

- Cultural Property Protection Scripting Workshop Report – - 4-6 October 2023 -



1. The Workshop

1.1. Concept

In the wake of the recent upsurge in political interest in safeguarding cultural heritage in the event of armed conflict many signatory states to the 1954 Hague Convention, as well as the NATO Alliance, now regard cultural property protection (CPP) as an implied military task to be factored into operational plans.¹

States party armed forces are charged with safeguarding as much cultural property as possible during the lawful conduct of armed conflict. This can only be achieved by factoring proactive safeguarding into operational plans: putting in place measures to avoid damage and destruction before it occurs to mitigate, in particular, the anticipated effects of combat events, manoeuvre, and logistical activity. Ongoing tasks involve supporting the competent authorities under Article 7(2) of the Hague Convention, which may include contributing to cultural property 'first aid' conservation

¹ This workshop was a collaboration between Captain Ankie Petersen (Staff Officer Cultural Property Protection, 1CMI Command, Royal Netherlands Army) and Dr Emma Cunliffe (Secretariat, Blue Shield International), with the excellent and welcome support of Francesco Di Giampietro, OF-3 ITraining Audience A Staff Officer, Training & Education (T&E) & ITraining Audience SNR, Civil-Military Cooperation Centre of Excellence.

activities at the site of recent violent events, supporting evacuations of movable cultural property, or even providing site protection if deemed to be mission relevant. Armed forces may also be called on to support the host nation, or an occupied state party, in efforts to suppress the illicit trade in cultural property. CPP also remains a factor during stabilisation activity subsequent to combat operations; when functioning as the occupying power; and during ‘first responder’ disaster relief operations. All of this will occur in collaboration with, or on behalf of, states parties owning the heritage in question, and always in a subordinate role, even when armed forces function as the occupying power.

Proactive CPP has the potential to enhance operational effectiveness in general. In particular, well-judged CPP planning should promote freedom of manoeuvre, the maintenance of a chosen tempo of operations, and create conditions for positive STRATCOM opportunities; CPP is a mission enabler, not a drag on operational efficiency. But this requires a degree of specialist input to operational planning from the outset, raising questions about how CPP should be factored into both individual and collective training, beyond general awareness.

“CPP serves as an ideal “gateway” to other cultural competence skills and more abstract concepts, and yet still forces planners to consider culture’s complex influences beyond more simplistic “dos and don’ts.”²

1.2. Aims

The workshop aimed to

- Explore and understand relevant CPP challenges at the level, differentiated from strategic level tasks;
- Explore and understand relevant CPP challenges in all phases of a mission and all types of deployment;
- share good practice and experience; in order to
- develop expertise in providing CPP exercise support.

Through two key training formats: **wargames** and **large-scale exercises** at the **tactical level**, with the ultimate goal of enriching training so that CPP is encountered as a planning factor with true operational impact.

Over 2.5 days, participants attended expert lectures on the challenges and successes of training in CPP, and workshopped challenges to CPP scripting in small groups.

1.3. Attendees

The workshop was attended by a diverse range of civilians and members of the armed forces from Belgium, France, Netherlands, and the UK, including representatives of their Cultural Property Protection Units, as well as a U.S. academic experts, and the Polish for International Centre for Training and Research on Cultural Heritage in Danger, as well as a civilian contractor who provides expert support to NATO training exercises. Attendee experience ranged across the spectrum of civil and military experience, and included those with extensive training and exercise experience but little to no experience of CPP, and those with extensive CPP experience, but little training experience. This range enabled in depth discussions of how practical experience can be applied to enrich training.

² Edmondson, Fogarty, and Peifer, “Planning for Culture. Incorporating Cultural Property Protection into a Large-Scale, Multi-Domain Exercise”, [Military Review Nov-Dec 2021](#), p28

2. Setting the scene

The CIMIC Centre of Excellence opened the workshop: Major Linda Rullens introduced participants to cultural property protection as cross-cutting topic in NATO. Rullens highlighted the importance of CPP as a legal and moral obligation that can improve campaign legitimacy and reputation, as well the importance of the operational impacts of countering adversary propaganda, preventing adversary financing, and improved understanding of the civil environment. Rullens provided the key overview of the scale and scope of CPP, affecting multiple branches and activities, setting the scene for the discussions that followed.

3. Wargaming

Wargaming is

“a scenario-based warfare model in which the outcome and sequence of events affect, and are affected by, the decisions made by the players. Wargaming is a decision-making technique that provides structured but intellectually liberating safe-to-fail environments to help explore what works (winning/succeeding) and what does not (losing/failing), typically at relatively low cost”³.

Wargames are intended to immerse participants in an environment with simulated realism to improve their decision-making skills. To date, however, CPP has not been widely included as either a topic in itself, or a factor affecting the wider operational environment. To that end, the organisers were delighted to welcome Dr. Natalia Wojtowicz, Lecturer in Wargaming and Cybersecurity at Hague University of Applied Sciences, an expert in wargaming to speak on *Experiences in Wargaming: Soldiers, Scientists and Civilians*⁴, and Major Mark Dunkley, OF-3, British Army, to present wargame Exercise HORIZON STRIKE, developed with DSTL (UK Government Defence Science and Technology Laboratory).

Professor Wojtowicz discussed examples of how wargames can explore realistic simulated scenarios, including an influence focussed scenario to challenge and train CIMIC forces. In that scenario, national and international actors, including UNESCO, engage in influence activities in a complex socio-cultural setting the mirrors a real world social, ethnic, and politically complex city. Their actions positively and negatively affect cultural property (amongst other activities) and influence the other actors in the scenario, including cultural vandalism indicating ethnic tensions, protection of a monument of significance to one (unpopular) ethnic group, international oversight, and so on. Within this complex scenario, CIMIC officers are encouraged to explore different responses to the evolving situation. Realism, she emphasised, is of critical importance in achieving training objectives.

Dr. Wojtowicz further elaborated on her defined ‘7 elements’ in developing a wargame from the example of several wargames she designed, such as a wargame on deterrence in the Baltic States and cooperation in the Mosul Battle. She emphasized the need for building a scenario on relevant cases, and focussing injects on realistic problems. Moreover, when creating an adversary ‘red team’, getting into the adversary mindset is crucial.

³ Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre (DCDC), Red Teaming Guide, 2nd Edition, 2013, Lexicon; and DCDC, Wargaming Handbook, 2017, UK Ministry of Defence, (publishing.service.gov.uk)

⁴ Based on her publications *Wargaming Experiences: Soldiers, Scientists and Civilians. Notes from a NATO Wargame designer*, and *Wargaming Experiences. Discussions. Notes from a Wargaming Lecturer*.

Major Dunkley introduced the participants to CPP in current UK doctrine, with a focus on the importance of cultural heritage intelligence at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels, in land, sea, air, space, and cyber. Influence, he argued convincingly, is the sixth domain of warfare and should be accorded importance as such. Echoing and building on remarks by other speakers, he highlighted the critical role cultural property can play in the influence domain, by allies and adversaries, which armed forces, states parties and civil society must be prepared for. In light of the significant role cultural property has in influence, he has begun to develop wargames that enable participants to explore the effects of CPP in operations.

Attendees split into two teams to participate in a summary playthrough of Exercise HORIZON STRIKE, a tactical simulation of a crisis response scenario, where cultural property can provide resources and advantage to the insurgents and becomes a protection challenge to the defending force. In the scenario, a successful radical insurgency (the “Red” team) in the fictional country North Zahour is driving up the fertile river valley, gathering followers as it advances. A NATO mission (the “Blue” team) is tasked to block their advance and clear them from the Area of Operations, and to protect cultural property, whilst strictly obeying the Laws of Armed Conflict. The Red team must try to advance to the capital and take (and hold) it. As they advance, they can occupy urban areas to raise forces, and can attack, destroy, and loot cultural sites (the latter provides finances for more forces). Given the constraints of the game, cultural property is included in a relatively simple manner to enable tactical exploration of its impact on the mission.

Although the workshop was only able to provide a brief experience over a few hours of the game (which would be expected to take two days to fully play through) it nonetheless provided fascinating insights. Blue began the game still deploying their battalions and resources into the area, whilst the insurgents were already present but needed to expand quickly across the area to keep renewing resources. In the opening hours, with their greater speed and manoeuvrability, Red quickly moved up the river valley while Blue were still deploying, and were able to take the capital. Along the way, Red looted or destroyed 7 of the 10 cultural locations on the Board, and used an eighth as a shield for their operations. The Red insurgent team achieved several quick victories - though were not the most strategic: had the game played out fully, it is highly unlikely they would have been able to hold the capital and would have been encircled and defeated. Whilst a probable victory for the country under threat, the cost to cultural property was extremely high (and would in all likelihood have also involved a bitter conflict in the capital).

Cultural property was very easily and quickly looted: there was almost nothing defending forces could do to prevent it, lacking the speed and manoeuvrability of the insurgents, particularly during the deployment phase. Given this, as recognised in the 1954 Hague Convention, it is critical that the heritage sector prepare for conflict before it occurs. In today’s asymmetric conflicts, cultural property looting and destruction provide easy and quick wins for adversaries, and preventing that can be equally important.

Participants found the experience highly valuable: in the feedback, they noted it was a very good tool to introduce the complexity of civil environment, and the interactive format of the game was very positively received. They made several enthusiastic comments on the exercise and ways to expand it, as well as suggesting new possible applications for the inclusion of CPP in wargaming. It was also noted that it was a good ice-breaker / bonding experience for military personnel and civilians alike, bringing everyone together.



Immovable cultural property in Exercise HORIZON STRIKE, courtesy of Major Mark Dunkley, British Army and DSTL.



Participants play Exercise HORIZON STRIKE, courtesy of Major Mark Dunkley, British Army and DSTL.

The game was an extremely effective teaching tool for the civilian and military personnel alike. As one participant commented:

“It was shocking to me just how quickly the red (insurgent) team were able to loot or destroy most of the cultural property on the map. Without highly mobile personnel specifically dedicated to protecting it, it would be almost impossible to keep it safe in a real conflict. If states parties don't move their museum collections to safety, they are at real risk. The game conveyed that to me in a way words never could.”

4. Exercise Scripting of Injects

The second part of the workshop focussed on scripting of storylines and the injects that they are made up of. Given the diverse range of experience, Dr Cunliffe introduced participants to the creation and planning of exercises, focusing on them as a specific type of wargame to provide an overview of the planning process. Scripting is the process of creating the events that make up storylines via injects⁵. Each storyline tests / teaches a certain aspect of responsibility, aiming to meet pre-identified training objectives. Cunliffe provided a brief overview what constitutes good practice from her experience of Command Post exercises (headquarters exercises involving commanders and their staffs, and communications within and between participating headquarters), emphasising that storylines must also be realistic within the constraints of the scenario, and the value of a framework that includes a cultural authority and international organisations (such a Ministries of Culture, UNESCO, Blue Shield, and / or the personnel identified in the 1954 Hague Convention Control system). Expert lectures on challenges and good practice were delivered by Dr Chris Jasparro, exploring the role of CPP with a specific focus on maritime exercises, based on his experience. Reputation, legal protection, and historical narratives, he noted, have all become weapons in themselves, exploited for influence. He highlighted how cultural property protection and destruction can reflect adversary intent and priorities, and how these approaches had been developed in his exercise experience to test the concepts they wanted to train to. A failure to respond to provocation, for example, resulted in a cultural protection incident escalating in exercise, whereas when the Training Audience responded proactively to get ahead of an incident and issued their own version of the story, they were rewarded. Training, in his experience (as in Cunliffe's) was most successful when it affected and incorporated multiple branches and planning elements.

Cpt Ankie Petersen presented the Dutch Army Approach to CPP, reviewing the changing character of war, and echoing Dunkley's comments on the increasing use of, and strategic importance of, the information and influence domain. She highlighted this for CIMIC, where her unit is part of the Princess Ariane Communication and Engagement Corps, which is part of the Information Manoeuvre Arm, with a broad spectrum of information expertise including CIMIC and Cultural Affairs. Bring the theory into practice, Cpt Petersen spoke on her tactical level exercise experience, capturing the broad operational role of CPP. Exercise Common Ground 2022 was a dynamically scripted Dutch

⁵ Storylines are composed of injects - pieces of information sent by the exercise runners to the Training Audience. They can be news stories, intelligence reports, phone calls, or any way to give information about an event to the Training Audience (such as its' occurrence or reactions to it), or to push for action regarding a topic. each inject progresses the storyline (or incident) They can also praise / reward or criticise action.

CIMIC exercise using an open-air museum as the Area of Operations. CPP injects included illegal digging and trafficking of objects, and buildings were marked with blue shields.



Exercise Common Ground 2022 © Cpt Peterson

Exercise Joint Cooperation 2023 at the Multinational CIMIC Command in Nienburg was a non-dynamic CIMIC Exercise for three brigades, all with a different cultural property challenge. Petersen noted that in the second exercise, CPP was briefed in the Academics⁶, which raised its importance and awareness amongst the Training Audience. Both Training Audiences were made aware of key resources, such as the Dutch CPP military handbook, and instruction cards, which proved valuable.

Looking to synthesise the learning points and recommendations from these presentations, the organisers moved to a group discussion to frame CPP, breaking it down into four key questions. These were intended to frame the challenge of how to create good exercises that will enable to Training Audience to better address CPP. By considering these questions, which to some extent echo more general scripting guidance regarding roles and responsibilities, storylines can be created that will challenge the Training Audience to deal with the issues identified.

4.1. CPP Risks and Responsibilities

What are the risks relating to cultural property in the Area of Operations? Following discussion in the workshop, depending on the area and conflict, the following risks⁷ were identified by participants:

⁶ A set of briefings designed to introduce the Training Audience to each other, establish /confirm common ways of working, and to introduce the exercise scenario and key topics of importance.

⁷ These are not the only risks, for example, heavy vehicles or fuel spillage can damage buried remains; Vibrations from vehicle movement can damage fragile buildings. For more on risks to cultural property in

- Natural Hazard
- Vandalism
- Deliberate destruction (with many motivations) – may be necessary or unnecessary
- Looting
- Accidental destruction
- Manipulation

Who creates those risks?

- Civilians
- Adversary forces
- Insurgents
- Partner forces
- Own forces
- Local/ national government (by lack of preparation for conflict or neglect of CH)

What is the risk to?

- A particular site or object
- Cultural workers / heritage custodians
- Armed forces (from reputational damage, conflict escalation, or terrorist financing, etc.) /

Whose responsibility is it? (This question, particularly if cultural protection is under-resourced or poorly implemented by the government / owners, remains an enduring operational dilemma for armed forces ,who may be placed in a position of responsibility when they should not be).

- Host nation – national and/ or local government depending on situation /
- National Armed Force / civil protection
- Civil society (such as NGOs tasked and mandated with CPP)
- Deployed multinational force.

Although these questions may seem obvious or reductive, they provide a framework that enables the creation of a good storyline. Storylines must tackle a risk to identified CPP; there must be a cause of risk the Training Audience must address or engage with; and it must either be their responsibility or provide an operational dilemma regarding responsibility. For example, a storyline regarding looting of hundreds of archaeological sites and subsequent trafficking is unlikely to get much Training Audience attention unless there is a strong stability policing element – despite the infamous civilian and organised crime looting of sites in Iraq in 2003-2006 immediately following the invasion⁸. Whilst it may seem to provide good inspiration, without the ability to generate the international attention over time and highlight the scale, the Training Audience are likely to insist that site security is a police task⁹ - or one to be dealt with later (that is, after the immediate urgency of the exercise period, and not important enough to be relevant during the exercise).

conflict, see Cunliffe, E. 2023. Methods, motivations, and actors: A risk-based approach to heritage destruction and protection. In: González Zarandona, J. A., Cunliffe, E., & Saldin, M. (eds.) *The Routledge Handbook of Heritage Destruction*. Routledge, pp.110-125.

⁸ Iraqi archaeologist Al-Hamdani, who worked mapping Iraq's sites and later went on to be Minister of Culture, estimated 70% of the sites in southern Iraq were looted in the post-invasion period.

⁹ Whilst legally correct as armed forces are not police, in the Iraqi situation, the Italian Carabinieri (who are both military and police) worked with the Iraqi Police to tackle the looting and build Iraqi capacity. (See Russell in: <http://tinyurl.com/4655z5zv>). However, the situation built up over months and years, with increasing

4.2. Scenario Exercises

Moving from the general nature of threats and risks to CPP, the participants were presented with a (very brief) scenario to develop preliminary storylines, with possible injects. Given the limited time available, the storylines were deliberately vague so that participants did not have to engage with detailed material, but could focus on the CPP elements of the storyline in a multi-branch, tactical-focussed setting. The intent had been to avoid lengthy discussions of, for example, responsibility regarding police and armed forces, and for the organisers to deal with specific questions as they arose, and Google was available, although this approach had only limited success as participants found the lack of detail challenging to engage with and to know what questions to ask.

Syndicates were asked to develop Primary and Secondary Training Objectives relating to CPP at the tactical level – what did they feel the most important CPP related activities were, and what Supporting Tasks would be related to them? Where time allowed, these were to be followed by 4 proposed injects to develop the storyline, and what the desired outcome of that storyline should be.

The tactical options Scenario One offered to the syndicates and their fictional opponents were too complicated to properly workshop in the time allocated. However, a number of interesting ideas were raised. Syndicates dealing with Scenario Two were able to address issues in greater detail, and their syndicate products are included here to contribute to discussion and workshop outcomes.

Scenario One:

Syndicate One: *The coast of Ankieland, all of which is a natural Tentative World Heritage Site of the Baltic Klint¹⁰ is struggling with an internal armed conflict. You (i.e., your syndicate) are part of a force deploying to the area to help secure it. What are the specific challenges posed by the scale of this natural Tentative World Heritage Site, and what CPP challenges might be scripted to assist training in dealing with it?*

Smuggling through an extremely porous border was identified as the most likely threat to the site. The national Navy, and Borders and Customs were the key actors who would deal with it. Training objectives would need to focus on exploring the value, and then raising awareness, of cultural property in the scenario to encourage interdiction strategies, and on capacity building in that regard to familiarise the Training Audience with how to account for natural World Heritage. It was the syndicates' recommendation that protection could only be achieved if J2 (Intelligence) Branch conducted significant pre-planning to understand the value of the geology and were able to identify a trusted agent to provide geological advice as required.

Syndicate Two: *An enemy has invaded the coast of Ankieland, all of which is a natural Tentative World Heritage Site of the Baltic Klint. Ankieland has requested assistance, and You (i.e., your syndicate) are part of a force deploying to the area support the Host Nation maintain territorial*

international concern: a UN Security Council Resolution which highlighted the looting of Iraqi cultural property (UNSCR 1483, 2003), and the Carabinieri were deployed for months on that mission, which is hard to replicate in an exercise environment which focusses on more immediate actions alongside longer-term planning.

¹⁰ The total length of the Baltic Klint is 1100-1200 km; of that 250 km are (in reality) in mainland Estonia. The limestone cliff begins from the western coast of the Island of Oland in Sweden (also a World Heritage Site). From the northern coast of the island it extends under the sea to the Island of Osmussaar and continues on the Pakri Islands. The mainland stretch of the klint starts on Pakri Peninsula. The klint runs through Estonia to Russia where it disappears on the southern shore of Lake Ladoga.

<https://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/1852/>

integrity. What are the specific challenges posed by the scale of this natural Tentative World Heritage Site, and what CPP challenges might be scripted to assist training in dealing with it?



Baltic Klint: Paldiski bank and Pakri lighthouse. Kulmalukko, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons

Key threats included the highly likely possibility that artillery batteries would be deployed along the coast: in addition to any damage caused in placing them, they would make the coast a target. Enemy forces would need to land, and combat on the coast would be inevitable. Maritime Command would be a critical party in preventing coastal combat, or mitigating damage from it, and so would be a key Training Audience. It was noted that the vulnerability of the coast to shocks and stresses was unknown, which made planning difficult. Further, as with all World Heritage Sites, it is impossible to judge how much of the Baltic Klint could be damaged for the area to retain its outstanding universal value¹¹.

Scenario Two:

Syndicate Three: *The Port in EmmaLand faces political instability that has escalated into armed conflict. Various gangs are looting and trafficking cultural property and artifacts. Civil authorities are overwhelmed, calling in the military and special forces to restore order and specifically protect cultural heritage sites and artifacts.*

The key challenges identified related to the decreasing security situation: restoring stability and security for the civilian population and the government were key, and CPP matters relating to that were prioritised. Additional objectives included relationships with key government authorities in the area, such as the Port Authority, and Police.

¹¹ In this case, the proposed inscription rests on meeting criteria:

(vii) to contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance; (viii) to be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features; (ix) to be outstanding examples representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals; (x) to contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation.

Syndicate Three – Port, armed forces in support role	Syndicate Four – Port, international armed conflict
Storyline Effect / Desired Outcome:	
Train the target audience in specialized approaches to Cultural Property Protection, ensuring both the safety of cultural heritage sites and their effective integration into broader military operations.	The aim is to achieve the Primary and Associated TOs effectively while ensuring the protection of cultural heritage and preventing the flaring up of ethnic tensions.
Primary Training Objectives:	
Equip military, port authorities, and special forces with the skills and strategies needed for Cultural Property Protection in an Area of Operation (AO) amid civil unrest and armed conflict.	Stabilize the politically and ethnically charged situation, establishing law and order.
Secondary Training Objectives:	
Identify key cultural heritage sites and artifacts in the AO.	Secure port facilities.
Develop and implement procedures for Cultural Property Protection.	Protect Cultural Property and artifacts.
Train forces in the proper handling and preservation of cultural artifacts.	Pacify warring gangs.
Coordinate with local authorities for integrated heritage protection.	Protect key infrastructure and buildings.
Supporting tasks:	
Rapid cultural heritage assessment upon arrival.	Deployment of specialized units for cultural property protection.
Implement temporary security measures for immediate cultural property protection.	Establishment of communication lines with local authorities.
Facilitate specialized training sessions for personnel.	Setup of temporary holding areas for recovered artifacts.
Establish a heritage liaison team within the operational framework	Community engagement for ethnic tension mitigation.
Operational Decisions:	
Choice of methods for securing cultural sites and artifacts.	Decisions must be made regarding the allocation of military resources, engagement or non-engagement in diplomatic efforts, and the balance between use of force and community engagement.
Coordination between military and local authorities.	
Handling of rescued artifacts	
Processes Triggered	
Implementation of heritage protection protocols.	Activation of emergency protocols.
Field assessment teams dispatched.	Initiation of artifact recovery process.
Artifact rescue and storage logistics initialized.	Engagement with community leaders.
Community and stakeholder engagement processes activated.	Setup of conflict de-escalation measures
Four Key Injects:	

Intelligence reports reveal an imminent threat to a shipment of ancient amphoras.	Local celebrity kidnapped by armed gang.
Local informants identify a hidden trove of Ancient Empire artifacts.	Intelligence reports suggests historical site Historic Castle is under threat.
Reports suggest that Historic Castle is being used as a stronghold by a gang.	Drone footage reveals a hidden stash of cultural artifacts in a warehouse.
A local museum extends an offer for safe storage of rescued artifacts	Local mosque offers to mediate between warring gangs.

Timeline	Key Events/Injects	Operational Decisions & Processes Triggered	Desired Outcomes		Timeline	Key Events/Injects	Operational Decisions & Processes Triggered	Desired Outcomes
Day 1, Hour 0	Scenario initiation: Political instability and civil unrest.	Deployment briefing focused on cultural property protection.	Initiation of operational framework with cultural property focus.		Day 1, Hour 0	Scenario initiation: Political instability leads to armed conflict; military intervention called.	Deploy forces; brief on primary mission.	Establish operational framework; brief all units.
Day 1, Hour 4	Arrival at Port.	Cultural heritage assessment; resource allocation.	Immediate cultural property protection measures put in place.		Day 1, Hour 4	Forces arrive at Port.	Initial assessment; resource allocation.	Efficient resource deployment; begin stabilization.
Day 1, Hour 6	Inject 1: Threat to ancient amphoras.	Decision on immediate action for artifact protection.	Secure vulnerable artifacts without collateral damage.		Day 1, Hour 6	Inject 1: Local celebrity kidnapped.	Evaluate public sentiment; decide on rescue operation.	Successful rescue; maintain public trust.
Day 1, Hour 8	Inject 2: Intel on Ancient Empire artifacts.	Decide on recovery or safeguard in situ.	Successful artifact protection with local coordination.		Day 1, Hour 8	Inject 2: Historic Castle under threat.	Verify intel; decide on protective measures.	Prevent damage to historical site; maintain cultural integrity.
Day 2, Hour 2	Inject 3: Historic Castle used as a stronghold.	Decision on military action considering cultural heritage.	Castle secured with minimal damage to structure.		Day 2, Hour 2	Inject 3: Drone footage of hidden artifact stash.	Decide on raid or alternative methods of recovery.	Secure artifacts with minimum collateral damage.
Day 2, Hour 10	Inject 4: Local museum offers safe storage.	Evaluate legitimacy and security of the offer.	Safely relocate at-risk artifacts to a secure location.		Day 2, Hour 10	Inject 4: Local mosque offers mediation.	Decide on diplomatic engagement or military approach.	Achieve peaceful resolution if possible; reduce hostilities.
Day 3	Debrief & Lessons Learned.	Comprehensive assessment of operational decisions and cultural property outcomes.	Understand successes and areas for improvement in cultural property protection.		Day 3, Hour 3	Inject 5: Ethnic tensions among gangs and communities erupt.	Initiate dialogues with community leaders; adjust operations.	Stabilize situation; avoid inflaming ethnic tensions.

Syndicate Four: *The Port of EmmaLand has been invaded by another country. It is suspected that various gangs are looting and trafficking cultural property and artifacts. You (i.e., your syndicate) are part of a force deploying to the area to help secure it.*

Key challenges identified included on the possible need to evacuate cultural property, and / or provide in situ protection. Key actors were identified as national employees and professionals, noting many cultural employees may chose to leave, or be displaced, which may push responsibility back onto the deploying force – who may lack enough resources or information to assist. The cross branch nature of the CPP challenge was highlighted – particularly the need to include logistics in supporting evacuation.

Discussion:

Those dealing with a large natural Tentative World Heritage Site struggled to factor it into planning and training. The vast majority of identified threats do not apply to it – for example, it would be almost impossible to deliberately destroy an entire coast. Conversely, it is not possible to know at what point the site may be so damaged it could lose its outstanding universal value and be delisted¹². Whilst biological diversity and value to conservation are proposed as an inscription criteria for the Baltic Klint, no information is available on which areas of the coast this might apply to. The problem of scale and how to protect natural sites with a cultural element remains an enduring problem in CPP¹³. The heritage sector increasingly recognises that many communities have no distinction between “cultural” and “natural”, but factoring such sites into planning is highly challenging.

Participant focus was very much on the detail, rather than more general Training Objectives, which is perhaps reflective of the tactical level focus.

Some of the Training Objectives developed by the participants relate to how to achieve the outlined mission in the scenario, rather than what personnel, skills, and processes are being tested. In a real exercise, unless it is specifically testing CPP personnel, there are unlikely to be specific Training Objectives dedicated to CPP, which would be perceived as more work by exercise organisers and an imbalance in the focus of the cross-cutting topics. It will be best achieved by using it to realise existing training objectives¹⁴. However, to some extent, the developed Training Objectives reflect a lack of provided information on the part of the organisers – for example, it became apparent there was a lack of clarity amongst the participants about who was being trained / exercised, and what was intended by us (specific branch tasks). There was also confusion about operational decisions (for example, one group suggested “Choice of methods for securing cultural sites and artifacts”) versus the operational dilemmas the organisers intended to be developed. Processes lacked a branch

¹² A process which has happened to World Heritage Sites only three times in the history of the World Heritage Convention, but many sites on the Tentative World Heritage list are never made into full nominations for World Heritage Sites due to changes in the requirements for listing – or in their condition.

¹³ A problem also explored in a previous workshop run by Blue Shield International:

<https://theblueshield.org/coping-with-culture-2022-workshop-report-available/>

¹⁴ We tried “not to create new training objectives but to integrate culture and CPP into existing ones. The more an inject was tied to the commander’s desired training objectives, facilitated opposing force needs, or fit the scenario, the more likely it found play. Well-crafted injects prepared in advance to meet particular training needs helped convince reluctant syndicate partners, and demonstrated how CPP could be integrated into the exercise to enhance rather than distract from fundamental training objectives”. Edmondson, Fogarty and Peifer on Exercise Blue Flag, in “Planning for Culture. Incorporating Cultural Property Protection into a Large-Scale, Multi-Domain Exercise”, [Military Review Nov-Dec 2021](#), p23.

owner – whose heritage protocols were to be implemented? Whose community engagement was being tested?

The injects and the storylines, however, supported by discussions amongst the groups, evidenced a broader understanding that was not initially apparent in syndicate group presentations – suggesting the detail-oriented approach may be as much reflective of a lack of familiarity with the template we provided. Even in the short time allocated for this brief exercise, storylines were developed that tackled critical issues of force protection, resource allocation, partner legitimacy, and strategic communications relating to force acceptance. These storylines would affect not only a hypothetical CPP unit, but also intelligence, military police, CIMIC, and Targeting / Special Forces. The implications of the scenario location on the coast were also flagged with regards to naval activity and port authorities, but were not explored in any depth due given the short time allocated to the exercise.

There was a focus on the types of activities conducted by CPP units – natural perhaps when participants included so many specialists, but CPP is a cross-branch activity and training must develop that. This reflects a more general lack of clarity amongst the civil CPP sector about what good CPP is, whose responsibility it is, and at what level that responsibility sits – strongly exacerbated by a lack of adequate preparation by civil authorities and cultural property owners which may place armed forces in the position of heritage protectors, whether they should be or not. Few armed forces have dedicated CPP officers, and most of those European countries who do sent representatives to the workshop. Without a dedicated CPP Unit / Officer, some of the storylines developed might be relegated to “nice-to-have”, but not a priority, by a Commander, highlighting the critical importance of CPP specialists and advocates, and the wisdom of the 1954 Hague Convention regulation (Article 7(2)) that states parties must develop such specialist units.

4.3. Storyline Bank

Building on the previous discussions of what constituted a good storyline, and who it would be relevant for, the final part of the workshop explored the risks to CPP in various components of a military area of operation, aiming to build ideas for a bank of storylines and injects. Working in syndicates, participants considered CPP challenges in three areas of / around an Area of Operations, looking at how the previously explored risks might manifest in these areas and how we can develop realistic challenges for Training Audiences to deal with these threats. Each situation contains the timescale at which CPP various threats, operational challenges, and operations opportunities occur at. These were considered in relation to potential missions, and assessed against LOAC and the 1954 Hague Convention and Protocols (particularly identifying areas where military convenience may replace necessity), in order to identify areas of potential weakness that could result from lack of planning or failure to exercise of appropriate CPP arrangements. The storyline ideas can be found in Annex A.

5. Recommendations and Challenges

The workshop concluded with good practice recommendations.

5.1. Recommendations

General recommendations:

1. Wargames and TableTop Exercises (TTXs) can be used to **generate buy in** and an understanding of the value of CPP and challenges it poses, so that it is factored in as a higher priority during the main exercise.
2. The **support of the Exercise Director** can be a critical boost to enabling CPP activities in exercise; it may also need an advocate within the Training Audience.
3. Cultural property should be treated as a **cross-cutting topic**. Anyone with responsibility for CPP storylines should work with all exercise content creators to embed CPP issues into a broad spectrum of storylines, reflecting reality.
4. CPP is part of NATO's Cross-Cutting Topics (likewise for several other forces): this means it is best realised when also **factored into the other CCTs** (playing potential roles in the protection of civilians, and building integrity, for example), as well inclusion across all military branches.
5. Wherever possible, **CPP should be used to realise existing Training Objectives**, to highlight its place in the wider environment, rather than being treated as a separate activity.
6. **Coordination with all relevant stakeholders** in the exercise development team (e.g. with Media for Press releases) is critical, and can significantly enhance buy in and realism.
7. Being **present in the academics phase** can significantly enhance awareness, understanding and buy in by the Training Audience.
8. **Having material to support troops** in decision making and understanding of CPP is highly beneficial to the Training Audience, who may previously have had little experience.
9. **Including a professional cultural management framework** in the scenario, and having **people able to role play as subject matter experts** (international organisations (UNESCO, Blue Shield), and / or the Ministry of Culture) will significantly enhance Training Audience understanding of their roles and responsibilities and the risks and challenges to CPP.

Effective storylines should:

1. Pose an **operational dilemma** (a situation where a commander would be required to make a choice between equally undesirable alternatives; i.e. difficult or perplexing situations or problems that will require the Training Audience to demonstrate all the skills outlined in their training objectives).
2. Be **consistent** with the mission, doctrine, policy, and standard operating procedures, and **realistic** to the scenario.
3. Have a **clear intended outcome** for the storyline.
4. Have a clear intended **observable Training Audience action / reaction**, testing specific skills, processes and chains of command.
5. Help the Training Audience **meet identified (multiple) training objectives**.
6. **Affect as many branches / staff as possible** (target multiple stakeholders).
7. Be integrated into / **consistent with wider event activity** and storylines.

8. Go beyond a cultural property data layer and **include the things that cannot be seen** to engage the Training Audience in the influence domain. However, the Training Audience should be encouraged to be proactive in this regard.
9. **Be based on real world data** in the Area of Operations and the wider environment, to develop plausible scenarios and enable understanding of how adversaries think and act.

Injects should:

10. Have **content that is coherent, timely, relevant, useful and appropriate**.
11. Have **a credible way to reach** the Training Audience to inform them (with appropriate identified recipients) and an appropriate source.
12. Be **situated in the wider scenario** (e.g., consider wider threats to CPP activity posed by the scenario).
13. **Generate activity that is not conducted in isolation** (by one branch, or person with without stakeholders).
14. **Consider key Training Audience events/action** (e.g.) battle rhythm, briefing times.

5.2. Challenges

1. The exercise environment is very dynamic, and content writers will need to be prepared to respond in a manner appropriate to the scenario.
2. The real world also affects it: parts of the Training Audience may be diverted for real life activities, so storylines may need (re)developing accordingly.
3. Command decisions are required for tasking, and trade-offs may be required. This can be particularly challenging for CPP, which is often viewed as a low priority, particularly if storylines lack a kinetic element: exercise scripters need to write storylines with compelling consequences for non-engagement to ensure it is factored in as a priority.
4. CPP is often viewed purely in terms of legal obligations, and activities which go beyond this are not included. However, cultural heritage exploitation can significantly affect mission success and the post-mission civilian environment, and the information domain can be utilised to positively enhance the mission by, for example, sharing protective work to increase goodwill. Good CPP goes beyond legal obligations.
5. Developing CPP storylines requires specific subject matter expertise (in both CPP and the branch activities). The necessary expertise may not be part of the Exercise Team, leading to gaps in assisting the Training Audience to meet objectives if not planned carefully.
6. Similarly, the training Evaluation team need a good understanding of CPP and to take it seriously.
7. As CPP is often considered a “soft” activity, CPP subject matter experts must be extremely professional to be taken seriously.
8. Cultural heritage frameworks, including Ministries of Culture at the strategic Level, or their regional staff at the tactical level, are rarely written into exercise scenarios. Content writers must be prepared to advocate for their inclusion to generate stakeholder engagement.
9. When the scenario is fake, it can be hard to pull through real detail for in depth engagement.
10. Sharing information on cultural property across branches is a regular challenge due to a lack of familiarity with who needs to know. Content creators should write storylines that test these processes, but also be prepared for information injected into one part of the Training

Audience not to reach a relevant part of the audience, and plan accordingly (for example, if a report received by CIMIC is intended to generate action by Military Police, storyline creators must have a back-up plan to trigger activity if the report is not shared, scripting dynamically if needed).

11. Very few exercises include specific training objectives for CPP. It is often part of broader cross-cutting topics, such as Protection of Civilians, or included as a part of training objectives relating to understanding the civilian environment, or engaging with NGOs and civil society. Content developers may need to set their own exercise objectives to work to, as well as advocating for inclusion of CPP in content for the wider training objectives it can assist with, such as effective utilisation of strategic communications.
12. However, training objectives need to be level appropriate, in terms of audience experience and operational level. What is appropriate is still a subject under exploration, hence the focus in this workshop, which reflected a mix of CPP and exercise experience, and so provided an ideal ground for collaboration and improvement of participant knowledge.

Annex A: Storyline Bank Proposals

Working in syndicates, participants considered CPP challenges in three areas of / around an Area of Operations, looking at how the previously explored risks might manifest in these areas and how we can develop realistic challenges for Training Audiences to deal with these threats¹⁵.

i. Rear area

Context: The Rear Area (RA) is the logistical support (food, ammunition, medicine, etc.) required to field the close divisions in a warfighting scenario. To put a single division into the field requires an area the size of a small city. The core (5 divisions) could require an area the size of a small country. Logistics and Engineering are the key divisions affecting the RA. The RA is where national civilian/ host nation support predominantly occurs, particularly regarding building protection.

Geographical area: Extremely large; the area is unstable, and moves slowly forward (or back) concurrent with the forward line of own troops

Military Threats: Potentially at risk from enemy long-range weaponry; use of special ops, hybrid and guerrilla fighting to disrupt logistics; accidental damage caused by logistical and engineering decisions.

Timescale: May be relatively long-term

CPP threats (with examples of opportunities – these can be extrapolated to the other scenarios):

- Long range adversary artillery may damage CP
- Sabotage operation to damage cultural property
- Accidental (or necessary) digging on cultural property site due to logistics operation
- Illegal digging/looting on cultural property site
- Accidental damage by logistics / engineering / patrol) due to failure to recognise CP
- Damage due to manoeuvre of vehicles
- Placement of rear area in proximity to cultural property (necessary / unnecessary shielding?)
- Presence of troops and subsequent restricted access of civilians causing tensions and disruption (can be tangible and intangible CP)
 - Loss of ownership of / access to cultural property resulting in loss of civilian income
- Increased vulnerability of cultural property to potential deterioration/neglect from lack of owner access

Training objectives:

- Understand the civilian environment and civilian pattern of life: what is located where – who values what, who uses what and when
- Understand, develop, and support civilian cultural property liaison processes within and outside HQ and across branches (Figure out: who talks to who (HN, cultural liaison, etc). Cross-branch reporting procedures. Information flows; Who are the relevant IOs/NGOs).

¹⁵ This section of the workshop follows on from an earlier workshop run by Blue Shield International in 2019. The workshop report contains another storybank, available here: <https://theblueshield.org/cultural-property-protection-cpp-exercise-support-workshop/>

We also recommend the excellent advice here: S. M. Edmondson, P. L. Fogarty and E. L. B. Peifer. Planning for Culture. Incorporating Cultural Property Protection into a Large-Scale, Multi-Domain Exercise. *Military Review* 2021 Vol. November-December, P16-30. Available: <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/Military-Review/English-Edition-Archives/November-December-2021/Fogarty-Cultural-Property/>

- Adaptation of military process to account for CPP (to be specific to branch being trained)
 - E.g. Adequate inclusion of cultural property in logistics planning (key decision making about what is placed where)
- Consequence management
- Understand the role of CPP in the influence domain and respond accordingly (StratComm)

Suggested sample scenarios:

- Civilian / cultural property impact of large deployment in the area is used by enemy/ adversary StratCom to negatively influence
- Adversary explodes a dam (communicated beforehand). What is the impact of it on CP? Estimate implications of event and make a contingency plan, including determination of responsibility.
- Threat of enemy activity to cultural property (for example, museum). Liaising with multiple stakeholders for possible evacuation, and consider force protection and resource allocation.

ii. Close operations

Context: Close operations covers an area of approximately 30 miles to each side of the Forward Line of Own Troops (FLOT) (i.e. the range of weaponry of each side) where the heavy front line fighting occurs. Operations occur at a very high tempo, and require rapid responses with minimal planning time. All staff remain bound by LOAC, but what is considered feasible may change. Close operations decisions are made quickly by lower-level staff.

Geographical area: Relatively small (c. 60 miles wide), but highly unstable and constantly fluctuating.

Military Threats: Potentially at risk from long-range weaponry; targeting will use highly explosive dumb bombs, saving PMGs for high value targets; significant damage likely to occur from explosive weapons, bullets, and shrapnel; the constantly fluctuating battle line can leave power and governance vacuums lasting 12-24 hours when looting and organised crime occur.

Timescale: Operations in any given area are likely to occur over a very short, high tempo timescale. However, the planning for these operations occurs far in advance over a much longer timescale.

CPP threats (Planning):

- Direct fire impacts on cultural property
 - Collateral damage
 - Deliberate targeting
 - Weapon systems & ammunition types
- Difficulty of mapping cultural property before operations because of fluctuating area
- High pace of operations makes it difficult to factor in cultural property and/ or prioritize / allocate resources
- Lack of protective measures / security measures

CPP threats (In theatre):

- Looting and vandalism
- Booby traps / IEDs / mines
- Damage due to manoeuvre of vehicles
- Direct fire impacts on cultural property
 - Collateral damage
 - Necessary / Unnecessary / deliberate targeting

- Weapon systems & ammunition natures
- Retaliation
- Looting and vandalism
- Opportunism
- Negligence (= illegal) during in-theatre action

Training objectives:

- Cross branch consideration of CPP
- Correct application of ROE & LOAC (factoring in cultural value), and IHL responsibilities, when under pressure
- Understand reporting responsibilities regarding damage and destruction within force, and to civilians (e.g. Police)
- Correct data collection pre-deployment and usage during deployment
- Good intelligence collection and information sharing processes within HQ and with other stakeholders
- Application of Strategic Communications with regard to cultural property to influence and affect freedom of manoeuvre and enable cultural protection.

Suggested sample scenarios (for mission execution):

- During the Battle of Falluja insurgents filmed US soldiers fighting from the cemetery and used it to negatively influence. How should armed forces deal with that situation – how could they respond & fix reputation?
- Intel receives a patrol report of digging on a (suspected/known) cultural site – is it looting? How do you find out, and whose responsibility is it?
- Opponents are placing snipers in the minaret/ church/ historical tower – how should LOAC be applied? A mission in planning wants to use the minaret/ church/ historical tower as an observation (sniper?) post - – how should LOAC be applied?
- A deliberately placed mine is detected on relevant cultural property e.g. shipwreck with mine.
- Civilian organisation – or Ministry of Culture - requests support to evacuation cultural property. Resource allocation, security considerations, assistance planning.

iii. Deep Operations

Context: Deep operations affect the enemy's Rear Area. Targeting – bound by LOAC - is the key division affecting their Rear Area: kinetic damage is the most serious threat to cultural property. Deep operation decisions are made at very high levels, by commanders relying on trained specialist staff. There is significant overlap with Deep Operations and Rear Area Operations caused by the fluctuating area.

Geographical area: Extremely large; the area is unstable, and moves slowly forward (or back) concurrent with the forward line of own troops)

Military Threats: Targeting (but potentially also disruption from hybrid warfare).

Timescale: Expected to have a long-term presence

CPP threats:

- As above. Also
- False reporting and blame allocation about destruction of CP
- Placement of military equipment in the vicinity of CP

Training objectives:

- *Cultural property* considerations in a high tempo operation
- Targeting with cultural property factored in
- Running liaison operations in the deep
- Mitigate harm during targeting, and consideration of specific cultural property issues in Battle Damage Assessment process.

Suggested sample scenarios:

- A valuable military objective is placed next to a protected cultural location (ideally under Special or Enhanced protection, or of significant community value) - tests the targeting decision making process.
- A cyberfarm is placed in a cultural location (e.g. castle) – how to achieve the military objective?
- Opponent is known to be deliberately altering cultural property in their RA to alter historical narratives – planning and responsibility challenge as FLOT moves forward and altered cultural property comes into the Area of Responsibility.



Dutch ↓

Dr Emma Cunliffe
Secretariat
Blue Shield International
Senior Research Associate
Newcastle University



Ankie Petersen
Captain, OF-2 NLD A
LNO Cultural Property
Protection
1 CMI Commando



Francesco Di Giampietro
Major, OF-3 ITraining
Audience A
Staff Officer T&E Branch
Civil-Military Cooperation