

**ARE WE PROVIDING SUFFICIENT TRAINING IN SURVIVAL, EVASION AND ESCAPE?**

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**SUBJECT:** Are We Providing Sufficient Training in Survival, Evasion and Escape?

1. **PROBLEM.** To determine if the Army is adequately training the American soldier in survival, evasion and escape.
2. **ASSUMPTIONS.**
  - a. In any future conflict isolation of individuals and small units on the battlefields will be a common occurrence.
  - b. In any future conflict American soldiers will be taken prisoner and receive similar treatment to those captured in the Korean War.
  - c. Many men will be required to enter combat after receiving only the training outlined in ATP 21-114.
3. **FACTS BEARING ON THE PROBLEM.**
  - a. Interrogation of repatriated American prisoners of war greatly indicated the need for survival, evasion and escape training. (Annex A)
  - b. In future wars, due to the nuclear threat and added stress on fluidity and airmobility, more independent isolation of units will be required. Independent actions and isolation of units will increase the need for being able to survive, evade and escape the enemy. (2)
  - c. An abundance of training in survival, evasion and escape is available to those selected individuals attending specialized training such as Ranger, Aviation, Jungle, Cold Weather and Mountain Schools. (Annex B)
  - d. The average soldier receives only two hours of instruction in survival, evasion and escape under ATP 21-114. Further training in this field is usually in the form of integrated training.
4. **DISCUSSION.**
  - a. During the Korean conflict thousands of American soldiers were cut off behind enemy lines and few of them tried to avoid capture or escape after capture primarily because of fear that they could not escape and survive on their own. This can be illustrated by the fact that not one American successfully escaped from a permanent Communist prison camp and returned to friendly lines. This can be overcome only by proper training in which the individual will gain confidence and knowledge in the techniques of survival, evasion and escape. Recent indications of this lack of confidence are becoming evident in Vietnam. (Annex C)
  - b. Due to the increasing use of airmobility on the battlefield every soldier must realize that the possibility of isolation and capture has been greatly increased. Prisoners

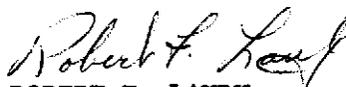
returned from Korean POW camps consistently agreed that one of the best defenses against Communist tactics in the prison camps would be to become mentally prepared for such treatment. This can be achieved only through training that is realistic and taxes the individual's endurance and abilities to their limits.

- c. The Army possesses an abundance of well qualified and experienced personnel for survival, evasion and escape training in its various service schools. However, the average combat soldier does not receive the benefit of this experience in the normal combat training program. The Air Force has recognized the need for training its personnel, exposed to possible enemy capture, in survival techniques and has established an outstanding survival training program at Stead AFB, Reno, Nevada. Since our methods of warfare are rapidly changing it appears evident that our training programs should be changed and updated to coincide with mobile warfare. (Annex B)

5. CONCLUSION. Current training being conducted in survival, evasion and escape by the Army is not adequate for the present or future needs of the American soldier.

6. ACTIONS RECOMMENDED.

- a. That a program of instruction similar to that of the Air Force Survival School be initiated for all individuals assigned to combat or combat support type units.
- b. That command emphasis at all echelons be placed on training units in the practical phase of survival, evasion and escape.
- c. That individual soldiers and small units be tested on survival, evasion and escape at least annually and before deployment to a combat zone.

  
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ANNEXES:                   A - Actions of American POWs during the  
                                  Korean Conflict  
                                  B - Comparison, Discussion and Summary  
                                  of Army and Air Force Survival  
                                  School Training  
                                  C - Letter, Survival in Vietnam  
                                  X - Bibliography

CONCURRENCES:           (Omitted)  
NONCONCURRENCES:       (Omitted)  
CONSIDERATION OF NONCONCURRENCES: (Omitted)  
ANNEXES ADDED:         (Omitted)  
ACTION BY APPROVING AUTHORITY:

Date:

Approved (disapproved), including (excluding) exceptions.

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Signature

ANNEX A--Actions of American POWs during the Korean Conflict.

1. Reports reveal that individuals captured had time, ranging from one hour to several days, to attempt another course of action before being captured yet no attempt was made. (2:26)
2. One out of every three American prisoners in Korea was guilty of some sort of collaboration with the enemy. (3:16)
3. Ten percent of the prisoners informed on a fellow prisoner at least once during their interment. (4:8)
4. Thirty-nine percent of the returned prisoners had signed Communist propaganda petitions. (4:7)
5. Nearly seventy percent of the Army prisoners returned had contributed in some degree to the Communists' psychological warfare efforts in Korea. (4:7)
6. The high percentage of deaths in the prison camps was due to malnutrition, which was caused or worsened by the prisoners' inability or disinclination to eat unfamiliar foods, and not as a direct result of Communistic mal-treatment. (3:144) Current indications of this tendency are becoming evident in Vietnam. (Annex C)
7. Discipline was lacking in the camps. Prisoners often refused to obey the orders of senior officers and noncommissioned officers. Organization in some of the prison camps became an every-man-for-himself type situation. Many men died from lack of leadership and discipline. (3:148)

ANNEX B--Comparison, Discussion and Summary of Army and Air Force Survival School Training.

The Army has several survival programs of short duration in its various schools but has no established, formal survival program. In contrast, the Air Force conducts a three-week survival course which is mandatory for all SAC personnel. This course is divided into three phases:

1. The first week is generally classroom type instruction to include practical work in the techniques of land navigation, procurement of food and water, signaling, defense with improvised and foreign weapons, construction of shelters and fires, self-aid, analysis of the Code of Conduct and Geneva Convention, and evasion net systems.
2. The second week is devoted to POW camp organization and methods of interrogation and resistance. This training is climaxed by a three-day POW camp exercise where each student's endurance is tested to the limit.
3. The last phase consists of a week-long field exercise where the individual student has no alternative but to put to use the skills learned in the previous instruction. He is turned loose to navigate, evade, survive off the land, provide his own shelter and pass through a complete evasion net system.

The Air Force survival training program is extremely realistic and every student must go through each phase of training. In comparison, the Army Aviation School survival program is approximately 20 hours in duration and time alone limits the benefits the individual obtains. If the student is subjected to interrogation and POW camp life, time does not permit his running the evasion net and vice versa. It is evident that in modern warfare all phases of this survival, evasion and escape training are necessary and no one phase can be overlooked at the expense of the other or of the individual.

ANNEX C--Letter, Survival in Vietnam.

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"Is the US Army Providing Sufficient Training in Survival and E&E?"

That's a damn good question! On first thought I was tempted to say no, a very definite NO. And upon second thought, I concur with my first. On the average, the Army does not provide sufficient training in survival (living off the land - no ice cream, PX goodies, canned goods, etc.) and E&E.

Of all the US personnel in the Republic of Vietnam, the only personnel who are "living off the land" are the battalion advisory teams and some Special Forces teams. Until you learn to eat the food of the geographic area of operation you can't expect to survive if cut off from US support. The food in the field - in Vietnam - is quite a change from the standard US diet. Rice, nuoc mom, fish, dog, goat, rat, sparrow, bean weed and chicken are the main staples. The manner of preparation, this is something else again. There have been many US battalion advisors (I know several by name) that have been unable to eat the local food and have requested transfer or have had to be transferred due to near starvation.

In Vietnam, there is a survival challenge when you simply go on an operation, in that water - potable - is extremely hard to come by in the delta region during the dry season. Knowing what fruits contain water is a big help as you can't always light a fire to boil water and the purification tablets aren't strong enough to handle rice paddy water normally.

Heat, insects, leeches, snakes, all present a problem. Until I had been here several months I didn't know as much as I needed too. Experience was my only teacher. Common sense helps a hell of a lot.

Escape from the VC is a pretty difficult proposition based on the intelligence reports I've had access to. It isn't impossible but many "E"s have been recaptured because they passed too close to water buffalo (they don't like the smell of a white man and go ape when approached by one) or because they were afraid to hole up in a mangrove swamp.

The basic precepts of the US Army E&E program are sound and apply to just about all areas - however, they aren't practiced enough.

In my opinion, survival is the one thing that will cause an escape or evasion to fail; provided several days are required to reach "home base".

Personally, I don't know what the solution (Army wide) is. One possible solution is to have an annual block of instruction for all combat and forward support units, stressing the basic principles (first aid (self-aid), various methods of navigation, night movement, minimum essential equipment, construction of a hide-out, expedient booby traps, covering trail). Units earmarked for a specific geographic area should receive instruction on available foods AND EAT SAME.

/s/William J. Lehner  
/t/WILLIAM J. LEHNER  
Capt                      Inf

ANNEX X--Bibliography.

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