



Te Matataua

The Scouting Party of Air Power

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A SEAMLESS INTEGRATED JOINT DEFENCE FORCE???

An attempt to disentangle some common NZDF terms

There are a number of 'buzz words' that are frequently used by the military, the definition of which are either open to interpretation or can often change from one year to the next, which is confusing, or even worse, nobody really knows what they mean. The military are also in the habit of inventing new terms for what are well established practices. The most prominent word used throughout the NZDF at the moment that falls into this category is **integrated**; though it is a close run thing with **joint**, and **seamless**, which are actually all related. Finding a satisfactory and simple to understand explanation of what these words mean in the context of the NZDF has proved challenging. So let's try to clear away some of the fog of the military lexicon and work out what these words might mean ... or at least bring some enlightenment to the confusion!

Military operations involving more than one branch of the armed services are not new, and have been in existence since the first soldiers stepped on a boat to get somewhere across the sea; Caesar did it, and Alexander before him. New Zealand's first joint operation was arguably the seizing of German Samoa in August 1914 (see picture), and in 1930 a NZPAF Moth seaplane co-operated with naval and ground forces suppressing Mau activities in



NZ troops coming ashore during the seizure of German Samoa, August 1914

Samoa, involving air for the first time. As far as the NZDF is concerned, **'joint'** connotes **activities, operations, organisations, and so on, in which elements of more than one service of the same nation participate**. The qualifier here seems to be 'participate', which simply means to be involved or take part in something; in this case a military operation. What's missing here is there is no indication of inter-service co-operation as such, which is the key element of a joint operation. Of course, not all military activities are joint, and a useful indicator of

whether an event is joint, is if it requires joint planning. For instance; simply moving a company of soldiers from a home airbase to an offshore location on a 40 Squadron Boeing is not really a joint activity; however, if that company then jumped on one of the same squadron's C-130s and parachuted into an area of

active conflict, there would have been some detailed planning carried out between Army and Air prior to the event, which clearly makes it a joint operation. So whether something is joint is largely contextual.

A term often used when describing joint activities, especially in an organisational context, is **'seamless integration'**, and unless you're the USMC, this is problematic. **Seamless**

can be described as something without obvious joins, which is somewhat ironic in the context of a 'joint' defence force. A seam is a boundary that marks a connection, a point of strength joining two or more entities, seamless implies no connection. It is probably not realistic to talk of 'seamless integration' in a multi-service environment, when in most cases, joint activities are usually only a time-limited phase as an enabler of predominantly single-service activities. Seams are connections, or bridges, that we can cross at will when required.

These bridges are the **integration** part of the equation. This word probably causes more confusion than any other in military circles. Integration simply means that selected parts of something are linked or co-ordinated, and it does not necessarily have to be permanent. Integration is mostly about people, and not technology, which is an interoperability issue. Adolf Galland (probably the most famed German airman of WW2), when referring to 'joint' operations with Navy or Army, used the term 'frictionless co-operation', and while frictionless in the context of war is ambitious, he hit the nail on the head with the word co-operation; co-operation is the key to all joint activities, and is the essence of integration in a military context, or any context for that matter; and of course, this is underpinned through co-ordination; which is the role of the planners and Liaison Officers.

The UK's Stabilisation Unit, who are generally regarded as world leaders in formulating policy for an 'integrated approach' to addressing conflict, security, and stabilisation issues, describe integration as follows:

Integration is primarily driven by the process of people from different institutions and different disciplines working side by side at several levels to ensure that their perspectives and activities reinforce each other. Integration requires low-level cooperation and mid-level coordination, supplemented by high level alignment of overall strategic objectives. Integration should improve the flow of information, contribute to shared understanding of stabilisation challenges and responses, reduce policy and delivery 'silos', and ensure greater effect on the ground.

Integration is simply about people working together who understand each other's problems; have an awareness of what each member does; have a basic level of common understanding, and can establish common goals.

Now that we, hopefully, have a better understanding of what these words actually mean, we can move forward with a renewed sense of co-operation in a 'joined up' NZDF ... well, no actually. The thinking now is that 'joint' is no longer enough in the current complex operating environment, where winning the peace is just as important as winning the war; as ongoing conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq and elsewhere illustrate. So we now have the '**inter-agency**' approach, which falls out of the 'comprehensive' approach (or maybe it's the same thing under a different name), and is underpinned by the 'integrated' approach. The inter-agency approach is designed to lever the full range of a government's capabilities in approaching a security event, and involves multiple agencies from the initial planning phase through to conclusion of stability activities. The good thing about this approach is that it uses experts from all sectors of the government to ensure the best outcome for all concerned, and in particular, those people who are affected by an event through no fault of their own. This takes the burden off the military, reduces their role, and allows them to focus on what they do best, i.e. military operations that lay the foundations for stability and peace.

Key Points

- Integration is mostly about people and is largely a state of mind.
- Inter-agency is the new joint.

References

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2. Photo: <http://www.aucklandcity.govt.nz/dbtw-wpd/virt-exhib/ww1/over-by-christmas/exhibition/samoa/AWN17.9.1914pg43.jpg>
3. Maj Gary Sampson, Going Beyond Joint: Building interagency warriors, *Marine Corps Gazette*, December 2015.

APDC Update

The APDC welcomes submissions for future bulletins. Word count is around 1000 words in an easy to read and informative style. Topics may be historical or contemporary.

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E-mail: ohapdc@nzdf.mil.nz