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# DoD GHE Snapshot

## **IMPROVING DOD GLOBAL HEALTH ENGAGEMENT PRE-DEPLOYMENT TRAINING: LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE UNIFORMED SERVICES UNIVERSITY'S OPERATION BUSHMASTER MILITARY MEDICAL FIELD EXERCISE**

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*The Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences' (USU's) CGHE is pleased to share the fourteenth issue of the Department of Defense Global Health Engagement (DoD GHE) Snapshot. The DoD GHE Snapshot is intended to create self-publishing opportunities for GHE professionals to share knowledge and experiences and learn from one another in real time. We hope you enjoy and please refer to our social media and website for real time updates.*

## IMPROVING DOD GLOBAL HEALTH ENGAGEMENT PRE-DEPLOYMENT TRAINING: LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE UNIFORMED SERVICES UNIVERSITY'S OPERATION BUSHMASTER MILITARY MEDICAL FIELD EXERCISE



Preparing personnel for tactical-level DoD Global Health Engagement (GHE) operations, activities, and investments (OAI)s is essential to building and strengthening partnerships, enhancing capabilities, and improving readiness and interoperability between U.S. and allied forces. Pre-deployment training aligns health and medical engagements with DoD strategic objectives and ranges from beginner courses such the [Introduction to DoD GHE](#), to implementer-level [Fundamentals of DoD Global Health Engagement](#) courses, the professional-level GHE Operations Course, unit-level instruction, and pre-deployment briefings. DoD GHE readiness is a key part of building a “ready medical force”.

This snapshot shares lessons from USU CGHE’s contributions to [Operation Bushmaster](#), an annual military medical field exercise led by the USU Department of Military and Emergency Medicine. The exercise tests fourth-year USU medical and nursing students’ medical knowledge, leadership, and teamwork in a simulated combat deployment in a notional partner nation.

# 01

## ONE TEAM, ONE FIGHT, ONE MESSAGE

Understanding the tactical and operational objectives of specific DoD GHE activities and programs is key to success, regardless of seniority or role in the engagement. Pre-deployment training for personnel supporting DoD GHE at the tactical level should clearly outline immediate mission objectives, broader goals, and alignment with the Combatant Command Campaign Plan.



When personnel have a strong understanding of why they are supporting an engagement, they can better exercise their agency and expertise in support of mission success. For example, a Health Facility/Needs Assessment is more effective when the team knows the goal is not just cataloguing capabilities, but identifying those suitable for U.S. or partner forces access during contingencies.

Our team has found that clearly defining objectives and metrics for Operation Bushmaster students improves performance, avoids morale issues (“why are we even here?”), and enhances partner engagement.

## 02

### CONTEXT IS KEY



Pre-deployment training should ensure DoD GHE personnel understand the engagement’s objectives, metrics, and key contextual factors for the partner nation and region, including health, security, culture, gender, and U.S. context (prior engagements, strategic messages, medical rules of engagement [MEDROE], etc.). While it may not be feasible for tactical-level personnel to conduct a thorough context assessment, the DoD and U.S. government interagency provide numerous high quality, up-to-date resources to help ensure DoD GHE activities are implemented effectively and in a contextually appropriate manner. Training leads can: provide previous After Action Reports (AARs); suggest personnel review existing context assessments (such as the Field Guides maintained by the [Air Force Culture and Language Center](#)); and share talking points that can be printed or memorized to support consistent strategic communications.

Experience from Operation Bushmaster highlights that inadequate context training can lead to communication issues with partners (for example, students relaying incorrect or outdated information to simulated partner nation key leaders - in one case erroneously informing local medical providers that water quality testing had detected cholera) and harm partner relationships (for example, assuming low levels of medical capability and education among partner nation providers).

# 03

## PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE



Pre-deployment training enhances mission effectiveness by incorporating practical skills workshops to reinforce best practices, address challenges, and prepare for common issues during DoD GHE execution. USU CGHE developed two workshops for the Operation Bushmaster pre-deployment training: one on using interpreters in medical and non-medical scenarios, and another on conducting notional health facility assessments. Despite curriculum exposure to interpreter use in direct patient care settings via the USU School of Medicine and Graduate School of Nursing. Many students were surprised by challenges in non-patient care scenarios, such as key leader engagements or subject matter expert exchanges. DoD GHE lane exercise faculty observed a considerable improvement in students' ability to communicate effectively through an interpreter post-CGHE's training. USU CGHE also developed and adapted templates for key leader engagements and health facility assessments supporting both pre-deployment and tactical-level activities. Detailed discussions on MEDROE can further prepare personnel for handling care or consultation requests from partner nation key leaders or medical providers.

In summary, effective pre-deployment training is key to DoD GHE success, ensuring personnel understand mission objectives, strategic context, and cultural factors. Using resources and emphasizing context-appropriate actions strengthens partnerships and improves outcomes. Training activities like Operation Bushmaster show that proper preparation avoids pitfalls and empowers personnel to engage effectively, advancing mission and partnership goals.

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