A generic SOP is written to support the on-site commander without violating reality by restricting their right to make decisions. For me, being generic means only regulating the activities, the least common denominator, that will, in all likelihood, always apply to the typical situation that has arisen.

But how do you write it generically? What you are describing to me is an unpredictable situation, and it can quickly develop in any number of ways.

I am not saying it's easy, but my experience tells me that then it is better not writing anything at all. Having lots of micromanaging that will not help you to extricate yourself from a difficult situation or, even worse, that aggravates the circumstances due to their irrelevance is not an alternative. I think that we, in some kind of planning zeal, produce far too many SOPs. Each staff function is supposed to have its own, and the number of pages just grows and grows. The result is numerous uncoordinated policy documents that are also not known within the organization.

What has made you think this way about your mission? How did you come to the conclusion that an SOP must be, as you call it, generic?

SOP is actually a term we were given when operating in a multinational environment. The closest term in the Swedish nomenclature is 'stående stab-order'. What they both have in common is that they form a set of permanent rules and regulations on how something is executed, something that is always valid. An example of this could be ISAF HQ's decision based on the nature of a certain threat in a specific area that all ISAF personnel operating in this area must always wear at least a helmet, a bulletproof vest, protective goggles and gloves. If you give a direct instruction like this without room for exceptions or assessments, you risk suboptimizing yourself and the increased protection level perhaps becoming an obstacle that, in actual fact, heightens the risk to personnel or prevents the task from being carried out. The question is then, how do I ensure that the authority to make a different decision resides in the right place, with the right person, at the right time. That is how you have to reason about these SOPs. Most ISAF soldiers and officers can probably understand that COMISAF (Commander of International Security Assistance Force) wants to protect his soldiers when he issues a directive like this. Unfortunately, probably not quite as many understand the consequences this type of directive could have if it is too detailed and also does not grant the authority to revoke it. ISAF HQ had noticed this and introduced a Force Exemption Card, which entitled the holder to deviate from the SOP. These cards were available at different levels that provided various mandates to deviate from, for example what equipment to carry or rules on how you should be equipped when advancing in a vehicle. All my commanders had these cards. All I demanded of them was that they should always notify me if they had decided to use them. This ensured that the on-site commander could decide to depart from the rules and regulations when they became obsolete.

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I remember there was a big discussion in Sweden about whether OMLT personnel should follow the ANA outside the geographical areas in which the Swedish military in Afghanistan is in charge of security.

We knew of this before our rotation to Afghanistan. This was, for instance, in NATO's policy documents. The only addition Sweden made in this context was clarifying how many days of lead time the Swedes required to deploy an OMLT in, for example, southern Afghanistan. In purely logistical terms, it would have been very difficult to execute such an order, and I don't think there was ever any actual alternative.

As a commander, which decisions did you find most difficult to make?

By far the hardest was when the units had just come back from a difficult mission and had conducted their After Action Review (AAR), and it became abundantly clear how tough things had been and how wonderful it was that everyone had made it back in one piece. When you, the commander, know that the next mission has already been prepared and that you will soon be sending them back into the hell they have just described, then a lot of thoughts about what is right or wrong go through your head. We didn't cancel any operation. However, we had to adapt to how our personnel were feeling. Many of them had combat stress reactions (CSR). Here my discussions with my deputies and company commanders were very important. Together we were able to provide assistance across the units so in that way we could relieve personnel who exhibited CSR and were not ready to go out straight away. I never had a single soldier or officer refuse to go, but sometimes I could see in their eyes that they wanted me to cancel the operations. My leadership was also important in these situations. I often decided to go out with them even though the Afghan battalion commander wasn't going along. It is important to share his subordinates' hardships; this creates trust. My actions actually got the Afghan commander to go out himself a couple of extra times although that wasn't his initial intention.

Did you always conduct AARs?

Each time we returned to base from a mission, all the involved personnel, including also subordinate units or those that had in some other way worked with us on the implementation, carried out an evaluation. My deputy had produced a clear and simple template covering a number of issues for discussion. It dealt with both hard and soft values, which was absolutely necessary as the soldiers were often highly strung like a violin. The individuals often suppressed their irritation and frustration at how colleagues and

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The individuals often suppressed their irritation and frustration at how colleagues and commanders had acted during the operation.
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commanders had acted during the operation. These discussions were a very important part of dealing with all the manifested CSR.

Were the Afghans involved in this?

We tried out the method at platoon level, but there was always a risk when Afghan officers were mixed with their soldiers. They didn't like to lose face, and getting negative feedback from a soldier was absolutely out of the question. The evaluations we carried out with the Afghans were rather doctored, and the soldiers were excluded. My experience is, however, that I could give negative feedback to my battalion commander. We didn't always see eye to eye, but I still got an inkling that he gradually changed certain aspects I had criticized. Things generally got better and better as our relationship developed.

How do you form a good relationship with the individual you are supposed to be mentoring?

Just like in ordinary relationships, a lot of it is about what kind of individual you are and how you view your counterpart. Trust is a keyword in order to make things work. I had a problem with some of my counterpart's peculiarities. But here you needed to be extremely tolerant. Cultural differences and one's life story are part of what makes us the people we are. For example, you can't change an individual's ethics and morals overnight. Unfortunately, my battalion commander was a bit of a scoundrel.

What do you mean by that?

He liked to appropriate the odd payment in kind and was mostly out for himself, exchanging, among other things, diesel for food. He knew I found that unacceptable and gradually improved a bit, or perhaps concealed it from me better. Quite soon after I had been relieved, he actually went to prison and was replaced. Whether there were legitimate grounds for this, I don't really know. However, I do know he wasn't the only one behaving like that. The entire society was more or less corrupt, where those who could give themselves perks did so. You need to be a bit careful though about being condemnatory. These behaviours probably originate in the environment of war and misery that have ravaged the country for the past thirty years. Nevertheless, we were obliged to report things we noticed. We wrote reports that were sent to NATO. They included, for instance, a section describing the Afghan commanders' behaviours. Unfortunately, this information was often leaked to the Afghans, which then created problems

and even put us at risk. We decided, however, to write the truth but tried to put it into context and in that way reduce the disparity vis-à-vis our Western approach.

Can you give an example?

My Swedish logistics mentor would come and say that a great deal of fuel had been used despite the ANA not having done anything. They would come to us with a form they wanted us to help fill in because they were going to run it through the American administrative system. This way they would get more fuel, but the Afghan unit's permanent logistics officer says that they haven't driven that much. They have done something else with the fuel they've already received. The Afghan logistics officer turns to us because his battalion commander has told him to arrange more fuel. It turned out that on one of these occasions they had exchanged the fuel for food because the ANA didn't have any. It was quite common for them not to have food, and I often had to pay for food for them, otherwise they would pillage the farmers' fields. They had no money. Then, in my opinion, this is a circumstance which shows that he hadn't only done it for his own personal gain. We wrote something like this in the report and tried to keep things quite woolly. When the Afghan battalion commander later came to me to ask about this, it confirmed for me that there was a leak somewhere along the line. He said that we had written unfavourable things about his unit, and I replied that we had. I said that I could show everything I'd written, and so I presented it. He knew a little English but not enough to understand the subtleties. We spoke about it, and I said that he was just as familiar with the American system as I was. The deal is that you get fuel if you have driven that vehicle. Then we know that you have used this or that amount of fuel, and you are compensated for it. To get ammunition, you will either have to do exercises for a predetermined purpose or carry out some form of operation. That applies to everything. It's no different from not getting paid for more soldiers than you actually have. Getting them to understand this system was one of our tasks. It's easy to judge the Afghans through Swedish eyes. It's always easy to be judgemental if you have money in your pocket, but the Afghans are poor people, as was the battalion commander. It was important to line your pockets before the Americans went home.

Another event underscoring that these behaviours were established in several social structures occurred during a joint operation with the Afghans. After protracted fighting, we had successfully surrounded a village the insurgents were operating out of. It was common for the Taliban to establish themselves in villages and use violence to force the villagers to hide

them. Following a decisive battle in which they, among other things, fired mortars at us, our use of attack helicopters successfully forced them to give up. The upshot was that we and the ANA took more than forty prisoners. These were handed over to the Afghan police, who were also involved in the operation. The police, together with the security service, then emptied the entire village of its inhabitants. It was also normal procedure for the police to conduct all searches and arrests in the village. The ANA only handled the operation's military aspect.

Nevertheless, the Afghan battalion commander decided that we would enter the village and search for weapons and other evidence. It is not so common for a westerner to be allowed into these villages, which are almost built like military forts, surrounded by high walls. We enter the village, and the Afghan battalion commander goes down into a den in the earth with several floors. He produces an axe and chops a hole in the clay wall. Inside there is a room and in which are three Norwegian military sleeping bags, a Swedish flare pistol, ammunition and some other equipment. The battalion commander was very pleased with having secured this evidence. While we were conducting the search, I noticed that several civilian men and also a woman wearing Western-like clothes had turned up in the village. I ask my battalion commander who these individuals are, and he explains that they are the security police and representatives of the provincial governor. These individuals then went round all the houses along with a police officer who kept a record. They took all the food. They confiscated everything of value, loaded it onto their vehicles and took it away. When I confronted my battalion commander with my observation, he just said that was what they always did. It was important to teach the villagers a lesson so that they resisted the next time the Taliban tried to hide in the village.

This is, of course, a very un-Swedish logic, but it sounds like it was logical to them?

Somewhere there is a limit to what you can accept in a given situation, but, at the same time, it's not just an individual case we are dealing with but an entire society where this type of event is part of the normal pattern. Our mission involved taking action in every situation where the rules of international law were being flouted, which we always did, even where this involved obvious risks to ourselves. We also managed to stop our Afghan battalion whenever it was getting closer to crossing the line. Unfortunately, I'm convinced that they didn't understand the principles we were trying to teach them, even if they did obey us for a while. We had a case like this, a tragic case in itself. We have been out on a lengthy operation together

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We are saved this time by a truck turning up with room for all the dead bodies.

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with the Afghans. On the way back to base, one of the ANA's vehicles goes over an IED. The vehicle, a Ford Ranger pickup, is fully loaded with soldiers when the bomb explodes under it. Five people die instantly, and the rest are seriously injured. The body parts of those blown to pieces lie spread out over the terrain, and confused Afghan soldiers try to collect their colleagues' remains. When we roll onto the scene, it is absolute chaos. The 100 Afghan soldiers who have gathered at the scene of the carnage are extremely upset. They have also taken two prisoners, who are now being singled out as the guilty party, and the Afghan company's officers are involved in a heated discussion, and through my interpreter, I understand that they are arguing whether or not the prisoners should be executed on the spot. In a very threatening situation, we manage to convince the Afghan company commander that the prisoners need to be interrogated so that we can gain intelligence on who their commanders are and who has made the IED. The situation is aggravated when the medevac helicopters we have called in land at the scene, and the ISAF doctor wants to prioritize one of the prisoners who is injured instead of flying the deceased ANA soldiers out. We are saved this time by a truck turning up with room for all the dead bodies.

What happened then?

We reported the incident. I had a discussion with the battalion commander where I made it abundantly clear that I did not appreciate being threatened. I explained to him that a condition for our continued support for his battalion was that they played by the rules we had laid down. We even put together for the Afghans a training package on international law. We ran the course at the battalion division, and I think they understood what we were saying but didn't agree.

It is a huge moral responsibility that amounts to a military commander who happens to drive into a situation.

Yes, it definitely is. Several of my commanders also had to put a stop to a number of similar events. Quite early in the mission, we had an incident where one of my company commanders had to stop a punishment at one of the company sites, down in Sar-e Pol. I received a report from my company commander that they had found a man in a small wooden cage. It turned out that a person from the Afghan unit had tried to escape. This was the interpreter's interpretation, but it could have been anything from French leave to actually trying to desert. As a punishment, they had put him in a cage and positioned it beside the guardhouse. He was sitting there being made an *example* of: that this is what happens. The Afghan company commander

on site refused to release the man when we complained that you couldn't do that. He said that this was how things were done and that they had to maintain discipline. At this time we were also rather new down there, and both my company commander and I were at a loss as to how to deal with the issue. Finally, we decided that I would raise the matter with the battalion commander. In that way, we could save the Afghan company commander from losing face in front of his troops and stop the punishment. I went to the Afghan battalion commander and asked him about current punishment practices and what punishments they were entitled to impose. The battalion commander was not aware of any system. It was up to the individual commander to impose a suitable punishment that fits the offence. It could be anything from corporal punishment to this type, a mixture of mental and physical punishment. So I said that we couldn't accept this type of punishment at the unit we were mentoring. I also said that we had an understanding of the culture they came from. I explained that it was not our place to say whether it was right or wrong but that we could not accept it from our point of view. I told him to think about what we could do and whether we could find some common ground. He came to me after just an hour or so and said that he had stopped it. He had got the message. You can accuse the Afghans of a lot of things, but they are not stupid. They understand the reasoning, and they comprehend that there is a big difference between understanding what another person is saying and agreeing with the other person. Gradually, as our mission went on, we increasingly realized that violence was a natural part of their society: in the town, adults hit children without the slightest reaction from those around them; military officers reprimanded soldiers by boxing their ears and hitting them. One important lesson we took home with us, however, was that you needed to put all these events into context in order to put a stop to them. To do this, you need very good knowledge of how the society and the culture in the operational area work, but also time: long-term plans rather than the Western 'quick fix'.

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I received a report from my company commander that they had found a man in a small wooden cage.

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It must have been a difficult challenge to understand how the Afghans think and act?

It definitely was. Many a time they played among themselves some kind of game that was difficult to interpret. You could call it a kind of double-dealing. Often when we were sitting at the negotiating table to discuss operations that should be conducted, my Afghan battalion commander made it very clear that he wouldn't be participating in the operation with his battalion but then did so anyway. The next time he did the exact opposite. One day he just said to the chief of police, who had suggested the operation,

‘Good, then we will roll out tomorrow morning at seven. I’ll make two companies available.’ That’s the way it has to be, he was thinking. Then the chief of police began to get worried and say that they wouldn’t have time and that it wasn’t possible. ‘Of course we can, let’s do it then. Come on,’ he said. Then he said to me afterwards that he had no intention of doing it and that it would never have been possible. ‘Which unit would I have sent; they are all out in the field,’ he said. It was a constant game that permeated all the meetings. The danger is when they also start playing with the opposition. That was our biggest fear.

These were the kind of guys with whom they were negotiating. One day they were the ones shooting at us and the next we were working with them. It was very trying. Only when you put together all these different components do you understand how complex the mission really is. How do we train and prepare ourselves for this? Everyone who has been in these environments, regardless of whether it is Africa, Afghanistan or Bosnia, knows how small you feel carrying out your mission and how infinitely far away the objectives are. You quite simply have no chance of demonstrating any measurable results of the major objective. Your participation and the risks you take will just be a drop in the ocean. Here I think we have a lot of work to do in our profession, particularly regarding our civilian superiors, namely forcing politicians to actually have strategies that put the military mission into context. The strategy will give our tasks meaning, which is important to all soldiers. It must never be a case of sacrificing soldiers’ lives without knowing why.

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It must never be a case of sacrificing soldiers’ lives without knowing why.

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Did you feel that your tasks were meaningful?

My soldiers probably felt very much that they were performing meaningful tasks, although I know that many questioned the lack of appreciation at home. Many have performed acts difficult to deal with purely mentally. Memories that will probably always live on. Here we have a responsibility to give meaning to their acts. Indeed, twelve of my soldiers and officers received medals for their actions, which was in itself an important recognition. However, I believe we need to do more. How will we otherwise get soldiers to subject themselves to all the paradoxes that modern battlefields involve?

That says something about how complex the environment is?

It is to do with what is right and what is wrong. The rule book will never give you the answers to this type of problem. It is left to your moral compass to decide what is right or wrong, where you have to be able to look

yourself in the mirror the following morning and be able to say to yourself that you've done the right thing.

Military force only becomes an alternative once other measures have failed. And then this is probably often a case of missions that are in some sense complex from the outset?

Yes, it is probably somewhat in the nature of things. The Swedish Armed Forces are often sent to those countries where the situation is really bad, and almost always we are the only tool Sweden has on the ground. The environment is quite simply too dangerous for others. Unfortunately, this affects the missions that the government assigns to its armed forces. I usually say that they use the armed forces like Gerber multi-pliers. We simply have to serve as a universal tool for all the tools in the security toolbox. In my opinion, this is a rather unsuccessful combination. You can't have someone who is distributing food parcels one day and is expected the next to climb four levels up the use-of-force continuum and carry out an ambush and shoot people to death, and then, on the third, revert to distributing food parcels. The world doesn't work like that. To be credible, you need to build for the long term.

Would you venture to say something about what will happen now in Afghanistan in 2014? What do you think?

There are everyday signs you can see with the naked eye. When you see little girls with just simple kerchiefs on their heads and Mickey Mouse bags on their backs on their way to school, that means something. That wasn't how things looked in 2006 when I was in Afghanistan for the first time. When you see women and children walking with men in Kabul, that also means something.

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It is to do with what is right and what is wrong. The rule book will never give you the answers to this type of problem.

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If You Encounter a Man in a Cage

Swedish Soldiers' Encounters with Unstructured Problems in Afghanistan

by Lotta Victor Tillberg

The Afghanistan Campaign, 2002–2014

Between 2002 and 2014, 8,024 Swedish men and women served in Afghanistan at a cost of around SEK 11 billion.¹ The Afghanistan campaign underwent different phases involving various tasks and challenges. The Swedish military personnel were used to execute various types of tasks, some with a focus on cooperation and coordination, while others involved counterinsurgency and sometimes combat.² The Afghanistan campaign spans a period that marks a time of transition for the Swedish Armed Forces.

In 2004, the then Supreme Commander voices the view that 'in the near future the Swedish Armed Forces' principal focus should be on adapting and increasing their ability to contribute to international crisis management'. Moreover, 'our ambition must be to create such an operational capability that what is internationally effective can also support the national defence'.³ The message is clear: Sweden's security must be constructed through Swedish military participation in international crisis and conflict environments. Participation in international missions is to be prioritized ahead of the territorial defence force, which was simultaneously undergoing personnel and materiel cuts. In 2009, conscription is suspended (i.e., it is practically abolished) and a professional force is introduced the following year. The development follows a European reform trend that sees most Continental countries switching to smaller but more professional and better-equipped military forces.⁴ However, at the same time, somewhat unexpected events are taking place in the world: in 2008, fighting in Georgia quickly escalates into a war, the Syrian conflict begins with expressions of discontent in January 2011, and due to the spread of Islamic State and especially Russia's activities in the Crimean Peninsula, there is a change of approach, namely Sweden needs a territorial defence force. The pendulum swings again. In 2014, the Parliamentary Defence Committee explains that:

The shape and size of the Swedish Armed Forces must be such that they can defend Sweden and promote Swedish interests. Therefore, the Swedish Armed Forces must be able to independently and jointly defend Sweden from an attack by state and non-state actors.⁵

The Afghanistan campaign (2002–2014) was thus conducted during a period of transformation for the Swedish Armed Forces, namely from an operational force whose focus was on carrying out tasks in another country back to defending the country's borders as the number-one priority. This is a brief and rough outline of the general context in which the Swedish soldiers and officers went to Afghanistan. If we now shift our gaze from the strategic and political perspectives, we can ask ourselves the following questions: What did the military personnel that Sweden dispatched to Afghanistan encounter? What challenges have the soldiers and officers faced?

Working Together, Protection and a Man in a Cage

Below are three examples of different situations that Swedish military personnel encountered in Afghanistan. These have been chosen because together they draw the contours of what has been required of a Swedish soldier who has served in Afghanistan.

1.

A man is sitting in a cage. This is the sight that greets you at the camp's guardhouse: a man in a small wooden cage. The temperature is 40° Celsius. You are there because your military mission is to work with the Afghan National Army (ANA). It is called 'partnering', and your mission is to 'support, plan, execute and evaluate operations carried out by an Afghan infantry battalion'. The location: somewhere in northern Afghanistan. It is the ANA, which you will be working with and helping to build up, that has put this man in the small wooden cage. Why is he sitting there? Maybe he is a soldier who tried to desert. The interpreter interprets. You understand that the Afghan company commander has ordered the man to be put in the wooden cage and it to be placed at the camp's guardhouse. The caged man is to act as a deterrent. He is being made an *example* of: this is what happens. What you are witnessing contravenes the rules and regulations you are subject to and believe in. Your Western values of how to treat other people are in sharp contrast to how problems are solved where you are in northern Afghanistan. You face a situation that requires your intervention.

2.

You are deployed at a three-way intersection. The platoon's three infantry sections, a medical section and a mine detection dog with a handler are at the scene. From above, a group of dispersed UAVs⁶ are monitoring the only way out of the area. No one will be able to prime prepared road bombs or bury any as long as you are there. It was precisely here that a Swedish

platoon got into a battle a year ago. Now you are standing in the same corridor. Since there are suspicions that villagers are letting their houses out to criminal adversaries, your job is to have a visible presence in the village. You have just recently collected biometric data – saliva – from a man suspected of helping your adversary. Everything has gone well. Now you are waiting. You have a drinking-vessel containing hot coffee in your hand. Kids of various ages are gathering on the other side of the wall. They seem to have some sort of a ledge on their side of the wall. Not only can they see you, but they can also climb up on the wall. They move close. Several of you realize all at once that a boy aged around ten is carrying something that looks like a battery pack with wires. You stare back and forth at this boy and at your fellow platoon member standing nearest to you. ‘Do you see what I see?’ The relaxed mood evaporates. The kids playing are a threat. Or are they still only kids playing? You contemplate for an instant.

3.

TAKE COVER! It is your own voice you hear. The sound of a grenade makes you shout. The countless high-speed impacts continue unabated. You move slightly to the side. The dried-out earth jumps up and forms small dust clouds all around you. Repositioning. New firing position. The same thing again, an impact, this time on your left. Branches rain down in small and large pieces. At some point here you sense the sound of all the firing melt into one. The wall of sound becomes the norm, and now you only react to changes in the repeated sound waves.

Behind you, you have a scared-to-death interpreter; his fear makes him follow your instructions to the letter. Good. Another repositioning. Peel left. Afghan soldiers lie strewn all over the place in a protective position in front of you. They are in danger. Here only the international language of clear and confident body language exists. The soldier nearest you is lying face down. You forcibly get your message across. The real problem is not the language confusion but the fear that his eyes betray. You see it in his taut mouth and the position of his head when your arms force him to look up. It is like having to shake life into a very deep sleeper. You strain every nerve to instil a sense of confidence; you have to convey the message that we are in control of situations like this. Not to show uncertainty even though everything about this situation is uncertain. Imparting confidence is the only way.⁷

The examples described above are real experiences recounted by Swedish soldiers who have served in Afghanistan. They describe events which

require intervention and which presuppose that the person in them can interpret the signs, pick up on what is happening and take reasonable and relevant action. How do you learn this? What do you do when there is one rule book but two or more realities? In other words, when the situations that have to be dealt with and mastered do not fully correspond to the mission you have, the instructions you have been given, or existing rules and regulations?

This chapter aims to highlight, from an epistemological perspective, in what way experiences and reflection are important for developing military professionalism. The texts in this book and this chapter's introductory examples focus on what is central to professionalism, namely judgment and how it is developed and used. We have good reason to ask the following question: what did we learn from being and operating in Afghanistan? Some are now saying that we can consign Afghanistan to the past and move on. The future brings with it other challenges. This book is an attempt to stop and reflect. What are the Swedish Armed Forces taking from the past into the future? What form does a constructive and purposeful development of experience take? Experiences were gained in Afghanistan: the question is which ones. And an even more relevant question is what importance will they have in the future. Experiences are a kind of background knowledge that accompanies future decision-making and actions.

We always have background knowledge with us when we move forward to solve a problem that has arisen. The experiences we have gained are thus in the past in relation to how we act when faced with the problems of today and how we solve them in the future.⁸

What kind of 'background knowledge' do the military experiences that the Swedish Armed Forces personnel take home from the Afghanistan campaign involve? What experiences will help military personnel execute their tasks safely and effectively next time, whether the real-time situation arises in Sweden or abroad? How can we know that soldiers who have served in Afghanistan have not learned the 'wrong' things? How can we ensure that the conclusions taken on board and incorporated into training and preparation for the next mission are relevant and valid? All we know with any certainty at the moment is that the next mission area will not be like Afghanistan. This brings to the fore a number of questions about how military experiences are used, both individually and organizationally. Having

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*Some are now saying
that we can consign
Afghanistan to the past
and move on.*

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personnel who have been involved in problematic situations and forced to act in complicated contexts with uncertain conditions provides a learning opportunity.

Creating Experiences

In a certain sense, organizations can construct experiences. These can be recorded and dealt with formally; facts and information can be incorporated into systems and be used for conclusions and decisions. This field has seen feverish activity for several years now but also often instrumental activity. Methods for documenting processes, statistics, questionnaires and evaluations of results are well developed.⁹ However, people *create* experiences; they take them into a future course of events and utilize them. The organization can at best provide good prerequisites, but when a mission must be carried out, or a situation has to be mastered, it is often one or more people who reflect, decide and intervene: it is people who have the power and the ability to influence the outcome by their actions. These people determine whether, when and how a situation should be handled. They assess and prioritize, sometimes between desirable and less desirable scenarios, sometimes taking into account incompatible values and in contexts where the outcome and effect are extremely difficult to judge. Those who take action must use their judgement. By judgement, I mean the ability to make intelligent choices in unpredictable situations and in relation to limited resources, institutional frameworks and multifaceted circumstances.

In the classic chapter on how skills are developed into professionalism, 'Five Steps from Novice to Expert', Hubert Dreyfus and Stuart Dreyfus distinguish between 'knowing that' and 'knowing how'. They also introduce the term 'unstructured problem areas'.¹⁰ This kind of problem area is recognized through the potentially unlimited number of relevant facts and aspects associated with the situation. But how these elements are related to each other or affect each other or other events is unclear. In this chapter, the introductory examples of situations encountered by Swedish soldiers in Afghanistan could be said to be examples of precisely these unstructured problem areas. For the individual expected to act there and then, they each contain an infinite amount of information to consider. An individual subjected to and acting in situations involving unstructured problem areas creates experiences, which is necessary in order to progress from novice to expert. They are facing real problems, assessing them, choosing and acting – developing the ability to make relevant judgements. Maria Hammarén, Associate Professor at the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm,

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It is people who have the power and the ability to influence the outcome by their actions.

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researches professional skills. She points out the relationship between experiences and developing judgement: 'Judgement is simply manifested in the ability to interact intelligently with the diversity of reality and continuous changes in a specific field.'¹¹

The three introductory examples of military situations in Afghanistan show how the military practitioner must be able to assess a situation, consider alternatives and act responsibly. The action taken – the decisions made – will have consequences. To execute missions in Afghanistan requires what Hammarén identifies as an ability to intelligently interact with the diversity of reality. The situations described – the man in the cage, the boy with the batteries and the shelling – contain both a history and a future. And the present that the soldiers must operate in is not infrequently both changeable and fluid. What is right, good, or reasonable to do does not always seem clear. And yet action must be taken.

In an ordinary sense, an experience can be said to be something perceived by a person's mind. They experience sounds, smells, events, the news on TV, a Twitter stream and other people's actions. In a more elaborated sense, experience can be said to do something to us. Experiences open us up to and make us receptive to new ones. Processing experiences – writing and talking about them – does something more. Reflected experiences influence us, shape our actions and direct our attention to what is relevant.¹²

Shall I Engage?

It began with a bad gut feeling. In 2010, Stefan Linder was serving as an armoured platoon commander with FS 19.* In response to the question 'Describe a situation where your judgement had been challenged?' he described the following: The platoon is deployed outside a village. The soldiers have often been in combat during the mission. They have nine days left in Afghanistan. Linder receives a report that they are being observed. A number of black-clad men are monitoring the Swedish soldiers from the roofs of the houses in the nearby village. It is half-hour until dusk. When Linder's platoon mounts the combat vehicles, they see thirty or so women with children briskly leaving the village. One of the commanders reports that they are now observing armed men advancing on the far side of the village. Linder's platoon is facing an attack.

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Experiences open us up to and make us receptive to new ones.

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* 'FS' was the prefix given to the Swedish contingents, starting with FS 01.

Now it's me and my platoon, here and now. Should I engage?
Do I know what I'm doing? Can I predict the consequences?
Do I only want to take revenge for my fellow platoon member?
They may not be insurgents? What would the consequence be in that case?
Nine days left in Afghanistan; is it worth it?
Memories of Family Day; 'get our men home in one piece'.
I already have injured soldiers, but all have survived thus far.
I can just drive out of here; there are nine days left.
If we don't engage, maybe the next Swedish unit will be attacked?
Then it's my men or someone else. Is it worth it?
Maybe there won't be any fighting? I can't think like that!
I have the most experienced and best-equipped platoon. I have the best prerequisites. If I don't engage, who will?
My friend passing by here early tomorrow morning, his first day in FS 20? No!
Or my other friend tomorrow afternoon on his way home to Sweden? No!
Could I look their girlfriends in the eye next time? I could have engaged, but I wanted to get my boys home. No!

This is my task. We won't be receiving combat support, and I can't get any support from my senior commander. All I have is bad intelligence, an unclear picture of the situation but a very capable platoon. Interpret the situation. Make a decision. Live with the responsibility.

I engage. We defeat the enemy on the outskirts of the village. Then we get stuck, and a track comes off in the dark; intelligence on enemy reinforcements; intelligence that the adversary intends to fire mortars at the stuck armoured vehicle. Reassess the situation: the time, the terrain and the enemy. Do one thing at a time. Make a decision. Give an order. Lead the platoon.

In Stefan Linder's text, something unusual happens. By writing the text, he presses the pause button and lets the reader join in reflecting on the course of events. He provides shape to what goes through his mind before making the decision. In the text, we get to see what he sees.

The text was read out at the series of lessons learned forums held at the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm in 2012. A group of soldiers and

officers with their own experiences of missions in Afghanistan reflected on problematic situations they had faced.

Their reflection took the form of writing about their experiences, and then using the written examples as a basis for discussion.¹³ The discussions were documented in memos, so-called minutes of ideas.¹⁴ The aim of the series of lessons learned forums was twofold: documenting Swedish soldiers' experiences in Afghanistan and sparking reflection on experiences, that is, to stimulate sharing experiences and to go into these in depth and, by extension, to explore the importance of judgement in difficult situations.

The examples in this book describe a complicated life for those having to carry out tasks in Afghanistan. Organization, planning, rules and regulations, clear tasks and good intentions do not provide the straight path to success and accomplishment. Contradictory values and information must be dealt with. There are conflicting rules, and the person in the middle of the situation must find a way out. Short-term prioritizations have undesirable long-term consequences, or the other way round. You often cannot know. Lieutenant Colonel Martin Liander gives an example of conflicting rules from his time as commander of the Swedish Operational Mentor and Liaison Team 2nd Kandak (2nd Battalion) as part of FS 19:

Two SOPs provided instructions from two perspectives on how discovered IEDs should be dealt with. One prescribed how to act when encountering mines so that specially trained personnel could disarm them at the scene. The other dealt with rules and regulations on how to secure evidence at a discovered IED location. We ended up in a situation where one of my vehicles had set off an IED and had detected one right beside it. We followed the normal procedure of reporting to the Swedish PRT, which was responsible for the area. The response they got was that the unit should remain there, secure the terrain and await orders in accordance with the SOP that prescribed how to act when encountering mines. So my unit was to secure the terrain until the PRT dispatched a mine clearance team to detonate the IED at the location. But of course no one would ever come out to them because they were in the area the Swedish contingent had put restrictions on. My company commander reported that because of the firing going on, they had to continue ahead, and he intended to act in accordance with the other SOP and disarm the IED at the scene and take it back to base. The PRT repeats its order to secure the terrain and await further orders. As a consequence of the order, my soldiers who have

just had an IED explode and are in combat are to remain there: eight men in this hellish terrain. The order was obviously wrong, and whoever issued the order also had no right to give it. Now, the company commander, who was the on-site commander, was too hardened to fall for something like this. The upshot was a so-called ‘nothing heard’, which indicated that he hadn’t been able to make out the order.

This is one of many examples that highlight the importance of your own judgement in a given situation. In the above situation, it comes down in the end to obeying the order, or not – a decision with consequences. In the interview, Liander returns to how rules and responsibility interact: ‘It is to do with what is right and what is wrong. The rule book will never give you the answers to this type of problem. It is left to your moral compass to decide what is right or wrong’. Applying general rules in real situations is problematic. The texts in this book reveal how you have to invent/find practical strategies that work in the context and environment in which you are operating.

Unstructured Problem Areas

What kind of knowledge is needed to deal with these situations? In *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle develops a classification of knowledge that is very much useful and relevant to those wanting to understand the importance of practical and experience-based forms of knowledge. Aristotle differentiates practical wisdom (phronesis) from two other forms of knowledge: technical (techne) and scientific (episteme).¹⁵ For those situations involving military professional practice, as described in this chapter, ‘knowing that’ something needs to be done is not enough. When instructions do not cover what is required to solve tasks in an unstructured problem area, something more than just theoretical knowledge is called for.¹⁶ A person must also want and have the courage to act. Possessing what Aristotle calls practical wisdom entails being able to judge when the time is right to intervene in a course of events. Practical wisdom includes how judgement works in a changeable situation where it is important to discern and observe what is unique and divergent. Scientific knowledge, also known as declarative or factual knowledge, can be learned by reading: the rules of engagement, a UN mandate under Chapter VII, security instructions, etc. Techne, which also can be understood as a form of practical knowledge, is about perfecting physical techniques, for example unload, peel left and weapons maintenance. Both people and organizations have well-developed methods and strategies for

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Practical wisdom includes how judgement works in a changeable situation where it is important to discern and observe what is unique and divergent.

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managing these two forms of knowledge. There are routines for high-volume training, developing skills or checking that someone has learned facts through reading. The perhaps most important form of knowledge, *phronesis*, is, of course, based on the two last-mentioned forms. However, it requires another important element, namely it is learned and developed from experience.

What Is At Stake?

In the eagerness to predict and understand a fluid and uncertain future, there is an impending risk that we do not learn from what we have undergone. We quickly turn the page. Methods used to capture what we have been through reframe experiences into data, dimensions and variables. The risk is that the experience remains unreflected, that it stagnates and becomes fixed, one experience among many. If we disregard Swedish soldiers' experiences in Afghanistan, whether positive or negative, politically correct or problematic, then we lose the opportunity to learn something of significance for the judgement upon which every soldier relies.

The philosopher John Dewey speaks of certain conditions that must be fulfilled to generate an experience. He opines that 'every experience is the result of interaction between a live creature and some aspect of the world in which he lives'.¹⁷ An experience in Dewey's sense involves both *doing* and *undergoing*.¹⁸ Military personnel serving overseas frequently operate in situations where they have to see what needs to be done and, at the same time, do it. Dewey considers that what is essential is the *relationship* between doing and undergoing. One should not simply lean on the one or the other. Stefan Linder's text is a good example of this: we get to follow how his observation works during the course of events being described. Here the point is that only afterwards can we pause and reflect in depth on what happened. Simply doing does not suffice to make the experience complete. Pressing the pause button later and stopping to reflect on what occurred are what Dewey calls the fulfilment of an experience. Without such reflection, we risk, according to Dewey, only having 'experience of an almost incredible paucity, all on the surface'.¹⁹ It is a risk we take when we avoid talking about what is difficult and what challenges our morality and our legal system. What do soldiers' reflections on the practical events they have experienced mean? 'Should we do this *with* the Afghans or *for* the Afghans? If we do something for someone, then we're solving the task but not bringing about change'. Someone continued: 'There are already enough weapons and soldiers in Afghanistan. What we need is not more of these but personnel with a better understanding of and a greater interest in Afghan culture,

“

Systematic reflection on dilemmas we have faced in real life shapes an understanding of what we have been involved in.

”

their way of thinking, their perception of time, and so forth. Or ‘you have to ask yourself whether you are a force for good, and I felt that maybe we weren’t all the time’.

Systematic reflection on dilemmas we have faced in real life shapes an understanding of what we have been involved in. But more importantly, reflection trains our powers of observation and focuses our gaze on future missions and situations. The series of lessons learned forums on which this book is based has been about activating experiences and not stopping at what Dewey calls ‘doing’. A lessons learned forum, conducted in the dialogue seminar form, allows us to go back, problematize, get others’ perspectives, that is, deepen our own reflection on the profession in a way which qualifies our professional skills.

Dewey sees a risk in not dealing with our experiences. We should search for the problematic aspects and ponder over them. Illustrate them from different perspectives. What does breaking the rules entail, an action that perhaps says more about the rule than the rule-breaker? What does cooperating with someone who violates others, who breaks the law, or who acts in their own self-interest entail? How long are our perspectives? Something wrong at the time can be precisely the thing that has a long-term positive effect. Martin Liander adds:

Everyone who has been in these environments, regardless of whether it is Africa, Afghanistan or Bosnia, knows how small you feel carrying out your mission and how infinitely far away the objectives are. You quite simply have no chance of demonstrating any measurable results of the major objective. Your participation and the risks you take will just be a drop in the ocean. Here I think we have a lot of work to do in our profession, particularly regarding our civilian superiors, namely forcing politicians to actually have strategies that put the military mission into context. The strategy will give our tasks meaning, which is important to all soldiers. It must never be a case of sacrificing soldiers’ lives without knowing why.

Each resistance is an invitation to reflection. However, according to Dewey, if it is instead treated as an obstruction, this will have the opposite effect: ‘An individual comes to seek, unconsciously even more than by deliberate choice, situations in which he can do the most things in the shortest time’. Dewey draws an analogy with the advance of an army, where it continuously consolidates the gains achieved with consideration given to what is

to be done next. 'If we move too rapidly, we get away from the base of supplies—of accrued meanings—and the experience is flustered, thin and confused.'²⁰ Dewey raises a warning finger against hastily leaving behind experiences gained; however, he does not stop there but goes on to say: 'If we dawdle too long after having extracted a net value, experience perishes of inanition.'²¹

It is vital to make the most of our experiences in a way that is not forced, superficial, or too slow. It must be a continuous and unbroken process, a living and vigorous dialogue that does not die down or is not only had when something has gone wrong. Armed forces cannot afford to have flustered, thin, or confused lessons learned management. Reflecting on experiences, both personal and collective, is a meaningful activity for developing a contextual understanding, how signs are interpreted in an unknown environment, or how questions of responsibility and cooperation are dealt with in practice. Judgement and how it is developed are the core of professional skills – this is where experience plays a part.

Knowledge without personal experience will not get you far if you encounter a man in a cage.

“

It must be a continuous and unbroken process, a living and vigorous dialogue that does not die down or is not only had when something has gone wrong.

”

References

- 1 Information from *Summary of the Report of the Inquiry on Sweden's Engagement in Afghanistan 2002-2014*, SOU 2017:16.
- 2 Henric Roosberg and Anna Weibull, *Försvarsmakten efter ISAF: Lärdomar och påverkan på militärstrategisk nivå* (Totalförsvarets forskningsinstitut 2014).
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Karl Ydén and Joakim Berndtsson, "Efter Afghanistan: Försvaret, kriget och svenskarna". In: Lennart Weibull, Henrik Oscarsson and Annika Bergström (eds.), *Vägskäl: 43 kapitel om politik, medier och samhälle, SOM-undersökningen 2012* (University of Gothenburg 2013). See also Anthony King, *The Transformation of Europe's Armed Forces: From the Rhine to Afghanistan* (Cambridge University Press 2011).
- 5 *Försvaret av Sverige: Starkare försvar för en osäker tid*, rapport från Försvarsberedningen, Ds 2014:20 (Försvarsdepartementet 2014), p. 38.
- 6 SUAV stands for Small Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (also called a drone), a kind of pilotless model aeroplane fitted with a camera that transmits images of the surveillance area to the ground personnel.
- 7 The first example comes from the interview with Martin Liander, the second from a text by Pär Thornell and the third from a text by Liridona Dauti. The chapter as a whole is based on material collected from two series of lessons learned forums at which soldiers and officers with experience in Afghanistan participated. They were held at the Royal Institute of Technology in 2012 and 2014 and arranged by the Swedish Centre for Studies of Armed Forces and Society. The material gathered comprises 205 pages of discussion notes (minutes of ideas) as well as 62 texts penned by participating soldiers and officers, who had written about concrete examples of situations where they had experienced that their judgement had been tested. Altogether, around twenty participants, mainly officers up to the rank of lieutenant colonel, were involved in the discussions and the writing. See also endnote 13.
- 8 Bernt Gustavsson refers to John Dewey in *Kunskapsfilosofi: Tre kunskapsformer i historisk belysning* (Wahlström & Widstrand 2000) p. 145.
- 9 See, for example, Lotta Victor Tillberg (ed.), *Kvalitetsjakten: Om professionalitet i välfärden* (Premiss Förlag 2014). A more detailed discussion is also given in Lotta Victor Tillberg, "The Importance of 'Knowledge of Familiarity' in Challenging Situations". In: Jan-Gunnar Isberg and Lotta Victor Tillberg, *By All Necessary Means: Brigadier General Jan-Gunnar*

- Isberg's Experiences from Service in the Congo, 2003–2005* (Swedish Defence University 2012), pp. 191–223.
- 10 Hubert L. Dreyfus and Stuart E. Dreyfus, *Mind over Machine: The Power of Human Intuition and Expertise in the Era of the Computer* (The Free Press 1986).
 - 11 Maria Hammarén, “Skill, Storytelling and Language: On Reflection as a Method”. In: B. Göranzon, M. Hammarén & R. Ennals (eds.), *Dialogue, Skill and Tacit Knowledge* (Chichester, UK: John Wiley, 2006), pp. 203–215.
 - 12 For a more detailed description of processing experiences as part of professional development, see Lotta Victor Tillberg, “Gaining Experience from the Examples of Others: Military Skills in International Operations”. In: Lotta Victor Tillberg and Peter Tillberg, *Mission Commander: Swedish Experiences of Command in the Expeditionary Era* (CSMS 2013).
 - 13 The lessons learned forums described here were conducted using the dialogue seminar method, which is a way of studying experience-based and practical knowledge. This is done using a systematic and disciplined process that involves reading, writing and dialogue. Fundamental to this is the idea that a small group (max. twenty people) regularly participates in writing seminars where they are given guidance. This goes on over a long period (preferably a year, and a minimum of six months). Prior to every seminar, the participants prepare themselves by reading selected texts and processing their reflections on them by writing their own text. The method is a way for somebody to process and develop their own experience by reading, writing and reflecting, both collectively and individually. For a description of the method, see, for example the chapters on dialogue and skill in B. Göranzon, M. Hammarén & R. Ennals (eds.), *Dialogue, Skill and Tacit Knowledge* (Chichester, UK: John Wiley, 2006).
 - 14 What did the participants talk about? Here is a general summary of the minutes of ideas. Often the soldiers experienced the tasks’ moral aspects as more difficult than the tactical ones. The quotes show a complicated environment in which to operate. They expressed the view that ‘combat is simple’ since the actions happen automatically – quantitative training produces results. The discussion frequently returned to the ethical considerations they had needed to deal with in their tasks. Furthermore, how do you prepare to operate in an unknown environment? ‘Before I went to Afghanistan, I was informed how I was supposed to

conduct myself, but it turned out not to work at all'. The clash of cultures many had experienced was illustrated as follows: 'Our arrival there can be compared with the star troopers coming to Kungsgatan [a main street in Stockholm]. The technology gap is enormous'. Another said this: 'There is a 700-year difference in culture and the meeting of knowledge. What is it I'm even looking at when I see a farmer working in the field out there? There is an enormous gap between us'. The discussions were about making personal choices in situations they have faced, but also about responsibility. 'Picturing bringing home disabled soldiers was more difficult to imagine than death. My combat vehicle gunners, who witness the weapon effects, are not at all as interested in engaging at too great a distance based on uncertain data. These gunners see everything clearly, can describe how they saw the target being hit where the sand is no longer brown but red, and so on'. Several perspectives were dealt with: courage, risk-taking and leadership, both individually and at the larger organizational level. 'I feel that it's a moral problem and even a leadership problem, because at some point or other you have to square what you see out there with the reason for going there at all'.

- 15 Taken from Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (Wordsworth Classics of World Literature 1996).
- 16 A closely related concept relevant in this context is wicked problems, which is characterized by the influencing factors not being clear. The connections and dependencies are both contradictory and changeable. The work to solve a wicked problem may very well create new, unforeseen problems, and misdirected solutions may make the original problem mutate. See, for example, Michael Miklaucic "Introduction". In: Michael Miklaucic (ed.), *Commanding Heights: Strategic Lessons from Complex Operations* (National Defense University Press 2010), pp. ix–xii.
- 17 John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (Minton, Balch and Company 1934), p. 45.
- 18 See Dewey, *Art as Experience*.
- 19 Ibid., p. 46.
- 20 Ibid., p. 58.
- 21 Ibid.





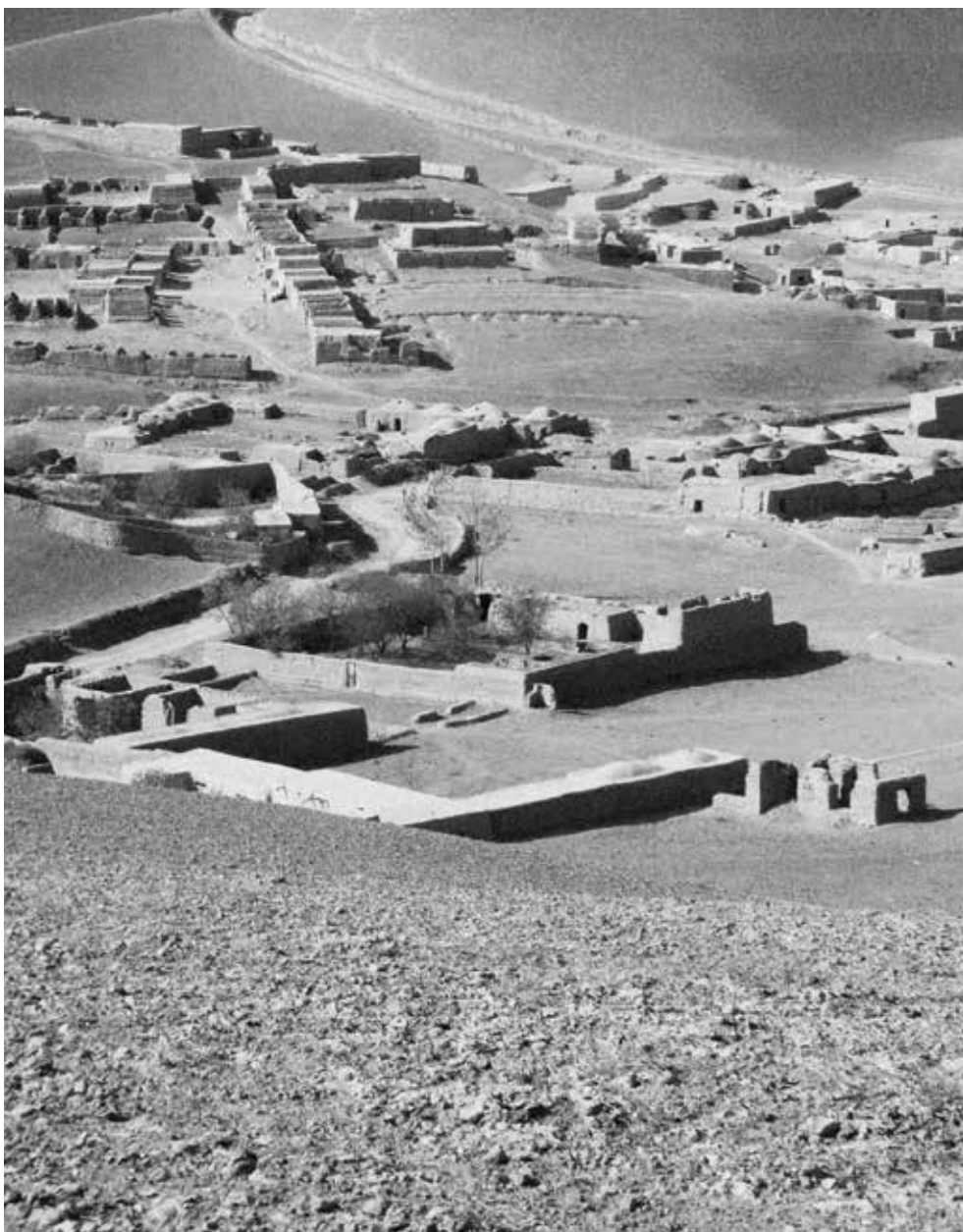


“ *Being able to apply the military basics, whether it’s about combat techniques or command, makes everyone know their way about. That always works, no matter the circumstances. But when a hard situation occurs, I need to be flexible with what methods and language I use. During a mission as well as at home, facing e.g. a difficult personnel problem.* ”













“ We train too little on explicit command, following and cooperation. We often go theoretical – nothing wrong with that, but we have to get it all together to actually increase our abilities, with the help from both theories and training. ”













“ When you, the commander, know that the next mission has already been prepared and that you will soon be sending them back into the hell they have just described, then a lot of thoughts about what is right or wrong go through your head. ”









“ Should I engage? Do I know what I’m doing? Can I predict the consequences? Do I only want to take revenge for my fellow platoon member? They may not be insurgents? What would the consequence be in that case? Nine days left in Afghanistan; is it worth it? Memories of Family Day; ‘get our men home in one piece’. I already have injured soldiers, but all have survived thus far. I can just drive out of here; there are nine days left... ”









“ We talk an awful lot about leadership and leadership training but, quite honestly, the majority of us practice followship – but how many followship courses are there, really? ”









“ *If our business is to work and we are to have operationally prepared Armed Forces, we can’t suddenly have a change of leadership methods – that would be totally absurd! To control things in detail in the daily business, and then suddenly expect people to operate with directive command – of course they don’t! We have to use the same leadership method from start to end.* ”









“ *If I get to see an Afghan boy in
my son’s outgrown sweater, my
time here has not been in vain.* ”







Notes on Contributors (2015–16)

Jan Almgård, Warrant Officer Class 2. Initially served in the Södermanland Regiment (Armoured) and subsequently in the Command and Control Regiment (Signals); Armoured Infantry Platoon Commander in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BA01); Military Adviser and Instructor in the Baltic States; OSCE and EUMM Observer in Georgia; Mentor to the Training Commander at the Afghan National Army Signals School in Kabul (FS24); and Swedish OSCE Military Observer (under the Vienna Document) in Ukraine. Awarded the Armed Forces' International Service medal for his 'meritorious leadership of units under difficult conditions' in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BA01).

Peter Bihl, Captain. Served as OMLT Mentor in Afghanistan (FS20).

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Jörgen Hildebrandt, award-winning Danish photographer and filmmaker who has worked in many parts of the world. Helped to show the world in the summer of 1992 the extent of the ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia. For him, photography and filming are a way of life rather than a way of living and subscribes to the quote by Irving Penn: 'A good photograph is one that communicates a fact, touches the heart, and leaves the viewer a changed person for having seen it. It is, in a word, effective.'

Anders ‘Andy’ Jansson, police officer in central Stockholm. Served in the Nordic Battlegroup 08 as part of the EU Common Security and Defence Policy; driver in the Swedish Quick Reaction Force Platoon in Afghanistan (FS10); Fire Team Commander of OMLT Kandak in Afghanistan (FS19). Since his latest tour of duty, has worked on lessons learned analyses for the Land Warfare Centre and trained at the Military Academy in Halmstad to become a non-commissioned officer.

Lisa Lanevik, Captain, initially served in the Uppland Wing (Air Force) and subsequently in the Norrbotten Regiment’s Ranger Battalion. Served in Chad, Mali and Afghanistan, among other things as Mobile Observation Team Liaison Officer (FS11).

Martin Liander, Lieutenant Colonel, initially served in the Gotland Regiment (Armoured) and subsequently in the Gotland Air Defence Battalion (Anti-Aircraft) and is currently in the Swedish Joint Forces Command. Served in Central America, at NATO Headquarters and a couple of times in Afghanistan, among other things as OMLT Commander for an Afghan National Army Battalion (Kandak) at FS19.

Mona Westerlund Lindberg, Church of Sweden priest, previously a military chaplain in the Lifeguard and the Nordic Battle Group 08. Currently working as a military chaplain in the Home Guard’s Uppland and Västmanland section as well as a hospital priest at Karolinska University Hospital. Served as the Swedish International Force’s battalion chaplain in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BA09) and in Afghanistan (FS16).

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Henrik Nestow, Staff Sergeant in the Skaraborg Regiment (Armoured). Named the 2012 Peacekeeper of the Year by the Swedish Veterans Federation.

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Mattias Otterström, Major in the Norrbotten Regiment's Armoured Battalion. Served as HQ/Fire Support Company Commander in the Nordic Battle Group 11 as part of the EU Common Security and Defence Policy, and Infantry Company Commander in Afghanistan (FS23).

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José Puntigliano Sandell, occasional position in the Life Regiment Husars (Ranger). Served as Deputy Infantry Section Commander in Afghanistan (FS21).

Anders Sundelin, reporter and author. Made his literary debut in 1982 with *Jihad! Det heliga kriget i Afghanistan* [Jihad! The Holy War in Afghanistan] after a journey around Soviet-occupied Afghanistan. Has visited the country several times since then and authored a number of books, including *Fallet Wennerström* [The Wennerström Case] (1999), Reportage: *Att få fakta att dansa* [Reporting: Making the Facts Dance] (2008) and *Den magiska cirkeln* [The Magic Circle] (2011). Teaches and lectures on report writing.

Joakim Svartheden, reserve officer in the Command and Control Regiment (Signals), teacher at Södertörn University and research assistant at the Swedish Centre for Studies of Armed Forces and Society. Editor of the anthology *Exempel: Yrkeskunnandets praktik och IT 2002* [Examples: The Practice of Professionalism and IT, 2002] and co-editor of *Mission Abroad: Military Experience from International Operations* (2008).

Pär Thornell, Major, initially served in the Gotland Regiment (Armoured) and subsequently in the Skaraborg Armoured Regiment. Served as Anti-Tank Section Commander in Kosovo (KSo2), Infantry Platoon Commander and adviser in Afghanistan (FS21 and FS28 respectively).

Joel Thungren, was born and raised in the city of Sundsvall. Did his military service as a close protection soldier in the Norrbotten Regiment (Armored Infantry). He is a trained photojournalist and reserve officer. Served as an infantry officer in Afghanistan (FS14, FS19 and FS21). Has worked as a photographer among other things for the newspaper *Mail & Guardian* in South Africa as well as for Swedish local newspapers. He currently serves in the Command and Control Regiment's Combat Camera unit (Signals).

Peter Tillberg, director of the Swedish Centre for Studies of Armed Forces and Society. Has long experience of conducting soldier and officer training in the Swedish Armed Forces and at the Swedish Defence University. Has for the past 25 years mainly worked on issues concerning military leadership, complex situations and military practice in international operations. Published, among other things, 'Some Aspects of Military Practices and Officers' Professional Skills' (2006), *Mission Abroad: Military Experience from International Operations* (2008) and *Mission Commander: Swedish Experiences of Command in the Expeditionary Era* (2013). Currently doing his doctorate at the Royal Institute of Technology's Department of Industrial Economics and Management.

Lotta Victor Tillberg, Senior Lecturer and Associate Professor in the Theory of Practical Knowledge at Södertörn University's Centre for Studies in Practical Knowledge. Awarded a PhD from the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm in 2007. Co-wrote the introductory chapter to *Mission Abroad: Military Experience from International Operations* (2008) and the book *By All Necessary Means: Brigadier General Jan-Gunnar Isberg's Experiences from Service in the Congo, 2003–2005* (2011). Co-authored *Mission Commander: Swedish Experiences of Command in the Expeditionary Era* (2013). Since 2011, a researcher on the project 'The Modern Military Profession', conducted at the Swedish Centre for Studies of Armed Forces and Society at the Royal Institute of Technology.









Appendices

Appendix 1

Centrum för Studier av Militär & Samhälle inbjuder till

UPPDRAG AFGHANISTAN

erfarenhetsforum om militärt yrkeskunnande

Beskrivning

I en serie skrivseminarier erbjuds deltagarna att i skrift reflektera över – och dela med sig av – erfarenheter från militära uppdrag i Afghanistan. Syftet är att med utgångspunkt i konkreta exempel från upplevda händelseförlopp utforska och beskriva vad som krävs av den som sätts att verka i internationella operationer. Begrepp som tyst kunnsande, risktagande, ledarskap, omdöme, våldsanvändning, mod och ansvar kommer att behandlas. Resultatet från skrivseminarierna kommer att presenteras i en särskild programpunkt på Uppdrag Utland konferensen i januari 2013.

Erfarenhetsforum Uppdrag Afghanistan genomförs med dialogseminariemetoden vilken förutsätter att deltagarna aktivt engagerar sig genom att i skrift reflektera över egna tidigare erfarenheter.

Varje samlingstillfälle består av tre delar; en kort introduktionsföreläsning följt av skrivseminarium. Efter en gemensam middag följer en kvällsföreläsning av en särskilt inbjuden gäst med egna erfarenheter från ledarskap i svåra situationer. Varje kurstillfälle startar kl. 9.00 – och avslutas ca 20.30. Deltagande i alla aktiviteter är obligatoriskt.

Erfarenhetsforum genomförs som en serie dialogseminarier på Kungliga Tekniska Högskolan som ett samarbete mellan KTH, Gothenburg Research Institute (GRI) och Centrum för Studier av Militär och Samhälle (CSMS).

30 augusti *Introduktionsmöte – skriva en metod för reflektion*

18 september *Tyst kunnsande i svårbedömda situationer*
Gästföreläsare: Hans Iilis-Alm

25 oktober *Uppdrag chef: ledarskap, risktagande och ansvar*
Gäst: Henrik Blomberg, Peacekeeper of the Year 2012

20 november *Äran, modet, våldet, döden – den professionelle militären*
Gästföreläsare: Olof Granander

Kursansvariga: Lotta Victor Tillberg, fil. dr. Gothenburg Research Institute / CSMS
Maria Hammarén, docent, Kungliga Tekniska Högskolan

Appendix 2

Centrum för Studier av Militär & Samhälle inbjuder till

Erfarenhetsforum om

MILITÄRT LEDARSKAP

Beskrivning

I en serie skrivseminarier erbjuds deltagarna att i skrift reflektera över – och dela med sig av – egna erfarenheter från militära uppdrag där militärt ledarskap satts på prov eller utmanats. Syftet är att med utgångspunkt i konkreta exempel från upplevda händelseförlopp utforska och beskriva vad som krävs av den som sätts att verka i militära uppdrag både i Sverige och i utlandet. Begrepp som tyst kunnskap, risktagande, ledarskap, omdöme, våldsanvändning, mod och ansvar kommer att behandlas. Resultatet från skrivseminarierna kommer att presenteras i en särskild programpunkt på Uppdrag Utland konferensen i januari 2015.

Erfarenhetsforum Militärt Ledarskap genomförs med dialogseminariemetoden vilken förutsätter att deltagarna aktivt engagerar sig genom att i skrift reflektera över egna tidigare erfarenheter. Varje samlingstillfälle består av tre delar; en kort introduktionsföreläsning följt av skrivseminarium. Efter en gemensam middag följer en kvällsföreläsning av en särskilt inbjuden gäst med egna erfarenheter från ledarskap i svåra situationer. Varje kurstillfälle startar kl. 10.00 – och avslutas ca 20.30. Deltagande i alla aktiviteter är obligatoriskt.

Erfarenhetsforum genomförs som en serie dialogseminarier på Kungliga Tekniska Högskolan som ett samarbete mellan Kungliga Tekniska Högskolan och Centrum för Studier av Militär och Samhälle (CSMS).

- | | |
|------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 14 maj | <i>Introduktionsmöte – skriva en metod för reflektion</i> |
| 27 maj | <i>Ledarskap och tyst kunnskap i svårbedömda situationer</i>
Gäst: Ulf Henricsson |
| 16 juni | <i>Uppdrag chef – ansvar, mod och omdöme</i>
Gäst: Martin Liander |
| 3-4 sept | <i>Tvådagars internat – Dag ett: att skriva om erfarenheter, gäst Ulla Ekström von Essen, idéhistoriker och Jan Sigurd, författare. Dag två: Militärt ledarskap – att skriva om sina erfarenheter: Jan-Gunnar Isberg</i> |
| 14 oktober | <i>Den professionella ledaren/militären</i>
Gäst: Hans Ilis-Alm |

Kursansvariga: Lotta Victor Tillberg, fil. dr. Centrum för Studier av Militär och Samhälle

Appendix 3



Centrum för Studier av Militär och Samhälle (CSMS) inbjuder tillsammans med Kungliga Tekniska Högskolan, Göteborgs Universitet och Försvarsmakten till konferens:

UPPDRAG UTLAND – MISSION ABROAD MILITÄRA ERFARENHETER FRÅN INTERNATIONELLA OPERATIONER

Kungliga Tekniska Högskolan 17–18 januari 2012

TISDAGEN DEN 17 JANUARI

Kl. 12.00

Inledningsanförande

General Karl Engelbrektson

Kl. 12.15

Erfarenheters betydelse för kunskapsutveckling

Centrum för Studier av Militär och Samhälle projektledare Karl Ydén & Peter Tillberg

Kl. 12.45

Uppdrag Chef – om prövande situationer i internationell tjänst

Vad krävs av den som ska leda andra i svåra situationer? Personliga erfarenheter från internationell tjänst där omdöme och förmåga prövats.

Inledning av filosofie doktor Lotta Victor Tillberg. General Anders Brännström, överste Ulf Henricsson, överste Hans Alm, överste Mats Ström, överste Olof Granander, överstelöjtnant Hans Håkansson

Kl. 15.45

Med alla nödvändiga medel – erfarenheter från Kongo 2003-05

År 2003 beskrevs läget i nordöstra Kongo i termer av ett långsamt pågående folkmord. Brigadgeneral Jan- Gunnar Isberg är en av få svenskar som i modern tid lett brigad i upprepade strider under längre tid. Uppdraget i Kongo formulerades med FN:s starkaste mandat "to use all necessary means". General Jan-Gunnar Isberg samt journalist Ola Säll, SVD:s Afrikakorrespondent

kl. 19.00

PRESENTATION AV BENGT ABRAMHAMSSON-PRiset

kl. 19.10

Cohesion – post-heroic combat

Professor Anthony King, University of Exeter

ONSDAGEN DEN 18 JANUARI, PLATS: INDEK/KTH

Förmiddag Parallella work-shops

KL. 9.00 Inledning – praktisk information om dagen

KL. 9.30

SPÅR 1: **Military ethics and moral decision making in complex emergencies**

Allan Janik, Senior research fellow, Brenner Arkiv Innsbruck; professor Paolo Tripodi, Marine Corps University

SPÅR 2: **Svenska militära erfarenheter från Afrika**

general Jan-Gunnar Isberg, Ola Säll, professor Lars Eriksson Wolke

SPÅR 3: **Skriva en metod för reflektion**

docent Maria Hammarén, KTH & Anders Karlsson, BA01 & CSMS

SPÅR 4: **Erfarenheter från OMLT Afghanistan – två verkligheter en regelbok**

överstelöjtnant Martin Liander

KL. 11.45

Gemensam lunch på Plattan

Eftermiddag Parallella work-shops

KL. 13.00

SPÅR 5: **Gender-based violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo**

Filosofie doktor Maria Stern, filosofie doktor Maria Eriksson Baaz,

SPÅR 6: **The powerbrokers in Afghanistan**

professor Anthony King, University of Exeter

SPÅR 7: **Utlandsveteraner – Samhällsproblem eller nationell tillgång**

överste Peter Öberg, veteranansvarig Försvarsmakten

SPÅR 8: **Hur kan Försvarsmakten tillvarata chefers erfarenheter från militära insatser?**

överste Sverker Ulving, Insats avdelning för erfarenhetsanalys

KL. 14.45

The Transformation of Europe's Armed Forces

professor Anthony King, University of Exeter

KL. 15.15

AVSLUTNING

General Anders Brännström, stf chef Insatsledningen

KL. 15.35

Om Uppdrag utland 2012

fil dr Lotta Victor Tillberg (CSMS)

Uppdrag utland Mission Abroad



Militära erfarenheter från Afghanistan
– med blick mot framtiden

Södertörns högskola
4 december 2013

CSMS
SWEDISH CENTRE FOR STUDIES
OF ARMED FORCES AND SOCIETY

Program

Uppdrag Utland – Mission Abroad

Förmiddag den 4 december 2013

Plats: MA 624

09.00 **Inledningsanförande** av generalmajor *Dennis Gyllensporre*, Chef Ledningsstabens inriktningsavdelning, Försvarsmakten samt *Nils Ekedahl*, Prorektor Södertörns högskola

09.30 **Uppdrag utland konferenserna – en arena för erfarenhetsutbyte** *Lotta Victor Tillberg*, CSMS

Inte mycket till larmstyrka – Stefan Linder, pansarskytteplutonchef FS19
Du kommer väl hem igen? – Fredrik Dauti, anhängig

09.50 **Convergence – Illicit Networks and National and International Security in the Age of Globalization**

Michael Miklaucic, Director of Research, Information and Publications at Center for Complex Operations at National Defence University, Washington

11.00 **Vad krävs? Militärt yrkeskunnande i internationella operationer – tre perspektiv**

Generalmajor *Anders Brännström*, Arméinspektör, Överste *Jakob Hahr* Chef för Flygtaktiska stabens Insatsavdelning, Örlogskapten *Mathias Jansson*, Fartygschef HMS Carlskrona

12.15 Mingel lunch i Foajé 4

Uppdrag Utland – Mission Abroad

Program eftermiddag 4 december 2013

Plats: ME 453, MC 243, MA 613, MA 211

13.30 Parallella seminarier

1. Taktiska och stridstekniska erfarenheter Afghanistan 2009-2012

Mats Walldén, Anders Andy Jansson, Markstridsskolan, Peter Tillberg CSMS

2. Militära erfarenheter från fång och tvångssituationer

Henric Roosberg, Lars Gerhardsson, Högkvarteret INS ERF ANA

3. Utvecklingen på hemmafronten vid utlandsuppdrag Dialogiska berättelser i aktionsforskning, *Ann-Margreth Olsson, Högskolan Kristianstad*

4. Efter Afghanistan? Försvaret, kriget och svenskarna Redovisning av svenskarnas attityder till försvaret. SOM-institutets rapport 2013

Karl Ydén, Joakim Berndtsson, CSMS

Kafferaest 14.30-15.00 Föajé 4

15.00 **5. Internationella erfarenheters nytta i organisationen hemma** Polisens erfarenheter från uppdrag i utlandet *Jörgen Holmlund m.fl. Rikskriminalpolisen Utlands-sektionen*

6. Försvarmaktens veteran- och anhörigarbete Vad är gjort, vad görs, vad skall göras? *Anders Stach, Försvarmaktens Veterandavdelning*

7. Om metoder för utveckling av yrkeskunnande i kris- och konfliktmiljöer

Den professionella militären/polisen och det reflekterande samtalet

Lotta Victor Tillberg CSMS, Ulla Ekström von Essen, Södertörns högskola

8. Conflict prevention in Africa ARTEMIS/MONUC

Hans Ilis-Alm, Jan-Gunnar Isberg, Försvarmakten INS ERF ANA

Kvällsprogram

Plats: Svarta Lådan

- 16.30 **Utdelning av Bengt Abrahamsson-priset**
Peter Tillberg, CSMS, ordförande priskommittén
- 16.50 **Specialförbandens erfarenheter från operationer i Afghanistan 2009-2012 – Ett urval av framträdande lärdomar**
Överste Urban Molin, Chef Specialförbandsledningen
- 17.30 Gemensam middag
- 18.45 **Modet, våldet, äran och döden – svenska militära erfarenheter från uppdrag i Afghanistan**
Peter Tillberg, CSMS, Bo Rahmström, Joakim Svartheden samt deltagare från Erfarenhetsforum Afghanistan: Anders Eckerberg, Pär Thornell, Liridona Dauti, Henric Roosberg, Henrik Blomberg, Per Näslund m.fl.
- 19.15 **Efter Afghanistan – erfarenheter, lärdomar och framtid**
Pannelsamtal och avslutande diskussion
Medverkande: Wilhelm Agrell, Torsten Björkman, Martin Liander.
Moderator: Lotta Victor Tillberg
- 20.15 **Vad händer nu? Mission Commander – Swedish Experiences of Command in the Expeditionary Era**
Presentation av boken Uppdrag Chef på engelska
- 20.20 **Avslutningstal**
Anders Claréus, forskningssamordnare, Försvarsmakten
- 20.30 Slut

Appendix 5



Centrum för Studier av Militär och Samhälle inbjuder
tillsammans med Försvarsmakten till konferens:

MODERN MILITÄR PROFESSIONALISM ERFARENHETER, UTMANINGAR & MÖJLIGHETER

Kungliga Tekniska Högskolan
8 september 2015

CSMS
SWEDISH CENTRE FOR STUDIES
OF ARMED FORCES AND SOCIETY

PROGRAM



PROGRAM 8 SEPTEMBER

KUNGLIGA TEKNISKA HÖGSKOLAN

- 10.30 **Drop-in & mingellunch** på Plattan, Lindstedtväg 30, KTH
- 12.00 **Inledningsanförande** av Karl L E Engelbrektson, *generalmajor, Chef Förbands produktion, Försvarsmakten Lokal H1, Teknikringen 33, 2tr*
- 12.30 **CSMS – forum för dialog och erfarenhetsutbyte med fokus på modern militär professionalism** Peter Tillberg, *föreståndare, Centrum för Studier av Militär och Samhälle*
- 13.00 **The Armed Forces After a Decade of War – British and Swedish perspectives** Christopher Dandeker, *Professor of Military Sociology at King's College, London, England*
- 14.00 **Contemporary Special Operations Forces: Generalized Specialization, Boundary Spanning and Military Autonomy** Eyal Ben-Ari, *Professor of Anthropology, and Director of The Kinneret Center on Peace, Israel*

PARALLELLA SEMINARIER – LOKALER SE SEPARAT INFORMATION

15.10-16.00

- 1. Militær profesjonsidentitet - utviklingstrekk, trender og betydning i det norske forsvaret** *Rino Bandlitz Johansen, Kommandørkaptein, PhD Forsvarets stabsskole, Norge*
- 2. Uppdrag Afghanistan – militärt yrkeskunnande och svenskt försvar** *Peter Tillberg, Jörgen Hildebrandt CSMS*
samt
Hålla handen – svenska officerares förståelse av sin profession i ISAF-insatsen i Afghanistan *Caroline Trulsson, försvarsanalytiker INS ERF ANA*
- 3. Underättelsetjänst – internationella erfarenheter**
Michael Aust, analytiker INS ERF ANA
- 4. Forsvaret, politikerna och svenskarna - iakttagelser från den nationella SOM-undersökningen** *Karl Ydén & Joakim Berndtsson, CSMS*

16.10-17.00

- 5. Hur irreguljära styrkor kan förstås – lärdomar från arbete med Handbok irreguljära styrkor** *Mj Anders Bengtsson, FMUndSäkC*
- 6. Yrkesutveckling genom handledning** *Fil Mag/projektledare Charlotte Nathansson, Kn/projektledare, Mikael Gudmundsson FMLOPE*
- 7. Bara en känsla – omdömet betydelse vid utlandsuppdrag**
Joakim Svartheden & Lotta Victor Tillberg, CSMS
- 8. The Future of Peace Operations and Counterinsurgency**
Robert C. Egnell, Associate Professor at the Department of Security, Strategy and Leadership, Swedish Defence University.

SAMLING PÅ PLATTAN, LINDSTEDTSVÄGEN 30

- 17.15 *Professor emeritus Bengt Abrahamson om **Avfällingen – Lawrence efter Arabien** samt utdelning av 2015 års Bengt Abrahamsson-pris*
- 17.45 Gemensam middag
- 19.00 **Military Professionalism – the Combat Soldier in the Expeditionary Era** *Anthony King, Professor at the University of Exeter, England*
- 20.00 **Avslutningstal** *Hans Ilis-Alm, överste, Avdelningschef Långsiktig utveckling och analys, Försvarsmakten*
- 20.15 Slut



Appendix 6



Datum
2008-08-28

FHS beteckning
98618:1

Sida 1(6)

Försvarshögskolan inbjuder till konferens om
UPPDRAG UTLAND – MISSION ABROAD
Kungliga Dramatiska Teatern, Målarsalen, 13 oktober 2008

Program

- Kl. 12.00 Inledningsanförande av rektor MATS ERICSON, Försvarshögskolan, VVD
STAFFAN RYDÉN, Dramaten och professor Bo GÖRANZON, Kungliga
Tekniska Högskolan
- Kl. 12.15 Uppdrag utland – om militära exempels betydelse
FORSKARE PETER TILLBERG, FÖRSVARSHÖGSKOLAN
- Kl. 12.45 *Inspel »Road side bomb« Marie Göranzon, skådespelare*
- Kl. 12.55 On Military Competence in Conducting War Amongst the People
SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW ALLAN JANIK, BRENNER ARKIV INNSBRUCK
- Kl. 13.30 Kaffepaus
- Kl. 13.50 *Inspel »På rutinens brant« Marie Göranzon, skådespelare*
- Kl. 14.00 Om att vara chef i internationell tjänst
ÖVERSTE MATS STRÖM
- Kl. 14.30 Blood, Sweat and Tears –Implementing an Medical Urgent Operational
Requirement in 2 Theatres, Afghanistan and Iraq
COLONEL HEIDI DOUGHTY OF THE BRITISH TERRITORIAL ARMY
- Kl. 15.00 Paus
- Kl. 15.15 *Inspel »I främmande land« Marie Göranzon, skådespelare*
- Kl. 15.25 Caglavica 17 mars 2004 – en kompanichefs erfarenheter
MAJOR NICLAS WETTERBERG
- Kl. 15.45 Ethics in War – Examples from Rwanda and Srebrenica
DR. PAOLO G. TRIPOLI, D. BREN CHAIR OF ETHICS AND LEADERSHIP,
MARINE CORPS UNIVERSITY USA
- Kl. 16.15 Försvarsmakten, våldsuppgiften och utbildningen
FORSKARE KARL YDÉN, FÖRSVARSHÖGSKOLAN
- Kl. 17.00 Gemensam middag i Dramatens Paulicafé, forts. nästa sida



Datum
2008-08-28

FHS beteckning
98618:1

Sida 2(6)

Fortsättning program 13 oktober Dramaten, Målarsalen

Kl. 18.00 **I främmande land – ett dialogseminarium om riddarmoral, ära och mod**

– Tig, käre Sancho, du skall veta att när det gäller krig så är saker och ting alltid mera oberäknliga än annars.

Miguel Cervantes berättelse »Don Quijote« är en gestaltning av det personliga ställningstagandets betydelse, om omdömet och den eviga kampen för goda värden. Här behandlas en liknande problematik som svenska soldater möter i internationell tjänst. Skådespelare: Ingvar Kjellsson & Hans Klinga i regi av Karl Dunér, Dramaten.

Dialogseminariet inleds med ett samtal mellan professor Bo Göranzon (KTH), Peter Tillberg (FHS) och officerare som medverkat i projektet Internationella Erfarenheter.

Kl. 19.30 Slut

DIALOGSEMINARIET – ETT MÖTE MELLAN KONST OCH VETENSKAP

Dialogseminariet på Dramaten startades 1986 med syfte att provocera en fördjupad diskussion om förhållandet mellan arbete och kultur, konst och vetenskap. Idag är seminariet en integrerad del av forskningsområdet yrkeskunskande och teknologi vid Kungliga Tekniska Högskolan (KTH).

För mer information se www.dialoger.se.



Datum
2008-08-28

FHS beteckning
98618.1

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UPPDRAG UTLAND – MISSION ABROAD

Försvarshögskolan 14 oktober 2008

- Kl. 9.00 Inledningsanförande av general ANDERS LINDSTRÖM, FM Insatschef
- Kl. 9.15 *Att sätta tyst kunskap i rörelse – om erfarenhetens betydelse*
Professor BO GÖRANZON, Kungliga Tekniska Högskolan
- Kl. 10.00 Parallella work-shops
Spår 1 *Military Competence in Conducting War Amongst People*
ALLAN JANIK & PETER TILLBERG
- Spår 2 *Coping with Casualties in International Operations - a Case-based Study* JIM STORR & KARL YDÉN
- Spår 3 *Rishtagande och tyst kunskande – exempel från militär praktik*
LOTTA VICTOR TILLBERG & BO GÖRANZON
- Spår 4 *Sociala och kulturella skillnaders betydelser vid internationella insatser* ERIK HEDLUND M.FL.
- Kl. 11.30 Lunch
- Kl. 12.30 Spår 5 *Missions abroad: the moral dimension. Reflections on Rwanda and Srebrenica* PAOLO G. TRIPODI & KARL YDÉN
- Spår 6 *Alfa Sierra på uppdrag i Bosnien*
PETER TILLBERG, STEWE SIMSON & ANDERS KARLSSON
- Spår 7 *Erfarenheter utland – vad kännetecknar en bra officer respektive soldat?* FRITZ ERICSSON & LOTTA VICTOR TILLBERG
- Spår 8 *Den svenska självbilden vid internationella insatser – kompetens, etik & moral* ERIK HEDLUND M.FL.
- Kl. 14.30 Svenska militära erfarenheter av internationella uppdrag – vad kan forskare bidra med?
MARIA HAMMARÉN – ett kunskapsteoretiskt perspektiv
LOTTA VICTOR TILLBERG – exempel från militär praktik
- Kl. 15.10 Perspektiv på framtiden, ANDERS CLARÉUS, forskningssamordnare PERSS
- Kl. 15.30 Slut

Pictures and Photographs in *Mission Afghanistan*

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