

Excellence in Confinement

US Disciplinary Barracks Provides Real-World Training

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The United States Disciplinary Barracks (USDB) at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, is historically the Department of Defense center of excellence for the long-term confinement of US military prisoners. Although the 705th Military Police Battalion, which provides direct support to the USDB, has many Soldiers who have deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom, the unit is not conventionally considered to be a source for training or expertise in detainee operations. However, the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) has changed the current operating environment and caused the missions of internment/resettlement and US military prisoner confinement to merge. Furthermore, recent events have shown the risk of having Soldiers who are not grounded in maximum-custody confinement operations operate detention facilities.

Using the USDB as a real-world training environment, the 705th Military Police Battalion provides training specifically related to the skills and standards necessary to operate a world-class confinement facility housing prisoners, whether combatants, high-risk detainees, or US military prisoners. Although the specific challenges and unique requirements of operating prisons in different locations are better left to the incoming and outgoing units at each location, the battalion can provide the general concepts and principles for operating any detention facility effectively. Correctional specialists working at the USDB have a unique skill set that is learned from dealing with maximum-custody inmates on a daily basis. This skill set is the foundation for the security of high-risk detainees and for supporting the Army's core competencies.

Recently, the 705th was called upon to expand its mission and begin training deploying units that had been assigned detention operations missions. In the fall of 2004, the Forces Command provost marshal contacted the USDB to request assistance in preparing the 2d Detachment of the Army Reserve's 535th Military Police Battalion for deployment to a facility in Kuwait. The 705th was tasked to provide special skills training (including on-the-job training [OJT]) for the unit as part of the detachment's training before deployment. Although the USDB Soldiers could not duplicate the exact tactical conditions of the Kuwait facility, they were able to provide basic skills that the Reserve Soldiers could build upon after they arrived in Kuwait.

Consideration of a unit's deployment mission is vital when determining the specific skills the unit needs to train. In this case, the detachment's mission was to run a confinement facility that housed US military prisoners pending transfer out of the US Central Command area of operation in Kuwait. To develop the training plan, the USDB contacted the Army Central Command provost marshal and the commander of the unit operating the Kuwait detention facility.

The following list of questions was sent to the commander:

- Who performs the individual missions within the camp and how do they do them? For example, who cooks inmate and staff meals and how are they served?
- Who provides administrative support for US military prisoners?
- How are supplies acquired for US military prisoners and then provided to them?
- How many segregation cells and bed spaces does the facility have?
- What type of equipment is available for general and special-needs inmates?
- How many inmates are in the camp on any typical day and what type of risk are they?

The current commander of the facility was very detailed in his responses to the questions and sent a list of specific tasks that he thought were critical to the accomplishment of his mission. Armed with this information, the 705th tailored the 2d Detachment's training plan to include those critical skills. Because

the mission was the confinement of US military personnel, the 705th could use the prison at Fort Leavenworth as a training aid to develop a base of expertise and knowledge.

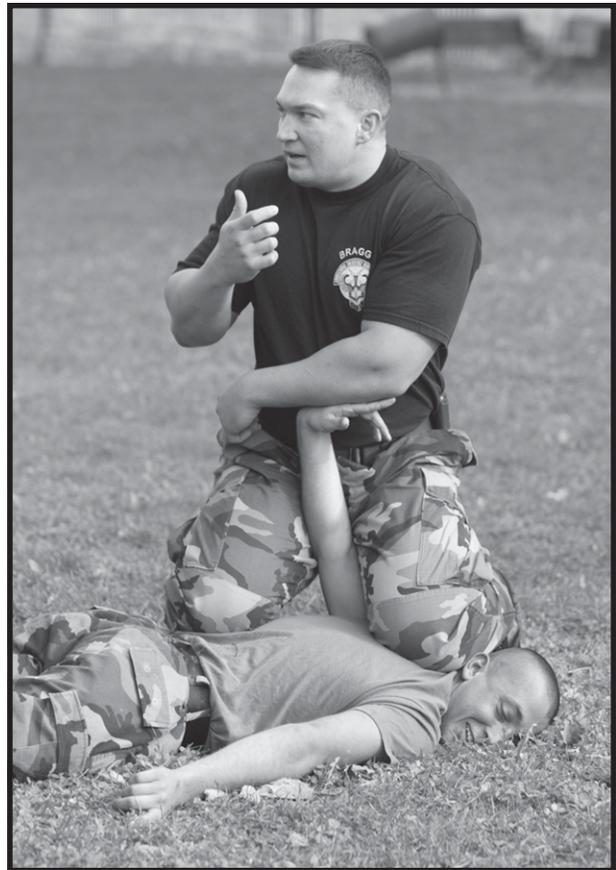
To further tailor the detachment's training for its pending deployment, the 705th conducted a training analysis to identify the critical strengths and weaknesses of the detachment's readiness to conduct confinement operations. Coordination with the detachment's leaders revealed that a majority of the Soldiers in the detachment were newly assigned and recently retrained in the confinement specialist military occupational specialty (MOS). The 2d Detachment would train at the USDB for approximately four weeks before leaving for Kuwait.

A home station training packet based on the above facts was developed by the 705th and sent to the detachment commander. The packet focused on common Soldier tasks in the field of confinement specialist that the 535th noncommissioned officers (NCOs) could teach the detachment before its arrival at Fort Leavenworth. If this common training was mastered beforehand, the USDB's seasoned NCOs would be able to concentrate on specific corrections topics once the detachment arrived at Fort Leavenworth. Because the unit was relatively new to corrections, the detachment commander validated Soldiers' training on the individual tasks before they arrived at Fort Leavenworth.

After arrival, the first four days of the detachment's training were focused on the classroom instruction received by all new Soldiers assigned to the USDB. Among the topics of the classroom instruction were—

- Hostage negotiations.
- Mission-essential task list overview of the USDB.
- Emergency-action procedures.
- Social and cultural lifestyles of inmates.
- Report writing.
- Priorities of force.
- Interpersonal communication skills.
- Unarmed self-defense.

After more than 30 hours of classroom instruction, a collective assessment was made of the proficiency of the Soldiers who had been trained. With that proficiency established, the prison commandant then approved Soldiers to move into the prison to conduct OJT with the 705th Military Police Battalion Soldiers. The commandant must approve all personnel who work in the USDB, and traditionally, only 705th Military Police Battalion Soldiers are allowed to



Unarmed self-defense was one of the topics the 705th demonstrated to Soldiers of the 535th Military Police Battalion.

work there. The Soldiers and leaders of the 2d Detachment worked next to their 705th counterparts for the last three weeks of training. The focus of the OJT was to better prepare the Soldiers of the 2d Detachment to run a facility of their own.

At the same time, the detachment's command group worked alongside the operations officer at the USDB, learning the planning and supervisory skills needed to run a confinement facility. The detachment's senior NCOs worked with USDB guard commanders to learn how to run the facility, including the day-to-day tasks necessary to ensure that custody and control are maintained at all times. The NCOs were able to observe notification of disciplinary decisions, vulnerability tests of the facility's security, and the systematic control procedures for maintaining a count of inmates.

All other 2d Detachment correctional specialists dealt with actual US military prisoners during the day. Detachment Soldiers were able to watch count procedures, cell searches, and inmate movement. The observations and training gave them experience, but more importantly, it gave them the confidence needed to succeed in the confinement of prisoners.

The detachment's diverse makeup includes more than just the correctional specialist MOS. It also includes MOSs such as food specialist, personnel NCO, supply specialist, and mental health specialist. Most of the detachment Soldiers had never worked with inmates, so it was crucial that they learn how their jobs contributed to maintaining custody and control and supported the operation of an effective detention facility.

Soldiers of the 705th Military Police Battalion, who perform the above missions daily, were able to help the low-density MOS Soldiers of the 2d Detachment learn the skills they needed. The detachment Soldiers paired up with a trained counterpart from the USDB and obtained the same skills, knowledge, and confidence as their confinement specialist peers in operating in a confinement setting. Some of the USDB personnel who taught the 2d Detachment Soldiers have more than 20 years of experience, including a psychologist, social workers, and inmate administration and food specialists.

The chance to interact with seasoned trainers proved to be vital, as many of the 2d Detachment Soldiers with support MOSs had little or no experience in working with inmates. For example, the mental health team of one officer and one NCO had the opportunity to observe and interact with USDB licensed professionals working with inmates. One team member noted that he never had the opportunity to work with incarcerated personnel before, although he has served as a licensed social worker for years. He added that the understanding he gained at the USDB was more than just training to a specific standard; it also provided him with the confidence and critical thinking skills needed to leverage his expertise within a confinement setting. Without the training, he said, he would have provided a less effective service for the inmates than he could when armed with the understanding he gained at the USDB.



Soldiers learn how to apply the body cuff to restrain a Soldier posing as an inmate.

At the conclusion of their training, the Soldiers had learned how to operate a confinement facility through OJT at the USDB. Through continual evaluation, the detachment commander, the battalion's senior NCO instructors, and the battalion's operations and training officer validated the Soldiers' understanding of the instruction. In addition, the Soldiers gained classroom understanding of the material and the insight and confidence needed to perform the confinement mission in Kuwait and to meet any new challenges along the way.

The USDB, in support of the GWOT, is expanding the 705th Military Police Battalion's traditional mission of operating a correctional center of excellence. The USDB and the battalion have now added the role of potential trainer in the performance of confinement operations worldwide. Current operations have demonstrated the critical success needed in not only engaging the enemy, but effectively detaining them as well. The role as a trainer not only expands the historical mission of the USDB, but also prepares units within the battalion for future missions in support of tactical operations around the world.