

## *SPECIAL FORCES, THE WAR ON TERROR AND ARTICLING*

*Contributed by David Hodson, CD*



When Diana Mansour, a second-year student at the time, was observing a trial being conducted by David Barrison, she had no idea that she'd soon be immersed in litigation involving Canada's Special Operations Force (SOF) community, learning the intricacies of combat arms or navigating the misery of tear gas. At the time, Mr. Barrison was conducting a human trafficking trial with David Hodson. During a break, Mr. Hodson learned that Ms. Mansour was interested in part-time distance work while finishing her JD at the University of Windsor. Recognizing her potential, and with the blessing of Mr. Barrison, he immediately made her an offer of employment.

Ms. Mansour's first file involved an accomplished SOF operator, with numerous tours "behind the lines" in Afghanistan. Unfortunately, for the operator, he was found with grenades in his home, prohibited devices, drugs and other concerns. In organizing the file for trial, which was ultimately successful, Ms. Mansour was forced to learn about SOF, assorted military kit and Canadian weapons' law. As a quick study, Ms. Mansour was soon speaking in the acronyms of the military SOF community.

Ms. Mansour was soon involved in a criminal negligence case involving a Light Armoured Vehicle (LAV III). Climbing in and out of the turret and knowing fields of fire and observation were not exercises taught at law school. Interestingly, considering that Ms. Mansour is of Middle Eastern heritage, she and Mr. Hodson had to address the security concerns that were raised as there is classified kit inside the LAV. That said, and as an aside, with her knowledge of Arabic and Arab culture, it wasn't long before both JAG and the SOF community were showing an interest in her future.

Ms. Mansour, as an articling student, argued the first Jordan application within a military Court Martial. She, vis-a-vis 11(b) of The Charter, an eighteen-month time frame. Her accomplishment is more pronounced knowing that a CM is deemed a Superior Court. She subsequently argued four more applications, including a Corbett, Similar Fact and a. s. 276 - all were successful. During the latter argument, members of Canada's SOF community had just returned from Iraq. Coincidentally, they had been hunkered down in Ms. Mansour's family village during the fight against ISIS. Mr. Mansour took the opportunity to personally thank them. Later, after the acquittal of their SOF "brother-in-arms", tears rolled as they thanked Ms. Mansour for protecting their brother.

Captain Diana Mansour has successfully represented a number of accused in civilian trials, but after her Call to the Bar, she accepted an offer from Defence Counsel Services, of Canada's Judge Advocate General. Accordingly, she was required to complete Basic Training, and the preliminary foundations for her targeting courses. It was during the Basic Training that Ms. Mansour was tear gassed, and as a result of a defective gas mask, the experience was "horrible". Regardless, she entered the gas hut a second time and afterwards, the smile on her face spoke volumes. She was hooked - there's "no life like it".

Captain Mansour's marksmanship skills with an assault rifle are the envy of many with her level of experience. As a Reserve Legal Officer, many may think she's only a courtroom warrior, but her skill with a rifle, together with her linguistic abilities germane to a war-torn region, will, inshallah (God willing), provide her with many opportunities to deploy as a soldier. In the interim, she continues to maintain a criminal law practice with Carlos Da Cruz and David Hodson., as well as crossing the country to appear at Court Martial.