


[Home](#)
[Up](#)

GWOT-English Dictionary Thanks to Unknown Author

This glossary of terms may be helpful in understanding modern day (Gulf War, Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom) military speak:

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. For example the statement 'There is a member of the insurgent forces on a rooftop firing a rocket propelled grenade a little to the left of our direction of travel, at approximately 100meters away. "Gunner, fire upon this position." While it sounds nice, it does not transmit the information with the necessary haste. Out of military necessity this translates to 'Gunner, RPG, rooftop, 10 o'clock, 100meters. Light it up.'

Battle rattle and war gear: The equipment lexicon. 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 sown together in 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.

9 mil: M9 berretta pistol.

A3_1

50 cal: M2 Browning .50 caliber machine gun. Alternately known as 50 cal, 50, M2 or Ma deuce

100mph tape: Standard issue army green duct tape. Called 100mph tape due to the belief it can withstand speeds of up to 100 mph when slapped on holes

550 cord/parachute cord: nylon cord used to connect a chute to a chute harness. Now used to tie damn near anything down. Used a lot when 'dummy cording' things down

AMTRAC: APC used by the Marines

ASK kit: Armor survivability kit. A kit designed in response to the high number of casualties produced by IEDs hitting unarmored vehicles. The kits consist of armor encapsulating the personnel compartment

AT-4: an 84mm anti-tank round. Essentially, a disposable bazooka

BFT: Blue Force tracker. A cool little gizmo that allows a BFT equipped vehicle to link up with a satellite and give the locations of friendly and enemy units, maps, and routes.

Brad or Bradley: M2 Bradley Armored Personnel Carrier (APC). Primary mode of transportation for mechanized infantry units

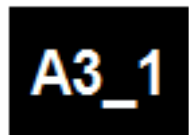
Camelback: water bladder usually carried on the back, holds up to 3 liters

DAP: Deltoid auxiliary protection. Shoulder armor primarily issued to gunners following increased numbers of gunner shrapnel injuries to shoulders. DAP kits also included side armor made of Kevlar, with no plates

Dummy cord: noun or verb. Term denotes the tying down of sensitive (ie- nvg's, aimpoints) or not so sensitive items (i.e. canteens) to a service member's body. So called to prevent being called a "dummy" for losing something

Farmer Armor or Hillbilly armor: improvised vehicle armor.

Frankenstein: A Marine Corps monster truck, bulging and rippling with spot-welded seams of add on armor. 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

Gun truck: Usually a turtle-back Humvee with a weapon system on top (i.e. .50 cal, or Mk-19)

Haji armor: improvised armor, installed by troops hiring Iraqis to update the vehicles by welding any available metal to the sides of Humvees

Kevlar/Kpot/ACH: helmet

M1: M1 Abrams Main Battle Tank

M4/M16: standard rifle. The M4 is distinguished from the M16 by a shorter barrel and a retractable stock. The M4 is usually equipped with a rail system, to which various items can be attached.

Mark 19: automatic 40mm grenade launcher. Belt-fed

M1114 /Up-armor: factory armored Humvee. Heavier and more protection than ASK kits, which is after factory armor added to a soft-skin Humvee

M203 grenade launcher: 40 mm grenade launcher, usually mounted under the barrel of and M16/M4. Single shot. Usually know as "2-O-3"

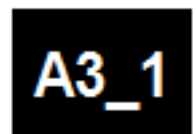
M240: machine gun. If dismounted, used in pairs with a gunner and assistant gunner (AG)

M249/SAW: Squad automatic weapon. Primary automatic rifle of a team/squad. Fires the same round as the M14/M16, but is belt fed, capable of firing 500-800 rds/minute. Ammo is usually carried in 200 round drums or 100 round bags (also known as "tea bags")

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

Plugger: PLGR (Precision Lightweight GPS Receiver) A GPS unit

SAPI: Small arms protective insert, usually pronounced as "sappy." Ceramic plates inserted into the front and back of the IBA/OTV



SINGARS: radio

Snivel Gear: Any article of clothing used to prevent troops from sniveling when the conditions get too wet or cold. This category includes Gore-Tex parkas, gloves, balaclavas, neck gaiters, etc.

Soft-skin: unarmored vehicle. Primary vehicle for OIF/OEF I, many later had armor added on, either as ASK kits, or salvaged metal found by digging through local landfills and welded on (hillbilly/farmer armor)

Stryker: 8 wheeled APC

Turtle back Humvee: a Humvee that does not have an open back. Usually a M1114 or M1025, when viewed from the side, looks like a turtle.

Wileys/Wiley-X's: protective eyewear issued to all soldiers in theater



The Joys of Life Downrange-Everyday Lingo

Acquire through non-standard means/Acquire/Requisition: Well, there are some times when one can't get necessities through the proper channels, so one needs to....sort of borrow things. (Webmaster's note: This used to be referred to as "Comshaw" in the Navy.)

Angel: among American military medical personnel in Iraq, a soldier killed in combat.

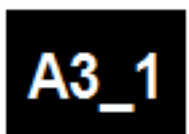
Ate up: Also said as "11 up and 3 down." See Charlie Foxtrot

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.

Beans, Bullets, and Band aids: General reference to supply items, i.e. food, ammunition, and medical supplies

BIAP: Baghdad International Airport

Blue Canoe: a portable (chemical) toilet



Blue Falcon: one that is willing to screw his buddy. Also known as Bravo Foxtrot, and Buddy F**ker.

BOLO: pronounced "bolo" 1. Be On the Look Out. Usually a list with descriptions of vehicles or personnel to be on the lookout for. 2. Slang for no good. Can be used as a noun when something goes wrong "That's a bolo," or a verb "I bolo'd that task."

Bunk: What one sleeps on

Butter bar: 2nd lieutenant/ensign. Refers to the gold bar of rank.

Cannon-cocker/Gun Bunny: Artilleryman

Case of the Ass: In a really foul mood

Charlie Foxtrot: The alphanumeric of the letters C and F. A more polite way of saying Cluster F**k.

Charlie Mike: Continue mission. Keep doing what you were doing

CHU: Containerized housing unit. – 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 in 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" is a base consisting of a large number of CHU's.

Cluster Fk:** Essentially when someone or some situation is completely messed up.

Detail: A group of service members sent to do a job

DFAC: Dining Facility. Pronounced "d-fack" Others used: mess hall, chow hall. Place where service members eat. DFAC's are modern looking cafeterias, some decorated 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.

Double Digit Midget: Less than 100 days left down range

Down range: Derived from the term to check on targets on shooting ranges. Refers to anyplace where there is shooting

Dirka dirka: A phrase used to parody the sound of Arabic. First used in a South Park episode, later gained more widespread use through the movie Team America

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. Usually just known as Fob. Most times followed by a name, i.e. FOB Warrior. Where troops primarily stay. Also populated by FOBBERS, FOBBITS, and FOBGoblins

FOBBERS, FOBBITS, FOBGoblins: 3 of the derisive terms used to describe someone who never leaves the FOB. Akin to Vietnam era "REMF." 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.

Fourth Point of Contact: Derived from the description of a Parachute Landing Fall, refers to one's rumpus. As in "You better get yer head outta yer fourth point of contact!"

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.

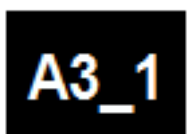
Grunt: Infantryman

Hardened building: A building with sandbags and a roof, preferably made of concrete.

Hooah: The official word of the Army. Meaning varies dependent upon the circumstances. Origin is apocryphal

Hooch: Where one sleeps

Hot-A's: Hot chow. When mermited, usually arrives cold or lukewarm.



ILO MP: IN LIEU OF MP. One with an MOS of other than MP, but retrained as one.

KBR: Kellogg, Brown, and Root. Subsidiary of Halliburton, they are the primary contractor in OIF/OEF, running most of the logistical support

Lima Charlie: Loud and Clear

Mermite: 1. (n.) container used to transport Hot-A's from the DFAC to service members. 2. (v.) Moving Hot-A's "We'll mermite chow out to that OP".

Midnight Rats: Late night chow for those that can't make the DFAC during regular hours.

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.

MWR or MWR tent: Morale, Welfare and Recreation. Usually an area of the FOB set up for various games, books, internet, and television

O Dark thirty: Far too early in the morning.

Ooh-rah: The official word of the Marine Corps. Meaning varies dependent on the circumstances

POG: Pronounced "pogue." Usually referred to someone that is a "shammer", or someone that is no good. Varies in usage. Originally used mainly by infantry personnel, referred to 'people other than grunts'. Usage moved throughout the Army, now generally refers to anyone that is a poor excuse for a soldier.

Pogey bait: derived from POG, refers to candy, sweets, or any other food that the Army does not issue but tastes good (any food the Army doesn't issue.)

Pop smoke: leave

Pucker factor: not necessarily a number, but generally refers to the intensity of fear felt during any given situation. Derived from the involuntary clenching of the buttocks during high-stress situations.

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.

Sandbox: Almost any desert area of operations, or middle eastern country.

Sham: To shirk one's duties. Usually used when referring to one that avoids unpleasant, non-life threatening work. When used as a noun, shammer.

Sham shield (army only): a designation for the rank of specialist, E-4. Refers to one who does not have enough rank to be an NCO, but has enough experience to get out of some of the lousy details.

Spoon: a cook or someone who serves food as their job

Tent city: More often seen in Kuwait or in beginning of OIF, essentially a large collection of tents

U-1/2/3: Codes given for level of troop protection on the FOB, varies from day to day dependent upon intel. Exact qualifications vary from FOB to FOB, but generally along these lines.

U-1: No body armor or helmet required, must have weapon and magazine of ammo.

U-2: Must have body armor, helmet, weapon and magazine whenever out side a hardened building or trailer. Usually for a specified time period.

U-3: Same as above, but open-ended, without any specific time period ending.

Washington's driver: Someone who's been in the service a very long time. As in the person is old enough to have been Washington's driver

Whiskey, Tango, Foxtrot, over?: Alphanumeric abbreviation in the form of a radio communication. Literally translated: What the F**k, over? Used when things devolve into a Charlie Foxtrot.



On the road again.... Operational Terms

Ali Baba: Generic Iraqi term for bad guy, be it insurgent or criminal

AO: Area of Operations

AOR: Area of Responsibility. The assigned area to any given unit.

AWR: (Alpha Whiskey Romeo) Allah's Waiting Room. When engaged, (insurgents) have a tendency to flee to the same building (the AWR) at which point the troops radio in an air strike.

Bird: Anything that flies, be it fixed or rotary wing

C-wire/Concertina wire: razor wire

CC: Coalition Country: the coalition of the willing allies.

CCP: Casualty collection point. Area closest to immediate action where casualties are triaged

Clearing barrel: A barrel filled with dirt around the entrances of the FOB. Used when clearing a weapon upon entry to the FOB

CP: Check Point. Usually numbered

Crypto: encryption keys for the radio. Computer code that scrambles the signal to prevent unauthorized listening

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.

Double gates: They always cover their nametapes and never call each other by their real names while they're near detainees.

FRAGO: A change in the OPORD that does not require a wholesale change in the 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

Glass house: a mock up of the layout of a target house used to rehearse assaults before a mission.

Goat trail: dirt or unpaved road.

Hardball: paved road

Hesco: big bins filled with dirt used to absorb explosions

IED: improvised explosive device. Military jargon for a roadside bomb. Varies in size, and materials

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. Troops working inside the wire must pass through several sets of intimidating

INTSUM: Intelligence summary. pronounced "ent-some" Most of the time, given the day after the events were supposed to happen. It's nice in that it lets you know what was supposed to happen yesterday

Jingle trucks: (Afghanistan) (transport trucks 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 20-40 foot containers were available. Although serviceable, these trucks would not pass standard US specifications.

KAF: stands for Kandahar Air Field. It is the main base of operations for the Southern part of Afghanistan. It is the main transportation hub—both Helo and Fixed Wing—also Convoys of Humvees going in and out.

Mike: minute. As in "I'll be there in 5 mikes."

Mike mike: millimeter. Used mainly when referring to the metric caliber of ammunition.

A3_1

Mortaritaville/Bombaconda: Nickname for LSA Anaconda, a major base near Balad, reflecting the frequent mortar attacks.

MSR: main supply route. Usually a highway with a name designation following it. Largest MSR in Iraq is MSR TAMPA, going from Kuwait to Turkey

Net: radio network. Usually unit specific

OPORD: Operations Order. A five Paragraph format for combat orders. Includes situation, mission, execution, service and support, and command and signal

OPSEC: Operational Security. Prevention of plans, troop numbers and strategy from getting to enemy

PCC/PCI: Pre-combat check/inspection. Checking of pertinent equipment and knowledge of mission before operation.

POO site: Point of origin site. Pronounced "poo" Point of origin for indirect fire

QRF: Quick Reaction Force. On standby to react to any situation.

ROE: Rules of Engagement. The rules given to every service member on when to engage targets. Changes dependent upon the situation.

Roger, roger that: From radio parlance, a word for 'understood.'

RPG: Rocket Propelled grenade. Insurgents like to fire these at coalition forces.

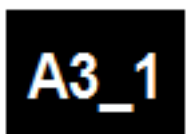
RTO: Radio telephone operator (Army) or RO-radio operator (Marines). The person working the radio, usually either in a combat maneuver element or at the TOC

S-1: Personnel

S-2: Intelligence

S-3: Operations

S-4: Logistics and supply



Shake and bake: First used during 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.

SP/RP (start point/release point): used to call in departure (SP) and arrival (RP). Almost always used in acronym form, and can be either noun (the SP is at checkpoint 12) or verb (We RP'd about 20 minutes ago.)

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)

TOC: Tactical Operations Center. Usually pronounced 'tock.' Where command elements are primarily located.

UXO: Unexploded Ordnance. Anything that has the potential to blow up, but hasn't.

VBIED: vehicle borne IED. Car bomb. Usually either spelled out or stated as "V-bed"

Zulu time: Greenwich mean time.



Meet the locals - Acronyms and poorly spoken Iraqi Arabic

Chocolata: Chocolate. Mainly used by children in conjunction with "Mista, mista, gimme"

Haji: M service members' term for indigenous Iraqis or persons of Arabic descent. Derived from the term given to one that has made the hajj, the pilgrimage to Mecca. Used as an adjective to describe anything Iraqi or Afghani (i.e. haji DVD, haji internet, haji cell phone) Also used: **jundi**.

Haji detail: overseeing Iraqi work details on FOBs, mainly day laborers.

Haji mart: convenience store usually found on FOBs. Usually sell various sundries, from DVD's to candy bars to cigarettes. Also, sometimes sold porn and alcohol

ICDC: Iraqi Civil Defense Corps. Forerunner to the ING, disbanded and reformed as the ING due to alleged corruption, incompetence, and collusion with the insurgent forces

Imshi: Arabic for "move along"

ING: Iraqi National Guard

Insh'allah: Arabic for "will of God." Along the lines of "so be it."

IP: Iraqi Police

Istah: Derogatory Arabic for "move along"

Maku: Arabic roughly translated to "I don't have any" as in "Maku chocolata." Usually followed by Iraqi child swearing at you in English.

Mu zien: no good.

Muj (pronounced: Mooj): short for Mujahadeen. Formally a person who wages jihad, informally used for the Iraqi insurgents starting in 2005.

Sadiki: friend

Salaam Aleikim: A more formal Arabic phrase for hello. Translates to 'peace be upon you.' Response: Aleikum salaam; 'and upon you, peace

Shonig(c?): word in the Iraqi dialect of Arabic; roughly translated to "how's it going?"

Terp: interpreter

Zien: good



And the Rest....Miscellaneous terms

CAB: Combat Action Badge (ARMY). Developed in response to number of soldiers performing in a infantry or infantry-like position under the same conditions as the infantry,

but do not hold an infantry MOS

CIB: Combat infantryman's badge (ARMY). Awarded to holders of an infantry MOS provided the soldier is under fire, and holds an infantry duty slot.

NCO: Non-commissioned officer. A fancy way of saying sergeant.

NCOIC/OIC: Non-commissioned officer in charge/Officer in charge.

NGO: non-governmental organization. (Red Cross/Crescent, Doctors without Borders, etc.)

OGA: Other Government Agency - CIA

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 to help rebuild. They coordinate construction projects and provide humanitarian assistance.

PSD: Personal Security Detail-private security contractors.

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.

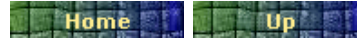
TCN: Third Country National: A citizen of a neutral country who is in the theatre of operations as a contractor. The Nepalese truck drivers who were killed by Ansar Al Sunnah in the summer of 2004 were TCN's

TCP: Traffic Control Point.

XO: Executive Officer. One step Below Commanding officer



[Back to Glossary](#)



Copyright 1999-2008 by Don Blankenship. You may use the images, descriptions, stories or text within this site for non-commercial, not-for-profit purposes only. In the event you wish to use any material contained within this site for commercial, for-profit purposes, permission must be obtained from the author, Don Blankenship, in advance of such use. All rights reserved. Click [email](#) if you have comments or feel free to sign the guestbook. Thanks for your interest in learning about the Mobile Riverine Force.