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BRITISH ARMY CULTURAL GUIDANCE

Reference:

- A. DPS(A)/28/9 dated 21 Jan 08
- B. DPS(A)/28/9 dated 31 Mar 08 (Edition 5).

1. The Army promulgated extensive guidance and sources of information and advice at References A and B in order to provide better support to it's Commonwealth citizens and their families. In particular, at Reference A, a series of fact sheets were produced by this headquarters in order to promote cultural understanding and awareness within the British Army. The new edition of these sheets (attached) cover all countries contribution 100 or more soldiers to the British Army and includes UK and Nepal. This edition supersedes the edition at Reference A which should now be destroyed.

2. The POC for additional information on cultural guidance is SO2 Pol/Plans, HQ DETS(A), Major Graham Cable, Tel 94344 8942.

3. The guides will be useful to a wide audience, either as published in full to include the rationale of 'Respect for Others' or as individual fact sheets published or otherwise used in isolation. Adapting these pages for local or specific use is fully encouraged. I would be grateful if you would ensure distribution of this information down your respective chains of command. Copies will be placed on Army intranet¹ and internet pages for local reproduction.

{DII signed}

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CULTURAL AWARENESS OF THE BRITISH ARMY

RESPECT FOR OTHERS

INTRODUCTION

The British Army of today recruits soldiers and officers from right round the world. This means that we are living, working and fighting alongside people from different cultural backgrounds whose values, beliefs and behaviours are different to ours. Whatever our own nationality or culture, having joined the British Army we have all volunteered to share a common British Army 'culture' that is based on a strong ethos based on commitment, self sacrifice and mutual trust. This is a tough job for us all and demands a strong set of core values.

Respect for others is one of the British Army's core values. Respect lies at the very heart of our fighting power and it is all about trust, cohesion, morale and unit effectiveness. Respect is earned and respect is mutual. You cannot force anyone to respect you just as you cannot be forced to respect someone else. Respect is built on understanding of other people, taking time to find out who they are, what their background may be and how that background affects how they think and act. The British Army expects us all to live and fight by a defined set of values and standards:

Values:

Selfless Commitment, Respect for Others, Loyalty, Integrity, Discipline, Courage

Standards:

Lawful, Appropriate Behaviour and Absolute Professionalism

Whatever our background, British or not, we all have a challenge to live up to these values. This guide gives a brief outline of the nations who contribute the largest number of soldiers to the British Army today. The biggest single group, other than British nationals, are the 3,400 or so citizens of Nepal, most of whom serve in the Brigade of Gurkhas. There are nearly 2,000 Fijians, more than 900 Jamaicans, some 800 South Africans, nearly 800 from Ghana, and nearly 600 from Zimbabwe. There are smaller but equally important numbers from the Seychelles, St Kitts, Ascension Island, Mauritius and Malta.

The majority, but not all, of these nationalities are members of the Commonwealth. All of these countries share a significant common history of working and fighting together in the defence of democratic freedom around the world. Just look back to the contributions these nations made in the two world wars. The war cemeteries are full of memorials to soldiers from around the world. Those to the Royal West Indian Regiment and the Kings African Rifles in Flanders and Northern France are but two. This shared past history is the basis for a common bond and shared respect. We go back a long way together, we have done a lot together and we can be proud to continue to do so.

Equality and Diversity Impact Statement:

This document has been equality and diversity impact assessed in accordance with Departmental policy. This resulted in a Part 1 screening as no direct discrimination or adverse impact has been identified. This document is due for review in October 2009.

WHAT IS THE COMMONWEALTH AND WHAT DOES IT STAND FOR?

The Commonwealth is a voluntary association of independent sovereign states with a common bond. The 53 Commonwealth member states include people of different races and origins and of many traditions and backgrounds. The special strength of this diverse group is its shared heritage of language and culture that has grown out of the Commonwealth's common historical connections. The result is a shared bond of fundamental values. Foremost among these is the Commonwealth's commitment to democracy and human rights.

THE COMMONWEALTH

An association of 53 independent states working together in the common interests of their citizens for development, democracy and peace.

www.thecommonwealth.org

* Fiji is shown as requested from the records of the Commonwealth in December 2006 following a voluntary coup. ** Namur is a Special Member.

The Commonwealth comprises 53 nations around the globe. It spans from the Americas to the Caribbean, Europe, Africa, Asia and the Pacific.

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The Flags illustrated are stylized representations and neither the proportions nor the colours are guaranteed true.
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January 2007

THE COMMONWEALTH

53 Nations. One Community.

* Fiji is shown as requested from the records of the Commonwealth in December 2006 following a voluntary coup. ** Namur is a Special Member.

Member countries are listed with the date they first joined the Commonwealth.

1. Antigua and Barbuda 1981	7. Botswana 1966	16. Grenada 1974	26. Malta 1964	36. St Lucia 1979	45. Swaziland 1968
2. Australia 1931	8. Brunei Darussalam 1984	17. Guyana 1966	27. Mauritius 1968	37. St Vincent and the Grenadines 1979	46. Tonga 1970
3. The Bahamas 1973	9. Cameroon 1995	18. India 1947	28. Mozambique 1995	38. Samoa 1976	47. Trinidad and Tobago 1962
4. Bangladesh 1972	10. Jamaica 1962	19. Kenya 1963	29. Namibia 1990	39. Seychelles 1976	48. Uganda 1962
5. Barbados 1966	11. Cyprus 1961	20. Kiribati 1978	30. Namur** 1968	40. Sierra Leone 1961	49. United Kingdom
6. Belize 1981	12. Dominica 1978	21. Lesotho 1966	31. New Zealand 1931	41. Singapore 1965	50. United Republic of Tanzania 1961
	13. Fiji Islands* 1970	22. Malawi 1964	32. Nigeria 1960	42. Solomon Islands 1978	51. Vanuatu 1980
	14. The Gambia 1965	23. Malaysia 1967	33. Pakistan 1947	43. South Africa 1931	52. Zambia 1964
	15. Ghana 1957	24. Maldives 1962	34. Papua New Guinea 1975	44. Sri Lanka 1948	

UK LAW

The social culture and laws in the United Kingdom may be different to those in other countries and while Britain respects anyone's right to follow their own cultural practices it also demands that everyone must comply with UK law. UK laws are designed to preserve and protect quality of life whilst bringing to justice those who commit offences.

UK laws include legislation promoting equality of opportunity and making racial discrimination illegal and are designed to ensure equal treatment of all, irrespective of gender, race, religious belief or sexual orientation and tolerance towards minority cultures and the protection of children.

UK Immigration laws are designed to give access to those with legitimate reasons for entering the UK, whilst ensuring that those who are here illegally or in breach of the conditions of their visa are brought to justice.

In the UK parents have a responsibility to protect their children and this includes not leaving them at risk of any significant harm. This needs to be considered especially in terms of leaving children unattended. If a child comes to any harm, or is perceived to be at risk of harm while left unattended, then the parent, or agreed adult carer, will face consequences and this may include prosecution. In UK society parents/carers are not allowed to cause their children physical harm regardless of any individual cultural or religious justification, if a punishment is too severe, individuals can be prosecuted for assault, or the child may be taken into care by the local authority.

WHAT IS COMMON TO ALL OF US?

We have all made a big step in joining the Army. It takes commitment and courage to volunteer to do what we are asked to do. Most British soldiers now live in a different part of the country to where they grew up and where their friends and family are. However, they are rarely more than a few hundred miles from home. It is worth remembering just how far from friends, family and home some of our fellow soldiers are.

We are all proud of our national background. Many people from the UK will describe themselves as Scottish, Irish, Welsh or English. Regional identification is important and people from the same regions feel a common bond; for instance those from the North East are called 'Geordies', from the Midlands 'Brummies' and from Liverpool 'Scousers'. It is just the same with other nationalities, and sometimes even more so if there are particular religious or language differences. It is natural for us all to stick with people who are like ourselves – this is common to all friendship groups.

We all seek respect. Friendly 'banter' or 'teasing' is a great military tradition. It is part of our culture, it helps to bond us as soldiers and is a way of hardening ourselves to the tough job that we do. However, we have all experienced a moment when it has gone too far. This varies between us all and for some of us this can be quite minor things such as insulting the football team we support. However most of us will not accept people insulting our families or things that we hold dear, and for some this is an especially serious issue. When someone has gone too far with banter the first thing they lose is respect.

We are all trying to make something of ourselves. This is a natural ambition for everyone, but the strength of that ambition varies between people. Some people will have further to go, some people are willing to make bigger sacrifices to achieve their ambitions. This has a big impact on many things that we do and how we perceive different things. This often has an

impact on our attitude to money. If it is easily accessible it is easily spent. If you have known real poverty you are more likely to value money and look to spend it wisely on things that you really value.

We all have loyalties. The Army asks us to have loyalty to the Army, the Crown and to each other. Our own personal loyalties are very different. Sometimes loyalty to others does not play a major part in our background. Sometimes our background makes loyalty to others (to family, to community, to friends) very important and sometimes this can seem strange to others.

We are all conscious of accidentally getting it wrong. Much of this is about not causing offence through using the wrong words or doing the wrong thing. Most black people from Africa or the Caribbean prefer to be referred to as 'black'. When talking about more than one, 'black people' is more respectful. 'Coloureds' was a term used in the past to cover embarrassment about not calling people black. There is one exception to this; South Africans of mixed race are completely comfortable with the term 'coloured'. It is as wrong to call an Indian a Pakistani as it is to call an Englishman French! The term Asian, or British Asian is much better and shows respect for both Britishness and cultural identity. The same goes for gender. Respect is shown by the language we use. Do not say 'the girl who is CSM of A Company' when we wouldn't say 'the boy who is CSM of B Company'.

CONCLUSION

Respect for others is based on understanding of others and respect for who they may be. Leadership and mutual trust are all built on respect and the ability to do the right thing on a difficult day.

The following information sheets have all been written from the viewpoint of the British person looking at each individual national culture, or, in the case of the United Kingdom sheet, from the viewpoint of a foreign or Commonwealth soldier looking at the British. The sheets cannot tell you everything about a country's culture and there will of course be things that you do not agree with or recognise. This is good. This is diversity. It is often easy to see our differences, but our similarities are often only found out in conversation. We must get to know each other and work together towards our common ground – the Army's culture and its Values and Standards

Values:

Selfless Commitment, Respect for Others, Loyalty, Integrity, Discipline, Courage

Standards:

Lawful, Appropriate Behaviour and Total Professionalism.



NEPAL - GURKHAS

Area: Approximately 147,000 sq km.

Population: 28.2 million (2006).

Serving in the British Army: 3,500 (2008)

Capital City: Kathmandu.

People: Main Tribal groups include Gurung, Limbu, Newar, Rai, Sherpa, Magar, Tamang and Tharu with diverse smaller groups.

Language(s): Nepali (official language) but with over 30 tribal variations and dialects.

Religion(s): Officially there are 80% Hindu, 13% Buddhist, 4% Islamic and 3% others in Nepal. Hinduism and Buddhism overlap considerably in Nepal.

Geography: Landlocked country bordered to the north by China and India to the south and west. The land varies from the Himalayas mountains in the north, including Mt Everest (Mt Sagarmatha), through steep terraced hills to flat plains on the south.

Currency: Nepalese Rupee (NCR)

Time: GMT plus 5³/₄ x hrs.

What is similar? (what is the common ground)

- Family is very important to the Nepalese; this goes beyond immediate family to the extended family.
- Nepalese are known for their hospitality and friendliness.
- Nepalese males have served in formed units in the British Army as Gurkhas since 1815 and have a long and proud history of exemplary and brave service (13 Gurkhas have been awarded the VC).
- The great majority of Nepalese are Hindus but with Buddhists, Muslims, Christians, Kirats, Sikhs and Jains. Religious tolerance is good and religious festivals play an important part of Nepalese family life. Many Nepalese practice both Hinduism and Buddhism.
- Nepalese society is generally male oriented but women do rise to the top jobs and a woman's opinion is valued as much as a man's. Females are accepted within the Nepalese Army and Police forces.

What is different? (what seems strange or may be uncomfortable)

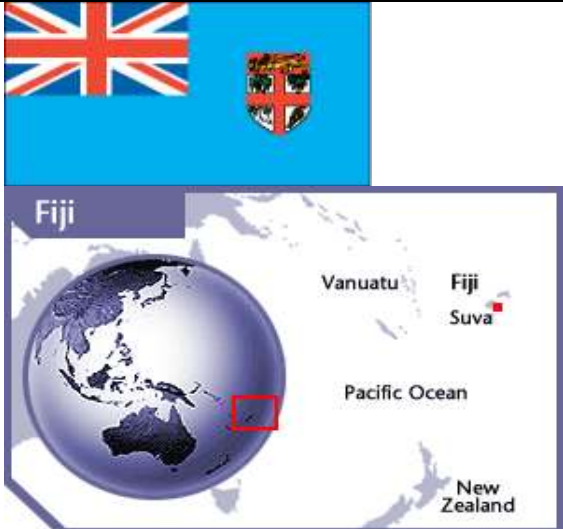
- It is preferable to offer a Namaste (hands joined together as in prayer, fingers pointing up) than to shake hands with a Nepali woman or Religious Teacher.
- Nepalese are conservative in their attitude to clothing; men should always wear a shirt and long trousers in public; women should wear a dress or skirt to mid calf level.
- It is considered rude to point your finger at someone, especially with a raised index finger, point with an open palm.
- Generally, eat only with your right hand, offer or receive items with both hands.
- Once you have touched something with your lips it is polluted (jutho) for everyone else. Generally, do not offer jutho to anyone.
- It is impolite to touch a Nepali's head.
- It is bad manners to step over the legs of someone seated and an insult to touch someone with your feet.
- Privacy and modesty are important. Men wear their underwear or swimming trunks in communal showers.
- The majority of Nepalese, as Hindu, do not eat beef.

What is hidden? (what lies underneath)

- Political unease due to Maoist insurgency since mid 90s.
- Poverty.
- Caste or *jaat* system divides people by profession, separates them in matters of marriage or contract and ranks them hierarchically.

What is critical? (what may cause tension and misunderstanding)

- In May 08 the country changed from a monarchy into a republic.
- Nepalese citizens consider it disrespectful for foreigners to criticise their country.
- The more successful part of the family is expected to help less able members of the extended family. Gurkha soldiers are expected to send money back home.

	<p>FIJI</p> <p>Area: 18,333 sq. km (11 385 sq .miles) Population: 846,000 (2006) Serving in British Army: approx 2000 Capital City: Suva Main Ethnic Groups: Fijian, Indian, European, other Pacific Islanders and Chinese Languages: English (official), Numerous Fijian dialects, Gujarati and Fijian Hindi Main Religions: Christian, Hindu and Muslim Currency: Fijian dollar (FJD) Time: GMT plus 12-13 hours</p>
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What is similar? (What is the common ground)

- Family is generally very important to Fijians, this goes beyond immediate family to the extended family.
- By many accounts Fijians are an outgoing, physical, community-oriented people. They respond well to team environments. A great ice-breaker with Fijians is to discuss sport, and in particular rugby union.
- Fijians are welcoming of other ethnic groups and are known for their hospitality and friendliness. Fijians in the British Army fit in easily with people of other cultures.
- The great majority of Fijians are church-going Christians. Indians in Fiji are mainly Hindu with some Muslims. Religious tolerance in Fiji is reasonably good.
- Fijian society is generally male oriented but women do rise to the top jobs and a woman's opinion is valued as much as a man's. Attitudes towards females of rank relate entirely to the qualities of leadership displayed.

What is different? (What seems strange or may be uncomfortable)

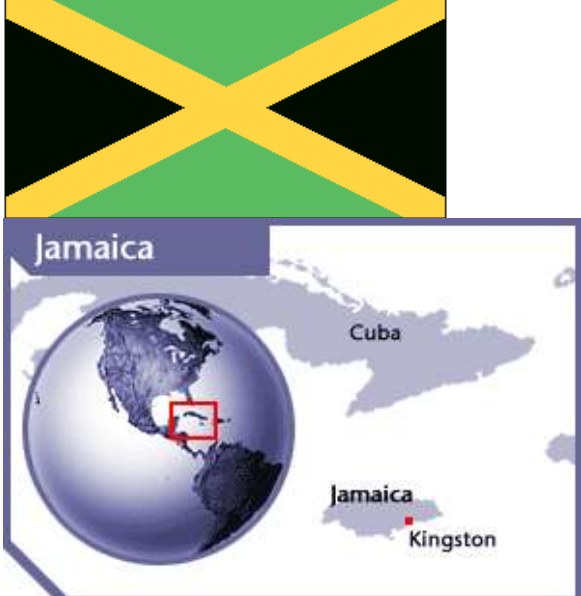
- Fijians are generally modest, both in dress and opinions reflecting the strong influence of Christianity in the island's history. However, private opinion, behaviour and humour often demonstrate a much broader attitude.
- Despite the general equality of opportunity for women in Fijian society, it is a traditional expectation for the husband to be the head of the household and for the wife to accept the husband's domestic authority. This can lead to a greater tolerance of controlling behaviour including, sometimes, domestic violence.
- Kava drinking is a traditional ceremony in which Fijians are used to expressing individual views and resolving problems. Despite the Food Standards Agency banning the sale and distribution of Kava in the UK (due to evidence that it can lead to serious liver damage) it is still obtainable and many Fijian soldiers in the British Army have access to it. It is an important aspect of Fijian community life, but its sale and distribution is illegal.

What is hidden? (What lies underneath)

- Fijians generally do not like to express their personal views publicly. Humility and not making quick judgements about others are signs of good character. Boasting and self-promotion are looked down on. Fijians are often quiet achievers, accepting of the authority of rank, while working hard for the common good. However, this cultural aspect can lead people to harbour grievances rather than talk about them. This can create tensions and leaders need to make sure they get the respect and confidence of their soldiers so that soldiers feel able to open up to their immediate chain of command.
- Fijians especially respect strong leaders and are often fine judges of leadership qualities. Because of this they respond well to leaders who are seen to have the welfare of their charges at heart and are ready to listen to soldiers' concerns. Weak leadership, especially inconsistency, aloofness or lack of good character, may result in dissension and poor morale.

What is critical? (What may cause tension and misunderstanding)

- It is considered rude to touch a Fijian on the head, unless circumstances dictate (e.g. in a rugby game)
- Standing over a seated person is considered rude. It is polite to bend the head forward and to apologise if standing amongst a group of seated people.

 <p>The image shows the Jamaican flag, which features a yellow saltire on a black field with green triangles in the four quadrants. Below the flag is a map of the Caribbean region, with a red box highlighting Jamaica and its capital, Kingston. The map also shows Cuba to the north.</p>	<p>JAMAICA</p> <p>Area: 10,991 sq km Population: 2.7 million (2006) Serving in the British Army: approx 1000 Capital City: Kingston (pop. 660,000) People: Afro Caribbean 90.9%, East Indian 1.3%, Chinese 0.2%, White 0.2%, Mixed 7.3%, Other 0.1% Languages: English Education: Mandatory and free up to age 16 Religions: Christian, Rastafarian, Judaism, Bahai Currency: Jamaican dollar (JMD) 142 JMD to the UK pound (Sept07) Time: GMT minus 5hr</p>
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What is similar? (What is the common ground)

- Up to a million Jamaicans have emigrated since the 1960's, mainly to Canada, the US and the UK. With unemployment rates running at about 11% in Jamaica, there continues to be economic motivation to emigrate in search of a better quality of life. This drives many aspiring and hard working Jamaicans to seek opportunity elsewhere.
- Joining the British Army gives young Jamaicans a means of earning a reasonable salary for an honest day's work, along with possibilities of learning new skills and travelling to new places.
- There is little ethnic tension among Jamaicans. The majority of the population is black (91%), the balance comprising Mixes Race, Indian, Chinese and White members of the population. On the occasions that such tensions are present in Jamaica, it is usually due to the difference between the 'haves' and the 'have nots'.
- Most Jamaican males have no difficulty in working with women in authority.
- In Jamaica, punctuality for school, work, worship and official events is demanded, but social events seldom begin on time, often starting an hour or more later than planned.

What is different? (What seems strange or may be uncomfortable)


- Religion tends to be important to Jamaicans and Sunday is a special day.
- Wives generally run the family household and hold the family unit together. Jamaicans do not take kindly to strangers telling them how to raise their children. Advice is best coming from close friends and family or respected church leaders.

What is hidden? (What lies underneath)

- Leaving home and travelling across the world to join the Army is a big step and shows huge commitment and determination to achieve. Jamaicans, maybe more than others, tend to be especially competitive and typically do not feel the need to band together but will join up with other like-minded soldiers regardless of nationality and cultural background.
- This keenness to get into the Army and get on has sometimes led people to enter the more widely available trades sooner, rather than waiting for vacancies in other trades that may better match their qualifications and trade-test results. This needs to be carefully managed; it is better to encourage transfer to the right capbadge and trade than risk losing the soldier altogether.

What is critical? (What may cause tension and misunderstanding)

- Mothers, as the central figure in the family, are very highly thought of and must not be insulted. Resorting to personal remarks of this nature immediately damages respect and loyalty.
- Jamaicans, like many soldiers, like to rib each other in a friendly way and they use such jibes and banter in a good-natured way, taking as good as they give.

	<p>SOUTH AFRICA</p> <p>Area: 1,228,376 sq km Population: 42.6 million (2005) Serving in the British Army: approx 800 Capital City: Pretoria/Tshwane (1.25 million) People: African/Black, white, coloured, Indian/Asian Languages: South Africa has eleven officially recognised languages: Afrikaans, English, Ndebele, Sepedi, Sesotho, Swati, Tsonga, Tswana, Venda, Xhosa and Zulu. Religion(s): All principal religions are represented in South Africa, but the majority is Christian (nearly 85% at the 1996 census). Currency: (ZAR) Rand (100 cents = 1 Rand) Time: GMT plus 2hr</p>
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What is similar? (What is the common ground)

- South Africa is generally considered to be a very family-orientated society and many continue to live in extended family households.
- South Africa is predominantly a Christian country (about 92% of the population is Christian). Other than Christians, 2% of South Africa's population is Hindu and 1.5% is Muslim. Religious holidays such as Easter and Christmas are typically observed in South Africa, and such holidays can be lonely times for South Africans living abroad, away from families and friends.
- Many Black South Africans have both a traditional, as well as formal Christian church wedding service. Labola (bride wealth) is still generally paid in Zulu and Xhosa marriages.
- South Africa is a very new democracy and South Africans are learning to be proudly South African and members of the Rainbow Nation. Respecting this and building on this is a good means of growing motivation and enthusiasm amongst South African soldiers.
- South Africans generally have a passion for sport. Talking to South African soldiers about the performance of South Africa's teams in World competitions provides a good opportunity for conversation, bonding and good humour.

What is different? (What seems strange or may be uncomfortable)

- As with Ghanaians, many black South Africans continue to practice various forms of African traditional religion with a strong emphasis on communication with ancestors. This strong belief in the power of ancestors and of symbols often includes the wearing of talismans or symbols as protection. These are important religious beliefs and must be respected in accordance with Army policy.


What is hidden? (What lies underneath)

- The popular name for the country is now "the Rainbow Nation", a name reflecting the developing multicultural ethos that has replaced the discrimination of the apartheid era. The younger generations of all racial groups raised in democratic South Africa are increasingly more open-minded and tolerant of race and ethnicity.
- The Black African population includes a broad range of ethnic groups. These include the Zulu, Xhosa, Basotho (South Sotho), Bapedi (North Sotho), Venda, Tswana, Tsonga, Swazi and Ndebele. While proud to be South African they are equally proud to be of their own tribe or group. This is much the same with British, English, Scottish, Irish and Welsh.
- The White South African population is divided along language lines, between English-speaking and Afrikaans-speaking groups. For them, cultural differences spring not just from language difference, but from historical heritage, notably the divide caused by the Boer War. This group of South Africans are equally coming to terms with and moving towards the Rainbow Nation.

What is critical? (What may cause tension and misunderstanding)

- HIV/AIDS is a sensitive issue to South Africans as well as many others from the continent and many South Africans have lost family or friends to the epidemic.

When South Africans who share a common language other than English are together, they will probably converse in it. This is normal, comfortable and bonding and should not be taken negatively

 <p>The image shows the national flag of Ghana, which consists of three horizontal stripes of red, yellow, and green, with a black five-pointed star in the center. Below the flag is a map of West Africa. Ghana is highlighted in a darker shade. Neighboring countries labeled include Burkina Faso to the north, Ivory Coast to the west, and Togo to the east. The Atlantic Ocean is labeled to the south. A small globe icon is also present on the map.</p>	<p>GHANA</p> <p>Area: 239,000 sq km Population: 21 million (2006) Serving in the British Army: approx 770 Capital City: Accra, 1.7 million People and languages: The official language is English. There are around 75 spoken languages and numerous ethnic groups, including Akan, Mossi, Ewe, Ga-Adangme, Fante, and Hausa. Religion: Islam, Christianity and indigenous beliefs. Currency: Cedi</p> <p>Time: GMT</p>
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What is similar? (What is the common ground)

- Family and tribal connections are very important in Ghanaian society. Ghanaian males are considered to be the heads of their households and are expected to take care of their female relatives.
- Christianity predominates in southern Ghana, while in the north Islam has a large following.
- Ghanaians are very proud of their heritage and like many far from home, tend to stick together.

What is different? (What seems strange or may be uncomfortable)


- Ghanaians generally tend to have a relaxed approach to life and an easy-going nature.
- When the Ghanaians find themselves together, as with many nationalities, they will speak in their common language if they share one. This is not meant as discourteous behaviour but is a natural bonding action.
- Friendships in Ghana between those viewed as socially or economically unequal, including friendship with Westerners, are commonly expected to include a bit of help – either in kind or in money - in times of difficulty. This is entirely natural at home but is a misunderstood practice and a source of discomfort in a UK setting.

What is hidden? (What lies underneath)

- Many Ghanaians practice various forms of African traditional religion with a strong emphasis on respecting ancestors. These strong beliefs, especially with some Ewe and Northern soldiers, lead to the wearing of talismans or symbols of protection. These are important and must be respected in accordance with Army policy.
- Ghanaian society has strong social rules. It is considered disrespectful for young people to wear hats or caps in the presence of older people and especially people in authority. This can lead to conflicts and confusions with Army dress regulations which they have to learn and will take some time to become accustomed to.
- Historically, marriage was arranged by parents and clans, but this is now changing under modern influences. However having more than one wife is still legal in Ghana. Western-style weddings have become increasingly popular in recent years.
- Ghanaian funerals are big events where respect for the dead is shown through gifts to the family of the deceased.

What is critical? (What may cause tension and misunderstanding)

- Ghanaian society expects women to defer to men. This does not mean that women in command are not respected, but Ghanaians may initially find it difficult to accept orders from a female superior until accustomed.
- It is considered very insulting for Ghanaians to fail to greet people they meet. On entering a place where several people are gathered, they are expected to greet their elders first, and then the remainder, in order of seniority of age.
- Ghanaians respect senior people, especially elders and chiefs. As a result the Ghanaian soldier can be expected to be a respectful and disciplined. Avoiding eye contact with those in authority is a cultural custom in Ghana which is a mark of respect.

 <p>The image shows the flag of Zimbabwe, which features a green triangle at the top, a yellow triangle at the bottom, and a black horizontal band in the center. A red triangle is on the left side, and a white triangle is on the right side. In the center of the black band is a yellow sun with seven rays. Below the flag is a map of Zimbabwe, showing its location in Southern Africa. The map is labeled with 'Zimbabwe' and 'Harare'. Surrounding countries are labeled: Zambia, Namibia, Botswana, Mozambique, South Africa, and Zimbabwe. The Atlantic Ocean is to the west and the Indian Ocean is to the east.</p>	<p>ZIMBABWE</p> <p>Area: 390,757 sq. km (150,872 sq. mi) Population: 12,121,311 (2007). 3m are estimated to live outside the country Serving in the British Army: approx 600 Capital City: Harare People: Shona, Ndebele, Others (10%) Languages: English (official language), Shona and Ndebele Religion(s): Christian; traditional African Currency: Zimbabwe dollar - exchange rate Z\$ 8,874,000 = £1 (Dec 2007). Hyper-inflation means this is constantly changing. Time: GMT plus 2 hrs</p>
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What is similar? (What is the common ground)

- Young Zimbabweans who come to the UK are likely to come from the better off, urban areas. They are well educated and very keen to put the political problems of their country behind them and to make the best of themselves.
- Football is the most widely played and supported sport in Zimbabwe and many people follow the English Premiership.
- Barbecues, which Zimbabweans call braais, are a very popular all-year-round party activity.

What is different? (What seems strange or may be uncomfortable)



- Respect for others is very important in Zimbabwean society. The often 'micky-taking' nature of British humour, is seen as odd and at times even offensive to some Zimbabwean soldiers.
- Most are likely to be Christians, but when it comes to marriage and death, often their local traditional religious beliefs take over.
- Although many Zimbabweans enjoy British foods, most have totems (sacred symbols of their clans) which they cannot eat. Even those who regard themselves as pure Christians never compromise when it comes to totems.

What is hidden? (What lies underneath)

- Traditional religious festivals happen randomly to thank or appease the ancestral spirits. Because of the clan-based nature of traditional religion, the timings of such festivals are not as universal as Christmas and Easter.
- Many couples go through two marriage processes. The first is always the traditional marriage where an oral agreement between the two families is made. The father of the bride can demand a dowry which can cost the equivalent of £3000. The second marriage is the church or registry wedding.
- Traditional religious beliefs often take over at times of death. Close members of the family have to observe a traditional process of mourning. About a year after the death, a special ceremony is performed for the dead.

What is critical? (What may cause tension and misunderstanding)

- With a high literacy rate of over 90% of the adult population, Zimbabweans pride themselves in being the most educated people in Africa. Education is very important in Zimbabwe and is seen as the means to raising social status.
- The more successful part of the family is expected to help the less successful part of the family. The extended family is an important source of welfare and Zimbabwean soldiers in the British Army often comply with custom in sending money back home.
- In Zimbabwe, it isn't interpreted as being inattentive or impolite if someone doesn't maintain eye-contact when they are speaking or being spoken to. Lack of eye contact usually signifies respect for the other party, humbleness or just plain shyness.
- Though many Zimbabweans appreciate foreigners showing an interest in their country's political situation, discussing some of these subjects makes them uneasy because of the historical complexities of the UK and Zimbabwe relationship. It is best not to bring up such issues as they are very sensitive issues for many.

 <p data-bbox="181 412 619 448">St Vincent & the Grenadines</p> 	<p data-bbox="756 183 1225 210">ST VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES</p> <p data-bbox="756 250 1120 277">Area: 389 sq km; 150 sq miles</p> <p data-bbox="756 282 1008 309">Population: 109,022</p> <p data-bbox="756 313 1257 340">Serving in the British Army: approx 300</p> <p data-bbox="756 344 986 371">Capital: Kingstown</p> <p data-bbox="756 376 1385 434">People: Mostly Afro Caribbean, a few white, sizeable minority of mixed race.</p> <p data-bbox="756 439 1002 465">Languages: English</p> <p data-bbox="756 470 1481 551">Religion(s): Mainly Christian: Anglican 47%, Methodist 28%, Roman Catholic 13%, Seventh Day Adventist, Hindu, other Protestant 12%</p> <p data-bbox="756 555 1273 582">Currency: Eastern Caribbean Dollar (XCD)</p> <p data-bbox="756 586 1050 613">Time: GMT minus 4 hrs</p>
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What is similar? (What is the common ground)

- St Vincent has a high rate of emigration. With extremely high unemployment and underemployment, population growth remains a major problem. This creates an economic motivation to emigrate in search of a better quality of life. This drives many aspiring and hard working Vincentians to seek opportunity elsewhere.
- Most Vincentian males have no difficulty in working with women in authority.
- In common with other Caribbean countries, punctuality for school, work, worship and official events is demanded, but social events seldom begin on time, often starting an hour or more later than planned.

What is different? (What seems strange or may be uncomfortable)

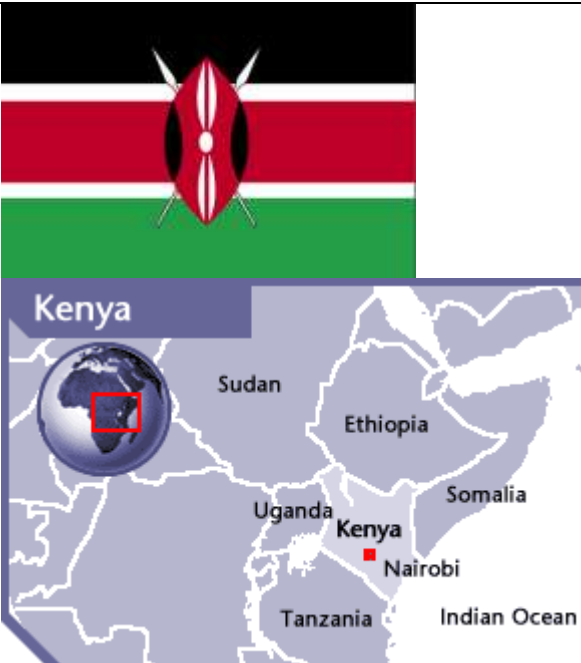
- Religion tends to be important to Vincentians and Sunday is a special day.
- Wives generally run the family household and hold the family unit together. Vincentians do not take kindly to strangers telling them how to raise their children. Advice is best coming from close friends and family or respected church leaders.

What is hidden? (What lies underneath)

- Leaving home and travelling across the world to join the Army is a big step and shows huge commitment and determination to achieve. As with other Caribbean countries, Vincentians do not feel the need to band together but will join up with other like-minded soldiers regardless of nationality and cultural background.
- This keenness to get into the Army and get on has sometimes lead people to enter the more widely available trades sooner, rather than waiting for vacancies in other trades that may better match their qualifications and trade-test results. This needs to be carefully managed; it is better to encourage transfer to the right capbadge and trade than risk loosing the soldier altogether.

What is critical? (What may cause tension and misunderstanding)

- Mothers, as the central figure in the family, are very highly thought of and must not be insulted. Resorting to personal remarks of this nature immediately damages respect and loyalty.

 <p>The image shows the Kenyan flag at the top, which consists of three horizontal stripes of black, red, and green, separated by thin white lines. In the center is a traditional Maasai shield with two spears crossed behind it. Below the flag is a map of Kenya, showing its borders with Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, Uganda, and Tanzania. The Indian Ocean is to the east. A small globe icon is also present on the map, with a red box highlighting Kenya's location on the African continent. The word 'Kenya' is written in a blue box above the map, and 'Nairobi' is marked with a red square on the map.</p>	<p>KENYA</p> <p>Area: 580,370 sq km (224,081 sq ml) Population: 34.5 million (2005) Serving in the British Army: approx 130 Capital city: Nairobi People (approx): Kikuyu 22%, Luhya 15%, Luo 12%, Kalenjin 12%, Kamba 11%, Kisii 6%, Meru 6%, Maasai/Samburu 2% Language(s): English, Kiswahili, various indigenous languages Religion(s): Mainly Christian: Protestant (mainstream) 27%, Protestant (evangelical) 23%, Roman Catholic 31%, Muslim 8%, other 2%, None 2% Currency: Kenyan shilling (KSh) £1=130KSh (May 2008)</p> <p>Time: GMT plus 3 hrs</p>
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What is similar? (What is the common ground)

- Kenyans generally love to party, and the music style known as benga is the contemporary dance music that rules.
- Most Kenyans place great importance on the family and the traditional values and responsibilities associated with it.
- Kenyan families tend to be large, and households often include many members of the extended family.
- Kenya's most popular sport is soccer, and Kenyan runners have gained worldwide renown.

What is different? (What seems strange or may be uncomfortable)


- As with many African societies the 'ancestors' are very important and death and funerals are an important part of life. In many areas it is an accepted custom to bury food, weapons, tobacco and clothing with the dead so that these may 'accompany' the departed into the next world.
- While expressing a largely Christian society, African traditional religions also play a part in the religious life of Kenya.

What is hidden? (What lies underneath)

- There are more than 70 tribal groups among the Africans in Kenya and this tribal loyalty is very strong.

What is critical? (What may cause tension and misunderstanding)

- Kenya has been politically stable for a long time but this stability has recently become endangered. This is a very difficult time for Kenyans who are rightly proud of their country and very worried about what is going on back home. It is important to respect this and be sensitive to the stress that many Kenyans are currently feeling.

	<p>MALAWI</p> <p>Area: 118,000 sq km Population: 13 million (2006) Serving in the British Army: approx 120 Capital City: Lilongwe. People: Main groups are Chewa and Angoni (Nguni) Languages: English, Chichewa Religion(s): Mainly Christian: Protestant, Roman Catholic, Muslim, indigenous beliefs, other beliefs Currency: Kwacha. Exchange rate 269.61 MK/£ (September 2006)</p> <p>Time: GMT plus 2 hrs</p>
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What is similar? (What is the common ground)

- The key characteristic of Malawians is friendliness. Malawians like to get to know people and be close to them. This characteristic of Malawians has earned the country the nickname of being the 'heart of Africa'.
- Malawi has been very stable since independence in 1964 under the same President for 30 years. It is now getting used to multiparty democracy and is suffering some economic decline as a result.
- Sport, especially football is great common ground.

What is different? (What seems strange or may be uncomfortable)

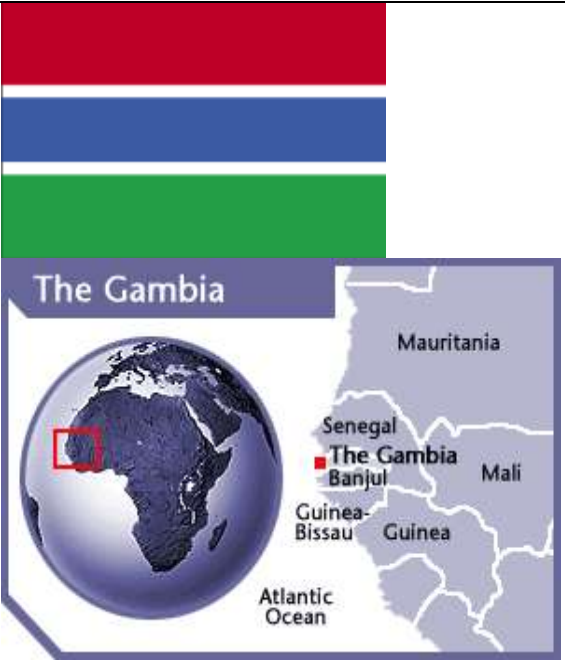
- Malawians generally regard themselves as an inquisitive and polite people. It is seen as polite to really get to know strangers. To the western mindset, this might be interpreted as unnecessarily staring at you or talking about you in front of you. Be prepared to answer lots of questions about yourself.
- Malawians love to shake hands, and you should oblige them. However, Malawian men often like to continue to clasp your hand, in a handshake, for the duration of a conversation. This should not be interpreted as anything sexual; they are merely trying to "connect" with you. If you feel uncomfortable, simply pull your hand away.

What is hidden? (What lies underneath)

- Malawians follow a strict patriarchal society — men are generally afforded more respect than women, and older men are respected more than younger men. However, a white person is often given the most respect of all. This is a holdover from colonial times but this is largely a Malawian's way of being courteous. Accept their hospitality.

What is critical? (What may cause tension and misunderstanding)

- When meeting a Malawian you should always say hello and ask how they are. Properly greeting a Malawian is very important.
- The social conventions of friendliness and politeness make many Malawians uncomfortable with the Western notion of simply "getting to the point." This is similarly uncomfortable to the more direct and 'stand-off' westerner who is not used to these social customs.

	<p>GAMBIA</p> <p>Area: 11,295 sq km Population: 1.5 million Serving in the British Army: approx 110 Capital City: Banjul (approximate population: 50 000) People: The Gambia is made up of several ethnic groups, including the Mandinka (the largest), the Fula, the Wolof, the Jola and the Serahuli. Language(s): English (official), Mandinka, Wolof, Fula, and other indigenous languages are widely spoken. Religion(s): The Gambia is predominantly Muslim, but there is a significant Christian community and indigenous beliefs are also practised. Currency: Dalasi (GMD)</p> <p>Time: GMT</p>
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What is similar? (What is the common ground)

- Gambian society is structured with traditional noble and warrior families, followed by the farmers, traders and persons of caste - blacksmiths, leather workers, wood workers, weavers and griots (GREE-oh). Griots are the lowest of the castes but are highly respected, as they are in charge of passing on the oral traditions and family or village history.
- Family plays a central role in Gambian society and it is perceived as a status symbol to support a large family. Gambian families tend to be large and three generations may live together in one household.
- The father is normally head of the family though the running of the household is usually left to the wife.
- It's quite normal in Gambian society to call more than one person 'mother' or 'father', and often people with no apparent blood ties are called 'relatives'.
- Gambia is entirely surrounded by Senegal, except for its short coastline, and is one of Africa's most densely populated countries.

What is different? (What seems strange or may be uncomfortable)


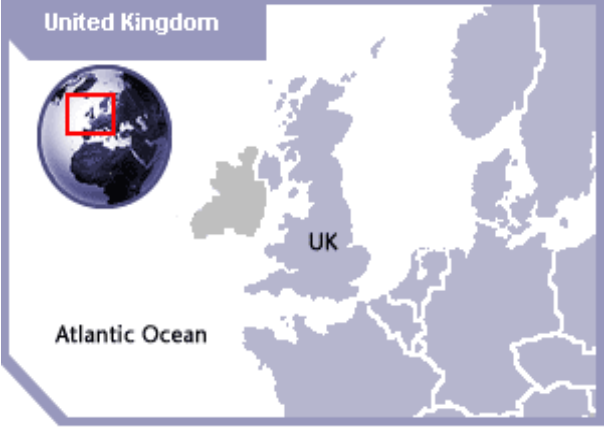
- Great importance is placed on greetings. Wolof and Mandinka people, for example, greet one another with a ritual that lasts up to half a minute, starting with the traditional Islamic greetings Salaam aleikum and Aleikum asalaam ('Peace be with you,' 'And peace be with you.') This is followed by several more questions about the other's family, home life, village, health, etc.
- Gambia has a male dominated society, families tend to educate their sons before their daughters and women tend not to work outside the home.

What is hidden? (What lies underneath)

- Islam is a very strong influence on daily life with prayer and the Qu'ran a central part how Gambians live their lives. This gives most Gambians a very honour and values based outlook.

What is critical? (What may cause tension and misunderstanding)

- It is the height of bad manners in Gambian society to smell food in front of others. Always give and receive food with your right-hand.

  <p>United Kingdom</p> <p>Atlantic Ocean</p> <p>UK</p>	<p>UNITED KINGDOM</p> <p>Area: 244,820 sq km Population: 60 million Serving in the British Army: approx 100,000 Capital City: London People: 92.1% white (of which English 83.6%, Scottish 8.6%, Welsh 4.9%, Northern Irish 2.9%), black 2%, Indian 1.8%, Pakistani 1.3%, mixed 1.2%, other 1.6% Language(s): English, Welsh (about 26% of the population of Wales), Scottish form of Gaelic (about 60,000 in Scotland) Religion(s): Christian (Anglican, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Methodist) 71.6%, Muslim 2.7%, Hindu 1%, other 1.6%, unspecified or none 23.1% Currency: Pounds Sterling (£)</p> <p>Time: GMT (and GMT+1 in summer months (BST))</p>
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What is similar? (What is the common ground)

- Most British will refer to themselves as either English, Scottish, Welsh or Northern Irish. England historically dominated Scotland, Ireland and Wales as the much larger and wealthier country in the Union and the seat of government and power.
- London, as the capital city, has the largest non-white population of any European city and over 250 languages are spoken there. 40% of all members of ethnic minorities live in London.
- The British, like most people, seek to identify themselves with people similar to themselves. With weaker family and social structures these bonds tend to be built on things like sports teams, regions or music preferences. Social and economic class used to be a major factor in social bonds.

What is different? (What seems strange or may be uncomfortable)

- The traditional family in Britain is decreasing as the number of single person households is growing. The average family unit is only 2.4 people. Instances of traditional marriage are decreasing with only 60% of couples marrying and for many, family life is changing.
- There are many traditions, superstitions and customs in Britain, but the average Briton is completely unaware of how strange these may seem to others as the majority culture is not often called upon to explain generally accepted customs.
- With a single majority racial group and language (White and English), and with English being a globally spoken language, the British are not used to hearing groups of people speaking in other languages amongst themselves. They often find this impolite or uncomfortable.

What is hidden? (What lies underneath)

- Religion is important to many individuals but it does not play an obvious part in British society in general. However, the major national events and holidays have strong Christian roots. Religion may appear to be much more important to the ethnic minority members of Britain. This may be a perception built upon a need to accommodate cultures and customs newly apparent in the country.
- Multiculturalism and economic mobility has weakened the old British class system but many people may still clearly identify with being either Upper, Middle or Working class more on the basis of their background than on the basis of their wealth or status.
- Status and sense of identity is important to many British people and is displayed in what they wear and how they speak.

What is critical? (What may cause tension and misunderstanding)

- The British have traditionally tended to be reserved and private or reticent. They protect their own space (a 'personal zone'), do not tend to touch and adherence to social conventions are important. Greetings are simple, politeness to seniors is expected, disciplined queuing and strict timekeeping is generally accepted to be a national characteristic.
- The British sense of humour is complicated but generally reflects the British habit of laughing at just about anything and anyone, especially themselves and each other, however strange or insensitive this may seem. The British are generally just as happy to laugh **at** someone as laugh **with** someone. Sometimes this does appear disrespectful but is usually not meant to be.

