

# The End of Security Assistance Training

By

Major John R. Hickey, USAF

## INTRODUCTION

You would not expect a professional publication like *The DISAM Journal* to borrow from supermarket tabloids a cheap journalistic trick such as a deceptive title. However, would you read this article if it were entitled, "Things To Do After Foreign Military Students Return Home"? Post training actions are important sources of feedback on how well the U.S. security assistance training program is working and how it can be improved. This article discusses what is required of the SAO in the area of post training actions and offers some suggestions on how to make improvements.

## POST TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

The actions required from the SAO after a student returns to his homeland are listed in the *Security Assistance Management Manual (SAMM)* and the Joint Security Assistance Training Regulation (JSAT). The SAO training officer should establish a suspense system to record completion of the four major requirements described in the SAMM and the JSAT: Utilization of Trainee, Disposition of Retainable Instructional Materials, Receipt of Academic Reports, and Interview of Students.

**Utilization of Trainees.** Reference: SAMM, Chapter 10, Para F.1.b. The SAMM directs the SAO to obtain assurance from the host country that IMET-funded students are assigned to the fields in which they were trained for a period of time sufficient to warrant the expense to the U.S. That minimum period of time is defined as three years for highly technical training such as pilot or missile training and two years for all other types of training. In order for the SAO to accomplish this tracking, the SAMM further states:

*To the extent consistent with available resources [emphasis added], SAOs are expected to maintain surveillance over utilization of U.S. trained personnel, with emphasis on the more critical and higher level skills and personnel attending CONUS schools. Periodic reports rendered by appropriate foreign authorities normally will satisfy the requirement.*

**Retainable Instructional Material.** Reference: SAMM, Chapter 10, Para f.5.a.(2).(b). Included in all tuition rates is a factor to cover the cost of shipping the student's instructional materials back to the SAO. These materials will be sent to the SAO using the most expeditious means, i.e., APO/FPO or State Department Pouch. The SAO preferably will give these materials to the student directly. As an alternative, the SAO could forward them to the student through host country military channels. SAO contact with individual students varies with each country. However, by personally conveying training materials to the students, the SAO may also accomplish the interview/debriefing at the same time. If this is not possible, the SAO can forward the instructional materials with an interview questionnaire similar to the one accompanying this article.

**Academic Reports.** Reference JSAT Para. 10-9. Any academic reports or student records will be forwarded to the SAO by the last training installation. In most cases these records are then

forwarded to the host country as documentation of the training the student received. These records can be extremely important as they may be the source for a student's future assignment, pay increase, or promotion. Prior to forwarding the records to the host country, the SAO training officer should briefly screen the records to remove any inappropriate data, e.g. reference to minor administrative or disciplinary infractions that may not warrant forwarding.

**Interviews/Debriefing.** Reference: JSAT, Para. 2-8i. Debriefing the returning student is the most important post-training action, and is probably the most difficult to accomplish. The debriefing offers an excellent opportunity to receive feedback on the effectiveness of U.S. training and to improve future training. The SAO should stress that the student's feedback is essential to improving the training experience for his colleagues in the following areas:

- **Adequate Preparation.** Did the SAO's predeparture actions adequately prepare the student for his training, the U.S. environment, customs, training installations, travel, and entitlements? What, if anything, came as a surprise?
- **Adequate Assistance.** What assistance was rendered the student (and family, if applicable) upon arrival in the U.S. and at the training installation?
- **Appropriate Training.** Was the training too advanced/too basic for the student? Will it be appropriate for future students?
- **Informational Program.** Did the student participate in the IP program and if so, what was his reaction? What were his impressions of the U.S.?

The ideal situation would be for the SAO to personally interview the student using questions similar to those in the following questionnaire. (NOTE: The attached form is based upon one provided and used by Lt Col Bill Cashel/JUSMAG THAILAND). If direct student contact is not possible, a variation of the form should be forwarded to the student through host country military channels or with his retainable instructional materials. The SAO could also provide this form to the student at the predeparture briefing with instructions to complete it at the end of his training. Finally, to improve the percentage of responses, a combination of these methods could be used.

## CONCLUSION

The purposes of our post-training actions are to promote the best utilization of foreign military trainees, to receive feedback on training effectiveness, and to provide information for the improvement of the U.S. training program. Attention to post-training requirements allows the SAO to complete the administrative processing of current students as well as prepare for future training requirements and student processing.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Major John R. Hickey is the Training Program Manager and an Instructor of Security Assistance Management at DISAM. He previously served in the Directorate of Logistics and Security Assistance at HQ USCENCOM and in the SAO at USMTM Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. He holds a MA from Troy State University, Alabama, and a BA from St. Michaels College, Vermont.

**SECURITY ASSISTANCE TRAINING  
STUDENT IMPRESSIONS**

GRADE: \_\_\_\_\_ NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
(FIRST) (LAST)

WCN: \_\_\_\_\_ BRANCH OF MILITARY: Army [ ] Navy [ ] Air Force [ ]

---

1. Have you previously received training in the United States?  
(Identify course, location, and time period.)
  
2. Was our pre-departure preparation and information adequate? YES [ ] NO [ ].  
If not, what additional information should we have given you?
  
3. Did you encounter any major problems in the United States? YES [ ] NO [ ].  
If yes, please explain:
  
4. Did anything surprise you about your training or life in the United States. YES [ ] NO [ ].  
If yes, please explain:
  
5. How would you rate the quality of training you received?  
Excellent [ ]; Satisfactory [ ]; Unsatisfactory [ ].  
If unsatisfactory, please explain:
  
6. Would you recommend the training you received for other members of your country's military services? YES [ ] NO [ ]. If no, please explain:
  
7. Did you attend language training at Lackland AFB? YES [ ] NO [ ].

8. Was understanding English a problem for you during training? YES [ ] NO [ ]

9. Did you mail instructional material back home? YES [ ] NO [ ]

10. What extracurricular activities did you participate in and were they valuable?

11. What did you like the most about the United States and your training?

12. What did you like least about the United States or your training?