



### **D79 Mentoring Forensics: An Explosive Application**

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After attending this presentation, attendees will understand the key practices in the effective mentorship of foreign military forces in the area of bomb scene investigation, including goals and benefits associated with the employment and application of weapons intelligence transition teams.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by highlighting an application of mentoring within forensics and the successful outcome of those efforts as well as presenting a challenge for forensic practitioners to identify opportunities to mentor individuals.

Hostile environments often involve a significant number of explosive events. After civilian populace and troop safety is insured, there is ample opportunity to conduct site exploitation due to real-world necessity and in the form of training and mentorship of friendly host nation forces. These tasks are primarily carried out by Weapon Intelligence Transition Teams (WITT). The mission of a WITT is to coach, train, and mentor host nation investigators in the law enforcement community at the local and federal levels. The goal is to create a system capable of investigating explosive incidents and completing the process through the judicial process to final disposition. WITTs support multiple command elements through operational, tactical, and administrative responsibilities for both coalition and host nation forces.

An effective WITT is comprised of approximately 25 individuals from several types of background and military branches. Coalition forces team members may include Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD), intelligence personnel, photographers, Law Enforcement Professional's (LEPs), interpreters, and a security element. Each of these individuals has the added task of providing mentorship to their host nation counterparts. Foreign national forces are often equal in size and strength with emphasis placed primarily on training and education of team members.

Weapons intelligence teams provide several forensic functions aimed at stabilizing the counterinsurgency environment. These functions include many of the efforts traditionally identified with the analysts of bomb scenes including: site security, evidence collection, location of epicenter, and documentation and reporting. The combat environment also demands additional investigative efforts including: forensic site exploitation, intelligence gathering, and Counter-Improvised Explosive Devices (C-IED). Forensic site exploitation allows analysis to identify several technical and tactical items from post-blast analysis. Intelligence information seeks to hinder enemy bomb-making capabilities through disruption of supply chains and bomb-maker activities. Intelligence information may include suppliers, evolution of insurgent Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (TTP's), as well as emerging threats. Similarly, several pieces of information about the individual(s) involved can be obtained and include training, region, affiliations, and other facilitators. C-IED activities seek to defeat enemy Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) through early detection or neutralization at the point of attack.

As with the individual team-member responsibilities described above, the host nation forces benefit from investigative efforts. Specifically, the aggressive use of forensic investigation aids Host Nation (HN) forces in securing the populace immediately after the investigation as well as long term after the withdrawal of coalition forces. This supports the stabilization of the counterinsurgency environment and has the additional goal of contributing to the creation of a functional judicial system, including the use of forensic capabilities, after the withdrawal of coalition forces.

The mission and goals of WITT ultimately result in numerous benefits in support of tactical and strategic mission accomplishment, each with the goal of gaining and improving forensic information for the purpose of timely and accurate dissemination of information. First, forensic and intelligence information obtained can be given to a forensic laboratory, such as the Joint Expeditionary Forensic Facility (JEFF) or the Joint IED Defeat Organization (JIEDDO) for additional, more-detailed analysis. The results of the analysis allow information to be collated from several tactical units and from multiple sources for wider dissemination throughout the Operating Environment (OE). The intelligence analyses provide information on enemy actions which often result in updated and improved Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) by Coalition Forces (CF). These SOPs have a direct and measurable result on counter-IED capabilities and survivability. Similarly, the teams identify individual bomb makers' manufacture and geo-spatial patterns and trends which provide additional tools for coalition forces to avoid or prevent explosive attacks. Finally, WITT provides technical information encountered including timers, electrical components, initiators, containers, and shrapnel material on a myriad of explosives. Each of these efforts seeks to disrupt enemy efforts via enabling offensive operations and creating an environment not conducive to employing explosives. This is



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accomplished by the capture or termination of enemy bomb makers and increased force protection and local national security. The disruption of insurgent bomb-making capabilities can be readily observed in terms of number and complexity of explosive incidents and will ultimately decrease deaths for the civilian populace as well as host nation and coalition forces.

In conclusion, this presentation will provide an introduction to forensic capabilities of weapons intelligence teams and their efforts at exploitation of explosive incidents as well as creating long-term benefits for the host nation. Additionally, the many areas of forensic mentorship associated with WITTs will be explored despite the many challenges and obstacles faced.

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### **Training, Mentorship, WITT**