



Australian Government

Department of Defence

**Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References
Committee Inquiry into ADF Resistance to
Interrogation Training**

**Department of Defence
Written Submission**

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Executive Summary

1. All military operations and activities conducted overseas in support of Australia's national interests carry the implicit risk that a member of the Australian Navy, Army or Air Force may be captured, detained, interrogated and exploited by an adversary, threat group, foreign military or foreign government. Conduct After Capture (CAC) training, previously known as Resistance to Interrogation (RTI) training, is a Defence activity which prepares ADF personnel to understand the rigors of captivity and exploitation while surviving the capture situation with dignity.

Training Framework

2. RTI activities were upgraded and transitioned to CAC activities in 2005 in order to better reflect contemporary operational risks to ADF personnel. The change also improved alignment with the activities of some coalition partners. At this time CAC training was expanded to also include Foreign Government Detention and Hostage Survival. The RTI element was re-named Military Exploitation to better reflect the risk of exploitation of ADF personnel. The first three-module CAC practical activity was conducted in 2006.

3. **Definitions.** The following definitions apply:

- a. **Resistance to interrogation (RTI).** The part of combat survival that deals with avoiding selection for interrogation and, if interrogated, the preservation of security.
- b. **Conduct after capture (CAC).** The resistance element of the ADF Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape continuum. It details how ADF personnel, if captured or detained, are to behave, resist exploitation and survive in captivity. It includes the captivity scenarios of: Foreign Government Detention, Military Exploitation and Hostage Survival.
- c. **Foreign Government Detention.** Detention by a foreign government organisation such as a border security force, a police force or an intelligence agency.
- d. **Military Exploitation.** Detention by the military forces of a foreign state.
- e. **Hostage Survival.** Detention by a hostile group such as a terrorist or criminal organisation.

4. The Defence Force School of Intelligence is the only ADF unit authorised to deliver CAC training. Only qualified ADF Resistance Trainers are authorised to deliver the training. The current Resistance Trainer qualification is awarded following a suitability assessment, including psychological testing, and the successful completion of a five week Resistance Trainers course (last updated on 27 January 2015) covering all aspects of CAC training.
5. Currently CAC training is conducted in three stages in accordance with the common practice of coalition and partners. The three levels are:
 - a. **Level A.** An introductory computer based package that provides a basic awareness of the ADF CAC policy.
 - b. **Level B.** A one-day theory workshop covering Introduction to CAC, Hostage Survival, Foreign Government Detention, Military Exploitation, Common Survival Strategies and a Level C activity brief. Completion of Level B training is a pre-requisite to undertaking Level C training.
 - c. **Level C.** Practical immersion training of up to 96 hours duration for identified “prone-to-capture” personnel. The activity includes the three CAC scenarios of Foreign Government Detention, Hostage Survival and Military Exploitation.
6. Typically CAC practical training is requested by Special Forces and other ADF units that include individuals prone to capture due to the nature of their roles.
7. Thirty females have undertaken CAC training since 2007. Appropriately qualified females have also been involved in various trainer and support staff roles.

Training Methods

8. CAC training seeks to simulate possible captivity scenarios in the contemporary operating environment including capture by state and non-state actors. During a Level C training activity, Resistance Trainers are required to role-play threat forces in the following modules:
 - a. **Foreign Government Detention.** This module is conducted over 24 hours and provides ADF personnel with survival strategies, coping mechanisms and experience in how to behave during detention by officials from a foreign government. The scenario of this module is that Australia is not involved in an armed conflict with the second country.
 - b. **Military Exploitation.** This module is conducted over 48 hours and provides ADF personnel with survival strategies, coping mechanisms and experience in how to behave during detention by a military service

of a hostile government. The training includes situations where ADF personnel are detained as prisoners of war and the detaining authority acts in a manner compliant with applicable international humanitarian law but also includes situations where ADF personnel are detained by an authority that does not comply with international humanitarian law.

- c. **Hostage Survival.** This module is conducted over 24 hours and provides ADF personnel with survival strategies, coping mechanisms and experience in how to behave during detention by a terrorist or criminal organisation.

Training Control Measures

9. All participants on a CAC Level C activity are volunteers and sign a volunteer declaration form prior to commencing training. All participants on Level C activities are provided an activity overview as part of the Level B brief. At the start of the Level C activity the Conducting Officer requires all trainees to reaffirm their volunteer status or withdraw from the activity. They also have the right to withdraw from training at any stage.

10. CAC Level C training includes the use of mental and physical stressors. These stressors are used in an effort to ensure trainees receive realistic training that replicates likely captivity situations in a safe learning environment. All stressors are employed in accordance with strict and documented protocols. Psychology officers and medical staff monitor the use of stressors to ensure trainees do not experience psychological distress or physical injuries that may be detrimental to their long term wellbeing.

11. At no point during the training are trainees exposed to sexual violence or sexual contact of any nature.

12. CAC Level C training employs the use of interrogation techniques in order to adequately train and prepare prone-to-capture personnel to resist interrogation and survive captivity by state and non-state actors including circumstances where either international humanitarian law does not apply (for example, hostage survival) or the detaining authority is acting in a manner that does not comply with international humanitarian law.

13. Medical and psychology staff have the power to withdraw a trainee from training at any point. All activity staff receive a safety brief prior to the commencement of the training, which covers the key safety issues relevant to the activity and provides guidance on processes and procedures to respond if an issue arises.

14. All CAC sessions are observed through CCTV by the Conducting Officer, the Shift Senior Trainer, neutral observers, medical staff and psychology officers. All activity safety staff are empowered to stop any activity should they deem a training method to be inappropriate or a trainee at risk of mental or physical injury.

15. All CAC Level C activities are recorded and retained in archives at the Defence Force School of Intelligence. Current practice is to digitally store this footage on a hard-drive specific to each activity. For activities conducted prior to 2014, footage is stored on VHS cassettes or discs. Recordings are made of the training in order to assist instructors during the ongoing conduct of training, to assist in the training of new CAC instructors; and as a safety mechanism to ensure that no trainees are mistreated during the training. The Defence Force School of Intelligence is in possession of thousands of hours of footage.

16. In order to aid the Committee's understanding of RTI training, Defence has offered to provide a sample video from various stages of the training, which could then be narrated and described in person by a subject matter expert. Due to operational security and other reasons it is necessary to control the conditions for this viewing and it is unlikely the video would be available before the end of May 2016.

Training Administration

17. An administration instruction that governs the conduct of the activity, including a detailed risk assessment and health support plan, is developed for all CAC Level C activities. This is provided to all staff conducting the training.

18. All trainees, whether they complete the activity or withdraw from training early, are individually debriefed by both a CAC trainer and a psychology officer. During this process they have an opportunity to raise any concerns about the training, including the way in which they were treated, and discuss any psychological or medical concerns.

19. Training costs vary based on location, number of trainees and support staff required. The indicative cost of a Level C activity conducted for 25 trainees is between \$50,000 and \$100,000 depending on location and travel costs.

Other Considerations

20. The detailed content, training methods and survival strategies exercised on a CAC Level C training activity are sensitive from an operational security perspective. An understanding of ADF CAC techniques and procedures by an enemy or threat force would enable them to alter their tactics, techniques and procedures to improve their chances of successfully exploiting detained or captured ADF personnel. In a worst case scenario this could pose a risk to the lives of ADF personnel captured or detained in the future.