

Military Speak from Operation Iraqi Freedom

INTRODUCTION: In most fields of endeavor, a shorthand lexicon develops to promote the transfer of the most information in the shortest amount of time. The military lexicon is no exception. What is different is the amount of information that must be transmitted in a short amount of time due to operational considerations.

- **Ali Baba:** Generic Iraqi term for bad guy, be it insurgent or criminal
- **angel:** a soldier killed in combat, used among some US medical personnel.
- **AO:** area of operation
- **AOR:** area of responsibility. The assigned area to any given unit.
- **APC:** Armored Personnel Carrier Primary mode of transportation for mechanized infantry units (AMTRAC –used by Marines, Bradley, Stryker - Army)
- **battlefield Airmen:** Air Force Special Operations Command [AFSOC] pararescue, combat control and weather troops. The term battlefield Airmen may be new, though AFSOC troops have been filling those combat jobs for many years.
- **battle rattle:** Full battle rattle is close to 50 pounds worth of gear, including a flak vest, Kevlar helmet, gas mask, ammunition, weapons, and other basic military equipment. One component is the soft vest that covers the torso the shoulders and the back. It's made of soft material, a mixture of Kevlar and Twaron. These are sewn together in sort of a sandwich fashion inside a nylon camouflage-pattern shell. The nylon vest has attaching points for load-bearing equipment. The second component of the system is ceramic plates that fit in pockets in the front and back of the vest. These plates protect the heart and lungs. Any TV news report from Iraq or Afghanistan shows American service members wearing "full battle rattle." Wearing the battle rattle has saved lives in both Iraq and Afghanistan. A soldier in full dress, including helmet, flak jacket, and automatic weapon said to be wearing "battle rattle" "play clothes" or "Mommy's comforts" -- terms that antedated the war in Iraq, though used less frequently because the gear was used by smaller numbers of troops. The term Battle Rattle was previously associated with a call to arms on warships in the 1812 period.
- **BIAP :** Baghdad International Airport
- **Bombaconda:** nickname for LSA Anaconda, a major base near Balad, reflecting the frequent mortar attacks.
- **CC :** Coalition Country -- the coalition of the willing allies
- **CHU:** Containerized Housing Unit (pronounced "choo") - Aluminum boxes slightly larger [22'x8'] than a commercial shipping container, with linoleum floors and cots or beds inside. This insulated CONEX shipping container has a door, window, top vent, power cabling, and an air conditioner. One version houses four people, while another is split into two, two-person rooms. The version with a shower and toilet shared between two rooms is called a "wet chu", which provides less crowded latrine and shower conditions than tents. The CHU gives soldiers a lot more living space than tents.
- **CHUville:** a base consisting of a large number of CHUs.
- **CP:** Check Point. Usually numbered
- **CSH:** Combat Surgical Hospital. Pronounced "cash".
- **Death Blossom:** The tendency of Iraqi security forces, in response to receiving a little fire from the enemy, to either run away or do the "death blossom" spraying fire indiscriminately in all directions. The term originated in the 1984 movie "The Last Starfighter" as a maneuver in which a single starfighter can single handedly wipe out an entire armada.
- **DFAC [Dining FACility]:** A DFAC is where you eat. Soldiers eat in a dining facility, or DFAC (pronounced dee-Fak). Old soldiers show their age they call it a "chow hall" and if you say "mess hall" it dates you.

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DFACs are modern looking cafeteria; some decorated it with sports memorabilia, movie posters, and televisions with ESPN on.

- **dirt sailor:** A member of the Navy's Construction Battalions (Seabees). In Iraq, a sailor playing a part that is not a normal Navy role.
- **Drive on:** The ethos of the soldier/Marine. Just keep on goin'. Usually used in the phrase "Suck it up and drive on."
- **FOB:** forward operating base.
- **FOB Taxi:** any vehicle that never leaves the FOB.
- **fobbit:** service member who never goes outside the wire off the forward operating base.
- **FRAGO:** fragmentary order. Fragmentary order is an abbreviated form of an operation order, usually issued on a day-to-day basis, which eliminates the need for restating information contained in a basic operation order. FRAGOs do not take the place of an OPORD. A FRAGO determines timely changes to an already existing order. The important point here is that a frag order is issued based on the basic operation order and is not a "stand alone" directive. It will normally state the changes from the basic order such as enemy situation and new taskings. A more formal decision-making process may be required before issuing a FRAGO, especially if a major adjustment to the operation order (OPORD) is needed.
- **Frankenstein:** A Marine Corps monster truck, bulging and rippling with spot-welded seams of add on armor. "We scrounge around for what we need and 'Frankenstein' it together." As of December 2004, of the 30,000 estimated wheeled vehicles in Iraq and Afghanistan, about 8,000 of the older models did not have armor [protection](#). Of those that were protected, about 6, 000 had full protection, while about 10,000 vehicles had received add-on kits, many improvised in theater. Green Zone: Heavily guarded area with several former Presidential Palaces in central Baghdad where US, coalition and Iraqi authorities live and work. Much of the rest of Iraq is the "red zone". An attempt was made to rename it the International Zone (IZ), but this seems not to have stuck.
- **Green Zone:** Heavily guarded area with several former Presidential Palaces in central Bagdad where US coalition and Iraqi authorities live and work. Much of the rest of Iraq is the Red Zone.
- **Grunt:** Infantryman
- **gun truck:** an armored and heavily armed vehicle used for convoy security.
- **GWOT:** global war on terrorism.
- **haji :** 1: Arabic word for someone who has made the pilgrimage to Mecca; 2: used by the American military for an Iraqi, anyone of Arab decent, or even of a brownish skin tone, be they Afghanis, or even Bangladeshis; 3: the word many soldiers use derogatorily for the enemy.
- **haji armor:** improvised armor, installed by troops hiring Iraqis to update the vehicles by welding any available metal to the sides of Humvees
- **haji mart:** any small store operated by Iraqis to sell small items to Americans.
- **haji patrol:** 1: escort detail; 2: Local National unit is also referred to as the Haji patrol, with all the projects that are being performed by the local nationals.
- **haji shop:** even the smallest base has some form of what soldiers call a "haji shop" or, in more politically correct terms, a shop run by locals. Frequently near the PX, the "Haji" shop would sell everything from cigarettes to knockoff sunglasses to pirated DVDs.
- **hillbilly armor:** Improvised vehicle armor, salvaged from digging through local landfills for pieces of scrap metal to bolster armor on their vehicles. Typically a half-inch of scrap steel hastily cut in the shape of the door and welded or riveted on. Name derives from Tennessee National Guard 278th Regimental Combat Team, whose Spc. Thomas Wilson grilled SecDef Rumsfeld in December 2004

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about the need for such scrounging. "Why do we soldiers have to dig through local landfills for pieces of scrap metal and compromised ballistic glass to up-armor our vehicles?" Spc. Wilson asked.

- **IED** : improvised explosive device
- **ICDC** : Iraqi Civil Defense Corps [obsolete]
- **Indirect**: indirect fire, usually referring to mortars and rockets
- **inside the wire** - inside an enemy combatant detention facility. Working "inside the wire" of the enemy combatant detention facility can lead to stress for the US troops working here. But experts and leaders are working hard to help service members deal with the unique conditions of working in an isolated island base such as Guantanamo. Troops working inside the wire must pass through several sets of intimidating double gates. They always cover their nametapes and never call each other by their real names while they're near detainees. Vietnam-era phrase for the perimeter of any US base in Vietnam.
- **ITGA** : Interim Transitional Government of Afghanistan.
- **Jingle trucks** : [Afghanistan] (transport trucks with a narrow wheel base that are usually adorned with colorful stickers and chimes), the military contracted for host nation delivery trucks, known as "jingle trucks" because of the decorative metal tassels hanging from the bottom of the truck frames that jingled when the trucks moved. These trucks are contracted through Afghan Government officials. The NCO responsible for these contracts was known as the "jingle man." The contract price was based on the destination and the type of truck used. Fuel tankers and trucks that could carry 20- and 40-foot containers were available. Although serviceable, these trucks would not pass standard US specifications.
- **KAF**: That stands for Kandahar Air Field. That is the main base of operations for the Southern part of Afghanistan. The main post is big and has lots of people, it is a main transportation hub--both Helo and Fixed Wing--also Convoys of Humvees going in and out
- **KBR**: Kellogg, Brown & Root -- The biggest contractor serving the Coalition Forces.
- **Kevlar**: helmet
- **LN**: Local National. A citizen of Iraq, if you're in Iraq, Afghanistan if you're in Afghanistan, etc. Usually encountered as labor brought on post to do construction or other labor.
- **Mortaritaville**: nickname for LSA Anaconda, a major base near Balad, reflecting the frequent mortar attacks.
- **MRE**: Meals Ready to Eat. Alternately known as meals refused by everyone, mysteries, and the 3 lies; they aren't meals, they aren't ready, and they certainly aren't edible.
- **Muj** (pronounced: Mooj), short for Mujahadeen. Formally a person who wages jihad, informally used for the Iraqi Insurgents starting in 2005.
- **NCO**: Non-commissioned officer. A fancy way of saying sergeant.
- **NCOIC/OIC**: Non-commissioned officer in charge/Officer in charge.
- **outside the wire** -- outside the security perimeter surrounding the FOB.
- **OEF**: Operation Enduring Freedom.
- **OGA** : Other Government Agency - CIA
- **OIF**: Operation Iraqi Freedom.
- **OTV**: (Outer Tactical Vest)/**IBA** (Individual Body Armor)/Vest- body armor. Usually consists of a Kevlar vest and ceramic plates. Combined, rated to a threat level IV, meaning it can stop a 7.62mm round
- **PPE**: Personal Protective Equipment
- **POG** [pronounced "pogue"]: Originally used mainly by infantry personnel, referred to 'people other than grunts,' rear-echelon support troops. Varies in usage. Usually referred to someone that is a

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“shammer”, or someone that is no good. Usage moved throughout the Army, now generally refers to anyone that is a poor excuse for a soldier/Marine.

- **PRT**: This stands for Provincial Reconstruction Team. These are military, government departments and civilian aid organizations from our country and many others who come to a town and help to rebuild. The PRT coordinates construction projects and provide humanitarian assistance.
- **PSD** : Personal Security Detail – often private security contractors
- **Red on red**: enemy-on-enemy fire. In June 2005 it was reported that Marines patrolling the desert near the Syrian border had, over the previous several months, seen a new trend in the Iraq insurgency. Insurgents were fighting each other in towns along the Euphrates from Husayba to Qaim. This suggested that there had been a split between Islamic militants and local rebels.
- **REMF**: rear-echelon motherf**r - Vietnam era phrase revived for the sandbox. The term REMF seems to have fallen into disuse, replaced by “**fobbit**”.
- **Remfland**: the rear-echelon areas where support personnel live and work in relative safety -- the paradox being that in the Sandbox, unlike Vietnam, REMfland is more a state of mind than a physical location.
- **RPG**: Rocket Propelled grenade. Insurgents like to fire these at coalition forces.
- **S-shops**: Battalion-level organizations that handle administrative duties. Usually there are only 4, but can be more, dependent upon the level of command. Many times referred to as ‘shops’ as in the ‘3 shop’ (operations)
- **S-1**: Personnel
S-2: Intelligence
S-3: Operations
S-4: Logistics and supply
- **Sandbox** or **Sandpit** : Iraq
- **SAPI**: Small arms protective insert, usually pronounced as “sappy.” Ceramic plates inserted into the front and back of the IBA/OTV
- **shake and bake**: first used during the Vietnam War, and revived in Iraq, to refer to attacks using a combination of conventional bombs, cluster bombs (CBU), and napalm. In the battle of Fallujah in 2004 it was used in reference to a combination barrage of White Phosphorus and explosive artillery shells.
- **sustainer theater**: AAFES' motion picture team has assembled an opening lineup of movies for the Balad Camp Anaconda theater dubbed "Sustainer." Before Soldiers can view first run shows at the Sustainer Theater the process of getting movies here takes weeks of time and effort, initially beginning at the Army Air Force Exchange Service headquarters in Dallas.
- **TCN**: Third Country National: A citizen of a neutral country who is in the theater of operations as a contractor. The Nepalese truck drivers who were killed by Ansar Al Sunnah in the summer of 2004 were TCNs.
- **TCP**: Traffic control point.
- **Terp**: interpreter
- **TOC**: Tactical Operations Center. Usually pronounced ‘tock.’ Where command elements are primarily located.
- **VBIED** : Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Devise. i.e. Car Bomb.
- **XO**: Executive Officer. One step Below Commanding officer

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