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# Infantry

October-December 2015



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# Infantry

OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2015

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*CPT Robert H. Edwards commanded C Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment during the Battle of LZ X-Ray. The article is an excerpt of the battle analysis he wrote while attending the Infantry Officer Career Course in February 1967.*

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#### 42 THE LOST ART OF DISMOUNTED LAND NAVIGATION

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*Shoot, move, and communicate. This well-known tag captures the skills needed by every Soldier in its most simplistic form. There is no question that with the rapid advancement of technology, the tools our warriors now use to employ these skills have grown more complex, precise, and easier to operate. So that leave the question: Are the "no-fail" basics originally used to complete these three fundamental tasks now obsolete?*



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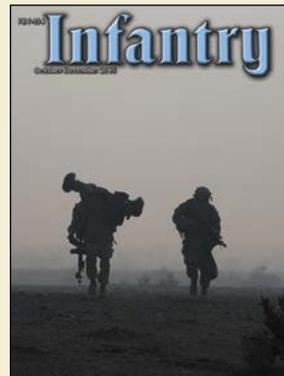
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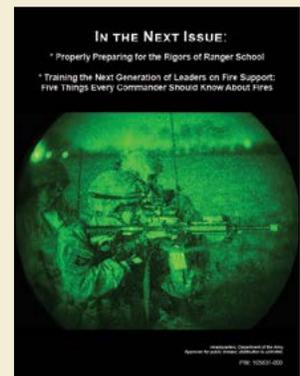


### ON THE COVER:

U.S. Soldiers assigned to the 1st Battalion, 41st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, maneuver during Decisive Action Rotation 16-02 at the National Training Center on Fort Irwin, Calif., on 12 November 2015. The Soldiers were part of an operation to assault and seize an enemy stronghold. (Photo by PFC Daniel Parrott)

### BACK COVER:

U.S. Army paratroopers assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade, provide security during follow-on missions as part of Exercise Rock Nemesis at Rivolto Air Base, Italy, on 4 December 2015. (Photo by Davide Dalla Massara)





## MCCC STUDENT TAKES PART IN MULTINATIONAL PLANNING EXERCISE

CPT BEN HUNTER

In October 2015, I had an opportunity to travel to France for a combined arms maneuver planning exercise with the French Infantry Captains Course. This provided a unique opportunity to interact, plan, and conduct combined arms rehearsals with captains from France, Germany, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates. The lessons learned from this experience were more than just tactical, technical, or operational. The opportunity to interact with these multinational partners through an operational planning process provided insight on the importance of problem solving through a foundation of communication skills and relationship building. As the U.S. military moves into the challenging and complex battlefield of the future, I truly believe it is the responsibility of the young leaders to solve these complex problems, and we cannot do this without our coalition partners.

Once we arrived at the military base in Draguignan, France, we were given a brief tour of the facilities and an overview of the French Captains Course. That evening we attended a social event with all the students and instructors. This event was the first opportunity to interact with the multinational captains. While most of the French and German captains could speak English, there were still moments where communication was difficult. One of the more interesting aspects of this initial experience was how all the other countries take a tremendous amount of time learning English and how little foreign language training I have had.

Day two started with everyone being broken up in small groups to begin planning for a noncombatant evacuation operation (NEO) exercise. For this planning exercise, I was assigned as the company commander; I had five French captains as my subordinate leaders. Our mission was to seize an airfield, expand the airhead line, and establish security through blocking positions along main avenues of approach in order to facilitate the movement of friendly forces through our sector and the evacuation of civilian nationals. This was the first time I have ever planned for a NEO, and now I was

charged with leading French captains through the planning process, which proved challenging for a couple different reasons. First, even though the French captains could effectively communicate in standard English, it was difficult to communicate through certain aspects of the plan because of our differences in doctrinal terminology. Secondly, I had to sometimes assist the French captains through some parts of their planning process, which was different from U.S. Army doctrine. Many times we had different perspectives on how to solve the operational problem set. I came away from this planning process understanding the importance of good communication skills and having the experience of leading multinational forces through a complex problem.

On the third day, we were tasked to brief a company-level combined arms rehearsal to the French Infantry commandant, General Emmanuel Maurin. This time, I was placed in a small group with French, German, and United Arab Emirates captains. Again, the challenges of the language barrier came into play as we began the planning process. I was now placed in a subordinate leader role as a platoon leader, which brought a different type of challenge to the experience. My responsibility



Courtesy photo

*The author, CPT Ben Hunter, briefs his portion of a company-level combined arms rehearsal to the French Infantry commandant.*

was to find out how I could assist the team of coalition partners during the planning process. An important outcome of the entire exercise was our ability to communicate the plan across a wide range of coalition partners using the universal language of English. My role now was to help the translation of the plan from French to U.S. doctrine. The outcome was a well-planned doctrinally sound combined arms rehearsal that was clearly communicated in English to the French Infantry commandant.

In the end, the trip to France gave me the ability to recognize the importance of understanding my role in the overall coalition mission. If I am the commander and have multinational partners as an enabler, then I need to understand not only their capabilities, but also the way they plan, their tactics, and even the way they think to optimize their capabilities. If I am not the commander but am there to augment my coalition partners, it is important to fully understand the operational environment to place myself in a way that facilitates their mission. Ultimately, I am there to ensure mission accomplishment, whether as the commander or as an enabler.

In light of the recent terrorist attacks in Paris, my trip has brought even more relevance to the ability to plan and operate alongside our coalition partners. As a captain and future company commander, I don't take lightly the responsibility to solve the complex problems of the future battlefield. The ability to establish relationships and communicate effectively with our allies is key to collectively solving the complex problems of the future operational environment. The capacity to lead multinational forces through a complex problem set and walk away with everyone having the confidence to execute the plan is the future of combined arms maneuver. On the fourth and final day in France, we had the opportunity to tour the Rhône American WW2 Cemetery. As we walked through the vast amounts of grave sites, I came to see the importance of what I was doing in France: continuing the legacy of those who had gone on before me. We have always fought alongside our allies, and we must continue to build upon that coalition through relationships and leadership.

*(At the time this article was written, CPT Ben Hunter was attending the Maneuver Captains Career Course at Fort Benning, Ga. He is currently serving as commander of B Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, Fort Stewart, Ga.)*

# NATICK INVESTIGATES SELF-HEALING PROTECTIVE CLOTHING

JANE BENSON

Army researcher Quoc Truong wants to fill in the gaps in Soldier protective clothing — literally.

Truong is a physical scientist at the U.S. Army Natick Soldier Research, Development and Engineering Center (NSRDEC). He is collaborating with other researchers at NSRDEC, the University of Massachusetts Lowell, and Triton Systems, Inc., on the technical development of self-healing coatings that contain micro-capsules of healing fluid, which will be used to mend chemical-biological, or CB, protective clothing.

“When Soldiers are wearing a chem-bio protective garment, they are basically isolating themselves from their environment and any harmful agents, such as nerve gases, viruses, and bacteria,” Truong said. “Soldiers are very active and can encounter thorny bushes or other things that could result in pin-hole-sized damage to their chem-bio garment while carrying out their missions. The damage may not be visible to the human eye, but it is there.”

The self-healing technologies will enable cuts, tears and punctures in fabrics to quickly repair themselves. This means that the protective qualities of the garments will be far less apt to become compromised by tears and punctures. The technology will be incorporated into both the Joint Service Lightweight Integrated Suit Technology (JSLIST) garment, and the Joint Protective Aircrew Ensemble, or JPACE, garment.

“The self-healing coatings can be a spray-on coating or a continuous coating — depending on the type of protective clothing they are applied on,” Truong said. “The idea is just like when a scratch breaks open the skin. Our body has the ability to heal and mend, make a scab and heal. The same idea applies to the self-mending fabric; when the fabric containing these self-healing materials gets cut, it comes back together and heals. It forms something very much like a scab on the skin except it is on the fabric.”

The technology combines innovative approaches to gap-closure with healing micro-capsules that are activated when torn to repair cuts and punctures. The self-healing layer contains reactive agents to deactivate dangerous threats, including deadly chemicals, and also acts to reform the physical barrier to bacteria and viruses.

Read more at [www.army.mil/article/158769/On\\_the\\_mend\\_Natick\\_investigates\\_self\\_healing\\_protective\\_clothing](http://www.army.mil/article/158769/On_the_mend_Natick_investigates_self_healing_protective_clothing).

*(Jane Benson works for the NSRDEC Public Affairs Office.)*





## THE BATTLE OF SUOI TRE

### REUNION GIVES CHANCE TO SHARE EXPERIENCES, LESSONS LEARNED

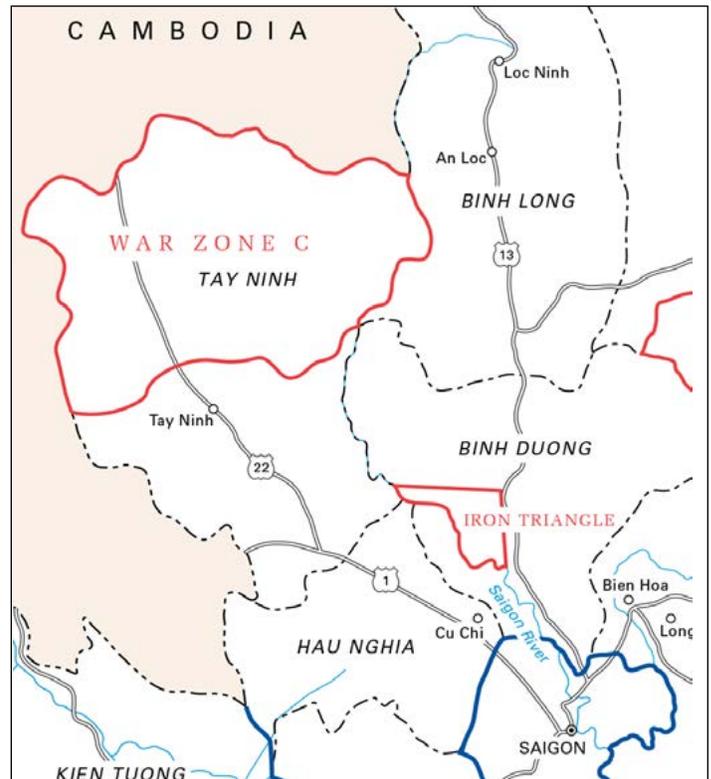
WILLIAM COMEAU  
CPT ANDREW LOFLIN

On 21 March 2015, 47 veterans of the Battle of Suoi Tre gathered at Fort Carson, Colo., to commemorate the 48th anniversary of the battle.

Fifty years earlier, around the time many of the veterans of Suoi Tre received their draft notices, General Chu Huy Man, a Moscow-trained intelligence officer, learned a valuable lesson that would shape the events of that day. In October 1965, General Man was tasked with drawing American units into a fight in the Central Highlands of South Vietnam in order to determine their combat capabilities. After the battle he was to share what he learned with other National Liberation Front (NLF) commanders. He did this by attacking the U.S. Special Forces base at Plei Me. General Man's plan worked as the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 7th Cavalry Regiment and 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment entered the Ia Drang Valley in early November. (See related articles beginning on page 24.) Despite a significant numerical advantage, the North Vietnamese forces were defeated largely due to the accuracy and lethality of the supporting American artillery. The lesson General Man and the Communist forces learned: *Given the choice to attack and overwhelm a major American unit, choose the artillery base.*

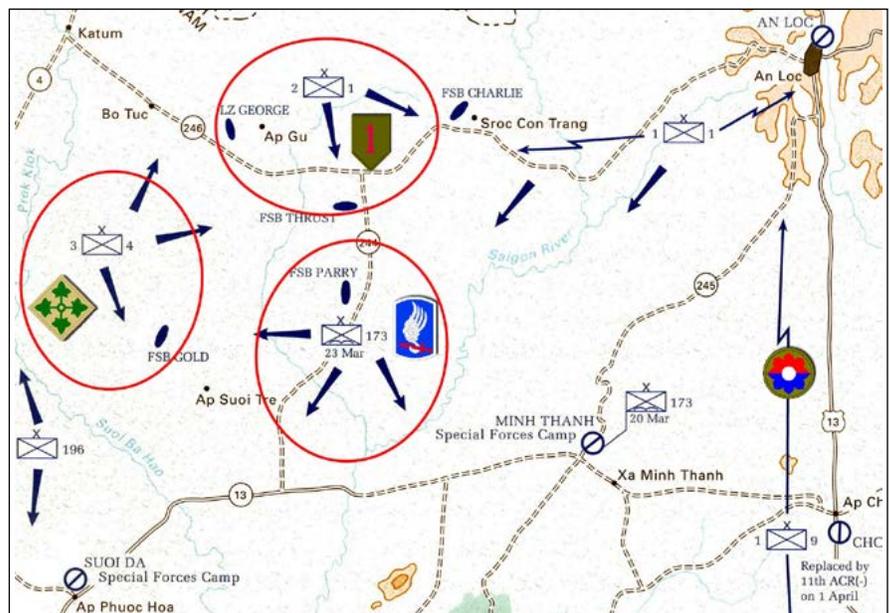
#### Background

Late in 1966, intelligence gathered near the capitol indicated a major attack was planned on Saigon originating from the Iron Triangle, north of the capitol. The Iron Triangle was a historic enemy staging area dating back to the Viet Minh conflict with the French. To deal with this threat, a force of 30,000 American and South Vietnamese troops invaded the area and disrupted the enemy's planned assault on the capitol. This first major operation of the year was called Operation Cedar Falls,



Adapted from a map in *American Military History Volume II* edited by Richard W. Stewart

Map 1 — War Zone C and Surrounding Areas



Adapted from a map in *Taking the Offensive, October 1966-October 1967* by George L. MacGarrille

Map 2 — Operation Junction City Concept Phase II

which began on 8 January 1967 and lasted 20 days.

This cleared the table for a major operation that had been planned for a year — a major invasion of the enemy's main base of operation in War Zone C. The target of the maneuver was the headquarters of the enemy's Central Office for South Vietnam (COSVN) which was thought to be situated in the zone. COSVN was the headquarters of the commanders who were directing all enemy activity in the entire South Vietnamese theater for the NLF.

On 22 February, nearly three American divisions began setting up a hammer and anvil operation — Junction City — that swept through War Zone C from east to west. The operation became the largest U.S. Army aerial invasion of this or any other conflict consisting of 249 helicopters and a number of fixed-wing aircraft. After three weeks, little was accomplished as the enemy was content to allow American forces to locate many of their base areas and supply depositories. Phase I of Operation Junction City ended on 15 March, and preparations were made to return to War Zone C after a brief rest and maintenance period.

### Suoi Tre

Phase II of Operation Junction City consisted of revisiting



*UH-1 helicopters prepare to move Soldiers to LZ Gold on 19 March 1967.*

Photo by Ken Eising

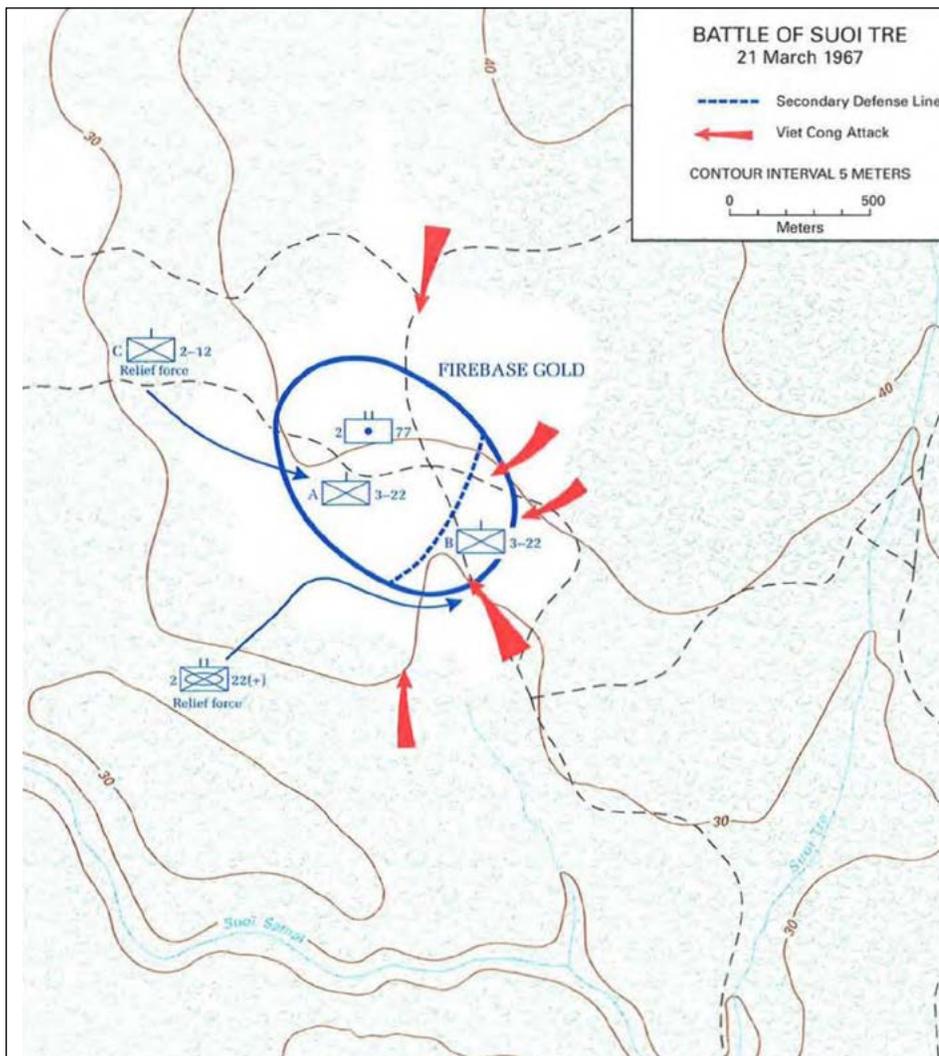
War Zone C with 24 battalions. The target was a suspected area where the 272nd Vietcong (VC) Regiment and the command office of the NLF South Vietnam were located. A loose cordon was set around the area of operation (AO) using the 173rd Airborne Brigade; 2nd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division; and the 3rd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division which established fire support bases. All three brigades were to perform a thorough sweep of their AOs while the 1st Brigade, 9th Infantry Division secured the Highway 13 supply route.

On 18 March, two of the three maneuver battalions of the 3rd Brigade — the 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment and 3rd Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment — were transported by fixed-wing aircraft from Camp Rainier at Dau Tieng to the



Photo by Ken Eising

*Soldiers with Recon Platoon, 2-12 IN prepare for airlift into FSB Gold. Black Virgin Mountain (Nui Ba Den) is seen in the distance.*



*Taking the Offensive, October 1966-October 1967 by George L. MacGarrille*

**Map 3 — Battle of Suoi Tre**

staging area at Suoi Da at the base of Black Virgin Mountain (Nui Ba Den). The third element — the 2nd Battalion, 22nd Mechanized Infantry — was sent cross country north into War Zone C with the task of securing a landing zone (LZ) for the insertion of the two other light infantry battalions. C Company, 3-22 IN would remain at Suoi Da to provide security for the staging area of the operation. Ultimately, the mechanized battalion received continuous harassment fire and was unable to reach the original light infantry's landing zone, which was seven miles north of the jump off point northeast of Suoi Da.

On 19 March, 2-1 IN loaded onto Bell UH-1 Iroquois (Huey) helicopters to prepare to move to LZ Gold, an unsecured clearing that was short of the original LZ but closer to the advancing mechanized infantry. Before the first lift, the decision was made to prep the LZ for an hour. After the hour, B Company, 3-22 IN took the place of 2-12 IN and moved to the LZ. The first lift was uneventful. The second and third lifts, however, were attacked with command-detonated improvised explosive devices (IEDs) resulting in 15 killed, 28 wounded, three helicopters destroyed, and three more seriously damaged. After a sweep of the area, it was clear that the

situation could have been much worse as an additional nineteen 82mm mortar rounds and two 175mm rockets rigged for remote detonation were found. The perimeter was finally secured at 1300.

The following morning, A and B Companies of 3-22 IN remained at the firebase to provide security and patrols in the area. Meanwhile, 2-12 IN was sent on a sweep of the area west and northwest of the firebase. To the south, units of the 2nd Battalion, 34th Armor Regiment were sent to reinforce 2-22 Mechanized Infantry as it struggled to move north towards the firebase. Eventually those units linked and moved into position along the edge of the Suoi Samat River two kilometers southwest of Forward Support Base (FSB) Gold. The 2-12 IN settled into the jungle near the originally proposed LZ (Silver) for the evening. The day was uneventful for all of the units with 2-12 IN and 2-34 AR with 2-22 IN finding only abandoned enemy encampments.

At 0429 on 21 March, an ambush patrol from B/3-22 reported movement in the jungle beyond FSB Gold. Shortly after, the jungle fell silent with no further movement reported. At 0630, as the patrol was preparing to move back to the FSB, they spotted two enemy and engaged them with grenades and small arms. A major firefight ensued. The B/3-22 commander, CPT Walt Shugart,

began to organize a squad to support the troops in contact. Before they could leave the wire, the sound of mortar rounds leaving tubes rang out from the surrounding jungle. The FSB began receiving heavy mortar fire around the perimeter and at the artillery emplacements.

As hundreds of 61mm and 82mm mortar rounds fell on FSB Gold, the situation report (SITREP) reached the brigade tactical operations center (TOC) at Suoi Da. Forward air controllers were immediately sent in their O1 Birdog aircraft to direct close air support over FSB Gold. F4 Phantoms from Bien Hoa Airfield scrambled to provide support. COL Marshal B. Garth, 3rd Brigade commander, commandeered the only available aircraft (an OS23 bubble helicopter) to direct the battle from above.

Meanwhile at FSB Gold, the VC were engaged in an all-out assault to overrun the base, leaving no survivors, just as they had done against Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) units in the past. The attacking force consisted of the four battalions of the 272nd VC Regiment reinforced with two additional infantry battalions and supported by the U80 Artillery Regiment. All told, 2,500 enemy troops were committed to the

assault on the 450 defenders of FSB Gold.

At 0635, the concentration of the mortar barrage shifted onto A Company and the western side of FSB Gold. This initiated a VC ground assault on B Company along the eastern side. By 0638, all B Company platoons were reporting enemy inside the wire. Soldiers with 1st Platoon reported hand-to-hand combat along their portion of the southeastern corner. The battle was quickly getting out of control. At 0640 the 3rd Brigade TOC alerted the nearby units to prepare for a hasty movement to FSB Gold.

By 0655, 2-12 IN was prepared to move out. Five minutes later, three of the four companies received indirect fire wounding 13 and killing one Soldier. LTC Joe Elliot, the battalion commander, was among the wounded. C Company, which did not receive casualties, was detached from the battalion and sent south shortly after the barrage. A Company followed 15 minutes later after tending to its wounded. The battalion command section, including the wounded LTC Elliot, traveled to FSB Gold as part of this group. B Company remained behind to secure the LZ for the medical evacuation (MEDEVAC).

Meanwhile, the units to the south were blocked by the Suoi Samat River. The 2-22 IN and 2-34 AR had no way to move their tracked vehicles across the river. Scouts were sent to search for a suitable crossing while the situation at FSB Gold worsened.

The first air support arrived around 0715 as the 01 Birddog guided four F4 Phantoms to the tree line. They dropped napalm from north to south, first along the edge of the jungle and then closer to the FSB where enemy troops were caught in the open. By this time, enemy mortar fire was beginning to taper off largely due to the accurate counterfire. Nevertheless, the advancing VC continued to attack the center of the FSB with accurate rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) fire and 57mm recoilless rifle fire from the woodland. The acting commander of 2nd Battalion, 77th Field Artillery, LTC John Vessey, moved to the gunline to rally his artillerymen and organize a hasty repair of the damaged guns. Of the 17 damaged guns, all but three were repaired. (LTC Vessey would later serve as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from 1982 to 1985.)

By 0815 the northeast corner of the FSB had been completely overrun. A/3-22, which had been manning the western half of the FSB, sent reinforcements to B Company on the eastern half. Minutes later a night ambush patrol from A/3-22, which had been positioned two kilometers west of the FSB, arrived.

Knowing that the men at the FSB could not hold out much longer, COL Garth checked the progress of the armor and mechanized units to the south. When he learned that suitable crossing had not yet been found, he ordered them to sink an armored personnel carrier (APC) in the Suoi Samat River and drive over it if need be. Within a few short moments, an accommodating site across the river was located, and the relief force sped across. Help was en route

***By 0840, the secondary positions were fully manned. This opened up more avenues of attack allowing for more flechette rounds to be used on the enemy, which was quickly closing on hand-grenade range. Minutes later, C/2-12 IN arrived at the northwest corner of the FSB just as the F4 Phantoms made another napalm run along the eastern woodland.***

if the defenders at FSB Gold could just hold out.

CPT Shugart ordered the firing of 105mm flechette rounds, commonly known as beehive rounds, directly into the advancing enemy. This initially quelled the advance, but more enemy continued to pour out of the woodland. By 0820 the enemy advance was overwhelming, and the decision was made to retrograde B Company's forces into fighting positions within the artillery perimeter. During the retrograde, an M45 Quadmount machine gun in the northern sector of the FSB was overrun and turned towards U.S. forces. Fortunately, an alert artilleryman reacted with one direct lay High Explosive (HE) round, eliminating the threat before the enemy was able to fire shots.

Around 0830, COL Garth ordered the A Company and Headquarters, 2-12 IN group to stop in place immediately. COL Garth asked if CPT Jon Palmer, A6, was anywhere near the trail running from their earlier position to north of the clearing where FSB Gold was located. CPT Palmer quickly checked his map and replied "negative." COL Garth responded, "Good, I spotted a platoon of VC laying on the side of that trail waiting to ambush any relief column coming down. Start up your column and head to the battle. I'll deal with that ambush group with gunships."

By 0840, the secondary positions were fully manned. This opened up more avenues of attack allowing for more flechette rounds to be used on the enemy, which was quickly closing on hand-grenade range. Minutes later, C/2-12 IN arrived at the northwest corner of the FSB just as the F4 Phantoms made another napalm run along the eastern woodland. At 0901, A/2-12 and the command group burst through the western woodland. With reinforcements present, A/2-12 and B/3-22 prepared for a counterattack.

At 0912, APCs from C/2-22 moved out of the southern woodland raking enemy with machine-gun fire as they moved towards the southern tip of the FSB. Shortly after, more APCs from Recon Platoon 2-22 and tanks from 2-34 AR moved out of the woodland, sweeping south to north along the western

side of the FSB. After clearing the southern end of the FSB, C/2-22 turned north and cleared the eastern perimeter.

Defeat was clear for the VC, and they began to retreat towards the jungle. CPT Shugart ordered B/3-22 to counterattack with A/2-12. The two companies fired point blank into the VC caught inside the perimeter. They then moved east to the original B/3-22 fighting positions. Soldiers from 2-22 and 2-34 AR pursued the retreating VC into the jungle northeast of the FSB, but they were quickly pulled back for fear of a possible ambush. They returned to the FSB and began searching and collecting the enemy bodies.

The final count revealed that 647 of the 2,500 attacking VC were killed. It was the largest one-day loss of the war for the VC. Shortly after the battle, GEN William Westmoreland flew to the clearing to congratulate the survivors. All participating units were awarded the presidential unit citation.

Within a few days of the battle, many of the Soldiers within the brigade fell victim to the infusion program, a plan that pulled Soldiers from a seasoned unit into other units in theater. The intent was to allow room for new Soldiers in these units, ensuring the brigade would not be left with all new Soldiers when the original draftee's commitment was fulfilled. This program left many of the Soldiers who fought at Suoi Tre unable to talk about the events of that day with those they fought alongside for many years.

Decades after the war ended, units present formed their own veterans organizations and would meet annually to reconnect with those they fought alongside as young men. On 21 March 2015, members of all units present on that day — including those that provided aerial support — met for the first time in nearly five decades.

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**William "Bill" Comeau** was a factory worker when he was drafted in December of 1965. He was sent to Fort Lewis, Wash., where he was assigned to A Company, 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment for basic training in a train and retain unit. After basic training, the unit was sent to Vietnam with the 3rd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division. Comeau served as the company's radio-telephone operator (RTO). After his tour he returned to his hometown of New Bedford, Mass., where he still lives. He attended and graduated from East Coast Aviation Technical School in 1971 and served as a technician for more than 40 years.

**CPT Andrew Loflin** was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment in March 2012. He deployed with 2-12 IN in April 2012 to Kunar Province, Afghanistan, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. There he served a platoon leader for A Company. He deployed with the battalion again in January 2014 to Zabul Province as the Scout platoon leader. He developed a relationship with many of the battalion's Vietnam veterans while planning for the 2014 post-deployment ball and the Suoi Tre Reunion. He and Bill Comeau have become close friends and correspond regularly.

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*"As young Infantrymen, none of us men could have possibly known how historical a battle was taking place on that day. As this was our first 'major' battle since our arrival, we had nothing to compare it to. Personally, as my company raced through the jungle to reinforce the beleaguered men at the fire base, I was overwhelmed by the noise that was emanating from the battle site. No compass was needed to get to the fight two kilometers away. I thought to myself, 'Wow, imagine what it was like on D-Day if this battle is producing such devastating sounds.'*

*As I helped police up the many dead Vietcong lying about the field for burial, it became very apparent that this was no inconsequential battle. It took 40 years to learn that this battle produced the largest enemy loss during a one-day battle in the war. Although all of the participating units in the battle earned the Presidential Unit Citation, most of the men in my company didn't learn of it until we formed a veterans group and I wrote about it in an association newsletter. The award was not awarded until July 1968, seven months after the draftees returned to their homes, factories, farms, and offices when their 24-month induction was completed.*

*I worked with Joe Engles, a veteran of the 2nd Battalion, 77th Field Artillery Regiment, to organize the battle's veterans for Heritage Week at Fort Carson, Colo. We were so grateful for all of the preparations that were made by LTC Neil Snyder, commander of 2-77 FA, and LTC Paul Staeheli, commander of the 2-12 IN. We were overwhelmed by the hospitality and the respect that was accorded to us during our visit. Personally, I was very much moved by the number of Soldiers who joined us on the 48th anniversary of the battle. That day fell on a Saturday, and I was amazed at how many Soldiers from our former units took the time to be with us in the middle of what I was told was a four-day weekend. More than 400 Soldiers were present, and these young men have no idea how gratifying and humbling that was for us. When we left Vietnam in 1967, most of us were not given anything to believe that our victory and sacrifices would ever be acknowledged in such a magnificent manner. We'll be eternally grateful."*

— William Comeau



Photo by 1LT Robert Wojcik

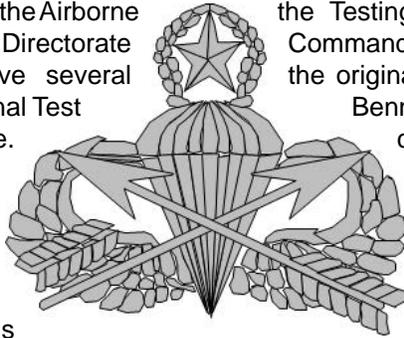
Veterans of the battle address Soldiers during the reunion on 21 March 2015.

# ABNSOTD TESTS, EVALUATES AIRBORNE EQUIPMENT

WILLIAM SLAVEN

While walking through the halls at the Airborne and Special Operations Test Directorate (ABNSOTD), you will observe several tributes honoring inductees in the Operational Test Command's (OTC) Testers Hall of Fame. Roger Pickett, Tom Hammonds, and Dean Horton are just a few of the many names that serve as a reminder to current and future testers of what an operational tester should be. These Department of the Army Civilians — dedicated individuals who have contributed a lifetime of service to testing and ensured that new airdrop equipment such as personnel parachutes, aircraft, and cargo airdrop equipment are safe to use by Soldiers in the field — are considered legends by those currently serving as airdrop testers and those serving in the airborne community. Users across the Department of Defense (DoD) depend on the ABNSOTD to test paratroop equipment to ensure it is reliable and safe. Therefore, we strive to test equipment the right way, the first time, all of the time.

ABNSOTD is located at Fort Bragg, N.C., and is the sole test directorate within the DoD that performs test and evaluation of airborne equipment. The directorate formally began as a service board activated in December 1944 at Camp Mackall, N.C. Its history can be traced back through



the Testing and Developing Section of the Airborne Command, organized in 1942 at Camp Mackall, to the original Parachute Test Platoon, activated at Fort Benning, Ga., in August 1940. LT William T. Ryder, commander of the Army's Parachute Test Platoon, made history as the first American Soldier to make a military parachute jump. Ryder's jump, and those that followed by the rest of the platoon's members, validated the airborne concept and ultimately led to the creation of the Army airborne units that

distinguished themselves during World War II. Following the end of World War II, the Airborne Board was incorporated into the Army Ground Forces Board on 1 October 1945 at Fort Bragg. As a direct descendant of the original parachute test platoon in 1940, ABNSOTD is not only responsible for the testing of new parachutes and airborne equipment, but it is also chartered to operationally test every item of Army equipment to be airdropped, airlifted, sling-loaded, or in any way transported or delivered by Army or Air Force aircraft.

Operational test requests are typically submitted by program managers or customer units to the Army Test and Evaluation Command located at Aberdeen, Md., where they are reviewed to ensure that they meet the requirement for operational testing. Once evaluated, the Army Test and Evaluation Command then sends the test request to the



Photo illustration by James Finney

Original Test Platoon Displayed With Modern Day Operational Test Jumpers

OTC located at Fort Hood, Texas, where an operational test directorate is assigned to design the scope of testing based off the requirements needed to properly test the listed equipment. The request is then assigned to a test officer within the test directorate where a test plan is developed. This is all followed by a well-coordinated and executed test by hand-selected test teams.

ABNSOTD is responsible for designing, analyzing, and executing all assigned tests. The test manager via the deputy test manager assigns tests to a test officer based on the type of testing required and work load required for the test. The Test Division is composed of several civilian test officers and research, development, test, and evaluation NCOs who are responsible for planning, executing, and reporting the test results. Each test officer and NCO assigned to the Airborne and Special Operations Test Directorate has years of military or civilian experience within the Airborne community, and all have completed a rigorous certification process to become OTC testers. The combined airborne experience level is in excess of 150 years and includes heavy airdrop rigging, static line, and military free-fall operations. Civilian test officers are offered the opportunity to perform duties as a test jumper. These testers and their test teams understand the value of robust testing in a world where Soldiers must rely on their equipment to accomplish their mission.

The two types of testing that an ABNSOTD test officer will typically be assigned to execute are personnel airdrop testing and heavy equipment airdrop testing. Personnel tests are usually challenging and in some cases difficult to thoroughly test because of their complexities. Personnel airdrop testing usually consists of anything that a jumper would wear during a combat insertion by parachute but may also include the testing of jump procedures for newly procured aircraft or jump-testing optics, scopes, radios, and other equipment that a Soldier may carry in a ruck sack or on the parachute harness. Personnel testing is usually followed by an operational ground exercise or a range exercise to validate the survivability and functionality of the equipment that has just been tested.

Heavy airdrop testing requires a test officer to have a complete understanding of

how the military delivers light and heavy equipment safely to a user while in combat. This knowledge comes from years of working on and around heavy airdrop rigging. Test officers work in conjunction with aerospace engineers from the U.S. Air Force Air Mobility Command and Natick Research, Development and Engineering Command because when testing new equipment for airdrop, the rigging procedures for the test items must be developed as well. These procedures have to be designed to function with the airdrop rollers and rail systems that are used by all DoD aircraft used in airdrop operations. The challenges of airdrop testing include designing restraint provisions and energy dissipation kits that can survive the rigors of airdrop for equipment that weighs up to approximately 42,000 pounds. After final rigging of the heavy equipment is complete, testers must coordinate with manual writers from the U.S. Army Quartermaster School located at Fort Lee, Va., to document the rigging designs into the appropriate format for publications in field and technical manuals. In addition to heavy airdrop testing, ABNSOTD is often tasked to conduct testing of external air transport (EAT) procedures of various types of equipment. This type of testing involves the flight testing of equipment that is to be moved by helicopter sling load. The ABNSOTD conducts aerial flight testing of light combat vehicles, howitzer guns, and many other forms of cargo by suspension from a helicopter while in flight. This type of test involves aviation

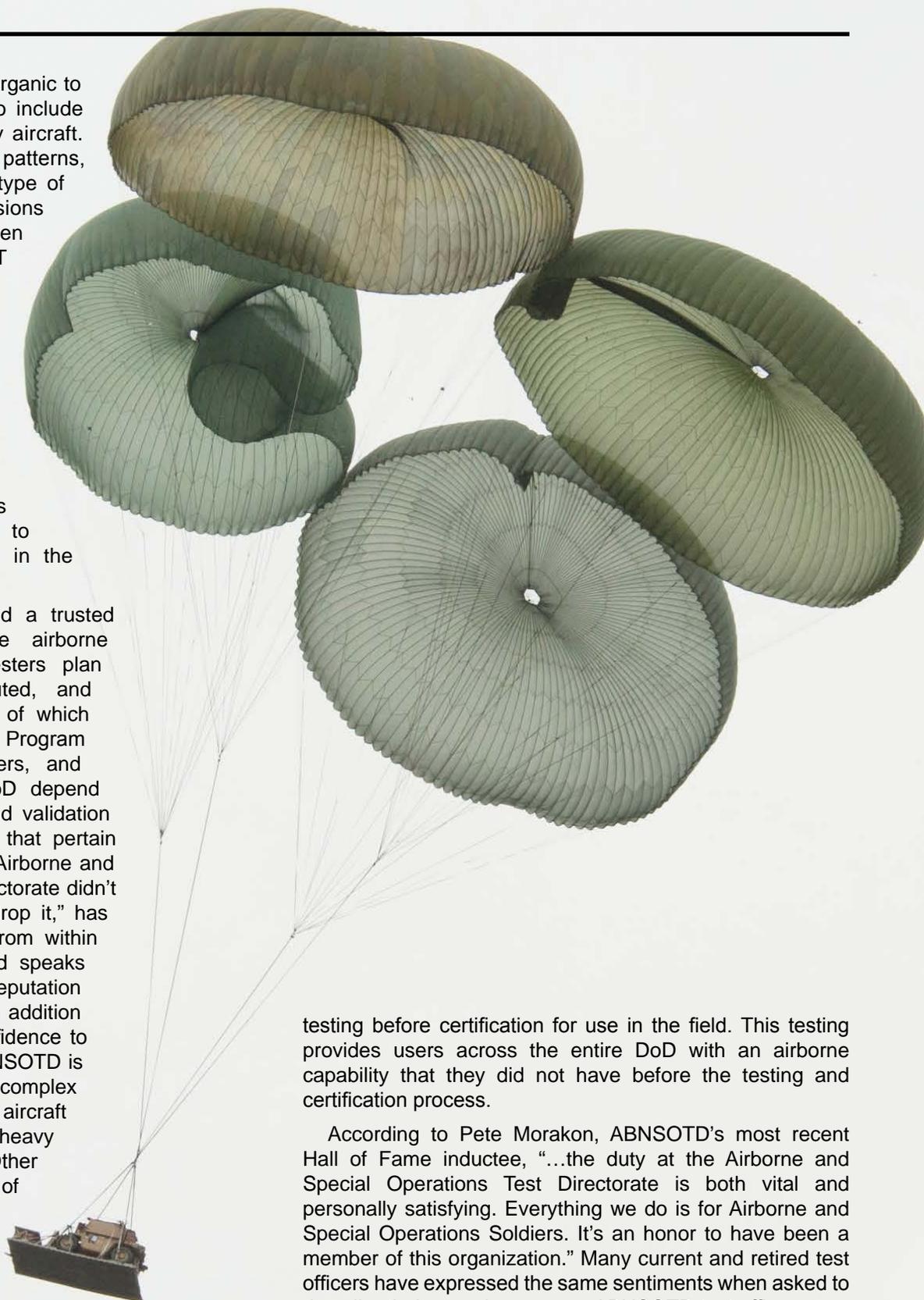


Photos by James Finney

*Personnel airdrop testing usually consists of anything that a jumper would wear during a combat insertion by parachute but may also include the testing of jump procedures for newly procured aircraft or jump-testing optics and other equipment that a Soldier may carry in a ruck sack or on the parachute harness.*

resources that are typically organic to the U.S. Army but may also include Marine, Air Force, and Navy aircraft. Weights of test loads, flight patterns, number of hook-up points, type of lifting slings, and lift provisions are all considerations when planning to conduct EAT testing. Once the plan is in place, helicopters, flight crews, and accompanying equipment are assembled with a test team that is prepared to document the results of a series of flight maneuvers over a predetermined flight route. If proven successful, the results are documented and sent to certifying agencies for use in the field.

ABNSOTD has developed a trusted relationship throughout the airborne community. Experienced testers plan well-thought-out, well-executed, and safe tests — the accuracy of which has been proven in the field. Program managers, local commanders, and airborne entities across DoD depend on ABNSOTD for advice and validation of questions or procedures that pertain to anything airborne. “If the Airborne and Special Operations Test Directorate didn’t test it, we aren’t going to drop it,” has become a common quote from within the Airborne community and speaks volumes to the respect and reputation earned by the directorate. In addition to providing advice and confidence to the Airborne community, ABNSOTD is constantly challenged with complex tests such as C-27 and C-17 aircraft personnel airdrop and heavy airdrop certification tests. Other examples include testing of rigging procedures for new emerging vehicles like the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle, Joint Precision Aerial Delivery Systems, unique equipment to be tested for use with Special Operations Forces, foreign interoperability airdrop equipment to be deployed with the Global Response Force, and newly designed personnel parachutes such as the T-11 static line parachute and the RA-1 military free-fall system. When equipment comes to the Airborne and Special Operations Test Directorate, it is generally there for final



testing before certification for use in the field. This testing provides users across the entire DoD with an airborne capability that they did not have before the testing and certification process.

According to Pete Morakon, ABNSOTD’s most recent Hall of Fame inductee, “...the duty at the Airborne and Special Operations Test Directorate is both vital and personally satisfying. Everything we do is for Airborne and Special Operations Soldiers. It’s an honor to have been a member of this organization.” Many current and retired test officers have expressed the same sentiments when asked to describe their experiences as a ABNSOTD test officer.

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# A PATTERN OF NEGLECT:

## THE CONCERNING STATE OF ARMY COUNSELING

MAJ TAD GRANAI

For some time now, many U.S. Army leaders have neglected their duties in conducting adequate, effective, and routine subordinate counseling.<sup>1</sup> The high tempo of training and frequent deployments since 9/11 have produced an environment of disregard that has brought the current Army counseling system to a near nonexistent state. A greater command influence and individual initiative are not enough to solve the counseling dilemma. It is essential to educate junior leaders and to implement a dynamic accountability strategy that would fix the current counseling system. The Army must act now.

The purpose of this article is three-fold. First, the commentary provides a doctrinal overview for historical context. Second, the article provides multiple case studies which offer a framework for the ongoing issues involving counseling. Third, the article makes suggestions that would assist in resolving current issues in the existing counseling system.

The Army understands the importance of counseling and has regularly published doctrinal references to aid leaders. In 1974, the Army published Field Manual (FM) 22-101, *Leadership Counseling*, which concentrated mainly on developing leader-counseling skills. The manual provided an exhaustive description on the “how to” of counseling

while offering practical and role-playing exercises to enhance leadership capabilities.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, in 1999, FM 22-100, *Army Leadership*, became a primary resource for counseling. FM 22-100 had an entire appendix dedicated to counseling, which included leader responsibilities, the various types of counseling, and persuasive techniques. Both FM 22-101 and 22-100 provided a counseling framework for leaders.

In 2006, the Army published FM 6-22, *Army Leadership — Competent, Confident, and Agile*. The manual, particularly Appendix B, helped guide leaders through effective counseling.<sup>3</sup> Appendix B states, “Counseling is one of the most important leadership development responsibilities for Army leaders. The Army’s future and the legacy of today’s Army leaders rest on the shoulders of those they help prepare for greater responsibility.” Prominently listed in FM 6-22, Appendix B, is DA Form 4856, the *Army Developmental Counseling Form*. DA 4856 formalizes counseling and assists in the establishment of clearly defined expectations and plans of action for both the counseled and the counselor.

Today, Army Doctrinal Publication (ADP) 6-22, *Army Leadership*, is the doctrinal manual on leadership and counseling. ADP 6-22 states, “Leaders have choices to make about developing others. Leaders choose when and how to coach, counsel, and mentor. Leaders



have the freedom to place people in the best situation to maximize their talents. Then the leader provides resources the subordinate needs to succeed, makes expectations clear, and provides positive, meaningful feedback.” Clearly, the onus is on the leader in setting the requisite conditions in providing sufficient developmental counseling of subordinates. ADP 6-22 is the most recent in a long line of ever-changing counseling doctrine.

Currently, multiple tools exist to help the leader in performing effective counseling. The NCO Evaluation Report (NCOER) Support Form (DA 2166-8-1), the Officer Evaluation Report (OER) Support Form (DA 67-10-1A), and the Army Developmental Counseling Form (DA Form 4856) all provide opportunities for teaching, coaching, mentoring, and developing Soldiers and future leaders. The documents allow the leader to explain expectations of the counseled and “what right looks like” in order to succeed. Furthermore, Army Regulation (AR) 623-3, *Evaluation Reporting System (ERS)*, details the importance and significance of counseling. Specifically, the regulation states, “It is easy to speak of ‘getting an OER’ or ‘giving an NCOER,’ but proper leadership and counseling is more intensive than just writing an assessment. The difficulty involved in the evaluation process is it requires all members of the rating chain — the rated Soldier and his leadership — to ensure all the requisite developmental counseling is performed and that personal relationships are maintained.” AR 623-3 and the rest of the present-day counseling tools clearly support the Army counseling system.

Nevertheless, there is no single form, doctrinal manual, or regulation that alone creates a perfect system. It is a leader responsibility to make the Army counseling system a success. Having said that, effective counseling does not always have to take place using written documentation; verbal counseling is a powerful form of counseling conducted on a daily basis. The daily interaction between leader and subordinate builds a solid working relationship that can influence a junior Soldier’s growth. There are obligatory counseling sessions, such as for the OER and NCOER, but powerful and routine non-standard counseling can support a junior Soldier’s development and career progression.<sup>4</sup>

Today’s counseling shortcomings are nothing new to the Army. As early as 1965, Chaplain Irvin Marks published a monograph focusing on his concerns regarding Army counseling. Chaplain Marks described in-depth how chaplains and leaders should handle “ineffective Soldiers.”<sup>5</sup> In the article, he also delineated multiple recommendations for developing Soldiers to their fullest potential, which included the necessity for leaders to truly understand their subordinates as a means for guiding and conducting influential counseling. Also, in early 2012, COL Adam Roth, the deputy assistant commandant for the U.S. Army Engineer School, wrote an article focused on the “lost art of garrison” titled “The Delta: The Challenge of Leading Extraordinary People to Do Ordinary Things.”<sup>6</sup> COL Roth highlights numerous instances showing outgoing Engineer School students never receiving proper instruction on how to conduct useful subordinate counseling. Years of

*...There is no single form, doctrinal manual, or regulation that alone creates a perfect system. It is a leader responsibility to make the Army counseling system a success. Having said that, effective counseling does not always have to take place using written documentation; verbal counseling is a powerful form of counseling conducted on a daily basis. The daily interaction between leader and subordinate builds a solid working relationship that can influence a junior Soldier’s growth.*

neglect and misunderstanding have created an Army culture which has overlooked the critical nature of counseling.<sup>7</sup>

In September 2014, *Army* magazine published an article written by MAJ Melanie Kirchoff, which stressed a systemic failure in the current Army counseling system.<sup>8</sup> MAJ Kirchoff interviewed several field grade and general officers to gain senior leader opinions on the effectiveness of the Army counseling system. According to MAJ Kirchoff, the study showed that “the counseling system is underutilized, lacks candid evaluations, and is providing little guidance or follow-through on improvement programs. Coaching and mentoring are practically nonexistent.”<sup>9</sup> MAJ Kirchoff provides two recommendations for improving the quality of Army counseling. First, and most importantly, she calls on greater command influence throughout the chain of command to employ the existing counseling structure. Second, MAJ Kirchoff believes leader training and the inclusion of counseling packets in organizational inspection programs (OIP) would improve the failing system. MAJ Kirchoff provides solid options for refining an Army counseling system in serious decline.

There are certainly things that the Army can do to improve its counseling record. Five potential solutions exist for revitalizing leader culpability. First, to assist in accountability, the Army could develop an online system to aid counselors, commanders, and leaders in tracking the who, what, where, when, and why of counseling through the use of Army Knowledge Online (AKO). AKO offers an efficient method for keeping leadership and Soldiers “on azimuth” with the standards generated by doctrine and in meeting counseling requirements. The use of a centralized system like AKO could benefit the Soldier, leader, and the Army, as it would alert Soldiers and supervisors of a scheduled or required counseling session. AKO could establish a system for the counseled to anonymously provide frank feedback on the value of the counseling session in efforts to improve the overall Army system. Moreover, AKO could categorize the forms of counseling and note if a delinquency exists. Similar to the “My Medical” or “My Training” portion of AKO, the “My Counseling” section would serve as the administrative supporter to both the counselor and counseled as an online enabler.

Second, the Army could re-emphasize some of the ideas from the often forgotten “payday activities.” In the past, payday activities was a once-a-month garrison event which routinely included inspections of dress uniforms and barracks cleanliness. More importantly, however, payday activities regularly encompassed monthly counseling of Soldiers and subordinates. With the re-invigoration of payday activities, the Army could support and place the needed emphasis on scheduled counseling without creating any significant changes to a unit’s monthly battle rhythm. A return to a consistent implementation of payday activities would have the intended consequences of developing junior officers and Soldiers while reinstating a garrison tradition.

Third, as part of its NCOER and OEF process, it would behoove the Army to include a clear way of indicating that a Soldier received proper counseling (not just what is mandated) throughout the year. As MAJ Kirchoff recommended, counseling packets should be a routinely inspected item on an OIP.<sup>10</sup> In recent evaluation forms, such as the obsolete DA 67-9 OER, there was a requirement for the rater to indicate if an appropriate level of counseling took place. However, the Army failed to employ a system of “checks and balances” as it never verified if consistent counseling actually materialized. MAJ Kirchoff’s argument for scrutinizing counseling packets during OIPs would not only help ensure that routine and personalized counseling transpired, but it would also promote a “culture of counseling” throughout the Army that would influence the next generation of Army leaders.

Fourth, unit leadership should incorporate “how to conduct effective” counseling sessions into their periodic leadership professional development (LPD) programs since counseling requirements impact both NCOs and officers. Through the conduct of LPDs, leaders at all levels provide the needed command emphasis on the importance of counseling. Using the LPD program to improve the counseling capabilities of all leaders would ensure a shared understanding of this vital responsibility while building “garrison” competencies required for developing future Army leadership.

Fifth, the Army must do a better job incorporating and expanding the art of counseling in the school house, starting in the Basic Leaders Course through captains career courses. As mentioned by Roth, junior leaders depart the school house lacking the requisite knowledge on how to conduct influential counseling of subordinates. To help solve this problem, the Army should immediately institute a greater academic emphasis on counseling at all junior leader schools. By implementing these five recommendations coupled with those highlighted by Kirchoff, Roth, and Marks, the Army can make huge strides in repairing a defunct counseling system.

Soldier improvement takes place over time through learning, training, observing, and experiencing the daily challenges of the Army. The Army counseling system synthesizes all of these aspects of leader and Soldier development through honesty and candor. However, almost 15 years of war and continuous conflict have put a dent in this important leadership responsibility. Commanders and leaders have allowed critical events like counseling to become a secondary task. To solve the crisis, this article recommends the enactment of five initiatives: a counseling tracker on AKO, an evaluation of counseling packets as part of a mandatory portion of OIPs, the revitalization of “payday activities” to normalize routine counseling, improving upon institutional counseling instruction, and the incorporation of counseling within the unit-level LPD program.

Counseling has become a lost art, which requires a mental paradigm shift to once again place this developmental function at the top of any leader’s priority list. There is an art and science to war which should also be applied to the Army counseling system. In the case of leader development, the science of synchronizing counseling will support the artful essence of steady, but more importantly meaningful, one-on-one counseling for the most important asset the Army has to offer — the Soldier.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Melanie Kirchoff, “Does the Army Promote Competence in its Officers?” *Army* 64, no. 9 (09, 2014): 24.

<sup>2</sup> Field Manual (FM) 22-101, *Leadership Counseling* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1974), i.

<sup>3</sup> Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 6-22, *Army Leadership* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), i.

<sup>4</sup> AR 623-3, *Evaluation Reporting System*, B-3.

<sup>5</sup> Irvin Marks, “Counseling the Ineffective Soldier” (Monograph, Army Chaplain School, 1965), 21, accessed 7 March 2015, [https://archive.org/stream/counselingineffe00mark/counselingineffe00mark\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/counselingineffe00mark/counselingineffe00mark_djvu.txt).

<sup>6</sup> COL Adam S. Roth, “The Delta: The Challenge of Leading Extraordinary People to Do Ordinary Things.” *Engineer* 42, no. 1 (January 2012): 6.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> AR 6-23-3, 22.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Kirchoff, 25.

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# GATEWAY TO THE BATTLEFIELD: *A SNIPER AND HIS OPTIC*

Photo by SGT Trey Harvey

## SSG CHRISTOPHER RANCE

**A** defining moment for a sniper is when he can positively identify a threat within his area of operation and exercise certain actions, from an intelligence report to target neutralization. The ability to identify a target is vital in a stability operation or counterinsurgency (COIN) environment, where precisely aimed fire is at a premium and collateral damage isn't an option.

### **The Basics: Calibrating your Rifle Zero**

Military sniping is an application that involves both precision and accuracy. Precision is a characteristic of both the rifle and ammunition. Precision is how well it prints group sizes whereas accuracy is an indication of how a group of shots hit relative to the intended aim point, regardless of group size. The key to great accuracy is having a reliable zero. When you zero your weapon from different support positions, you can incur a different point of impact (POI). For the traditional sniper role, this will be from the prone bipod position. Realistically, the sniper will not always be able to shoot from the prone bipod position.

Positional shooting (kneeling, standing) and even off a tripod is highly likely. A recommendation is to analyze POI shifts from those alternate support positions on a dot drill target at your zero range. If you see that when you shoot off a tripod you generally shoot .2 MILS low, you can accommodate for that error and add .2 MILS to your firing solution. Other POI shifts in your weapon's zero can come from temperature effects and harmonics. Annotate these changes and account for them. Lastly, when zeroing, a three-shot group isn't recommended. A five-round shot group shot five times will give a good representation of the rifle's inherent precision.

Uncalibrated sight adjustments are a common problem in long-range shooting. Many snipers take for granted that when they dial up or hold a certain correction in a reticle that they're getting exactly the intended correction. In reality, it's generally more often that there is some amount of error in a scope's turret or reticle. As with every other measurement instrument, the turrets and reticle need to be verified before they can be trusted. The test to use to conduct the calibration



is called the “tall target test.” The test is conducted in the following manner:

1. Put up a tall target (36 inches tall) at your 100 meter/yard zero range. Have an aim point at the bottom of the target and a plumb line (leveled line) drawn up from the center of the aim point. You can use a carpenter’s level or a plumb bob to draw the vertical line.

2. Shoot the lower aim point to verify your zero. Now dial your elevation turret up 30 MOA or 10 MILS. Still shoot at the aim point when doing this.

3. After you have fired your groups, you can calculate the correction factor for that given scope. Measure from the zero group to the actual group for your 30 MOA increment.

Correction Factor: 1 MOA equals 1.047 inches at 100 yards so 30 times 1.047 equals 31.41 inches. Let’s say your scope only moved 29.5 inches; it’s only moving 94 percent as far as it

should when it’s adjusted, 6 percent less than it should move. Therefore, when you have to dial for elevation, you have to dial 106 percent of the intended adjustment. Example: You have a target that requires 30 MOA of elevation, but by doing the tall target test, you know that you actually need to dial 30 times 1.06 equals 31.8 MOA in order to get a true 30 MOA on the scope.

**(Note: Remember, the tall target test is a calibration exercise, so it’s very important to know the exact zero range. Verify with a laser range finder or tape measure.)**

The tall target test is also a way to check if your scope is vertically tracking correctly. You want to eliminate any cant. Leveling your scope is very important and a necessity for long-range shooting. Shooting with a verified leveled rifle and scope will promote in better wind reading since it will allow you to observe wind effects directly without an unknown component of cant. By shooting the tall target test with your level installed, you will assure your wind zero is calibrated. Every sniper should have a scope level installed in order to prevent the accuracy-damaging effects of cant.

### MOA Consistency Errors

When it comes to an MOA standard across the industry, many manufacturers fall short. Many manufacturers will advertise MOA adjustments but fail to specify if the turrets and/or reticle are SMOA (shooter minute of angle 1 MOA=

1 inch at 100 yards), IPHY (inches per 100 yards) or TMOA (true minute of angle = 1.047 inches at 100 yards). This type of error equals a miss at 1,000 yards. This can create a huge dilemma for a sniper team if one shooter is using X brand of scope and the other is using Y brand of scope. You’re speaking two different languages.

### Echelons of Capability

The latest craze taking over the military sniper community is the use of MIL-based grid system reticles, which are calibrated in USMC mils (6283 mils/circle) (1 mil = 3.60 inches at 100 yards) (10cm at 100 meters). These reticles let you visually place the target on the appropriate horizontal and vertical grid lines to correct for elevation and windage visually without turning knobs or counting clicks. These reticles are great for when you are in desert mountainous regions where you can generally see dust fly from misses, but once you move into an area of operation where foliage is dense, this type of reticle gets lost.

### The Designated Marksman Solution

Generally, designated marksmen (DM) are rightly being placed on support-by-fire lines. Effective support by fire is critical for the assault team’s success and safety. DM’s have the ability to engage point targets on the objective in close proximity to the assaulters. Today’s battle rifles — outfitted with a variable power, lightweight scope — give the DM an ideal platform to deliver 175 grains of diplomacy onto targets of opportunity.

### Magnification

Magnification is a function of mission requirement, weight, cost, and bulk. Magnification is an enabler when it comes to acquiring positive identification on a HVT (high value target) or the presence of small arms. A magnified scope will allow the sniper or DM to identify further and faster than shooters with minimal magnification. Nine or 10x magnification will get you to 1,000 yards, but magnification greater than 10x will give you precision aiming for smaller targets or partially exposed targets. One thing to be cautious of in first focal plane (FFP) scopes is the stadia line thickness increases with magnification, which could hinder the sniper in refining his aim point. Scopes with larger magnifications (3-20x and greater) tend to be heavier and bulkier than their lighter counterparts. Weight is an important consideration when it comes to mission planning. In the end, the **mission** will drive the tools necessary to complete the mission. Snipers need to continue to evolve and progress. Don’t let the lessons we learned from over a decade of fighting go by the wayside with the drawdown. Continue to reinvent the wheel and fine-tune the greatest all-weather, day or night, offensive and defensive firing platform — the SNIPER!

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**SSG Christopher Rance** continues to serve in the U.S. Army in a variety of sniper specific roles and is a two-time International Sniper Competition competitor.

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# WINNING THE LAST BATTLE: INACTIVATION

CPT AUBREY INGALLS

The impact and threat of future sequestration is real and would be felt at every level of the force. The resulting effect of the 2011 sequester was the inactivation of 13 brigade combat teams (BCTs) and three aviation brigades.

One of those BCTs — the 4-2 Stryker Brigade Combat Team (SBCT) — inactivated upon return from its Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) 12-13 deployment. The inactivation concept required an unfamiliar approach, and the process proved to be incredibly painful. The two primary reasons the inactivation of our companies and battalions was so difficult were:

- 1) There was no step-by-step blueprint for closing shop, and
- 2) The company-level supply sergeants and executive officers (XOs) did not realize until late in the process just how much initiative they needed to exercise from the outset.

The purpose of this article is to provide a general framework on which to base a battalion's inactivation plans and to alert

supply teams to possible pitfalls. The following lessons learned are from my perspective in the Raider Brigade as XO of Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC), 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry Battalion. As the battalion's final property holder, I learned many of these lessons the hard way. If I were to inactivate another battalion, I would focus on the following:

## Fix PBUSE and Trim the Books

Unfortunately, Property Book Unit Supply Enhanced (PBUSE) doesn't automatically update component listings to match the latest technical manuals (TMs). In fact, PBUSE allows users to alter or modify the component listings for any given end item. Odds are that your listings of components do not match the latest TM for any given end item. Fix this problem first because it will have to be done eventually in order to execute any lateral transfers. Besides, gaining units will use the latest TMs, just like you would.

Changes in PBUSE, of course, require commanders to re-inventory property to accurately reflect shortages. This is a good thing and the only way for commanders to prevent being left with the bill for years of bad record keeping.

If it is not prescribed property, it needs to go. Chances are good that a past commander put some fancy flashlights on the books for accountability after the deployment. While accountability is always commendable, a transaction must occur to remove them from the books.

Have the property book officer (PBO) pull them off the books and use them to bribe another unit: "If you sign for this trailer, you can have these super-cool flashlights!" If the PBO will not take them off the books, they will be the last item you transfer because no one wants to add 60 flashlights to their property book, especially when half are broken and



Photo by SPC Nathan Goodall

*In preparation for the 170th Infantry Brigade Combat Team's inactivation, a Soldier with the 2nd Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment loads equipment for turn-in onto a truck in Baumholder, Germany, on 21 May 2012.*

the manufacturer no longer makes replacement bulbs.

Also, equipment that belongs together but has been split into two line item numbers (LINs) — particularly Advanced System Improvement Program (ASIP) radios and Enhanced Position Location and Reporting System (EPLRS) radios — needs to be re-assembled in PBUSE to complete lateral transfers. Raise this issue early as it will likely require significant time to resolve.

**Empty Everything in Your AO**

Get into absolutely everything. Not just the closet on the third floor but also the mold-covered cardboard box underneath the wet mop heads in that very same closet. If it is not organizational or installation property, get it out and get it gone.

Ideally, all excess in the battalion is consolidated and grouped by like item to make “shopping” easier. Put a portion of the S4 section in charge of the consolidated excess and let them know that the sooner it all goes away, the sooner they can leave the unit.

There are a few ways to get rid of the endless amount of junk your unit has collected over the decades. The best and most obvious way is to fill shortages. (Good thing you just updated your shortages according to the latest TMs.) Not only is it the responsible thing to do, but it helps the unit that will eventually sign for the equipment.

The second way to get rid of excess is to let other units come “shopping.” The battalion’s consolidated excess can quickly be tallied on a document and sent all over the installation. Non-inactivating battalion XOs will jump at the chance to fill shortages for free.

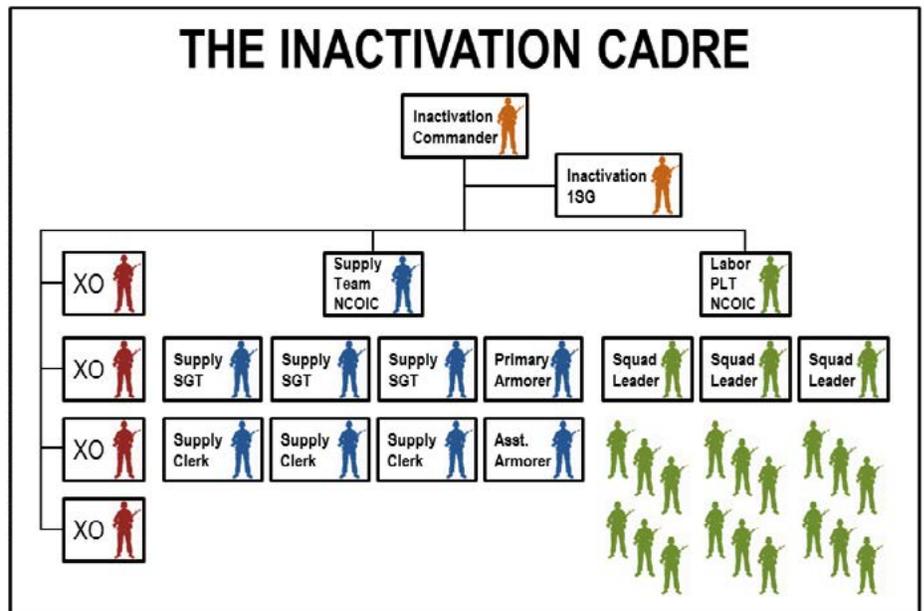
The last, best way to get rid of excess is the Supply Support Activity (SSA). They may not like it and may eventually stop taking any excess. So, make sure your supply sergeant keeps them on good terms and is the first to tap into their goodwill before it runs out.

Keep in mind that Soldiers love gear and gadgets. If it is excess and even somewhat interesting or useful, it will find its way into someone’s privately owned vehicle (POV) and maybe to the nearest surplus store. Develop controls to protect against the temptation of seemingly zero-consequence pilferage.

**Match the Battalion’s Task Organization to the Mission**

Accept that you are now in the export business. Be audacious and build your organization to do two things: move property and move people.

Set gates to ensure all companies are at the same or nearly the same point in the process when any new task/organization



**A Recommended Task and Organization**

takes effect. If A Company still has a basement full of supplies and has not updated PBUSE, then the inactivation cadre will waste precious time catching that company up when the companies merge.

Identify the commander and the cadre as early as possible. Company commanders, XOs, and the S4 make up the field of candidates for the role of inactivation commander. Every other key leader in the battalion will quickly disappear and move on to non-inactivating units. Numerous factors will determine the best choice, but whoever is chosen will remain until the bitter end.

Each company XO and supply team, of course, needs to be added to the cadre. However, if an XO, supply sergeant, or clerk is not a highly competent property manager, let her or him move on. A bad transaction can easily do more damage than good.

Perhaps the most important is to crown one supply sergeant as the king of the hill. Rank immaterial, the most organized supply sergeant with the best relationships on the installation is my choice 10 times out of 10. Do not overlook the S4 NCOIC for this role.

Ensure enough Soldiers are added to the inactivation cadre to facilitate lateral transfers. To build a fast and agile labor platoon, the NCOs and Soldiers must be unburdened by physical profiles or recurring appointments and be capable of operating with minimal guidance.

**Consolidate Property**

The seemingly obvious technique for property management is for company XOs to own their respective companies’ unit identification codes (UICs) as primary hand receipt holders. As an advantage, this structure maximizes time at the front end by allowing individual companies to pursue turn-ins and transfers early in the process. In fact, this is the course my battalion pursued.

Later, we realized the flexibility we gained actually de-synchronized our collective progress and restricted our ability to mass and concentrate along lines of effort. More time was lost in the long run as supply teams from each company fought the same battles to move the same equipment while needing the same support assets. The S4 had far more coordinations to make and transactions to track than was necessary.

Based on that experience, I recommend the following configuration: the inactivation commander is the primary hand receipt holder of all the battalion property. The XO's are sub-hand receipt holders but not of their previous companies' property. Instead, the commander sub-hand receipts property to the XO's by LIN. This, of course, requires significant effort in the form of more inventories. The payoff, though, will be obvious when entire LINs of property are turned in and transferred off the property book.

For example, the A Company XO signs for all high mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicles (HMMWVs), medium tactical vehicles (MTVs), water trailers, M4 rifles, and M240 machine guns. The B Company XO signs for all commo equipment, tents, and optics. And so on. This enables each XO to focus on finding "buyers" for only a handful of LINs instead of each XO finding "buyers" for every LIN. Additionally, this arrangement allows the closure of the other companies' UICs, meaning many green boxes on the brigade's tracker.

### Reduce your Footprint

The installation property book office (IPBO) requires buildings to be in a high state of repair for turn-in. Walls must be painted, broken windows fixed, and four keys on hand per locking door. Many man-hours are needed, so it is better to do the work of getting smaller while the battalion is still large.

Do not get caught with only your inactivation cadre remaining to turn in hundreds of desks, chairs, lockers, shelves, conference room tables, and fake trees with no vehicles or licensed drivers available. Phase IPBO turn-ins to match the departure of troops from the unit.

Arms rooms are treated separately from their parent buildings. Prepare the memos, schedule the inspections, and turn them in whether the larger building is ready or not. Be careful, though, not to consolidate sensitive items into one arms room before you are ready. Sharing arms rooms among UICs is procedurally and practically complicated.

Ultimately, the inactivation cadre will occupy one or two offices in a building that the brigade owns. Emptying and clearing the battalion motor pool is a big obstacle to that end. Do not delay closing the motor pool for the sake of a few trucks and trailers. If you must park vehicles in the company area, so be it. To speed the process, send Soldiers to help the maintenance team as they execute vehicle services and their own inactivation.

*Do not get caught with only your inactivation cadre remaining to turn in hundreds of desks, chairs, lockers, shelves, conference room tables, and fake trees with no vehicles or licensed drivers available. Phase IPBO turn-ins to match the departure of troops from the unit.*

When and if another sequestration forces additional cuts to the Army's formations, all Soldiers will cross their fingers in the hope that their unit is left intact. When and if that sequestration includes the inactivation of your unit, I am hopeful that this article will provide some measure of assistance in making that process more manageable. Finally, I leave you with 10 tips to make the actual movement of property easier. As with the rest, I learned most of these lessons the hard way.

### Thoughts on Transfers and Turn-ins

1. Find logical "buyers." For combatives gear, try the fight house.

2. The fastest transfer or turn-in is the best; in the end, it does not matter who takes your property. If the fight house will take your gear next week, but the chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, explosives (CBRNE) unit will take it today... it looks like a rumble in the gas chamber to me.

3. Train and license every member of the inactivation cadre for cargo vehicles; most property can be moved by POV but not all.

4. Prioritize the transfer of unique S6 equipment; it is the hardest to transfer because either no one knows what the equipment actually is or it is an out-dated version.

5. Do not turn in equipment due for reset — transfer it.

6. Off-post lateral transfers are the most painful process in the history of humankind. Before your division is forced to find a unit on the other side of the world to take your equipment, exhaust every means to transfer it locally.

7. For off-post lateral transfers, send a Soldier to hand-walk the transaction through to completion. Without a hands-on system, you will not see your DA 3161s for a very long time.

8. Get a head start on vehicle and generator maintenance and services. Many of the 4-2 SBCT Strykers required significant work to be turn-in ready.

9. Use the Directorate of Logistics (DOL), the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA, formerly known as DRMO — the Defense Reutilization and Marketing Office), and IPBO to get rid of as much as you can before those resources are closed.

10. Except computers and printers for the inactivation cadre, do not hold equipment or installation property in reserve once the commanders and battalion staff have left the unit.

At the time this article was written, **CPT Aubrey Ingalls** was attending the Maneuver Captains Career Course at Fort Benning, Ga. He currently is serving as commander of A Company, 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, Fort Polk, La. He served as XO of 4-9 IN, 4-2 SBCT at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash. CPT Ingalls has a bachelor's degree in English from Kennesaw State University in Georgia.

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# FIRES UNDER RESOLUTE SUPPORT



Photos by CPT Charlie Emmons

## ***INTEGRATING INDIRECT FIRES IN A NON-COMBAT MISSION***

**CPT STEVE THOMAS**

**A**s coalition forces have transitioned from combat operations under Operation Enduring Freedom to a strictly advisory role in Operation Resolute Support, the need for lethal fires has diminished significantly. The amount of combat patrols conducting kinetic missions necessitates far fewer fire missions, and our limited combat power simply does not demand the volume of indirect fire once commonplace in Afghanistan. Although fairly limited in scope, accurate indirect fires remain vital to overall security. Integrating fires, even in this non-combat mission, is essential to our overall security and force protection.

Task Force War's primary mission is to provide security to both Operating Base (OB) Fenty and the Police Advisory Team while simultaneously providing critical life support functions on the base. LTC Jason Curl, commander of the 1st Squadron, 33rd Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Infantry Division, is also the ground force commander responsible for security in the surrounding ground defense area (GDA), an area surrounding OB Fenty in which he is tasked with securing and defending the base. Task Force War also provides security for the advisory team, transporting and securing the advisors in different locations throughout Nangarhar Province.

Historically, the primary threat to Jalalabad Army Airfield has been indirect fire consisting of both 107 and 122mm

rockets. Throughout the past two years, OB Fenty has been targeted by more than 70 rocket attacks. In nearly every instance, hostile forces positioned rocket systems on timers, launching volleys of rockets towards the airfield in an attempt to destroy coalition infrastructure and personnel. Even now, one of our top concerns is the indirect fire threat from multiple hostile forces throughout Nangarhar.

In the winter months, Jalalabad and the surrounding areas experience low cloud ceilings and frequent storms that constrain the use of airborne assets. Unfavorable weather consistently affects our operations, forcing last minute changes in patrols and advising missions. Inclement weather restricts patrols, limiting the overall projection of combat power. In light of these challenging environmental conditions, we have been able to retain a full complement of indirect fire capabilities from 60, 81, and 120mm mortars to M777A2 155mm howitzers. The howitzer platoon — consisting of artillerymen from the 3rd Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment — provides 24-hour coverage for both preplanned missions and counterfire operations. Artillery fires provide an all-weather capability to the task force commander, enabling him to quickly respond to an indirect fire attack and project combat power when unmanned and rotary wing assets are grounded.

In order to minimize unnecessary troops on the ground and limit exposure when conducting disruption operations, we have

utilized numerous nonstandard observer platforms in place of the standard 13F fire supporter. Attack aviation, unmanned aircraft, and static high-resolution cameras provide the ability to safely observe rounds without requiring observers to be physically present and still provide accurate fires. All assets are limited by the elements, but if weather is favorable, they provide an array of options that do not necessitate boots on the ground.

### Employment

The primary means to maintain proficiency and conduct preplanned fire missions is through observed fire training (OFT), a deliberate process that requires approval through our higher headquarters at Train, Advise, and Assist Command-East (TAAC-E). All targets are mensurated through the Combined Air Operations Center (CAOC) and are outside of the minimum safe distance for the 155mm projectile. We plan and resource these missions just as we would a patrol, providing task and purpose to the mission in order to produce measures of effectiveness that align with our commander's overall targeting guidance. While fires are not principally used for counterfire, OFTs instill confidence in the local population that we are protecting in the area, impact hostile forces, and maintain crew proficiency on the gun line as they conduct drills and rehearsals in preparation for routine fire missions.

Our unit, at multiple levels, takes great precaution in planning fires; therefore, no fire missions – precision or otherwise – are authorized within the minimum safe distance.

Throughout Nangarhar, hostile forces also emphasize collateral concerns, issuing guidance to avoid populated areas in order to minimize their negative effect on the civilian population. Historic points of origin are often in rural and uninhabited areas because ultimately the enemy's information operations campaign is just as important as ours. Indirect fires from OB Fenty directly impact their ability to stage and launch, complicating their decision-making process.

Precision munitions provide a more accurate first round, enabling accurate target engagement with fewer munitions. Critical to operations under Resolute Support, Excalibur and Precision Guidance Kit (PGK) provide reliable options that achieve effects on target with a significantly lower probability of collateral damage. Additionally, the increased range of the M982 Excalibur extends our overall reach to 37.5 kilometers, well beyond the GDA boundary.

TAAC-E employs a unique disposition that enables two bases — Tactical Base (TB) Gamberi and OB Fenty — to conduct fire missions with a shared fire direction center. The hot gun and Soldiers reside at OB Fenty providing 24-hour coverage, yet we maintain the ability to insert a section into TB Gamberi at any time and quickly establish firing capability. Similar to an artillery raid, the section occupies an already verified position, establishes a hasty fire direction center, establishes communications with higher headquarters, and is capable of providing lethal fires in support of TB Gamberi. This competency affords both ground force commanders

***While fires are not principally used for counterfire, OFTs instill confidence in the local population that we are protecting in the area, impact hostile forces, and maintain crew proficiency on the gun line as they conduct drills and rehearsals in preparation for routine fire missions.***

the ability to employ fires in support of preplanned missions and in extremis provide the ability to conduct defensive fires. This arrangement sends a strong message to hostile forces within each GDA that there is a weapon capable of incredible firepower in position and ready to fire. Such a unique ability also possesses significant limitations. Routine maintenance such as the fire control alignment test (FCAT), borescope, pullover gauge readings, and regular preventive maintenance checks are required by a force that is not consistently at the gun position. Additionally, all fire direction and communications equipment must be brought with the section for every fire mission.

### Preparation

Prior to the deployment, we conducted numerous live-fire training exercises, enhancing our overall ability to integrate joint fires. Through squadron live-fire exercises, a brigade air assault, and the joint forced entry at the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) at Fort Polk, La., leaders and Soldiers were equipped for the mission sets required in Resolute Support.

In May 2014, to prepare for JRTC Rotation 14-09 and the upcoming deployment, 3-320th FA invited LTC Scott Collins and the PGM (precision-guided munitions) Fires Team from Fort Sill, Okla., to Fort Campbell. His team conducted initial precision fires training which integrated fire supporters, fire direction and howitzer personnel, and battalion leadership. The training provided a general overview of the capabilities of precision munitions and gave practical guidance on how to employ precision munitions as an observer, FDC, gun line, and as a higher headquarters. The introductory course set the stage for additional hands-on training at Fort Polk, whereby the platoon fired 17 M795 with PGK throughout the rotation. Throughout JRTC and our time in theater, we fired 22 rounds with an overall circular area of less than 36 meters. Overall, TCM Fires at Fort Sill reports an average success rate of 85 percent. Of the 22 rounds fired, only one failed to function, resulting in a reliability rating of 95 percent.

Most of the firing section from Cobra Battery, 3-320 FA participated in the precision fires training at JRTC. Eighteen out of 22 Soldiers conducted the training and received initial instruction and practical application of the PGK and Excalibur. Once on ground, SFC Erik Olson, the section's platoon sergeant, and SSG Benjamin Gonzales, the fire direction NCO, conducted refresher training to solidify proficiency. The

squadron fires cell conducted numerous rehearsals, ensuring fire direction procedures to regain expertise in the employment of precision munitions.

### Implementation

Within the confines of Resolute Support, the overall purpose of fires in this dynamic environment is to augment force protection, extending our operational reach to areas unable to be influenced by a more consistent presence on the ground.

One of our greatest fears in establishing a firing point on a base that has not housed an artillery platform in several years is the effect on the local populace. After all, the M777A2 is a violently loud 155mm cannon. OB Fenty is situated on the outskirts of Jalalabad, directly adjacent to numerous houses. Firing such a weapon could undoubtedly disrupt and annoy the neighboring community; however, this is not the case. Simply stated, since we began regularly firing the howitzer in support of defensive operations, rocket attacks in the area have decreased dramatically. Local maliks readily admit their dissatisfaction with the loud noises in the middle of the night but praise the results. They are more confident that we are able to provide indirect fire deterrence and have commended LTC Curl that he has provided such a capability in support of Jalalabad Army Airfield .

Being at an airfield, airspace synchronization plays

a significant role during each fire mission. To avoid any synchronization conflicts, the howitzer is positioned away from the flight line and the gun target line is directed away from the airfield and oriented towards our primary threat. Prior to firing, we establish a restricted operations zone (ROZ) that limits aircraft along the gun target line. Through these simple parameters, we are capable of firing without significant airspace clearance headaches. Consistent communication with the airspace control tower and the local aviation unit alleviates most issues, enabling simple airspace clearance for any fire mission in what would otherwise be a difficult problem set.

With our restricted ability to project combat, indirect fires allow us to impact areas across the battlefield. Although considered a training mission, precision indirect fires enable us to accurately fire fewer rounds with minimal circular error, significantly decreasing the likelihood of collateral damage while simultaneously enhancing force protection. Coupled with focused intelligence collection, artillery fires prove an invaluable resource that enhances our presence throughout the GDA, providing both lethal and nonlethal capabilities throughout TAAC-E.

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**CPT Steve Thomas** is currently serving as the fire support officer for the 1st Squadron, 33rd Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault).

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*Artillerymen from the 3rd Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), conduct M777 Howitzer training with precision-guided munitions on 19 March 2015 at Operational Base Fenty, Afghanistan.*

# THE BATTLE OF LZ X-RAY: PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF A COMPANY COMMANDER

CPT ROBERT H. EDWARDS

**Editor's Note:** CPT Robert H. Edwards commanded C Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, during the Battle of LZ X-Ray. The following is an excerpt of the battle analysis he wrote while attending the Infantry Officer Career Course at Fort Benning, Ga., in February 1967. Read the complete monograph at: [www.benning.army.mil/library/content/Virtual/Donovanpapers/Vietnam/STUP4/EdwardsRobert.H.CPT.pdf](http://www.benning.army.mil/library/content/Virtual/Donovanpapers/Vietnam/STUP4/EdwardsRobert.H.CPT.pdf).

## Introduction

The operation portrayed in this monograph was a small but highly significant phase of a much larger operation known as the Pleiku Campaign conducted by units of the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) from 23 October to 25 November 1965.

In mid-October 1965, a large North Vietnamese Army force attacked the Special Forces camp at Plei Me, located approximately 35 kilometers south of Pleiku. Subsequent

intelligence identified these forces as the 32nd and 33rd North Vietnamese Regiments. It was believed that these units were newly infiltrated from North Vietnam, and that they had a twofold mission in attacking the camp:

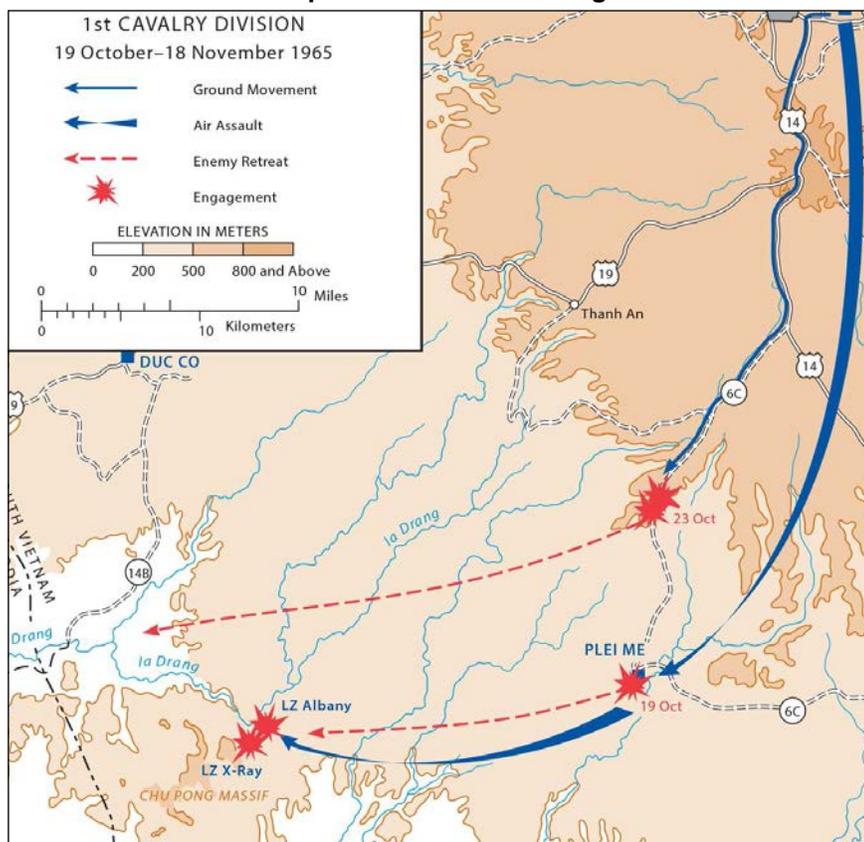
- First, it would serve as an introduction to battle for their troops, and
- Second, they would destroy any relief force committed to assist the besieged camp.

As a result of the heavy concentration of enemy forces in the area, the South Vietnamese II Corps commander decided to commit his corps' reserve forces to the battle. This action seriously depleted the defense of the vital Pleiku airbase complex. To bolster the defenses of this important logistical installation, on 22 October the commanding general of Field Forces Vietnam ordered the commanding general of the 1st Cavalry Division (Air Mobile) to deploy elements from its base at An Khe to the Pleiku area. The mission was to assist in the defense of installations at Pleiku and to prepare to reinforce II Corps forces in the relief of the Plei Me camp.

This initially small commitment grew larger, and the role of the 1st Cavalry Division was expanded when additional intelligence concerning the size and composition of the enemy forces was developed. The operation discussed in this article occurred after the initial division mission had been changed to that of finding, fixing, and destroying enemy forces in the area of operations.

By 25 October the Plei Me camp had been relieved, and the enemy was withdrawing west to its base area located in the Chu Pong Mountain complex. The enemy forces massing in this area were later identified as the two regiments previously listed and a third regiment — the 66th, all operating under the control of a field front headquarters. This headquarters is the equivalent of a U.S. Army division headquarters. The westward movement of the 32nd and 33rd Regiments (the 66th was not committed to the Plei Me camp battle) was subjected to constant harassment by units of the 1st Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, which was then operating in the area. Numerous enemy contacts were made, and the enemy

Map 1 — Battle of Ia Drang



Map courtesy of The U.S. Army Campaigns of the Vietnam War, Buying Time 1965-1966

suffered extensive losses of men, material, and equipment. On 9 November, the 3rd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division assumed responsibility for the conduct of operations in the area. For the next four days, search and destroy operations were conducted north, south, and east of the Plei Me camp with little enemy contact. Then came the turning point and the crucial days that followed.

### **The Plan**

By 13 November, it was obvious that the enemy was not located in force to the north, south, or east of Plei Me. Accordingly, at approximately 1700 on 13 November, the commander of the 3rd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division ordered the commander of the 1-7 CAV (LTC Harold G. Moore) to conduct a helicopter assault into the Ia Drang Valley early on 14 November to conduct search and destroy operations.

LTC Moore formulated his plan, assembled his staff, completed his coordination, and issued a warning order to the battalion. At 0830 the following morning, he issued the operations order (OPORD) at the battalion CP. During an early morning aerial reconnaissance, three potential landing zones (LZs) were identified — Tango, X-Ray, and Yankee. After further reconnaissance, Moore selected LZ X-Ray as the primary LZ and established 1030 as the time for the assault landing.

### **The Initial Assault, 14 November**

Last minute problems caused a delay in the start of the artillery preparation, which finally began at 1017. Aerial observers reported that the rounds were well placed on the LZ, in the trees and high grass around the LZ, and on the finger and draw leading down from the high ground northwest of the LZ. The artillery fire lifted, and the UH-1B helicopters of the aerial rocket artillery battalion (ARA) made a firing pass of the LZ and then commenced an on-call orbit nearby.

The gunships accompanying the lift ships preceded the landing with suppressive fire from their machine guns and rockets. The door gunners of the lift ships also contributed suppressive fire with their machine guns. The initial landing of B Company elements occurred at 1048. LTC Moore and his command group (the battalion command sergeant major, S2, two radio operators, and an interpreter) landed with the leading elements of B Company. The battalion S3, the artillery liaison officer, the helicopter liaison officer, and the Air Force forward air controller all operated from a command helicopter in orbit over the area. This group furnished aerial radio relay, coordination and control of supporting fires, and aerial observation throughout the day until darkness forced them to land at X-Ray.

B Company received no enemy fire on landing and commenced operations to secure the LZ. The lift ships immediately departed to pick up the remainder of B Company and the lead elements of A Company.

### **Securing the LZ and Initial Enemy Contact**

Immediately upon landing, B Company dispatched the rifle squads of one platoon on a quick reconnaissance of the LZ. These squads moved off the LZ in different directions for a distance of 50-100 meters. The B Company commander assembled the balance of his company as a striking force in a wooded area adjacent to the LZ. At 1120, one of the squads captured a prisoner. This individual was unarmed, carried an empty canteen, and was dressed in dirty khaki clothes with a serial number on one of his shirt epaulets. When interrogated he stated that he was a member of the North Vietnamese Army, that he had only eaten bananas for five days, and that there were three battalions on the mountain above the LZ that

*Soldiers with the 1st Cavalry Division disembark a UH-1 Iroquois helicopter in the Ia Drang Valley of Vietnam.*

U.S. Army photo



# 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF IA DRANG

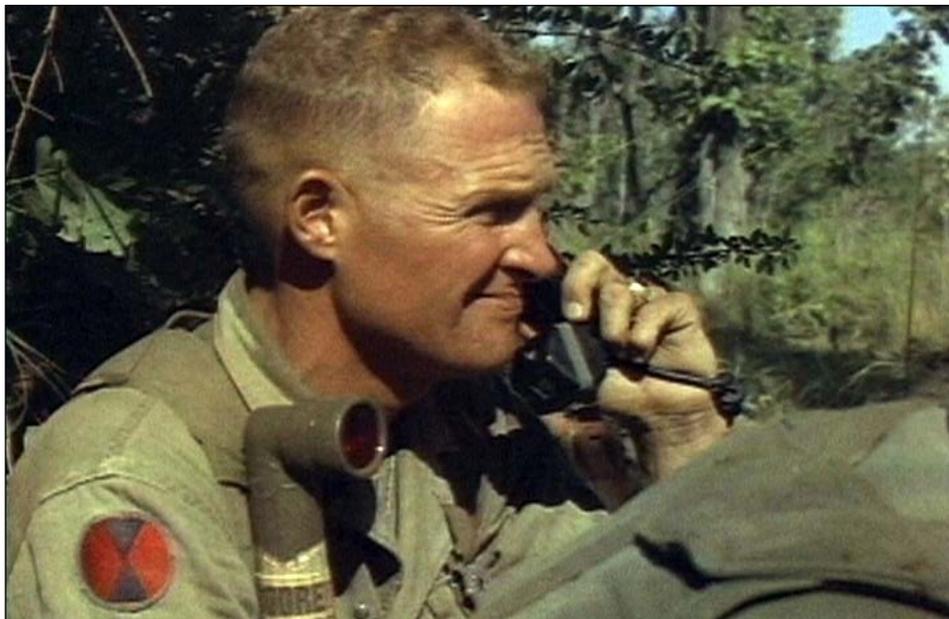


Photo extracted from U.S. Army motion picture footage

**LTC Harold G. Moore, commander of 1-7 CAV, on the radio during the fight for LZ X-Ray.**

wanted very much to kill Americans but had been unable to find any. The prisoner was then evacuated to the 3rd Brigade CP.

Based on this information, LTC Moore ordered the B Company commander to concentrate his reconnaissance efforts in the area where the prisoner was taken and to prepare to assume the C Company mission of searching the lower portion of the mountain, particularly the finger and draw to the northwest. By about 1210, elements of A Company had landed and assumed the LZ security mission from B Company.

By approximately 1220, B Company had made scattered contact with enemy riflemen near the mountain. The company was directed to assume the C Company mission and to develop the situation. As B Company started this task, LTC Moore alerted A Company to be prepared to follow B Company when sufficient forces from C Company had arrived to assume the LZ security mission.

At approximately 1245, the leading elements of B Company engaged in a firefight of moderate intensity. By 1330, the B Company commander reported that he was being heavily attacked by two enemy companies and that his right (north) platoon was in danger of being surrounded and cut off from the remainder of the company. As the fight in the B Company sector developed, a few rounds of mortar fire struck the LZ and portions of B Company.

The remaining elements of A Company and the lead elements of C Company landed about the time B Company reported the presence of two enemy companies. A Company was ordered to move up on the left (south) flank of B Company, establish physical contact with this flank, and protect it. Additionally, A Company was directed to send one platoon to

B Company to assist in preventing the B Company right flank platoon from being cut off.

C Company was directed to establish a blocking position off the LZ to the south and southwest. From this position, the unit could prevent the LZ from being attacked and protect the A Company left flank.

LTC Moore then contacted the command helicopter and issued instructions to his fire support liaison officers. Air strikes were requested in the following priority: on the lower portion of the mountain, on the mountain itself, and on enemy approaches into the LZ from the west and south. Similar target areas were designated for the artillery and ARA. Priority of fires went to requests from the rifle companies. In the absence of such requests, fire

was to be placed on suspected enemy locations in the target areas outlined above. Accurate placement of supporting fires was a serious problem for everyone. The terrain and heavy vegetation prevented pinpoint location of friendly units. B Company experienced the most problems as the right flank platoon became separated from the rest of the company and could not precisely locate itself to benefit from the available fire support.

This platoon fought a moving battle against an estimated 75-100 enemy. A and B Companies, unsure of the location of the separated platoon, were unable to bring artillery fire in front of their units to assist their movement. Instead, the artillery fire was placed well up on the mountain to the west and south, and then gradually "walked" down until it gave some support to these companies, especially A Company. Air strikes were delivered northwest of the LZ and on the suspected location of an enemy battalion reported by higher headquarters the previous day.

## **First Attack to Reach Surrounded Platoon and Defense of the LZ**

The A Company platoon sent to assist B Company engaged the enemy prior to reaching its destination, and when it finally made contact with B Company, found itself on the unit's right flank rather than the left as directed by the A Company commander. This situation caused some confusion until the exact location of this platoon was determined. B Company, with the platoon from A Company, pushed forward in an attempt to reach the separated B Company platoon. This attack managed to get within 75-100 meters of the separated platoon, but the enemy — positioned in force between the attacking units and the B Company platoon — inflicted moderate casualties and

stopped the attack short of its objective.

Meanwhile, A Company (-) moved toward the left flank of B Company when it made contact with an estimated enemy company that was moving along a dry creek bed parallel to the western edge of the LZ. This route led directly into the left rear elements of B Company. A Company engaged the enemy and was able to inflict heavy casualties with only light casualties on the friendly side. For some unknown reason, the enemy — apparently determined to maintain its movement toward the rear of B Company — kept moving into the massed fires of A Company. A Company took two prisoners, who were later evacuated.

As A Company engaged the enemy, the remaining platoons of C Company and the lead elements of D Company landed. The helicopters landed under enemy fire. Although several personnel were killed and wounded, no helicopters were shot down. Hearing this, LTC Moore stopped the lift of additional battalion elements until a later time.

The C Company commander positioned his platoons alongside the elements that had landed earlier. C Company had no sooner completed its hasty organization of the blocking position to the south and southwest when a force of 175-200 enemy, headed for the LZ, struck this area. For the next hour and a half, C Company fought the enemy in this sector, and with the assistance of artillery and ARA fire, defeated the attack and inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy. It captured and evacuated one prisoner during this battle.

The elements of D Company that landed with C Company included the company commander, his command group, the

antitank platoon (organized as a rifle platoon), and part of the mortar platoon. Upon landing, this force headed for the fighting in the A Company area. As they reached the dry creek bed, D Company ran into 25-30 enemy. D Company fought this enemy force, and assisted by elements of A Company, killed most of the enemy. During the fight, the D Company commander and the mortar platoon leader were seriously wounded but continued fighting until the enemy withdrew. The D Company commander relinquished command to the antitank platoon sergeant (the senior man present) and was then evacuated.

The C Company commander, at the conclusion of the D Company fight, contacted the NCO commanding D Company personnel, and with LTC Moore's permission, positioned them on the left (southeast) flank of C Company to provide added protection to the LZ.

At this time LTC Moore estimated that the battalion was fighting a force of 500-600 enemy, with others probably nearby. This fact, together with the numerous casualties suffered by the battalion, prompted Moore to request an additional rifle company from the 3rd Brigade commander. The request was approved; in fact, the brigade commander had anticipated the need for reinforcements and had already alerted B Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry for possible commitment to the area.

By approximately 1500, as a result of the fighting by C and D Companies, leaders determined the remainder of the battalion elements — which had been previously diverted from landing — could be brought in with a minimum of danger. These

forces — three UH-1D loads of C Company personnel and several loads of D Company personnel — landed without incident. The D Company executive officer arrived with these ships and assumed command of D Company. He positioned the battalion reconnaissance platoon on the eastern edge of the LZ. He then assumed control of the rifle company mortars (previously consolidated on the eastern side of the LZ by the C Company commander) and formed a composite mortar platoon by adding the mortars from D Company. The mortars were oriented toward the A and B Company sectors, with the mortar men also responsible for the defense of a portion of the LZ near their positions.



*Seven Firefights in Vietnam* by John A. Cash, John Albright, and Allan W. Sandstrum

**Infantrymen from the 1st Cavalry Division advance at LZ X-Ray.**

## 2nd Attack to Reach Surrounded Platoon

It was now approximately 1545. The surrounded platoon had moved with its dead and wounded to a small rise of ground and established a 25-meter wide perimeter. The platoon had fought off all enemy attempts to defeat it.

A and B Companies, under cover of heavy artillery fire, withdrew slightly, evacuated their casualties, and prepared for a coordinated attack to reach the surrounded platoon. The battle in the C Company area was in its closing stages.

At 1620, A and B Companies launched the second attack to reach the surrounded platoon. This attack was supported by massed artillery and ARA fire. The enemy — despite constant bombardment by artillery, air strikes, and ARA — had become well entrenched in the area between the attacking companies and the surrounded platoon. The enemy made maximum use of the terrain and vegetation to provide cover and concealment for its positions. Snipers occupied the trees and numerous automatic weapons were emplaced behind the ant hills in the area.

A and B Companies made only slight progress in the direction of the surrounded platoon. A Company gained at most 150 meters while B Company advanced only 75-100 meters. The enemy inflicted numerous casualties on the attacking friendly units. A Company lost all three rifle platoon leaders, either killed or wounded in action (KIA/WIA), plus its artillery forward observer. The enemy almost succeeded in drawing one of A Company's rifle platoons into a trap. By falling back in front of this platoon and holding in front of others, the enemy soon had this platoon in front of the other advancing elements. Then the enemy attempted to maneuver a force behind this leading platoon. The platoon detected the enemy movement though, and under cover of white phosphorous artillery fire that seemed to disorganize the enemy, the platoon fell back and rejoined A Company. This ended the second attempt to reach the B Company platoon.

## Establishing the Perimeter

At 1740 hours with an estimated 200 enemy fighting against A and B Companies, LTC Moore ordered these companies back to the LZ to establish a defensive perimeter for the night that was fast approaching. The surrounded platoon remained in radio contact with B Company and held firm against the enemy. Surprisingly, this platoon suffered no additional casualties before being reached the next day. The radio link enabled friendly artillery to establish a ring of protective fire around the platoon whenever the need arose.

Activity now concentrated on the establishment of a strong defensive perimeter in addition to water and ammunition resupply. A and B Companies had suffered numerous casualties which needed evacuation. Both companies required

reorganization because of the high number of leader casualties suffered during the day. C Company, in fighting from a hasty defensive position, had not suffered excessive casualties. The enemy had ceased his attacks in this sector but maintained contact with snipers and harassing fire. D Company, after its initial losses, had not sustained further casualties.

Between 1705 and 1800, B Company, 2-7 CAV arrived on the LZ and occupied a position on the perimeter to the northeast. One platoon was attached to C Company, 1-7 CAV since C Company had a relatively wide sector to defend. This platoon was positioned on the right flank.

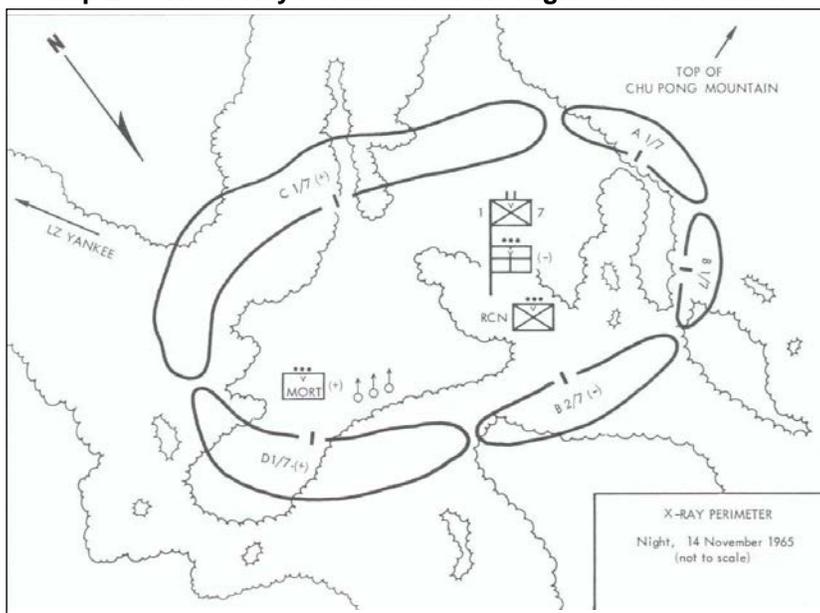
The battalion reconnaissance platoon was placed in battalion reserve near the battalion CP. The perimeter was complete by 1900, and defensive fires were registered.

## Activities During the Night of 14-15 November

With the perimeter established, the battalion commenced activities designed to defend the LZ and prepare for the next day's actions. Artillery concentrations were adjusted on all sides of the perimeter. Resupply was accomplished, and units reorganized their chains of command to counteract the loss of leaders and other key personnel. Morale was high; the men knew they had inflicted heavy losses on the enemy. For most personnel, this was their first experience in heavy combat, and they were pleased to know that they could and did perform well.

The enemy conducted several small probes of the perimeter during the night, but all were quickly detected and defeated. The groups of five to 10 enemy conducted the probes in apparent attempts to detect the location of the battalion's automatic weapons. The Soldiers maintained strict fire discipline and used only M-16 rifles and M79

Map 2 — The X-Ray Perimeter on the Night of 14 November



Seven Firefights in Vietnam by John A. Cash, John Albright, and Allan W. Sandstrom



*Photo courtesy of U.S. Army*

**MAJ Bruce Crandall's UH-1D helicopter climbs skyward after discharging a load of Infantrymen on a search and destroy mission.**

grenade launchers to fire against the probes. The artillery continued to fire throughout the night on suspected enemy locations around the perimeter and on the mountain above the perimeter.

The rapid pace of battle during the day prevented the construction of proper individual shelters. With the establishment of the perimeter came an attempt to dig some type of positions. Soldiers hastily constructed prone shelters but did not dig extensively for several reasons. First, it was not known if the enemy had the capability of launching a night attack; therefore, strict noise discipline was maintained to assist in detecting enemy movement toward the perimeter. Second, the tall grass in the area partially blocked observation, and deep foxholes would have increased the observation problem. Other than close-in local security, no listening posts or other security positions were established. The heavy vegetation and the threat of immediate enemy attack made the establishment of distant outposts impossible. In addition, protective artillery concentrations were fired within 100-150 meters of the perimeter, and this fire would have endangered friendly security positions.

The surrounded platoon of B Company held on despite enemy attempts to overrun it. Priority of fires was given to B Company; any call for fire to assist the isolated platoon was immediately answered. The enemy could be heard moving around the surrounded platoon, and each time the enemy seemed to be massing for an attack the platoon called for artillery fire. On several occasions screams and shouts from the enemy attested to the effect of this supporting fire.

An Air Force flare ship remained in the vicinity throughout the night awaiting illumination missions. On one occasion, an air strike on the mountain was conducted using the flare ship illumination for control. The strike was right on target. Illumination was not used since the light seemed to expose the men in the perimeter of the surrounded platoon as well as the positions within the battalion perimeter.

With the appearance of dawn at about 0630, plans were made to launch an attack to reach the surrounded platoon. LTC Moore called for the company commanders to meet him at the C Company CP (the best vantage point to observe the area) to finalize plans for the attack. Moore first directed that each company patrol forward of its positions in a search for infiltrators and snipers.

## Enemy Attacks in 15 November

The violence that characterized the fighting on the first day erupted anew at 0650 of the second day, 15 November. The patrols from the 2nd and 1st Platoons of C Company (the left or southeastern two platoons) each consisted of one rifle squad accompanied by the platoon leader. These patrols had moved about 150-200 meters in front of their positions in the search for enemy snipers and infiltrators when both patrols received heavy small arms fire. They returned fire and started back for their positions. At this time, the enemy launched a vicious attack at the C Company sector with a force of two to three companies. The patrols from the other two platoons of C Company (the 3rd Platoon and the attached 2nd Platoon from B Company, 2-7 CAV) received some enemy fire, probably an overlap from the firing to their left. They, too, started back for the company sector. The patrols from the 2nd and 1st Platoons suffered numerous casualties before they reached their defensive positions.

This seriously depleted the strength of the platoons defending the left portion of the C Company area, and this was where the brunt of the enemy attack struck.

The patrols from the other two platoons reached their positions without casualties. A heavy fight quickly developed in the C Company sector, with the bulk of the struggle centering in the area of 2nd, 1st, and 3rd Platoons (from left to right), and in front of the company CP. The enemy pressed his attack, and despite intense fire from artillery, ARA, TAC air, and small arms, reached the perimeter positions in the C Company area. The men of C Company stood their ground and limited the enemy's advance. Close range, at times hand-to-hand fighting, continued to rage in the C Company sector for more than two hours.

The enemy also attacked the battalion perimeter in the D Company area (at about 0715) and the A Company area (at about 0800). These attacks used smaller forces than that thrown against C Company and were repulsed by the defenders in the respective company areas. The attack in the D Company area forced LTC Moore to commit the battalion reserve (battalion recon platoon) to ensure the safety of the LZ. The reserve joined the fight, and after defeating the enemy attack, occupied a position in that area. These additional enemy attacks limited the landing of helicopters until approximately 0910.

At 0715, the C Company commander (who had been wounded early in the fighting but continued to command for three hours) requested reinforcements from LTC Moore after the enemy penetrated to within hand-grenade distance of the company CP. Moore ordered a platoon from A Company to move to the C Company area at about 0745. Due to the heavy fighting, this platoon did not reach C Company for approximately one hour.

Having committed his reserve and in light of the heavy enemy attacks and the losses being inflicted on the battalion,

LTC Moore requested another rifle company from 3rd Brigade. This reinforcement (A Company, 2-7 CAV) was already standing by but could not be moved until the LZ was determined safe for landing.

C Company (with attachments) continued to battle the enemy in a series of savage encounters. The intensity of the fighting in their sector is reflected in the following examples:

- The platoon leader of 1st Platoon was found KIA with five dead enemy in and around his position.
- One man was found KIA with his hands around the throat of a dead enemy soldier.
- All C Company officers were casualties by 0800, two KIA and three WIA.
- In the vicinity of the company CP, some 50 meters inside the perimeter, the company command group killed 15-20 enemy.

At approximately 0910, the leading elements of A Co, 2-7 CAV arrived on the LZ. After becoming oriented on the situation and terrain, the A Company commander took over positions previously held by B Company (-), 2-7 CAV. B Company (-), 2-7 CAV moved to the C Company, 1-7 CAV area, assumed control of the remaining C Company forces, and continued the defense of the sector.

By 1000 the enemy attack had been defeated, and units completed reorganization, resupply, and evacuation activities. At 1300 the units on the perimeter swept the area out to a distance of 300 meters. Evidence of the destruction dealt the enemy was everywhere. Dead enemy were scattered throughout the area; weapons, equipment, bandages, and bloody trails littered the ground. Two enemy prisoners were also captured.

C Company, 1-7 CAV was then positioned as battalion reserve near the battalion CP.

## The Rescue of the Surrounded Platoon

With the perimeter re-established and the enemy withdrawn, attention turned to the task of reaching the surrounded platoon. The 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry, which the 3rd Brigade commander positioned on LZ Victor late on 14 November, commenced a foot movement toward X-Ray at 0800, 15 November, and succeeded in reaching X-Ray at about 1205. The battalion commanders conferred and decided on a plan. A and C Companies, 2-5 CAV, with B Company, 1-7 CAV (under control of the commander of 2-5 CAV), would conduct a coordinated attack to reach the surrounded platoon. LTC Moore assumed control of B Company, 2-5 CAV and was responsible for the defense of the LZ during the rescue operation.

The attack to reach the surrounded platoon launched at 1315 after a heavy fire-support preparation. The enemy offered little resistance, and the rescue force reached the platoon at 1510. They had suffered 8 KIA, 12 WIA, and 7

were unwounded. There was still ammunition available, and the men were in good spirits.

The Soldiers moved back to X-Ray and established the perimeter for the second night.

### **The Second Night, 15-16 November**

During a relatively quiet afternoon, the troops occupying the perimeter made extensive improvements in their individual positions. This effort paid dividends as the enemy was not finished with the American force at X-Ray.

The perimeter remained quiet until 0100 when the enemy launched a five-man probe at the sector held by B Company, 1-7 CAV. Soldiers detected the enemy threat, however, and killed two enemy. Fire discipline remained excellent on the second night, and artillery fire continued to protect the perimeter as it did on the first night.

The enemy commenced a small probing action against the area defended by B Company, 2-7 CAV at 0400. At 0422 an enemy force of 250-300 troops attacked this area, the same area that had been struck on the morning of the 15th. B Company discovered the attack but didn't return fire until the enemy was clearly within small arms range. The company then retaliated with small arms, automatic weapons, and massed artillery fire from the four batteries now supporting the LZ. At 0430, the enemy launched another attack against the same area, which was quickly defeated. At 0500 the enemy tried again with 100 men from a more southwesterly direction. This attack also failed to penetrate the perimeter. At 0630 the enemy made a final unsuccessful attack, striking again from a southerly direction. B Company, 2-7 CAV had conducted a magnificent defense. Constant illumination from an Air Force flare ship and later from mortar and artillery shells seemed to

confuse the enemy, for each time a flare illuminated the area the enemy would hit the ground or attempt to hide in the grass and trees, thus disrupting the momentum of his attack.

### **The Final Day**

At 0655, all units on LZ X-Ray fired a coordinated "mad minute." This consisted of all personnel firing small arms and automatic weapons into the trees and possible enemy hiding places in front of their positions. This intended to prevent a recurrence of the previous morning's enemy assault at the perimeter. As soon as the firing began, an enemy force of 30-50 men jumped to their feet 150 meters in front of A Company, 2-7 CAV and fired their weapons. Artillery fire drove off the enemy.

Next, all units conducted a sweep of the area out to a distance of 500 meters. Executed at 0955, B Company, 2-7 CAV received enemy fire after moving only 50-75 meters. All units pulled back to the perimeter, and artillery and TAC air were again called on the area surrounding the perimeter. At the completion of this strike, the units continued the sweep, killing 27 enemy in the process. Like the sweep after the battle the previous morning, Soldiers discovered grim evidence of the heavy casualties suffered by the enemy force.

By 1200, the remainder of the 2-7 CAV landed at X-Ray and prepared to relieve 1-7 CAV. The 3rd Brigade commander ordered LTC Moore to move his battalion (plus B Company, 2-7 CAV and 3rd Platoon, A Company, 2-7 CAV) to LZ Falcon by UH-1D.

### **The Extraction from LZ X-RAY**

The remaining units at LZ X-Ray manned the perimeter while 1-7 CAV with attachments was extracted by helicopter. Additionally, artillery fire and TAC air strikes on the mountain above X-Ray kept the enemy from interfering with the movement. By 1500, the battalion had completed the movement to LZ Falcon. By 1830, all elements of the battalion with attachments had been further moved by air from Falcon to Camp Holloway near Pleiku airbase for two days of rest and reorganization.

### **Summary**

The examination of any military operation would be incomplete if an effort were not made to show how the particular operation contributed to the overall military effort. In this regard, there are several factors that should be considered to fully appreciate the significance of the three-day battle on LZ X-Ray:



*Seven Firefights in Vietnam* by John A. Cash, John Albright, and Allan W. Sandstrum

***Company B sweeps forward of the battalion perimeter during the Battle of Ia Drang.***

# 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF IA DRANG

(1) At that stage of the United States' involvement in Vietnam, the operations of 1-7 CAV at LZ X-Ray represented the first major engagement between a large U.S. force and units of the North Vietnamese Regular Army (NVA).

(2) The ability of the individual American Soldier to fight and defeat the NVA enemy was vividly demonstrated in a series of savage encounters.

(3) The techniques and tactics of Army air mobility, as developed and practiced by units of the 1st Cavalry Division, were subjected to the test of sustained combat and passed with flying colors. Relying entirely upon aerial resources, 1-7 CAV entered a hostile area, rapidly massed men and fire support to defeat a numerically superior enemy on his own ground, and conducted all logistical activities necessary to support the combat effort.

(4) The 1-7 CAV, with the support of massed artillery and close air support, was credited with the near annihilation of the 7th and 9th Battalions of the North Vietnamese 66th Regiment, plus the remnants of the 33rd Regiment. It is certain that these staggering losses, combined with the casualties inflicted on the enemy by other units of the 1st Cavalry Division, seriously disrupted the enemy's long range plans for the conquest of the vital Central Highland area of South Vietnam.

## Analysis and Criticism

The principles of war as outlined in FM 100-5, *Field Service Regulations: Operations*, provide a valuable aid in the analysis of this operation.

The ultimate objective of war — the destruction of the enemy's armed forces and his will to resist — was the sole objective of the operation. The battalion searched for the enemy and intended to inflict maximum punishment on him when he was discovered. The high number of enemy casualties is ample evidence of the successful accomplishment of this mission by the battalion.

Offensive action was achieved by initiating an attack in an area long recognized as an enemy base. The offensive thrust disrupted the enemy's attack plans and caused him to destroy much of his fighting strength in a series of futile attempts to dislodge the battalion from its positions in the landing zone.

The principles of mass and economy of force will be discussed simultaneously since they are so closely related. The battalion initially constituted a relatively small force searching for the enemy. When contact was made and it became apparent that a degree of massing was required, additional units were moved to the area. The helicopter must be recognized as the most important factor in the battalion's success in applying the principles of mass and economy of force. Using the helicopter, a small force can cover a large area. Upon making contact with the enemy, mass can quickly be achieved through the use of the helicopter to move units to the critical point.

Maneuver is evident in several instances. First, the sudden appearance of the battalion on the enemy's home ground forced the enemy into the position of defending its base from a potential threat. This gave the battalion a tactical advantage by requiring the enemy to fight under unfavorable circumstances. Second, the ability of the individual companies to rapidly change from their original missions once the situation developed, proved an important factor in the final outcome of the battle.

Unity of command was established from the beginning of the operation. The battalion commander was solely responsible for the actions of all units in the landing zone. Additional resources that were put into the area came under his control. The battalion commander reported to and responded to orders from one superior headquarters — the 3rd Brigade.

A constant flow of information on the enemy's movements and activities was supplied by the pilots of the numerous aircraft flying over the area. In this manner, a high degree of security was achieved. Likewise, positioning forces in a complete perimeter around the LZ prevented the enemy from gaining a tactical advantage and thus maintained the battalion's vital link with outside assistance.

Surprise was definitely another factor that contributed to the success of the operation. Before the enemy knew what was happening, a strong American force had landed and established a position from which it could not be moved. By the time the enemy had reacted in sufficient strength to make the landing of additional troops impossible, there were enough friendly forces on the ground to protect the landing zone. Then, with the support of almost unlimited fire power, the friendly force commenced inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy.

Any airmobile operation is, by its very nature, a complex combat operation. Simplicity must be gained through the utilization of a ground tactical plan that does not involve complex maneuvers. The battalion attempted to do this in formulating its tactical plan. An additional consideration in applying the principle of simplicity is the status of training of the unit and the familiarity of personnel with airmobile operations. Fortunately, Soldiers of the battalion had been working with the airmobile concept since July 1964 and were completely familiar with the techniques and tactics.

In the analysis of this operation, there are two important points that, above all others, contributed to the successful accomplishment of the battalion's mission:

(1) The coordinated utilization of all available means of fire support turned the tide of battle in favor of the battalion in the conduct of this operation against a numerically superior enemy force. The fact that the battalion S3, artillery liaison officer, and forward air controller were co-located in the command helicopter was a principle factor in the success of the fire-support effort. These individuals were in a position to

closely supervise and coordinate all fire-support means. This close association was maintained on the ground when these officers landed in the objective area.

(2) The ability of the companies to rapidly execute tactical maneuvers on the battlefield retained the initiative for the battalion, and B Company's initial thrust toward the enemy when contact was established, placed the battalion on the offensive. Had B Company delayed in this movement, the battalion could well have been trapped on the LZ from the very start. The swift movement of A Company to assist B Company certainly prevented a potential disaster by intercepting the enemy force driving into the rear of B Company. C Company, in quickly establishing a blocking position and repelling the enemy attack from the southwest, prevented the enemy from capturing the landing zone.

In a more critical sense, there are two areas that should be examined.

(1) The failure of the intelligence agencies to more accurately estimate the potential enemy threat in the area is important. The enemy strength was such that, had he been able to react more rapidly to the landing, he could have easily overwhelmed the friendly force on the LZ before sufficient troop strength was available to defend against his attack.

(2) The failure on the first night to sacrifice noise discipline in order to dig better shelters and clear fields of fire was the cause of a number of additional casualties on the morning of the 15th when the enemy attacked in strength.

The enemy must also be credited with some favorable achievements. The enemy made excellent use of the available cover and concealment by positioning his snipers in well-concealed areas and digging his automatic weapons into the bases of the ant hills. In this manner, the enemy was able to make the terrain work to his advantage. The accuracy of the enemy marksmen was excellent. A high percentage of friendly casualties were officers, other leaders, and radio operators. All were apparently especially selected sniper targets because of their important function of command and control.

One unfavorable aspect of the enemy should be noted. The enemy continued to use a mass attack formation against the same area of the perimeter after repeatedly being turned back.

It would appear, the enemy lacked either the flexibility to divert units from a previously selected course of action, or the command and control facilities to influence the action once it had commenced.

### **Lessons Learned**

1) Units must be cautious in their pursuit of enemy forces. An often used enemy tactic is to fall back in front of an advancing friendly unit in order to lure it into a position

where a second, concealed enemy force can move behind the friendly force and cut it off from its parent organization. "Walking" artillery fire in front of a pursuing friendly force is of assistance in preventing such a trap.

2) There exists a need for units occupying a perimeter to be able to mark the trace of the perimeter at night with some sort of illumination device that will permit aircraft to fire in support of the perimeter.

3) A carefully controlled "mad minute" (a form of reconnaissance by fire) is a successful method of triggering an enemy attack by causing the enemy to expose himself prematurely.

4) The security of a unit's flanks must be a continuous process, particularly in an area where there are no fixed battle lines.

5) Leaders at all levels must be made aware of the value of close defensive artillery fire. Too often leaders were reluctant to use close-in artillery fire in fear of friendly casualties. This misconception must be removed from the minds of combat leaders. Artillery fire is the Infantryman's most available and powerful means of influencing the action.

6) A unit conducting an air assault operation must first concern itself with holding the LZ that links it with outside assistance. The higher headquarters of the unit making the assault must retain the ability to rapidly reinforce the committed unit should it require assistance. It is highly unlikely that a unit in heavy contact with the enemy would be able to execute an extraction from an LZ.

7) Units preparing defensive perimeters during the hours of darkness must sacrifice noise discipline to dig proper individual shelters and clear fields of fire.

8) Pathfinder teams should always accompany battalion-size units on air assault operations. These teams provide aircraft control, and thereby free the battalion CP of the requirement to handle this important task. This permits the battalion CP to concentrate on tactical operations.

9) Personnel must be trained to exercise caution when going to the assistance of wounded men. In many cases, additional casualties were suffered when personnel were too anxious to assist wounded personnel. Taking time to analyze the situation, eliminate enemy positions in the area, or at a minimum having other personnel provide covering fire would greatly reduce this danger.

10) Co-locating all personnel connected with obtaining and directing the various fire-support means ensures close, continuous fire support from all available agencies.

### **Additional Resources**

Read LTC Moore's after action report at: [www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/vietnam/ia\\_drang.pdf](http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/vietnam/ia_drang.pdf).

# THE BATTLE OF LZ ALBANY

CPT J. DALLAS HENRY

**Editor's Note:** This article first appeared in the April-June 2014 issue of *INFANTRY Magazine*.

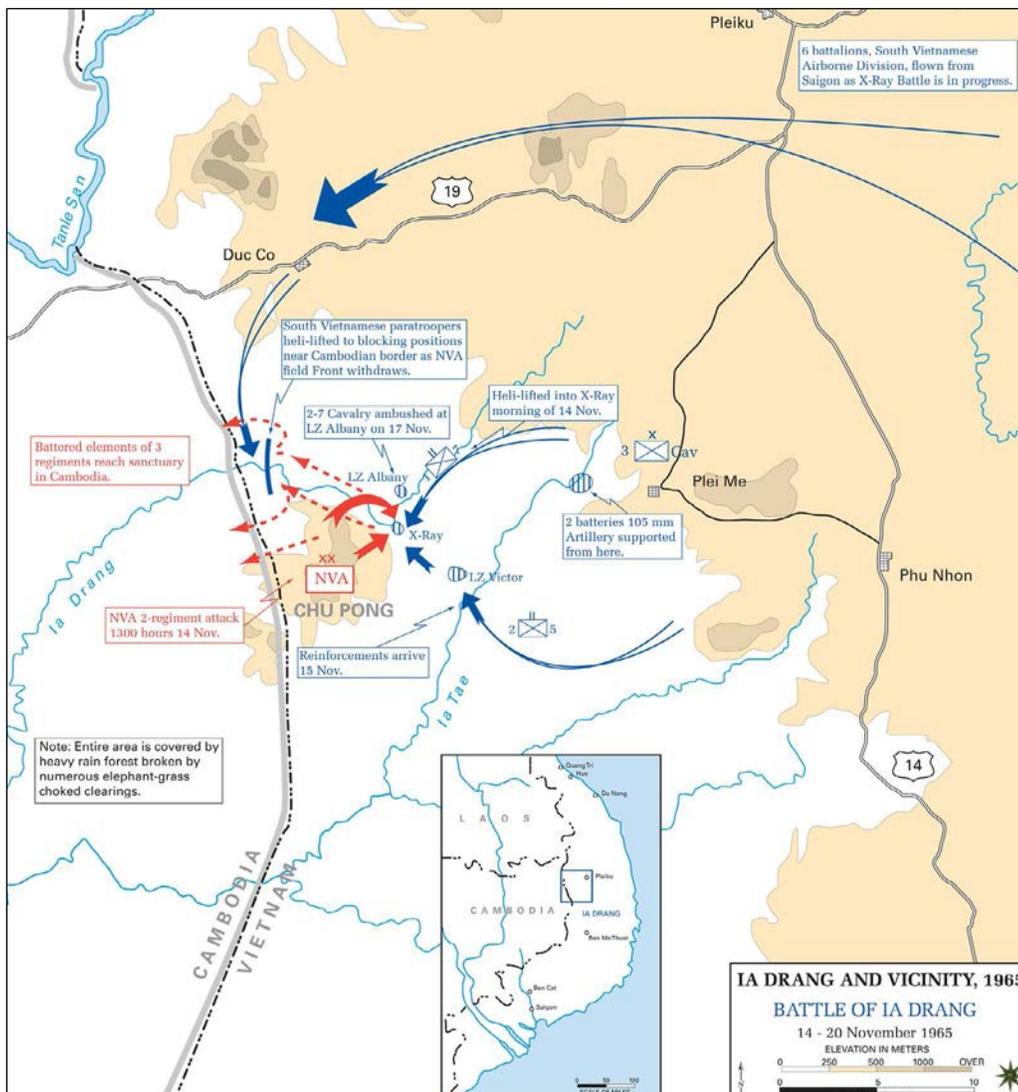
The Battle at Landing Zone (LZ) Albany — fought between the 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry of the U.S. Army and the 8th Battalion, 66th Regiment, along with the 1st Battalion, 33rd Regiment of the Peoples Army of Vietnam (PAVN) on 17 November 1965 — was the deadliest single-day battle during the Vietnam War.<sup>1</sup> Using the lens of doctrine, one can see that LTC Robert McDade, the 2-7 CAV commander, violated three of the five principles of patrolling: reconnaissance, control, and common sense.

After World War II, the United States remained acutely aware of communist regimes around the world, with particular focus on Southeast Asia. Before 1961, the U.S. presence in South Vietnam consisted of advisors to the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN), whom played a supporting role as the nation underwent military and social struggles. The leader of the North Vietnam communist movement, Ho Chi Minh, and the elected leader, Prime Minister Diem, were catalysts in the escalation of U.S. force beginning in 1961. Consequently, their actions led to the commitment of U.S. ground troops to Vietnam. The decisive point for U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War came on 2 August 1964 when three North Vietnamese ships attacked the USS Maddox, an American destroyer. The attack spurred President Lyndon Johnson to order the bombing of North Vietnam, and by April 1965, 60,000 American troops were deployed to Vietnam.<sup>2</sup>

The first major American direct fire conflict took place in November of 1965 in the Ia Drang Valley. The conflict is divided into two engagements: the Battle at Landing Zone (LZ)

X-Ray and the Battle at LZ Albany. The Battle at LZ X-Ray occurred on 14-16 November between the PAVN's 9th Battalion, 66th Regiment (commanded by Senior Lieutenant Colonel Nguyen Huu An) and the 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry (commanded by LTC Harold Moore) with aid from the 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry (commanded by LTC Bob Tully). Marching from a drop zone two miles southeast of LZ X-Ray, 2-5 CAV arrived at 1200 on the 15th as reinforcements for 1-7 CAV, which was in continuous enemy contact beginning on 14 November. Marching from LZ Columbus (two miles east of LZ X-Ray) to provide additional support, 2-7 CAV arrived once the majority of the fighting was complete at 0900 on the

Map 1 — Battle of Ia Drang Overview



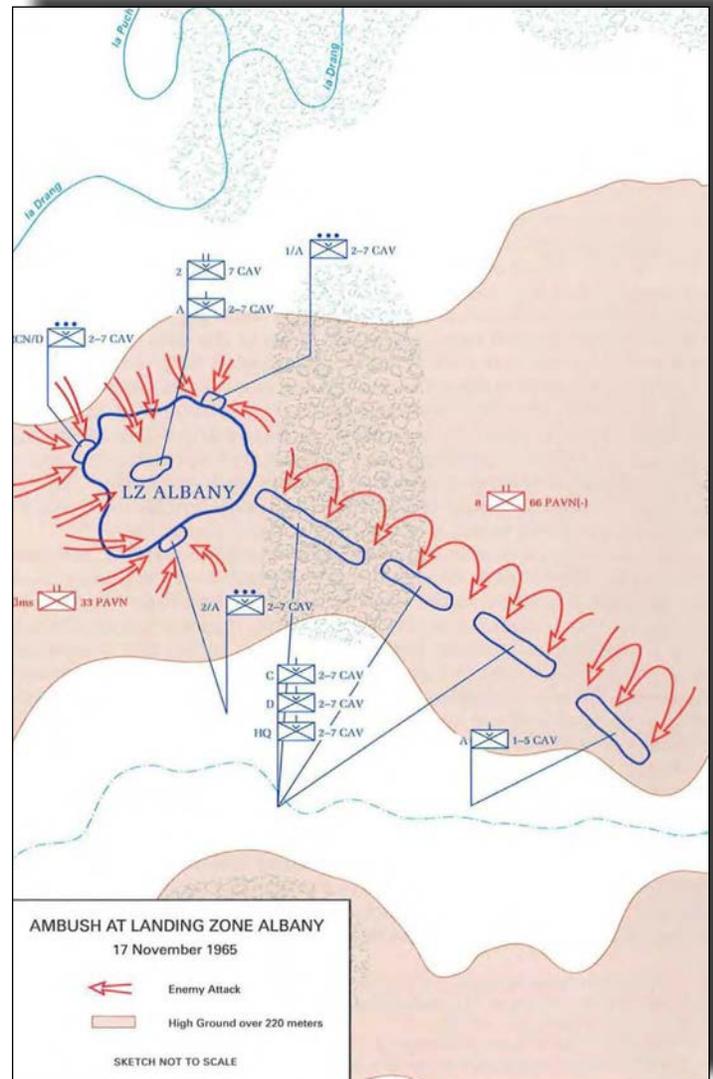
Map courtesy of the U.S. Military Academy Department of History

16th. At 1040, COL Tim Brown, the brigade commander in charge of U.S. forces on the ground, ordered 1-7 CAV to pull out of LZ X-Ray by helicopter. A relief in place was conducted as 2-5 and 2-7 CAV took over defensive positions held by 1-7 CAV. The remainder of the day on LZ X-Ray consisted of sporadic enemy mortar and rifle fire. Into the night the men maintained 100-percent security, without sleep and in defensive positions. On the morning of 17 November, COL Brown ordered 2-5 and 2-7 CAV to leave LZ X-Ray, as it was marked for an Air Force bombing. The units responded quickly. LTC Tully led his men off of LZ X-Ray at 0900, and LTC McDade followed 10 minutes later. Moving to its assigned location of LZ Columbus, 2-5 CAV led the way with 2-7 CAV following. Eventually breaking off to the north, 2-7 CAV moved to its assigned destination of LZ Albany.<sup>3</sup>

LTC McDade did not have a clear picture of the operational environment his unit was moving into. He recalled having no idea of what to expect and was instructed to establish an LZ at “a place called Albany” without being given an enemy situation overview.<sup>4</sup> His operation order (OPORD) to the leaders of 2-7 CAV followed in suit with regards to brevity. After returning from LTC McDade’s brief, CPT Joel Sugdinis, commander of Alpha Company, 2-7 CAV, informed his subordinates that the situation was “pretty unclear,” but confirmed enemy units in the area. CPT Sugdinis told his men that they were the lead element in a battalion march to LZ Albany, where they would be extracted. The men of 2-7 CAV would begin by following 2-5 CAV east and then branch north alone. The entire orders and preparation process took less than two hours and provided little in terms of contingency or alternate course-of-actions plans.<sup>5</sup>

The 2-7 CAV order of march to LZ Albany was: Reconnaissance Platoon, Alpha, Delta, Charlie, and Headquarters (HQ) companies. Last in the order of march was A/1-5 CAV, which had been attached to replace B/2-7 CAV, as it previously fought attached to 1-7 CAV during the battle at LZ X-Ray. As planned, 2-7 CAV followed 2-5 CAV east to a fork in the path where it branched north an additional two miles to LZ Albany.<sup>6</sup>

During the march, Soldiers carried a full combat load that reached weights of 80-110 pounds. The further into the movement, the more arduous the terrain became. Knee-high elephant grass turned to chest high as flat terrain turned into rolling. The thick single overhead tree canopy became a triple canopy, which increased temperatures and humidity. Exhausted from marching and having no sleep for 36-48 hours, Soldiers discarded equipment to lighten their load. As fatigue increased, the ability to remain disciplined was diminished during security halts; taking up defensive positions was second in priority to drinking water and recovering. The unexpectedly thick canopy forced the perimeter security element provided by A/2-7 CAV too close to the main body to effectively provide early warning.<sup>7</sup> While LZ Columbus received preparatory artillery fires, LZ Albany



Stemming the Tide, May 1965 to October 1966 by John M. Carland, Center of Military History

### Map 2 — Battle at LZ Albany

did not. CWO Hank Ainsworth, a Huey pilot assigned to 2-7 CAV, conducted aerial reconnaissance of LZ Albany prior to 2-7 CAV’s departure of LZ X-Ray. After completing the reconnaissance, CWO Ainsworth reported negative enemy contact to COL Brown. Armed with that information, COL Brown decided to withhold artillery fires on LZ Albany to mask the movement of 2-7 CAV. This deception plan set by COL Brown was counteracted when 2-7 CAV set fire to grass huts along its movement route. The high-rising smoke was visible for miles.<sup>8</sup>

Within 150 meters of the LZ, 1LT Pat Payne, the reconnaissance platoon leader, turned the head of the battalion column northwest. When doing so he saw a PAVN soldier asleep on the ground behind a six-foot tall termite hill. Sounding the alarm, 1LT Payne jumped on him and detained the prisoner. His platoon sergeant captured a second resting PAVN soldier while a third member of the apparent PAVN scout element escaped. No official report of an escapee

## 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF IA DRANG

was made to the chain of command. The prisoners made claims of being PAVN deserters but provided no actionable intelligence. The capture confirmed PAVN soldiers in the area. During this time 2-7 CAV halted movement; however, still stricken by exhaustion, the majority of the battalion did not take up formal defensive positions.<sup>9</sup>

After completing the interrogations, LTC McDade called the company commanders forward to establish and disseminate his plan to occupy the LZ. LTC McDade began his briefing before CPT George Forest, commander of A/1-5 CAV, arrived from the rear of the column. All other commanders traveled forward accompanied by their radio transmission operators (RTOs); first sergeants from A/2-7 CAV and B/2-7 CAV also attended. As the battalion commander briefed his plan, the reconnaissance platoon, along with 1st and 2nd Platoons of A/2-7 CAV, reconnoitered the LZ. Before the completion and formal reports from the reconnaissance elements, LTC McDade along with his commanders and staff moved to a cluster of trees in the middle of LZ Albany. All other companies remained spread along a 500-meter battalion column awaiting guidance. At approximately 1315 on 17 November, still awaiting the completion of the reconnaissance and main body's occupation of the LZ, 2-7 CAV began to receive direct and indirect contact. The 8th Battalion, 66th Regiment and 1st Battalion, 33rd Regiment of the PAVN were executing a flanking attack from the northeast.<sup>10</sup>

Fighting broke out at the head of the battalion formation and continued down the northeast flank of the battalion. The PAVN fired from positions in the trees and ran through 2-7 CAV lines to cause a splintering effect between elements. The enemy closed with 2-7 CAV Soldiers, thus preventing the use of U.S. indirect fire. Unable to support one another, elements of 2-7 CAV conducted react-to-contact battle drills and mission command on levels as low as squad. Enemy indirect fire came from a PAVN local support-by-fire position near C/2-7 CAV. Still able to maneuver, C/2-7 CAV destroyed the enemy mortar assets. While successful in its attacking efforts, C/2-7 CAV received the most casualties in the battalion during the fight.<sup>11</sup>

1LT Larry Gwin, the A/2-7 CAV executive officer (XO), recalled receiving most of the casualties within the first 30 minutes of fighting. Gwin was co-located with the battalion HQ element in the middle of LZ Albany when 2-7 CAV began its counterattack. Charlie Company's destruction of the PAVN mortar positions provided 2-7 CAV the freedom of maneuver, and 1LT Gwin recalled the enemy's formation disestablishment resulting in the PAVN simply walking around in search of surviving U.S. Soldiers. This enabled 2-7 CAV to employ "sniping" of the PAVN, one by one. Although the PAVN attack became increasingly disorganized, the conflict was far from over.<sup>12</sup>

As a result of multiple breaks in contact, LTC McDade struggled to effectively command his force for a majority

of the afternoon and into the evening. Ineffective radio communication was the primary cause. Malfunctioning equipment and the loss of key leaders and radio operators resulted in the inability to maintain communication long enough for the battalion to effectively maneuver. The battalion operations officer, CPT Jim Spires, recalled that the ability to effectively execute mission command was greatly diminished. LTC McDade did not receive a clear picture of what the entire battalion column was experiencing until late in the day. At 1426, LTC McDade, his staff, and the A/2-7 CAV leadership fought as an independent small unit in the small wooded area on LZ Albany, paralleling the actions of the other battalion elements.<sup>13</sup> All components of the battalion remained in squad- and platoon-size formations as each pulled security, fired on small groups of PAVN soldiers, provided medical aid, and awaited indirect fire and reinforcements.<sup>14</sup>

The 2-7 CAV XO, MAJ Frank Henry, provided indirect fire, air assets, and medical aid. Located on LZ Albany with the battalion HQ, MAJ Henry radioed in artillery and air support, aiding in the suppression and destruction of the PAVN. MAJ Henry and CPT Joe Price, the battalion fire support officer, began by calling in fire on known enemy positions in the trees surrounding LZ Albany. Calling in effective indirect fire on the PAVN positions was a challenging and slow process as the enemy had intermingled among U.S. forces. According to 1LT Payne, the Soldiers cheered as aircraft flew by so close they could see the pilot's profile in the cockpit. The outlook for 2-7 CAV remained positive as reinforcements arrived by air and ground. Marching north from LZ Columbus, B/1-5 CAV made contact with CPT Forest and the men of A/1-5 CAV at 1636. CPT Forest's familiarity with the unit provided quick integration as B/1-5 CAV helped attack the PAVN and relieve pressure on the rear of the battalion column. Recovering at Camp Holloway, the unit's forward operating base, B/2-7 CAV was still raw from its part in LZ X-Ray when it received orders for a night mission onto a hot LZ. At 1845, the company arrived on LZ Albany by helicopter.<sup>15</sup>

By early evening, the battle successfully shifted in the favor of U.S. forces. The arrival of B/2-7 CAV allowed the battalion HQ security perimeter to strengthen and expand. As the perimeter grew, wounded CAV Soldiers in hiding were either found or made their way to the HQ element. After the first round of medical evacuations (medevacs), helicopters pilots refused to extract the wounded from LZ Albany because it was "too hot," but MAJ Henry made a special request for the "229th Huey Slicks."<sup>16</sup> After hearing MAJ Henry's request, CWO Ainsworth recalled that "the whole damn unit volunteered."<sup>17</sup> At 2146, four helicopters began the evacuation of casualties off LZ Albany. Fighting continued in bursts as reinforcements and medical aid continued to arrive at the LZ throughout the night. Air Force bombers dropped napalm around the perimeter of U.S. forces, allowing LTC McDade time and space to reconstitute his formation into larger masses.<sup>18</sup> Finally, at dawn the U.S. CAV leadership

assessed the conflict as possibly concluded. CPT Sugdinis, recalled the morning as calm but not comforting. The toll of fighting and the violence of the PAVN attack became clear to the leadership of 2-7 CAV. To ensure LZ Albany was void of PAVN soldiers, LTC McDade commanded 2-7 CAV to conduct a "mad minute" firing of all weapons systems at any and all suspected enemy positions. The action did not elicit a response. The fight at LZ Albany was over, and 2-7 CAV was able to collect its wounded and dead. The PAVN fatalities totaled 403 with 150 additionally wounded. The U.S. forces sustained 151 fatalities and 121 wounded.<sup>19</sup>

### Analysis

During the Battle at LZ Albany, LTC McDade and 2-7 CAV violated reconnaissance, control, and common sense. The second principle of patrolling, reconnaissance, is defined as "the responsibility to confirm what you think you know, and to learn that which you don't."<sup>20</sup> Violation of reconnaissance occurred when LTC McDade ordered the reconnaissance platoon to move as the lead element in the battalion column instead of acting as forward element detached from the battalion column. LTC McDade chose to move onto the LZ with his commanders and staff before the reconnaissance was complete and before the LZ was formally occupied. This is an additional violation of this principle. As a result of these violations, LTC McDade's subordinates were unable to paint for him a picture of LZ Albany prior to occupation or call-in fires on the LZ once the reconnaissance platoon discovered the enemy. LTC McDade and 2-7 CAV learned what LZ Albany held firsthand and fought reactively rather than proactively.

The fourth principle of patrolling is control. It is defined as clarifying the concept of the operation and commander's intent, coupled with disciplined communications, to bring every man and weapon available to overwhelm the enemy at the decisive point.<sup>21</sup> The violation occurred when LTC McDade did not provide clear a mission and intent to his subordinates prior to the initiation of movement. His subordinates were in equal violation by leaving the OPORD brief without receiving clarity of the battalion commander's intent. Furthermore, LTC McDade violated the principle of control when he called his company commanders to the head to the battalion. This provided the PAVN an initial advantage over 2-7 CAV upon contact. Detaching the commanders from their respective companies slowed the ability of 2-7 CAV to bring maximum arms to bear against the enemy or to exercise disciplined communication upon initial contact.

Burning huts during the movement to LZ Albany and not providing clear intent for actions on enemy contact violates the principle of common sense. Smoke created en route to the final destination neutralized the battalion's deception plan. Despite knowledge of likely enemy in the area of operation, the battalion commander did not provide any formal guidance with regards to actions on enemy direct fire

contact. Violations of common sense resulted in the enemy's ability to mass forces onto 2-7 CAV's suspected route as well gain and maintain the advantage upon initial contact.

The Battle at LZ Albany was the deadliest single-day battle in the Vietnam War. Reviewing the movements, reactions, and decision-making processes involved can afford valuable lessons learned. While conflict with the PAVN would have likely been unavoidable, either on LZ Albany or en route to the objective, the resulting consequences could have been mitigated had the principles of patrolling been followed.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Kenneth R. Pierce, "The Battle of the Ia Drang Valley" *Military Review*, 69.1 (1989): 95-97.

<sup>2</sup> Spencer Tucker, *The Encyclopedia of the Vietnam War: A Political, Social, and Military History* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2011), xli-xlvi.

<sup>3</sup> Larry Gwin, *Baptism: A Vietnam Memoir* (NY: Random House, 1999), 110-124.

<sup>4</sup> LTG (Retired) Harold G. Moore and Joseph Galloway, *We Were Soldiers Once... and Young: Ia Drang, the Battle that Changed the War in Vietnam* (NY: Harper Perennial, 1993), 217.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, 217-219.

<sup>6</sup> Gwin, *Baptism*, 127-128.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, 127-129.

<sup>8</sup> Moore and Galloway, *We Were Soldiers*, 222-225.

<sup>9</sup> Merle L. Pribbenow, "The Fog of War: The Vietnamese View of the Ia Drang Battle," *Military Review*, 81.1 (2001): 94.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, 94-97.

<sup>11</sup> Gwin, *Baptism*, 131-133.

<sup>12</sup> Moore and Galloway, *We Were Soldiers*, 237.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, 235.

<sup>14</sup> Gwin, *Baptism*, 145-147.

<sup>15</sup> Moore and Galloway, *We Were Soldiers*, 230, 237, 264-265.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, 282.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, 282.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, 280-283.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, 285.

<sup>20</sup> SH 21-76, *Ranger Handbook* (Department of the Army, 2011), 7-1.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, 7-1.

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When this article was written, **CPT J. Dallas Henry** was attending the Maneuver Captains Career Course at Fort Benning, Ga. He began his military career as a member of the 1st Battalion, 38th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division. While with 1-38 IN, he served as a mobile gun system platoon leader, Headquarters and Headquarters Company executive officer (XO), and as the rear detachment battalion commander. CPT Henry deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) 12-13.

CPT Henry is a third generation combat arms officer and the grandson of 2-7 Cavalry XO MAJ Frank Henry. The review of this battle remains pertinent and practical in the ever important understanding of the principals of patrolling and how a clear understanding of the mission and operating environment can have an effect.

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# SI IN RANGER SCHOOL:

## *A CALL FOR UNIVERSAL LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES DURING A TIME OF TRANSFORMATION*

CPT THOMAS E. MEYER

**S**ocial Intelligence (SI) is an emerging theme — both nationally and globally — in economic, military, business, and various organizational priorities. Successful leaders understand IQ does not always correlate to organizational success.<sup>1</sup> Companies do not rise and fall on the abilities of leaders at the top but rather are built on the foundation of constituents' and juniors leaders' ability to work as a cohesive whole. Leaders are defined by how they meet these challenges at the decision points. Decision points are generally critical events that, in their very nature, can greatly shift the momentum of the organization. However, these critical events are not where learning organizations apply the endurance to sustain greatness over decades. Lasting organizations make the most of touch points. Touch points are rarely met with climactic music and a ticker tape parade. They are the daily interactions that define relationships. These touch points are crucial conversations comprised of opposing opinions, strong emotions, and high stakes.<sup>2</sup> The thousands of touch points leading up to a decision point can make or break organizations and leaders. The U.S. Army, and specifically the Infantry community, is amidst a time of transformation and transition with the admittance of women in U.S. Army Ranger School. While this topic has sparked conversation and varying opinions, the focus should be on maintaining the basic, universal principles making Ranger School a premier leadership opportunity.

The purpose of this article is to relate academic theory to real-world application through personal experiences at the U.S. Army Ranger School, enabling individuals to define their interpersonal leadership dimensions of SI and build effective organizations. A strong foundation of principles, putting people first, and showing alignment of word and deed through practice of organizational values (the “3 Ps”) provides a method of improving productivity and creating success. The 3 Ps is an approach to leadership — through SI — that incorporates the academic assertions of servant leadership, principle-centered leadership, and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB).<sup>3</sup>

### **What is SI?**

All organizations strive to produce results (e.g. quarterly earnings and profit margins in corporate America, ministry and community following in a church, or combat effectiveness and security in our nation's armed forces). Achieving desired results (end state) at minimum cost necessary (ways and means) is the strategic purpose of any organization. However, organizations often look to more quantifiable and traditional metrics for success (IQ, grade-point average [GPA] and other statistics) when hiring or evaluating employees. Factors such as emotional intelligence (EQ or EI) — one's ability to recognize, understand, and manage their own emotions/influence the emotions of others — often go unconsidered.<sup>4</sup> The direct link between human resource and relationships (HR) — as a combination of factors like EQ and SI — and organizational output/profitability has proven more vast than previously assumed.<sup>5</sup>

Photo by Sue Ulibarri



SI is the combination of understanding the emotional, interactive, social, and behavioral elements at work — both internally and externally — summed up as situational awareness. It requires the ability to implement this awareness to effectively interact with individuals and influence the organization.<sup>6</sup> Ultimately, it allows the organization to achieve common goals. SI is the combination of two “ingredients.”

\* Social awareness — what we sense about others, and

\* Social facility — what we do with that sense.<sup>7</sup>

If that is the analytical approach to SI, the essence of SI is people and providing them SPACE (situational awareness, presence, authenticity, clarity, and empathy).<sup>8</sup> SPACE leads to socially intelligent, thought-provoking, developmental, and learning leaders. These learning leaders create learning organizations.<sup>9</sup> Understanding SI is one facet, but applying it requires the “3 Ps.” One of the most effective ways to test the authentic core of a person’s character (and SI) is shared adversity and struggle.

### Principle: Acting from Within

Ranger School, widely accepted as one of the most difficult and elite leadership schools in the armed forces, taught me the importance of communication and SI when enlisting the support of others. Ranger School showed me my weaknesses and the impact they have on mission success. Looking back five years, I still see the need to improve in these areas of my leadership. But, the one area of social intelligence that I favored is quite possibly the reason I was able to make it through with the help of my Ranger buddies. A strong foundation of principles, shared across the formation, is absolutely critical to the “3 Ps” and ultimately to SI.

“Rangers are honest [...] the first step in living in sync with yourself is figuring out what principles or philosophies govern your actions. What are your morals?”<sup>10</sup> My experiences at Ranger School taught me the importance of leading from principle. Physical, mental, and emotional exhaustion pushed my peers and me to the brink and provided an environment so challenging, the lessons learned would not soon be forgotten. There are times at Ranger School when you are faced with moral and ethical decisions, but there is always someone watching. You can save momentary pain by choosing the easy wrong, but it is the hard right that will pay off in the long run. I truly believe this principle saved me from possibly recycling Mountain Phase of Ranger School.

Trust flows from principle-centered leadership and creates a foundation of loyalty.<sup>11</sup> SI is ineffective without the credibility that flows from congruent actions and authenticity. Principle-

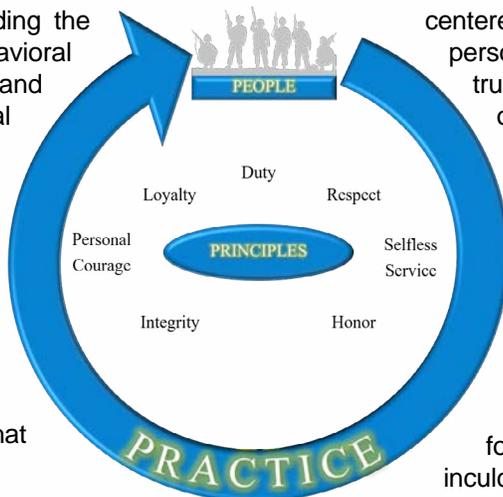


Figure 1

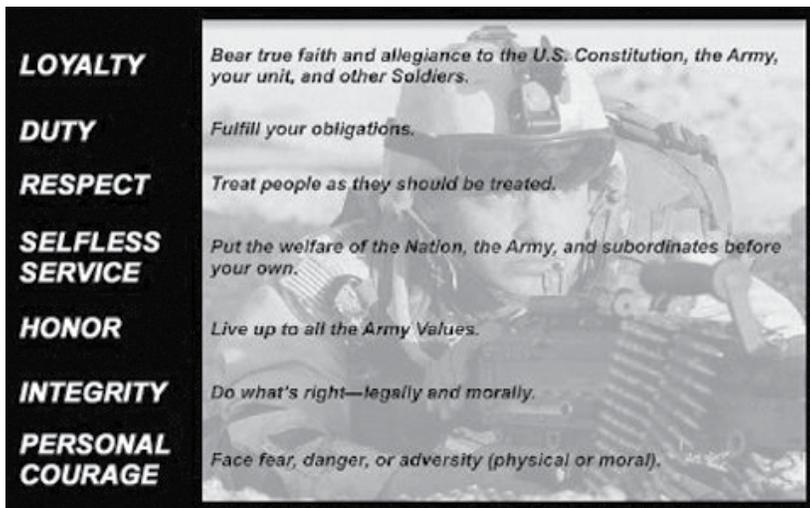
centered leadership — the result of personal trustworthiness, interpersonal trust, managerial empowerment, and organizational alignment — builds the credibility and authenticity needed. But, to reach empowerment and alignment (i.e. practice), leaders must start with personal trustworthiness and interpersonal trust.

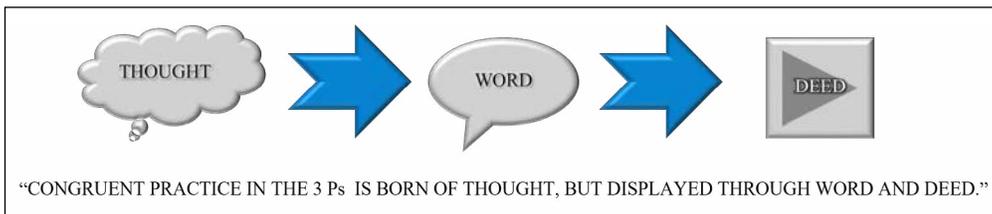
Principle-centered leadership was the only level of SI I could achieve and verify prior to entering Ranger School. The Army values define a foundation for leadership (see Figure 2), but unless inculcated through previous experiences it is merely an acronym.<sup>12</sup> As an individual, your responsibility in this phase of the “3 Ps” is to reflect on your past experiences (youth sports, parental lessons, etc.) to determine the principles you hold at your core. In order to intentionally practice principle-centered leadership, you need to be aware of what principles comprise the core of your character. For me it was servant leadership, but Ranger School taught me that servant leadership doesn’t always mean serving on your terms.

### Practice: Congruency through Aligned Organization

“Acting in line with your beliefs will allow you to reduce stress, sleep at night, and become predictable to your leaders and subordinates.”<sup>13</sup> Ranger School, while more of an individual experience in leadership growth, taught me the absolute necessity of congruence in what you say and what you do. There is no 9-5 at Ranger School; you are with each other every waking moment, which tends to be a lot considering the lack of sleep. If a Ranger’s actions are not aligned with his words, he will immediately lose the support of his peers, never reaching Stephen R. Covey’s third and fourth levels of principle-centered leadership (managerial empowerment and organizational alignment).<sup>14</sup> Without the support of your peers, a Ranger candidate will likely recycle

Figure 2





**Figure 3**

for patrols or for a low peer evaluation — and may ultimately fail the course.

My focus going into Ranger School was to earn my Ranger tab by practicing servant leadership through my actions. Throughout the first phase of Ranger School, this plan served me well. I was not as physically or mentally tested as I thought I would be. I was in high spirits and focused heavily on carrying more than my share of the task. To me, at the time, that meant always carrying the heavy equipment. Lightening the load for my Ranger buddies was how I was going to serve them. In the first phase, my thought, word, and deed were congruent, and my peer evaluation matched. I was in for the most important lesson of my career — one that I try to keep close to my heart and work on daily — during Mountain Phase.

The emotional challenges of working through my own struggles while serving the needs of my peers during Mountain Phase proved to be difficult. I failed to understand servant leadership does not always mean serving as you would intend. I entered Ranger School with the plan to carry more than my share of the task. To me, that meant physically. I would physically carry heavy equipment. I did not understand the meaning, and importance, of carrying other types of burden. I did not carry the burden of a positive attitude when the sleep depravity of the patrol leader was leading him astray. I did not carry the burden of motivational spirit when I felt others were not carrying their weight. I was critical of the team. My intentions were pure and my physical deeds matched my principles, but my words were failing. I did not understand congruent practice in the “3 Ps” is born of thought but displayed through word and deed.

Thankfully, my peers expressed these concerns to me and helped me learn about myself. While my peer evaluation was lower in Mountain Phase, it did not limit my ability to continue. More importantly, I learned something about myself I carry with me to this day. As I stated earlier, it is what you do when faced with the easy wrong and the hard right that will make all the difference. I truly believe the times I helped my peers through the physical hardships, the times I picked up the heavy equipment, and the times I volunteered to be a team leader made all the difference. Had I not done those things, those of my peers who overlooked my failings in Mountain Phase may have been more harsh on my peer review — and rightfully so. Thankfully, I was provided the opportunity to learn my lesson, identify my mistakes, and focus on improving.

The effects of highly committed constituents

on organizational performance are largely founded on the managing practices of socially and emotionally intelligent leaders in the upper chains of hierarchy.<sup>15</sup> This is to say, leaders set the foundation upon which their constituents build their motivation and output. Constituents will regard

more neutral orders within the “zone of indifference” — “ok he is in charge, and he told me to, so who cares...I will do it.” — more controversial or difficult orders will require trust.<sup>16</sup>

Trust built through actions congruent to shared values (thought-word-deed), is critical to building a commitment-compliant continuum.<sup>17</sup> This level of commitment — where trust, credibility, congruence, and authenticity reign supreme — leads to commitment and constituent buy-in.<sup>18</sup> Every organization is “selling” something, but to market it efficiently to the target audience those in the organization should buy-in. In Ranger School, you are selling — to your peers — your trustworthiness and that using their limited energy output on helping you get your “Go” will pay-off in them getting theirs. This kind of trust can only be sold through authentic transparency.

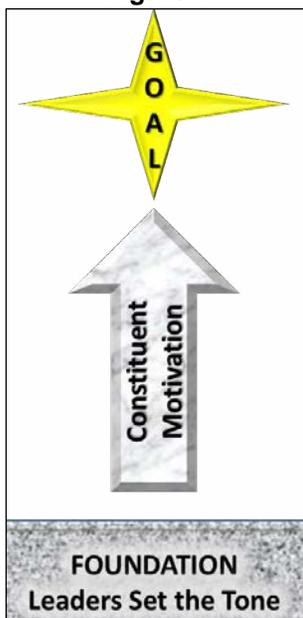
### People: Success is a Team Sport

Ranger School taught me the importance of approaching leadership from a servant perspective. Mental, emotional, and physical struggle is a vital part of the Ranger School experience, but that struggle separates the socially intelligent and selfless leaders from those who are average. I say average because suffering is often seen as individual; no matter how bad or inclusive the suffering is the individual concerns him/herself with an intimate view of suffering.<sup>19</sup> It is human nature — average — to focus on your own suffering instead of selflessly focusing on those around you. By understanding the key elements of SI and HR, I learned to place my own struggles aside and engender cooperation from my peers.

SI is a key requirement of the HR savvy leader and the cornerstone of human relationships where the primary goal is to empower constituents.<sup>20</sup> Putting people first unlocks the door to transformative leadership and unparalleled success through retained trust and congruence.<sup>21</sup>

Successful organizations apply diverse perspectives to new problems finding innovative solutions aligned with common goals. Differences in worldviews, life experiences, social groups, and other factors contribute to diversifying organizations.<sup>22</sup> Diversification can cause disconnect — dividing team members and prohibiting coalitions — or leaders can intentionally use differences to strengthen the outcome through interaction. If the Army is a melting pot of America, Ranger School takes it one step further.

**Figure 4**



Within a typical Ranger class, there are Soldiers, Marines, and Airmen of multiple ranks, Military Occupational Specialties (MOS), units, etc. There are captains coming out of the Maneuver Captains Career Course (MCCC), brand new Infantry second lieutenants out of the Infantry Basic Officer Leaders Course (IBOLC), specialists and privates from the 75th Ranger Regiment, NCOs from across the Army, international students, and more. Some students have combat experiences while others haven't experienced what it is like to hear a shot in anger. The socially intelligent Ranger finds a way to navigate these waters of diversity to motivate a group of individuals to become a collective whole. These interactions are the "work of a leader and the workhorses of an organization."<sup>23</sup>

Entrepreneurial-thought leaders have been linking empirical data to suggest a direct link between investing in people and receiving return on that investment through profits.<sup>24</sup> The power lies with the leader, and if he/she sees people as costs to be reduced and opportunistic free-riders who require micro-management then the connection is broken and the organization will never reap the profits of tapping into the strength of social intelligence.<sup>25</sup> The same concepts apply to Ranger School in how a student performs when the Ranger Instructor (RI) is not evaluating him. Every day at Ranger School is an opportunity to put others first — to practice servant leadership through prioritizing people.

Ranger students can demonstrate a "people-first" mentality by motivating a peer who is having a rough time, assisting in the planning process, carrying heavy equipment, volunteering to fill a team leader position, and countless other ways that do not directly place the student in a position to be evaluated by an RI. Ultimately, by expending energy, motivation, and time focusing on others without the direct opportunity for personal gain (a "Go" on a patrol), the Ranger student is investing in his peers. It can honestly be summed up with "being a good dude." Sounds easy, but when Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs has you at the very base of the pyramid, focusing on the needs of others can be more difficult than you think.

## Conclusion

Social intelligence provides leaders with the link between people and profits, creating a common ground for dialogue and progress. The U.S. Army Ranger School teaches leaders the importance of SI leadership through principles, people, and practice. These "3 Ps" are an approach to leadership through SI that incorporates the academic assertions of servant leadership, principle-centered leadership, and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). By firmly understanding one's principles; practicing congruency through authentic thought, word, and deed; and investing in people as the focus, Ranger students have a glide-path to incorporate SI as a strength while in Ranger School — and as leaders in the U.S. Army.

Earning your Ranger tab is a milestone for every Infantry leader, but bearing the tab by internalizing the lessons taught in the school is what really matters. In every initial counseling statement I have given since graduating Ranger School, I conclude with "live the Ranger Creed." Take a moment and

read the creed; don't recite it — read it. If a leader, tab or no tab, truly internalizes and lives that creed, he will display the "3 Ps" — principle centered, practice implemented, and people focused.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Karl Albrecht, *Social Intelligence: The New Science of Success Beyond IQ, Beyond IE, Applying Multiple Intelligence Theory to Human Interaction* (NY: Jossey-Bass, 2006).

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<sup>4</sup> Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ* (NY: Bantam, 2005).

<sup>5</sup> Albrecht, xi-xiv, 10; Jeffrey Pfeffer, *The Human Equation: Building Profits By Putting People First* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1998).

<sup>6</sup> Daniel Goleman, *Social Intelligence: The New science of Human Relationships* (NY: Bantam, 2006), 84.; Albrecht, xiii.

<sup>7</sup> Goleman, 2006, 84.

<sup>8</sup> Albrecht, 28-29.

<sup>9</sup> Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* (NY: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, 1990).

<sup>10</sup> Brace E. Barber, *No Excuse Leadership: Lessons from the U.S. Army's Elite Rangers* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc, 2004), 161.

<sup>11</sup> James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, *The Leadership Challenge* (4th ed.) (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2007), Ch. 215; Cam Caldwell and Linda Hayes, "Leadership, Trustworthiness, and the Mediating Lens," *Journal of Business Ethics* 26, no. 3 (2007): 261-278.

<sup>12</sup> Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 1, *The Army*, 2012: 2-3, Fig. 2-2.

<sup>13</sup> Barber, 161.

<sup>14</sup> Covey, *Principle*, 32.

<sup>15</sup> Jeffrey Pfeffer, *Competitive Advantage Through People* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1994).

<sup>16</sup> Chester I. Barnard, *Functions of the Executive* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1968), 168.

<sup>17</sup> Cam Caldwell and Mark Hansen, "Trustworthiness, Governance, and Wealth Creation," *Journal of Business Ethics* 97 (2010): 173-189.

<sup>18</sup> Albrecht, Chapter 4; Kouzes and Posner, Chapter 2; Pfeffer, Human, Chapter 4; Rob Goffee and Gareth Jones, "Managing Authenticity: The Paradox of Great Leadership," *Harvard Business Review*, 83 no. 12 (2005): 86-94.

<sup>19</sup> Barber, 185.

<sup>20</sup> Eric M. Eisenberg, H. L. Goodall Jr. and Angela Trethewey, *Organizational Communication: Balancing Creativity and Constraint* (Boston: Bedford/ St. Martin's, 2007), 73.

<sup>21</sup> Caldwell, et al., "Transformative Leadership;" Cam Caldwell, *Ethical Duties and Organizational Citizenship Behavior: Two Perspectives of the Psychological Contract*, not yet published; Pfeffer, *Competitive*, Ch. 4.

<sup>22</sup> Eisenberg, et al., 3.

<sup>23</sup> Susan Scott, *Fierce Conversations: Achieving Success at Work and In Life, One Conversation at a Time* (NY: Berkley Books, 2004), xix.

<sup>24</sup> Pfeffer, *Competitive*, 292

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, Ch. 10.

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# THE LOST ART OF DISMOUNTED LAND NAVIGATION

MAJ JOHN P. VICKERY

**S**hoot, move, and communicate. This well-known tag captures the skills needed by every Soldier in its most simplistic form. It could be argued that if you perform these fundamental skills better than the enemy, you will win. There is no question that with the rapid advancement of technology, the tools our warriors now use to employ these skills have grown more complex, precise, and easier to operate. So that leaves the question: Are the “no-fail” basics originally used to complete these three fundamental tasks now obsolete?

Our nation’s most skilled Soldiers would declare that although our weapons should be outfitted with the most advanced optics and infrared (IR) lasers, it is equally important to maintain a rifle’s zero with iron sights. Furthermore, America’s most experienced combat leaders would argue that although having the most advanced communication devices is a combat multiplier, non-verbal communication such as hand and arm signals and recognition signals must be used in the event radios fail; which they can. So why is traditional

land navigation training no longer prioritized throughout our formations?

With the procurement of Global Positioning Systems (GPS) throughout the military, promoting the skills needed to navigate using a map and compass have degraded over the past decade, especially when considering the deluge of requirements of the Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN) cycle. During my last tour of duty in Afghanistan, every task force headquarters could observe live operations with real-time pinpoint accuracy. Strykers in my rifle company were outfitted with Force XXI Battle Command Brigade and Below (FBCB2) systems that displayed instant location updates. Platoon radio telephone operators (RTOs) carried a Defense Advanced GPS Receiver (DAGR), and nearly every leader, regardless of rank or position on the patrol, had a personally owned GPS on his wrist. Considering the availability, effectiveness, and reliability of the GPS, it is easy to see how units accept the risk of not training traditional land navigation in the limited time to prepare for upcoming missions abroad.



Photo by SPC Jacqueline Dowland

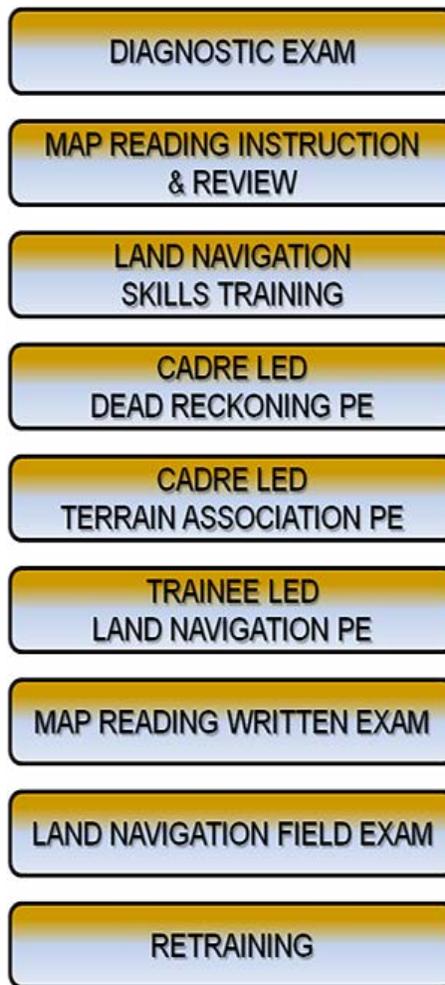
*An Infantryman assigned to D Company, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade, plots coordinates on a map during a land navigation exercise in Voru, Estonia, on 9 September 2015.*

Now don't get me wrong, I'm not against the use of the GPS. However, I am an advocate of training dismounted land navigation as it has proven time and time again to produce intangible results that technology cannot.

Although the evolvement of the GPS has unquestionably provided our Infantrymen a tremendous advantage on the modern battlefield, the individual confidence gained by navigating severely restricted terrain using a map and compass is immeasurable. Along with the newly gained confidence comes a better understanding of the terrain in which a Soldier is navigating. For example, Soldiers attain the ability to understand how the terrain could mask a squad's movement as they maneuver towards an objective, the proper employment of support-by-fire positions to maximize the effects of the systems, or simply to realize how the terrain looks when compared to the map. This heightened situational awareness doesn't naturally occur when using a GPS, and the possession of this capability is what could potentially determine success.

It is critical that our Infantrymen remain masters of dismounted land navigation. Not only is it a necessary skill required to get us to the objective, it is a confidence builder, physical conditioner, and mental workout. Because it is so highly perishable, it remains the unit's responsibility to keep its Soldiers proficient.

As stated in the Training Circular (TC) 3-25.26, *Map Reading and Land Navigation*, "The Soldier must continually make use of the skills he has acquired to remain proficient in them. The institution is responsible for instruction in the basic techniques of land navigation. The institution tests these skills each time a Soldier attends a leadership course. However, it is the unit's responsibility to develop a program to maintain proficiency in these skills between institution courses. The unit sustainment program provides training that builds on and reinforces the skills the soldier learned in the institution." That said, there must be a system of accountability at the unit level for maintaining land navigation proficiency. After all, there is an accountability



**Figure — Example Land Navigation Training Outline**

system in place for the Army physical fitness test (APFT), marksmanship, and even sexual harassment/assault response and prevention (SHARP) and equal opportunity (EO) training.

When considering how doctrine describes the training execution model, most units have it wrong. Almost every time I have conducted land navigation training, it usually started with formal classroom instruction on basic map reading skills. The trainees then confirmed their 100-meter pace count and a compass bearing, and finally culminated with a land navigation field test. During this test, trainees were given a list of approximately five 8-digit grids to locate in a predetermined training area. They would then return with all points found, none at all, or somewhere in between. This model of "trial and error" is simply ineffective. A cadre-led practical exercise (PE) should be implemented if the Army is

going to reinvigorate its land navigation proficiency.

In future training events, units should model their execution plan from TC 3-25.26 (see figure above). Before anything else, determine the organization's current level of proficiency with a diagnostic exam. Then conduct formal classes on map reading and land navigation skills such as dead reckoning, terrain association, catching features, linear backstops, and attack points to name a few. The next portion, and arguably most important, is the cadre-led PE in dead reckoning and terrain association. This consists of placing the trainees into small groups based on proficiency level (deduced from the diagnostic exam) and following a cadre member through a land navigation site to allow trainees to visually compare the map to the ground. During PEs, trainees would also be afforded the opportunity to lead the small group under the supervision of the cadre member. After several repetitions with the experienced leaders, trainees would take a written map reading exam and then test their individual skills in the field. Finally, like all training events, retraining would be conducted as necessary.

Now more than ever is the time to reinvigorate this lost art; the revolution starts with the leaders. It is not so much a question of how we train, but rather how we prioritize. Land navigation training remains easy to plan and resource, and it reinforces the fundamentals essential to every Infantryman, regardless of how long the training event lasts. The global situation tells us to be prepared for any terrain. Whether in the jungles of the Pacific rim, mountains of southern Asia, the Middle East or Africa, our ground forces must bring to the fight the ability to quickly adapt, remain more agile than the enemy, and demonstrate we have the competency to shoot, move, and communicate better than anyone else in the world. Follow me!

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# Training Notes



## TRAINING WITH THE ITE CAPABILITY

MAJ SCOTT PATTON

“Shoot, move, and communicate” is still a fundamental, albeit simplistic, means of describing warfare. By adding “decide” we account for the mental thought process that occurs before any action is taken in warfare. Training leaders and Soldiers to decide, shoot, move, and communicate at platoon, company, or battalion levels was simpler when the only tools a leader had to consider were his rifle, radio, map, and Soldiers. Previously, leaders could go to an unoccupied training area, with little or no coordination, and train knowing they were accounting for the majority of tasks required. With the increased dependence on digital mission command information systems (MCIS) and the need to train as a combined force, the tools and level of responsibility of our Soldiers and leaders have changed dramatically. Soldiers and leaders now require more technological skill and greater lateral thought. This change increases the need for a more robust training capability. Additionally, the availability of equipment, funding, training space, and time required to train have decreased. Therefore, the solution must use less resources to meet an increased training requirement. To answer the call, the Army developed the Integrated Training Environment (ITE) to help commanders meet that challenge.

The ITE allows for more robust scenarios that can impart the complex realities of the current operating environment. The ITE allows commanders the ability to control training utilizing their tactical operations center (TOC) for Soldiers in the field with Soldiers training at the mission training complex (MTC) and virtual training facilities concurrently in the same event. While the ITE is technically capable of enabling a brigade-level exercise, it is best suited for training platoon, company, and battalion combined collective training. It is important to note that while ITE events can include live, virtual (including gaming), and constructive training systems, they do not have to include every system. Leaders add or subtract systems based on whatever meets their specific training objectives. Before giving examples, a brief description will be provided



*Soldiers in the Reconfigurable Vehicle Tactical Trainer coordinate with Soldiers in the Close Combat Tactical Trainer, Virtual Battlespace 3, Aviation Combined Arms Tactical Trainer to conduct combined arms maneuver against enemy forces within a built-up area.*

for each of the training systems and the tools that facilitate Soldier interaction within.

Live training is supported by the Home Station Instrumented Training System (HITS) which works in conjunction with the new radio-linked Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement System (MILES) gear to push Soldier position, status, weapon fire, and weapon impact information.<sup>1</sup> HITS also allows Soldiers to receive simulated damage from indirect fire weapons from other connected training simulations. If conducting a force-on-force event, placing the artillery unit within a constructive simulation allows training of the call-for-fire mission with simulated rounds impacting on live opposing forces (OPFOR) based on the coordinates sent by either voice or through MCIS. The current limitation of replicating simulated indirect fire into a live area still remains — the Soldier must review the monitor to see the effect. Good synchronization with the lane walkers can mitigate this limitation and ensure a simulation is thrown prior to the simulated rounds' impact.

The constructive system the Army utilizes can be compared to *Command and Conquer* or any other desktop/tablet-based strategy game. In the constructive environment, units move and interact on a 2D map. When utilized within the ITE, the constructive system displays 2D map icons for each unit regardless of the system actually controlling the unit. This allows tanks or Soldiers controlled in the constructive simulation to interact with tanks or Soldiers in the live and/or virtual/gaming simulations. To promote “fair-fight,” we only

allow constructive artillery to affect live forces using HITS. It would not be fair for a Soldier in a simulation, who cannot be seen by the Soldier in live, to be able to shoot the live Soldier.

Virtual simulations include gaming simulations. The virtual training environment, when considered as part of the ITE, consists of the Aviation Combat Arms Tactical Trainer (AVCATT), Close Combat Tactical Trainer (CCTT), Reconfigurable Vehicle Tactical Trainer (RVTT), Reconfigurable Vehicle Simulator (RVS), and Virtual Battlespace 3 (VBS3). AVCATT is an aviation collective flight trainer that is configurable for variants of the AH-64, OH-58, UH-60, and UH-47 helicopters. CCTT is a maneuver collective ground combat trainer that has systems to represent the variants of the M1A2 and M2A2 combat vehicles. RVTT and RVS are slightly different, and both provide reconfigurable wheeled vehicle platforms surrounded by an interactive screen. The screen responds to laser light signals from handheld weapons inside the simulator, much like the Engagement Skills Trainer (EST) 2000. Lastly, VBS3 is a first-person commercial game that has been modified to support Army training by utilizing real-world terrain and Army equipment specifications. It was contracted to provide military-specific training capabilities utilizing gaming techniques to represent training requirements/tasks down to the individual Soldier level. While it is possible for some MTCs to use lasers integrated into the rifles, like EST 2000, to interact with VBS3, this capability is not an Army-wide provided or funded capability with VBS3. The primary interface for the Soldier using VBS3 is through a mouse and keyboard and/or a Xbox controller.

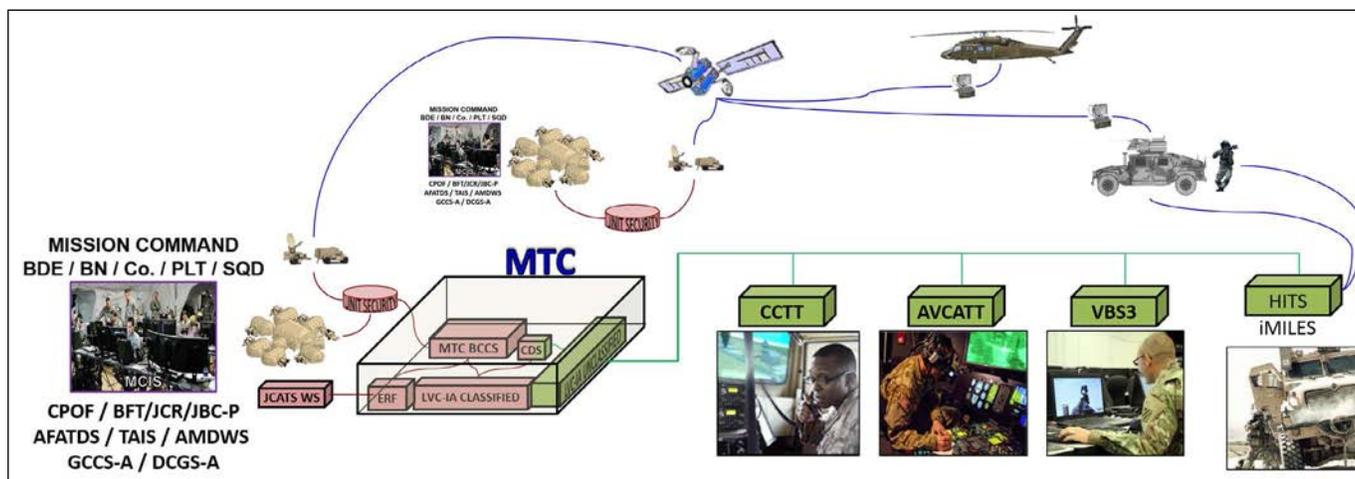
Lastly, the ITE concept utilizes a single mission command interface system to send messages to a unit's MCIS, which includes the Command Post of the Future (CPOF), Blue Force Tracker (BFT)/Force XXI Battle Command Brigade and Below (FBCB2), Advanced Field Artillery Tactical Data System (AFATDS), Tactical Airspace Integration System (TAIS), Battle Command Sustainment Support System (BCS3), and Air and Missile Defense Workstation (AMDWS). The Army continues to fund the mission command interface system for developing new message formats. Continued

funding supports functionality with future MCIS systems like the Joint Capabilities Release (JCR) and Command Web initiatives. Each system is provided the appropriate message information from the simulations and simulators and tracks the information like real data. In addition, AFATDS can direct fires from both live and simulated artillery. In the near future, the AVCATT and CCTT-embedded BFTs will be able to receive the same data.

Training utilizing the ITE capability provides many possibilities such as training air-ground integration, air assault, hasty attack, or deliberate defense. This concept is well suited for training tasks requiring additional enablers or complexity not as readily available in live training. The ITE capability also supports high-risk training such as combined arms actions, urban operations, close air support, or danger close fire missions. Training opportunities are left to the imagination of the trainer. For ease of reference, the examples provided next will be based on a 2010 heavy brigade combat team (HBCT) cavalry troop configuration consisting of Bradleys, Cavalry Fighting Vehicles, and HMMWVs with three-man crews and two scouts each. This configuration allows a reference for dismounted training, motorized training, and mechanized training.

Platoons can start out small with collective gunnery, either unstabilized or stabilized, depending on their platform. Combining CCTT and VBS3 allows for crews to practice acquiring targets, dismounting their troops, coordinating fires, and then remounting and repositioning. In the haste of deployment, units often do not conduct collective firing tables, but they can virtually. Air assaults are another operation that is often not trained due to limited resources. A dismounted force in VBS3 can practice actions on the helicopter landing zone (HLZ) with actual aviators in AVCATT. This is very easy to set up, though it may take a little more coordination with the pilots and the MTC. The payoff is the ability to work with actual pilots and conduct more iterations of these essential and expensive skills than what is possible live.

Executing a platoon exercise of greater complexity, like the hasty attack, the Bradley crew members use CCTT Bradleys



**The live, virtual, and constructive integrating architecture (LVC-IA) allows more realistic combined arms training through linkage to real-world Mission Command Information Systems and TADSS (training aids, devices, simulations, and simulators)**

while their dismounts use VBS3. The dismounts communicate via radio to the crew, reinforcing good internal and external communication techniques. All of the HMMWV crews — minus the headquarters (HQ) section (platoon leader [PL] and platoon sergeant [PSG]) — utilize VBS3 along with their dismounts. The PL and PSGs, along with their vehicle crews, use RVTT/RVS HMMWVs. This forces the leaders to execute mission command via voice and BFT. If aviators are available, they can provide support from AVCATT. If they are not available, close air support can be provided through VBS3 artificial intelligence software controlled by the training support personnel. Indirect fires are provided by the administrative controller within CCTT and can be relayed through the company fire support officer (FSO), or platoon forward observer (FO). OPFOR are controlled by the VBS3 training support personnel in conjunction with the company/troop commander's guidance. The troop commander can observe the fight using the CCTT after action review (AAR) systems or the integrated exercise control 3D viewer provided with the integration architecture hardware at the MTC. Leaders can also listen to the radio communications as Soldiers transmit over their radios and monitor events utilizing simulated BFT equipment. When complete, leaders can review the entire scenario with a 3D visual and highlight any points of interest or learning.

For a company or troop, the training can be as simple as joining with the previously mentioned platoon event. The HQ section can receive, monitor, and battle track the platoon's actions. The company can also run platoons simultaneously in the same configuration, depending on the availability of systems, or in a different configuration, such as a platoon in live and a platoon in the virtual and gaming environment. The HQ would still need to battle track all the platoons at the same time while coordinating the air assets and shifting priorities of support.

A more complicated, complete company-level event would require battalion staff support. Platoons can execute missions in the same structural configuration as the first example, but with a constructive wraparound that provides the overall squadron situation. In this scenario, the company commander would receive support from the battalion S2 or the company intelligence support team (CoIST), as advised by the S2. The S2 or CoIST can provide varying OPFOR reactions and interactions to support all types of scenarios but is most beneficial in stability and urban operations. Using constructive simulations, the ITE allows the company to involve various enablers not generally available in live training (engineers, signal intelligence, etc.). The Raven unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) is a key enabler the company has but often cannot practice employing. The company defense is a great opportunity to enable platoons to employ the Raven and practice procedures for employment, recovery, and control. If actual aviators are available, Soldiers can practice airspace deconfliction, which is increasingly a lower-echelon responsibility.

In the last example, we used the battalion to facilitate company training. Currently, however, the ITE is mostly used supporting battalion exercises. Most battalions using the ITE

capability, use it as a means to prepare for Combat Training Center (CTC) rotations after their combat equipment has shipped and before they deploy. Due to the lack of overall training aids, devices, simulators, and simulations (TADSS), many battalions conduct training events without troops (TEWTs). PLs and PSGs occupy CCTT, AVCATT, and/or VBS3 with their crews. The rest of their formations are filled with artificial intelligence (AI) or tethered wingmen (AI vehicles programmed to maintain position relative to another vehicle), sometimes called semi-automated forces (SAF). Staffs establish command posts and practice digital procedures while still exercising unit actions and orders. Subordinate leaders practice the same while also maneuvering their sections, platoons, companies, etc., within a 3D environment. Ultimately, leaders gain a better understanding of the time delay and processes required for aviation and fires support, as well as the employment of additional enablers. The training further establishes unit SOPs and improves unit total performance while reinforcing small unit operational skills. The 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, 1st Infantry Division, recently conducted this same exercise in preparation for a National Training Center (NTC) rotation and reported significant success, resulting in laudatory remarks from NTC observer controller/trainers (OC/Ts).

This article provides an overview of the ITE capability of training and what it can do. Use of the ITE will allow Soldiers to learn how to decide, shoot, move, and communicate. Start out small and then build the complexity of your events (crawl, walk, run). The live, virtual, and constructive integrating architecture (LVC-IA) supporting the ITE capability is currently supported at 12 MTCs across the Army and will have an ability to include remote virtual systems not located at the home station starting in FY17. The ITE capability has limitations but provides many more benefits for training Soldiers to fight and win on today's complex battlefield. Most ITE limitations can be overcome by the expertise found on an MTC's support staff. The ITE capability is available at Fort Stewart (Ga.), Fort Riley (Kan.), Fort Campbell (Ky.), Fort Carson (Colo.), Fort Wainwright (Alaska), Korea, Hawaii, Joint Base Lewis-McChord (Wash.), Fort Drum (N.Y.), Fort Bliss (Texas), Fort Hood (Texas), and Fort Bragg (N.C.).

Additional information about the ITE or information regarding conducting integrated training can be found at the ITE Portal (<https://ite.army.mil>).

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> The radio linked MILES gear is called iMILES and is differentiated from normal MILES because of the ability to connect to an external radio. The external radio comes with the HITS system and plugs into the port on the iMILES harness.

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# OPFOR REPLICATION OF COMPLEX THREATS AT JMRC

MAJ RYAN LIEBHABER  
MARIO HOFFMANN

During most of the previous decade, U.S. Army Combat Training Centers (CTCs) focused on executing mission rehearsal exercises that prepared brigade combat teams (BCTs) for deployment to Iraq and Afghanistan. To do so, the operational environment at the CTCs strictly sought to replicate a counterinsurgency (COIN) environment, and the opposing forces (OPFOR) served almost exclusively in an insurgent role. During this period, the OPFOR units' Sheridan and M-60 tank fleets were retired, their M113s were mothballed, and their focus on replicating a "conventional" threat was extinguished.

In 2012, as U.S. operational commitments in Iraq and Afghanistan began to decrease, the Army's training and readiness efforts shifted to wide area security and combined arms maneuver (Army core competencies, Army Doctrine Publication 3-0, *Unified Land Operations*), and the need for a competitive near-peer OPFOR once again emerged. The CTCs were thus tasked to modify their training environments that promote unit readiness for decisive action-focused forces. To ensure that training centers created a common foundation for a complex operational environment with hybrid threats, the Army's Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) published a decisive action training environment (DATE) manual that describes required training conditions upon which training programs and units can develop their scenarios. This article will focus on the uniqueness of the Joint Multinational

Readiness Center's (JMRC's) multinational DATE rotations and the leader-development opportunities experienced by a JMRC OPFOR Soldier — leader development opportunities rivaled nowhere in the world.

At the turn of the 21st century, the U.S. Army began a shift that divested its training and readiness efforts from fighting against a Soviet Union-era OPFOR supporting air-land battle doctrine and redirected its efforts against a capability-oriented OPFOR at the CTCs. The intent was to turn away from training focused on fighting a predictive threat that U.S. forces might never face and conversely train on defeating any threat and its capabilities, regardless of what foreign flag or allegiance it may have. However, the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 prematurely halted this OPFOR transition as the CTCs became engulfed with mission rehearsal exercises that prepared BCTs for deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan. Thus, it could be said that the Army is really picking up where it left off in the early 2000's — although not entirely so as DATE rotations also incorporate the hard lessons learned during 14 years of asymmetric combat.

*Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment gather for an after action review following movement-to-contact training during exercise Allied Spirit II at the U.S. Army's Joint Multinational Readiness Center in Hohenfels, Germany, on 10 August 2015.*

Photos by SPC John Cress Jr.



Formerly known as high-intensity conflict, combined arms maneuver operations are reemphasized at CTCs; gone are the days of fighting the old Krasnovian and Aragonian OPFOR bound to executing Soviet-era doctrine. Such simulated force-on-force or “metal-on-metal” engagements are much less relevant in today’s more complex and ever-changing operational environment with hybrid threats and near-peer weapons. Training conditions must reflect environments of modern battlefields that include the integration of joint, interorganizational, and multinational partners. No other training center in the world provides such a multinational training experience as JMRC, and no other OPFOR emulates a multinational OPFOR threat.

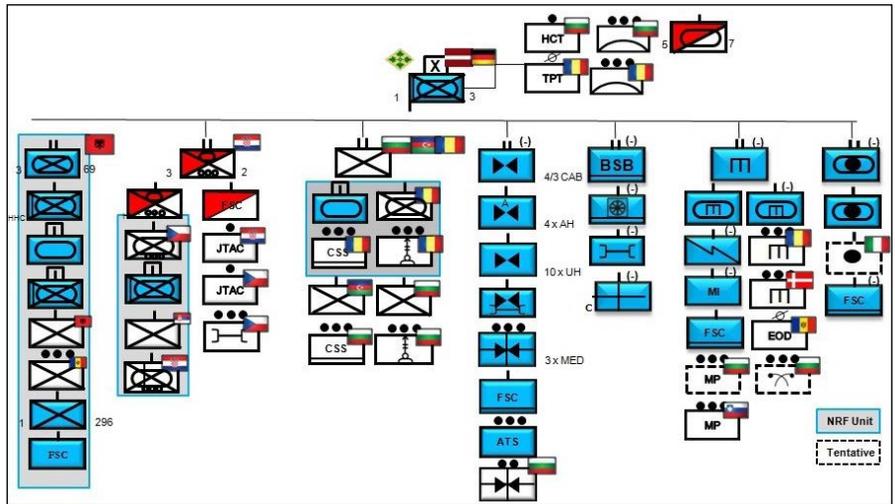
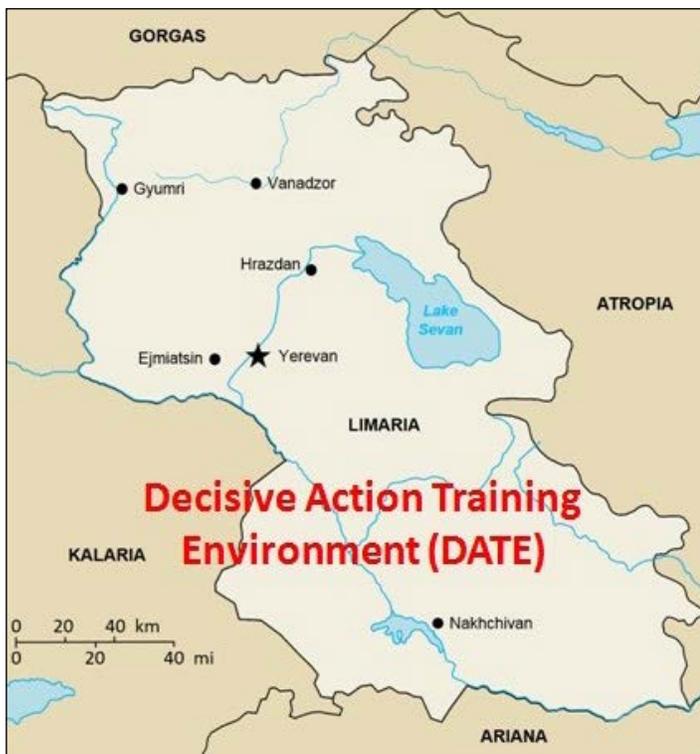


Figure 2 — Example of Multinational Training Brigade

**The JMRC Multinational Experience**

Former Chief of Staff of the Army (CSA) GEN Raymond Odierno tasked JMRC to focus on multinational interoperability at brigade level and below, something that NATO never accomplished even during the height of the Cold War (NATO doctrine strictly addresses interoperability at the division level and above). During DATE rotations at JMRC, training brigades consist of either a U.S. or allied/partnered nation brigade headquarters, with a varying mix of U.S. and allied/partnered nation battalions for both maneuver and supporting elements. Furthermore, within the training brigade’s battalions, there is a mix of U.S. and allied/partnered nation companies and platoons, thus creating multinational battalions and companies within the multinational brigade. For the OPFOR,

Figure 1 — Map of Fictitious Countries in DATE Scenario



as one can conclude, planning operations and fighting against such multinational units is considerably different from planning to fight a homogeneous U.S. brigade.

JMRC sponsors three primary types of DATE rotations/exercises: (1) Saber Junction, which focuses on readiness training/certification for a U.S. brigade combat team (BCT); (2) Combined Resolve, which builds readiness for a U.S. regionally aligned brigade, and (3) Allied Spirit, which focuses on developing multinational interoperability at the brigade level and below. More information is available at <http://www.eur.army.mil/exercises/default.htm>.

Saber Junction rotations primarily focus on the readiness of European-based units and always involve one of the two remaining U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR) brigades, the 173rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team (Airborne) or the 2nd Cavalry Regiment, for their biennial CTC training event. Typically, this will involve the U.S. brigade headquarters leading a multinational brigade in the Hohenfels Training Area, nicknamed “the box,” with one of its organic maneuver battalions and two attached multinational maneuver battalions. Meanwhile, the other two organic battalions from the USAREUR brigade will conduct maneuver operations elsewhere in Europe, with recent locations including Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Bulgaria, and Romania. These off-site battalions are tied to the JMRC exercise and scenario through the use of mobile digital instrumentation and deployed observer/coach/trainers (OCTs) and OPFOR packages, which ensure that a professional OPFOR challenges the unit and that OCTs are present to provide mentorship and feedback despite the physical separation from JMRC.

The other two types of DATE rotations at JMRC, Combined Resolve and Allied Spirit, are not as U.S. brigade-centric but “get-after” the former CSA’s guidance to focus on multinational interoperability at the brigade level and below. Combined Resolve exercises involve a U.S. regionally aligned force (RAF) brigade leading a multinational brigade headquarters with at least one of its organic battalions and typically two allied/partnered nation battalions for the “box” fight. Like Saber Junction DATE rotations, some of the RAF

brigade's battalions that are not physically participating in the "box fight" will conduct operations elsewhere in Europe and are also linked to the Hohenfels scenario through deployed digital instrumentation and OCT and OPFOR packages. The final series of DATE rotations, Allied Spirit, involves a focus on high readiness allied and partner nations with an emphasis on technical interoperability between communications and mission command systems. Although the various exercises have different points of emphasis, all provide a rich environment for interaction between allied and partner nation forces, both from the sociopolitical aspect and the technical/tactical aspect — factors that are essential for the successful conduct of unified land operations in a multinational environment.

Within a multinational DATE rotation, there is no pre-set separation of rotational training unit (RTU) offensive versus defensive versus stability operations, so each rotation is unique in this regard and planned according to the RTU's desired training objectives and time available. Typically, multinational DATE rotations encompass seven to 10 days of force-on-force maneuver training. Rotations will often start with an initial movement to contact (MTC) that pits the multinational training unit against the OPFOR, which views such an engagement as a deliberate attack. Such engagements begin with the training unit starting on the east or west end of the box and the OPFOR brigade tactical group (BTG) starting on the other end of the box; a meeting engagement occurs somewhere in between. After this initial battle period, the rotation will then shift to alternating offensive/defensive battle periods with the intent that the training brigade gains ground through the conduct of successive offensive operations. During the days between offensive and defensive battle periods, the opposing brigades will conduct reconnaissance and counter-reconnaissance operations, and the training brigade also focuses heavily

on stability operations, to include civil-military operations and area security. The varying nature of the RTU's task organization, length of the rotation, and desired training objectives mean that planning OPFOR operations requires far more than cookie-cutter techniques and requires a thorough military decision-making process (MDMP) with a special emphasis on developing an enemy (training unit) situational template (SITEMP).

### JMRC's Professional OPFOR

The 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment serves as JMRC's professional and full-time OPFOR. The 1-4 IN is a relatively standard U.S. light Infantry battalion that is augmented with unique OPFOR equipment and capabilities that allow it to transform into a replicated threat combined arms BTG as outlined in TC 7-100.2, *Opposing Force Tactics*. Its Apache and Blackfoot Companies are each able to transform into OPFOR combined arms battalions (minus), replicating up to 20 threat infantry fighting vehicles (BMPs) and 13 main battle tanks (MBT) apiece, both which are replicated via M113-variant OPFOR surrogate vehicles (OSV) with visual modifications. Cherokee Company replicates the OPFOR division tactical group's (DTG's) reconnaissance and BTG reconnaissance elements using their 10 high-mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicles (HMMWVs) that replicate threat reconnaissance vehicles (BRDM) and four BMPs. Cherokee Company also replicates the OPFOR special purpose forces (SPF) and insurgent elements.

In addition to 1-4 IN's organic companies, the OPFOR BTG is augmented with multinational units as well as U.S. Army Reserve/National Guard Infantry and engineer companies. Figure 4 shows the OPFOR BTG task organization for Rotation 15-03 (Saber Junction 15), where the OPFOR BTG was augmented with a Romanian battalion headquarters, Bulgarian battalion headquarters, Romanian infantry company, Bulgarian infantry company, Lithuanian infantry platoon, and a U.S. Army Reserve engineer company. The 1-4 IN also sent a platoon from Apache Company to Romania to support the out-of-sector portion of Saber Junction 15, and thus they did not take part in the box fight at Hohenfels. When the OPFOR BTG is operating at its maximum vehicular combat power of 26 MBTs, 40 BMPs, and 10 BRDMs, it must rely heavily on augmentation for its dismounted infantry assets. The OPFOR BTG also has a "red air" capability that comes from the Falcons OCT team (aviation trainers at JMRC), which provides two Hind-D attack helicopters (replicated by LUH-72 Lakota helicopters with VISMOSDs). OPFOR artillery is mostly virtual but typically has at least one live artillery battery; all assets, live or virtual, are controlled by

Figure 3 — Variations of Multinational Armored Personnel Carriers





*Soldiers with Apache Company, 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, engage opposing forces in a simulated combat scenario while conducting defensive operations training during exercise Combined Resolve V in Hohenfels, Germany, on 31 October 2015.*

the OPFOR BTG and is fully susceptible to RTU counter-fires.

To provide a more holistic and realistic “capability-based” OPFOR, JMRC provides the OPFOR asymmetric weapons such as improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and aggressive threat information warfare capabilities. TC 7-100 describes information warfare within seven categories: (1) computer warfare, (2) deception, (3) electronic warfare, (4) information attack, (5) perception management, (6) physical destruction, and (7) protection and security measures.

### **Unparalleled Leader Development Opportunities**

Serving within 1-4 IN as an OPFOR Soldier truly provides leadership development opportunities unparalleled anywhere in the U.S. Army; ironically, the only similar experience opportunities are within OPFOR units of the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif., and the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, La. However, these are absent the exposure of serving with, in support of, or leading multinational units at various levels. The autonomy they enjoy in executing their mission — from the ranks of sergeant through even the battalion commander — is simply astonishing. When integrated with multinational units, where often foreign forces look for U.S. leadership, Soldiers at all levels learn to be flexible, agile, and adaptive, creating an experience far beyond an exercise; to them — it’s

all real — a true leader-development breeding ground.

Within the NCO ranks, a sergeant will lead a team of replicated insurgencies, and a staff sergeant may lead a replicated Special Operations Force (SOF). In both cases, these young NCOs will operate independently from any platoon or company for many days at a time and behind enemy (training unit) lines. To be successful, they must reconnoiter for their own targets, plan attacks and ex-filtration, synchronize with senior-ranking OCTs for effects, and coordinate for resupplies — all under tactical conditions. These experiences not only help them develop proven tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) based on lessons learned from the vast amounts of repetitions, but upon returning to regular operational units, those experiences serve them well to think differently and more robustly about COIN operations.

These Infantry Soldiers also serve as air defense teams, deep reconnaissance assets, combat security outposts, information operations specialists, and high-value targets that attempt to avoid rotational unit discovery and capture. Moreover, this is an environment where Soldiers routinely perform multiple roles in one rotation, and at times in one day (killed as an insurgent in the morning... part of a conventional attack by the afternoon).

Officers of the OPFOR battalion gain equally vast amounts

of leader-development opportunities in an environment where lieutenants act as company commanders, company commanders lead replicated maneuver combined arms battalions, battalion operation officers plan and synchronize maneuvers for a multinational threat brigade, and the battalion commander commands it all — to include threat helicopter elements, artillery and engineer units, and even cyber-attacks. This implies that company commanders, replicating threat combined arms battalions, often plan, construct, and execute their defensive operations against an entire U.S. brigade combat team, with little support from their higher headquarters — and win. When coupled with multinational units, the battalion staff is stretched beyond its normal adaptability as it figures out ways to synchronize operations and provide sustainment support for new subordinates who predominately speak another language, fight with different tactics and techniques, and bring equipment for which they have limited maintenance, parts, and/or ammunition.

### Conclusion

JMRC's unique location in Germany (with training partnerships throughout Europe) and mission to integrate and build multinational training experiences with U.S. and allied forces, makes it truly a world-renowned training center and moreover a leader-development haven for its Soldiers.

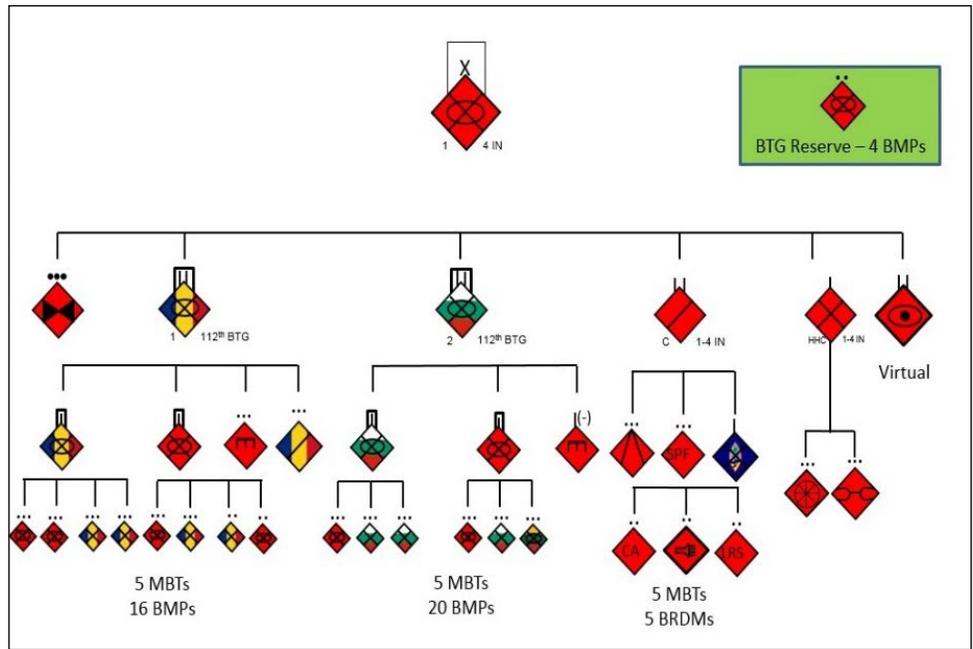


Figure 4 — OPFOR BTG Task Organization for Saber Junction 15

Units that train at JMRC will not only experience a battle-hardened fight against a hybrid threat within a complex environment, but against OPFOR Soldiers that loves their job — and are darn good at it. Most unique, however, is that the environment does not “replicate” a multinational experience... it is one!



Photos by SGT Brian Chaney

**Bulgarian soldiers assigned to the 3rd Mechanized Infantry Battalion, 61st Mechanized Brigade, engage simulated enemy forces while conducting a react-to contact mission rehearsal during exercise Combined Resolve V on 29 October 2015.**

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**Mario Hoffmann** is a retired U.S. Army military intelligence officer and currently serves as a senior Department of the Army civilian in a dual-capacity as the Director of TRADOC's G27 Operational Environment and Opposing Forces (OE/OPFOR) Program and the TRADOC Project Office (TPO) for OE/OPFOR. For over 12 years, he has overseen all aspects of accrediting and validating how the Army replicates the complexities of the OE/OPFOR across the live, virtual, and constructive environments supporting training, education, and leader development. He also manages the Army's OE/OPFOR modernization program, and in support of the Deputy Commanding General of the Combined Arms Center (Training), leads the OE/OPFOR Pillar of the Army's Combat Training Center and Home-Station Training programs.



Photo by CPT Charlie Emmons

# ADJUSTING THE TRAINING PARADIGM TO ‘WIN IN A COMPLEX WORLD’

MAJ ED KIM

*“We believe, with the new Army operating concept, we have to be able to do multiple small-scale things simultaneously. You’ve got to be a bit more flexible, a bit more adaptable. You’ve got to be able to get there quickly... You have to be prepared to operate around the world.”*

— **GEN Raymond Odierno**<sup>1</sup>  
Former Army Chief of Staff

This statement by GEN Odierno highlights the significance of training — or more precisely, realistic training — as the Army prepares to confront complex challenges throughout the world. Last October, the Army released its new Army Operating Concept (AOC) titled, “Win in a Complex World,” which anticipated faster rates towards instability, increased opportunities for adversaries to acquire asymmetric capabilities, and an increasing propensity for military operations to occur amongst dense population centers as some of the characteristics that will likely impact future warfare. Given this increase in complexity, the AOC calls for “globally responsive combined arms teams [that can] maneuver from multiple locations and domains to present multiple dilemmas to the enemy, limit enemy options, avoid enemy strengths, and attack enemy weaknesses.”<sup>2</sup> As a way to achieve these ends, the new concept is emphasizing the need to “develop innovative leaders and optimize human performance” by “foster[ing] discipline, confidence, and cohesion through innovative, realistic training.”<sup>3</sup>

Realistic training is no novel concept within the Army as the phrase “train as you will fight” is a long-standing tenet echoed within the ranks and even resides in current doctrine as a fundamental principle of unit training.<sup>4</sup> However, as the decade-long wars in Iraq and Afghanistan wind down and Army leaders balance resource constraints with force reductions to conduct effective training, our view (or existing paradigm) on what constitutes realistic training is at a critical juncture. The risk is overemphasizing the cognitive aspects of warfare, whereby overlooking the criticality of building the physical capacity to endure the hardships of warfare. Indeed, threat-based training is important to improve critical thinking, intuition, mental agility, and decision-making, which are all necessary aspects that enable us to effectively confront complex challenges. However, training to enhance physical performance is equally important to balance our approach towards what the AOC describes as “adaptive leaders, resilient Soldiers, and cohesive teams that thrive in uncertain, dangerous, and chaotic environments.”<sup>5</sup> Thus, this article contends that as we transition our intellectual framework to train and operate in the manner described by the AOC, we must not forget a fundamental component of realistic training — training within various types of physical environments that mimics the potential or known operational environment. When combined with threat-based training, this provides the level of realism that not only enhances the cognitive aspects but also improves the physical capacity to operate under austere and complex environments.

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## The Significance of Geographically Focused Training

While the character of warfare is constantly evolving, the nature of physical exertion during war does not change. Carl von Clausewitz, the famous 19th century Prussian theorist and soldier, stated, "War is in the realm of physical exertion and suffering. These will destroy us unless we can make ourselves indifferent to them, and for this birth or training must provide us with a certain strength of body and soul."<sup>6</sup> This physical exertion occurs within the context of an operational environment that encompasses a unique set of terrain and weather conditions. History demonstrates this relationship as evidenced by Napoleon's campaign into Russia amidst the harsh winter weather and numerous river crossings in 1812, General Ulysses S. Grant's expeditions along the bayous and high seasonal rains while attempting to seize Vicksburg during the Civil War, and the Allies' experience within the deserts and high temperatures in North Africa during World War II. Most recently, our recent experiences over the past decade within the rugged mountainous terrain of Afghanistan and hot summers in Iraq again demonstrates how the physical aspects of war do not change. Thus, training to build physical performance, particularly amidst various terrain and weather conditions, is clearly an integral part of training for conflict.

In the future, the ability to operate under various geographic conditions will remain critical as the Army attempts to enhance its expeditionary qualities to become a globally responsive and regionally engaged Army.<sup>7</sup> GEN Odierno recently observed, "One of the things that has changed in the world is, as I call it, the velocity of instability and the necessity to deploy our capabilities simultaneously to several different continents at the same time."<sup>8</sup> This "velocity" is evident as units continue to deploy on short notice to a wide variety of unforeseen contingencies such as the Ebola crisis in Liberia, the Ukraine crisis in Eastern Europe, and most recently, our return to Iraq given the emergence of the violent extremist organization, Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Given these trends, this means units will have less time to prepare for the environmental factors prior to deploying. Additionally, given the dynamic and complex character of the potential threats, units will not have the luxury of slowly adapting to the environmental factors. Therefore, mitigating this risk requires greater emphasis on geographically focused training to enhance our ability to rapidly deploy and operate effectively under austere and hostile conditions.

A cursory glance at potential crisis regions throughout the world reveals unique geographical conditions that pose a uniquely different set of environmental challenges than what the Army experienced recently. In the Asia-Pacific region, tensions in the East China and South China Seas, the unpredictability of North Korea, and the spread of violent extremism in Southeast Asia include dense population centers, jungles, and most noticeably, the vast Pacific Ocean. In the African region, hot tropical climates with high humidity covers the northern portions of Nigeria where Boko Haram continues to terrorize the local population. Finally, extreme

cold and rugged terrain cover the Arctic region where Russia is seeking to expand their influence. If Army forces deployed to these regions, could they "transition quickly and conduct operations of sufficient scale and ample duration to achieve strategic objectives?"<sup>9</sup> Stated otherwise, is the Army prepared to fight in small numbers in a jungle environment, or participate in amphibious operations under hostile conditions, or conduct the full range of military operations amidst rugged terrain under extreme cold or hot weather conditions?

### The Existing Training Strategies

Currently, the Army's operational training domain is largely divided into three mutually supporting activities that consist of home station training, maneuver combat training center (CTC) training, and regionally aligned force (RAF) training.<sup>10</sup> Each of these activities has clear benefits at various echelons that contribute to Army's overall readiness and ability to respond to emerging threats across the world. However, they also possess limitations, which unless clearly understood, may leave our units unprepared for the physical aspects of armed conflict.

As advancing technology provides another medium to create realistic training scenarios, the Army is placing greater emphasis to incorporate the Integrated Training Environment (ITE) with home station training. By 2020, the Army expects to field this system to every installation, which will allow units to leverage a combination of live, virtual, constructive, and gaming training enablers to create a realistic training environment.<sup>11</sup> This tool allows commanders to optimize training time and mitigate the resource shortfalls required to conduct live training by integrating simulations to complement the live training. However, the risk with this strategy is the illusion that virtual, constructive, or gaming experiences, as realistic as they may be, equates to realistic training, when in reality, it cannot fully replicate the physical experiences of military operations. With decreased live experience during training, Soldiers, units, and staffs are less apt to gain the tacit knowledge that enables greater understanding on the effects of the physical environment on military operations.

Another critical component of the Army's training strategy is the maneuver CTCs, which include the Joint Multinational Readiness Center (JMRC), Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC), and the National Training Center (NTC). These training centers were critical during the past decade while the Army's Force Generation (ARFORGEN) cycle consistently produced incrementally trained and cohesive units to deploy against a known threat within a known theater. Today, these centers continue to provide opportunities for leaders, Soldiers, staffs, and units to train against an unpredictable, free-playing, and thinking adversary in a live environment. Indeed, the current training opportunities available at the CTCs provides the best medium to infuse a variety of the latest technologies and resources, which enhances the overall training experience. However, the limitation of these centers is the inability to replicate the full range of physical environments found across the world. As described earlier, what happens if the next conflict occurs in some of the more

severe climates that are unlike Hohenfels, Germany, Fort Polk, La., or Fort Irwin, Calif.? In other words, the limitations of the CTCs are their fixed geographic locations, which only offer threat-based training vice threat-based training under conditions that resemble the physical environment of known or potential future conflicts.

The third component of the Army's training strategy is regionally aligned forces (RAF) training. This area has drawn more attention lately as the Army looks to become more globally responsive and regionally engaged by aligning specific units to combatant commanders from different regions of the world. Underpinning this training strategy is the ability for units to physically train or gain some degree of operational experience and familiarity within their assigned region. In terms of geographically focused training, this strategy is clearly the most beneficial. However, the weaknesses of this training strategy are opposite to that of the CTCs where units are unable to train in a robust and well-established training center that combines the myriad of technology and other key external supporting enablers. Granted, deployed forces gain invaluable experiences through partnerships and real-world security cooperation missions. However, without the full complements of a robust threat-based training environment, leaders and units are unable to train in an environment that combines the intensity created by an adaptive and lethal enemy with extreme geographic and weather conditions.

**Insights towards Adjusting the Training Paradigm**

*“We have to replicate and provide all of the friction, the unknowns and things that detract from clarity, so they can*

*use their expertise acquired in training to bring clarity in real situations.”*

**— GEN David Perkins<sup>12</sup>**  
U.S. Army TRADOC Commander

Given the fiscal constraints and challenges of preparing for future complex environments, there are many ongoing Army-wide initiatives that provide valuable insights towards better integrating the physical environment into training events. Embedded in all of these initiatives is the similar focus on preparing units to operate within unfamiliar geographic and climate conditions, whether it is through increased frequency, variety, or duration. Taken together, the underlying logic behinds these initiatives provide useful principles to help shape our training paradigm as we go forward.

Last year, the 25th Infantry Division established the Jungle Operations Training Course in Hawaii to train Soldiers on jungle operations. Divided into three phases, the course allows companies to incrementally build from basic individual jungle skills up to a culminating company-level field training exercise. In similar fashion, 1st Armored Division recently established the Desert Warrior Course at Fort Bliss, Texas, to train Soldiers on desert operations. This course provides opportunities to train at the individual and small-unit collective levels. The key take-away from these two divisions' initiatives lies is the blend of geographically focused training with threat-based training at home station. By maximizing the geographic potential at their respective home stations, these units are now able to increase the frequency of realistic training opportunities. Granted, the requisite resources and available

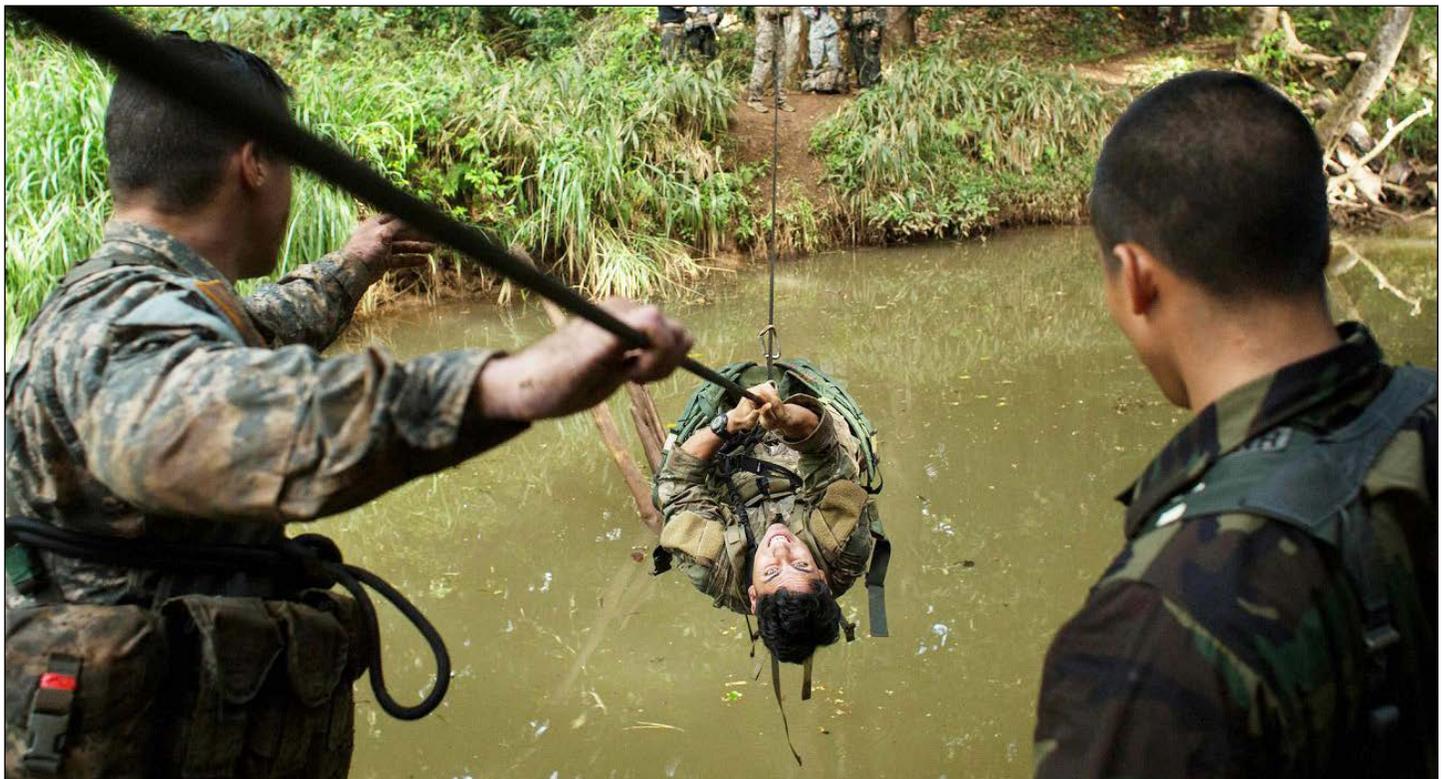


Photo by SPC Benjamin Pollhein

**A Soldier crosses a river during training at the Lightning Academy's Jungle Operations Training Center in Hawaii on 21 January 2015.**

terrain to begin a similar initiative on this scale is not readily available to all units. Furthermore, many units may already have a similar training methodology established at home station. However, the point is, given the resource constraints and increasing velocity of instability, leaders can no longer afford to wait for major training events or CTC rotations to conduct what this article qualifies as realistic training. Instead, we must build sustainable solutions that properly prepare our Soldiers for the physical aspects of warfare.

In October 2014, Soldiers from the 75th Ranger Regiment went to the U.S. Army Alaska's Northern Warfare Training Center to conduct mountaineering and cold weather training. MAJ Jeremiah Hurley, the executive officer for 3rd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment stated, "That's something across the regiment, whether it be the Arctic tundra or the mountains or deserts, jungles, we continue to look for opportunities to train in all these different environments so we can conduct operations anywhere in the world."<sup>13</sup> At a much larger scale, U.S. Army Pacific's Pacific Pathways is another model where units travel to various countries within the Pacific region to conduct multilateral exercises. This concept not only provides a medium to train with our strategic partners, but it also enables our units to train in various geographic locations. The lesson with these examples is to look beyond the typical training locations offered through the CTCs and home station to expand the scope of exposure within various environmental conditions. This variety of experience is a key component towards helping our Soldiers and units appreciate and understand the effects of various types of terrain and weather on individual performance and military operations. Ultimately, this will enhance our ability to rapidly deploy in any type of environment and focus on the right problems — the existing threat. Indeed, every unit will not have the available resources or time to train in Alaska or across the Pacific, however, at a much smaller scale, this logic is applicable at home station or locally through a variety in seasonal, light, or terrain conditions.

All CTC rotations at the NTC and JRTC recently increased from 14 days to 18 days. This extension of the CTC rotations looked beyond a proven model that continuously produced mission-capable units throughout the past decade. COL Jeff Broadwater, the commander of the operations group at NTC, stated, "This is an opportunity to continue to focus on allowing the BCTs to really stretch their systems over an extended period of time. Instead of 14 days, we've got 18 days to do that now, so we can really sharpen some of those collective tasks at the brigade, battalion and company and platoon levels."<sup>14</sup> The lesson here is to go beyond "what is" and critically examine "what if." By extending the duration of training, this provides opportunities to build endurance within our formations; this applies to our systems and physical capacity. Introduced as a new tenet for Army operations in the AOC, endurance is a critical component of improving our overall capacity to sustain operations until assigned missions are accomplished. However, since it is impossible to know in advance how long missions will take, we must continuously build beyond our comfort levels by extending our exposure to unfamiliar and complex situations.

Given the anticipated complexity of future warfare, the Army must train to fight and "win" in complex environments. Proper training requires realistic training opportunities beyond a threat-based model. As physical exertion amidst specific geographic and weather conditions will continue to define the nature of conflict, Army leaders must not forget about this important aspect within their training strategy. Hence, the training paradigm going forward must look beyond the current limitations, whether it is limited resources or the existing training strategies. As evidenced by the numerous ongoing initiatives throughout the Army, adjustments are already underway. Collectively, we must make sense of these initiatives and incorporate the underlying principles at various scales and echelons to establish the level of realism in our training plans going forward. With greater emphasis on increasing the frequency, variety, and duration of realistic training, this is a potential step in the right direction.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Michelle Tan, "Army Unveils New Plan to 'Win in a Complex World,'" *Army Times*, 13 October 2014, <http://www.armytimes.com/story/military/pentagon/2014/10/13/army-unveils-new-plan-to-win-in-a-complex-world/17180141/>.

<sup>2</sup> Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Pamphlet 525-3-1, *U.S. Army Operating Concept: Win in a Complex World* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army TRADOC, 2014) 17.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>4</sup> Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 7-0, *Training Units and Developing Leaders* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, August 2012), 2-2.

<sup>5</sup> TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1, 39.

<sup>6</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Peter Paret and Michael Howard (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 101.

<sup>7</sup> GEN Raymond Odierno, "Waypoint #2: Follow up to CSA's Marching Orders," U.S. Army website, 19 February 2014, <http://www.army.mil/article/118873/>.

<sup>8</sup> GEN Raymond Odierno, "Interview: U.S. Army Chief of Staff," Defense News Website, 12 October 2014, <http://archive.defensenews.com/article/20141012/SHOWSCOUT04/310130013/Interview-Gen-Ray-Odierno-US-Army-Chief-Staff>.

<sup>9</sup> TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1, 17.

<sup>10</sup> Army Regulation 350-1, *Army Training and Leader Development* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 2014) 3.

<sup>11</sup> U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Pamphlet 525-8-3, *The U.S. Army Training Concept: 2012-2020* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army TRADOC, 2011), 35.

<sup>12</sup> GEN David Perkins, "TRADOC Commanding General Spells Out New Army Operating Concept," U.S. Army website, 4 February 2015, [http://www.army.mil/article/142218/TRADOC\\_commanding\\_general\\_spells\\_out\\_new\\_Army\\_operating\\_concept/](http://www.army.mil/article/142218/TRADOC_commanding_general_spells_out_new_Army_operating_concept/).

<sup>13</sup> Michelle Tan, "Rangers Tackle Alaska Terrain in First Visit Since 2011," *Army Times*, 8 September 2014, <http://www.armytimes.com/story/military/pentagon/2014/09/06/rangers-tackle-alaska-terrain-in-first-visit-since-2011/15190413/>.

<sup>14</sup> Michelle Tan, "Combat Training Rotations Will Increase to 18 Days," *Army Times*, 6 February 2015, <http://www.armytimes.com/story/military/careers/army/2015/02/06/army-extends-ctc-rotations/22948785/>.

At the time this article was written, MAJ Ed Kim was attending the School of Advanced Military Studies at Fort Leavenworth, Kan. MAJ Kim's previous assignments include serving as an observer, coach/trainer with the Mission Command Training Program at Fort Leavenworth; he also has Stryker and light Infantry experience in the 82nd Airborne Division (Fort Bragg, N.C.) and 3-2 Stryker Brigade Combat Team (Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash.) to include deployments to Iraq and Haiti. He earned a bachelor's degree in biology from the University of Washington and a master's degree in management and leadership from Webster University.

# INTEROPERABILITY AT JMRC: MISSION COMMAND AND THE LNO TEAM

CPT KENNETH O'REILLY  
CPT JAMES DEVLIN

*“Alliances are force multipliers: through multinational cooperation and coordination, the sum of our actions is always greater than if we act alone. We will continue to maintain the capacity to defend our allies against old and new threats. We will also continue to closely consult with our allies as well as newly emerging partners and organizations so that we revitalize and expand our cooperation to achieve common objectives. And we will continue to mutually benefit from the collective security provided by strong alliances.”*

— 2010 National Security Strategy<sup>1</sup>

## Why is Mission Command Important?

*“NATO, including the United States, will defend Estonia. Will defend Latvia. Will defend Lithuania. Will defend all of our NATO allies. As NATO allies, we stand together. We stand as one.”*

— President Barack Obama<sup>2</sup>

**A**s we continue to employ regionally aligned forces (RAF) and conduct more training exercises with our European allies and partners, the reality is that it is becoming less and less likely that U.S. forces

will conduct unilateral operations. For this reason, it is imperative that battalions look at their task organization and figure out how to properly leverage interoperability and partnership. Interoperability is defined as the ability of systems, units, or forces to provide services to and accept services from other systems, units, or forces and to use their services so exchanged to enable them to operate effectively together.<sup>3</sup>

Battalions at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center (JMRC) who are task-organized a multinational company often struggle to achieve effective interoperability, and one of the main reasons is the inability to effectively conduct mission command. The lack of mission command creates frustration at all levels, hampering interoperability. The implementation of the liaison officer (LNO) team is instrumental to the success of executing mission command and achieving interoperability when conducting operations with multinational units. A battalion's ability to quickly understand what its multinational company has to offer and then utilize those capabilities effectively will have a huge impact on its success.

## Opening Vignette

*“Roger, out,” the task force commander replied on the radio after receiving an update to his combat power. It was now 1530 and the task force had been on the offensive since early morning, seizing multiple objectives. They had lost significant combat power in doing so and now had to turn to one of the two multinational companies (COY) within its task force. The task force had integrated LNO teams into the multinational COYs upon arrival at JMRC with the intent to increase their ability to effectively conduct*



Photo by SGT Michael Broughey

The LNO OIC assists the multinational company commander in developing his plan.

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mission command, and they were soon to reap the benefits of doing so.

The battalion commander called 1LT Queen, the officer in charge (OIC) of the LNO team embedded in the multinational COY, over the radio and gave him a rally point so he could link up with the COY commander. The COY moved to that location and linked up with the task force commander, who tasked them to seize the final objective — a village which had approximately a platoon-sized enemy element. The COY would attempt to seize the village while a section of tanks would provide overwatch. The LNO team was equipped with radios, which gave them the ability to communicate with the tank platoon leader over a secure net, a capability the COY wouldn't have without the LNO team. The COY commander, with the assistance of 1LT Queen, quickly developed a plan to seize the objective. 1LT Queen was a senior first lieutenant who had the experience and knowledge to assist the COY commander in making a tactically sound plan. Once the plan was complete, the COY commander briefed his platoon commander while 1LT Queen back-briefed the task force commander over the radio and then they began movement into the village.

The 1st Platoon made contact first with two enemy squads defending from an abandoned combat outpost (COP). 1LT Queen quickly got on the radio and coordinated with the tanks in overwatch, communicating where the friendly elements were and passing on targets to the tanks. The tanks engaged and destroyed the enemy guard towers, allowing the platoon to maneuver onto the COP and successfully seize it with minimal casualties. While 1st Platoon was seizing the COP, 2nd Platoon moved out of the wood line and began its assault on the village and immediately made contact.

The platoon took casualties, but they were able to seize a foothold within the village. Although they had seized the foothold, they were still taking effective direct fire from the enemy. The COY commander realized he was outmatched in the village, so he had 1LT Queen send a situational report back to the task force commander and ask for additional forces. The task force commander told him that there were no additional forces available and they had to seize the village on their own. With that guidance the COY commander called his 3rd Platoon forward to link up with 1st Platoon and move into the village to assist 2nd Platoon, which was still taking effective fire. The two platoons were able to engage and destroy multiple targets, causing the enemy to withdraw and take up new positions within a building in the southeastern portion of the town. As the COY maneuvered on the enemy, the LNO team provided the task force commander with timely and accurate reports as well as recommendations from the COY commander until the mission was complete.

Ultimately, despite their differences in radios, tactics, equipment, and language, the multinational COY successfully achieved their assigned mission. The key enabler in this case was an effective LNO team at the right time and place that was trusted by both the COY and task force commanders.

## Mission Command and the LNO Team

Mission command is one of the most important foundations of unified land operations. Mission command is defined as the exercise of authority and direction by the commander using mission orders to enable disciplined initiative within the commander's intent to empower agile and adaptive leaders in the conduct of unified land operations.<sup>4</sup> Battalions at JMRC that embed LNO teams into multinational companies have had better success executing mission command than those that do not. These LNO teams are able to build cohesive teams, create a shared understanding, assist the company commander in exercising disciplined initiative and accepting prudent risk, and ensure mission orders and the commander's intent are understood.

Building a cohesive team through mutual trust is extremely difficult when integrating a multinational company. Building a team does not happen overnight, but due to the tempo of unified land operations it almost has to. The way a battalion receives and integrates a multinational COY into its formation will set the stage for the rest of the time they will work together. Battalions need to identify their LNO teams prior to meeting their multinational units for the first time and integrate them immediately. Too often at JMRC, the multinational companies are brought into the operations process too late, severely degrading the ability to create a shared understanding. Integrating the LNO team early allows the battalion commander and staffs to synchronize collaboration and open dialogue while assisting the battalion in creating a shared understanding.

Battalions at JMRC often do a poor job at making sure the multinational companies understand the problem set or the overall goal for an operation. The companies generally understand what their mission is but do not understand the larger picture and how they fit in it. The LNO team can play an important role in ensuring that the multinational commander has a shared understanding, knows how he fits in the battalion's overall plan, and understands what the overall endstate is, which ultimately facilitates the development of mutual trust.

A major principle of mission command is providing a clear commander's intent. When a battalion commander has multinational commanders in his task force, he must ensure that his commander's intent is understood by those commanders. Not all multinational commanders will speak fluent English, and on a rare occasion, a multinational commander may speak very little English. This has proven to be a major issue at JMRC and usually results in a misunderstanding of the battalion commander's intent. Often, the multinational commander will not ask for clarification during a brief or rehearsal, so it is assumed that he has a clear understanding. The LNO team can fix that issue by attending all briefs and rehearsals with the multinational commander and make sure that he understands everything. If any questions or issues arise, they can then be brought to the battalion commander's or staff's attention.



Photo by CPT James Devlin

*The LNO attends a key leader engagement with the COY commander.*

Commanders often rely on subordinates to exercise disciplined initiative, especially when attempting to seize, retain, or exploit the initiative. When conducting unified land operations, taking the initiative is essential in mission success. Initiative allows commanders to maintain the tempo necessary to defeat the enemy. This can be difficult when integrating multinational companies into U.S. battalions, as some multinational units do not understand initiative as we see it. Some multinational armies are built upon Soviet doctrine, which does not value initiative at the lower echelons in the same way as more Western armies. Another major issue is that the units have not worked together before and when using initiative, knowing and understanding your higher commander plays a role in exercising disciplined initiative. An effective LNO team will understand the battalion commander's intent and ensure the multinational commander is operating within that intent while exercising disciplined initiative.

When exercising mission command, commanders must use mission orders to assign tasks, allocate resources, and issue guidance. It is imperative that the multinational companies understand these mission orders. The LNO team can assist the multinational commander in understanding the mission orders. The team needs to attend all briefings and rehearsals, and they need to read all orders from battalion. This way they are not only helping the commander, but they understand the mission as well. In some instances, a multinational commander may be too embarrassed to ask for clarification during a briefing or rehearsal, so the LNO can assist by bringing those questions to the battalion commander or staff. The language barrier can be a huge issue when using mission orders. Battalions must limit the use of jargon, spell out all acronyms, use doctrinal tactical tasks, and issue clear and concise orders to overcome the barrier. Successful tactics,

techniques, and procedures (TTPs) have been to clearly define the tactical task and purpose or use NATO terminology.

Some multinational units do not accept prudent risk like we do. The commander may not understand our process for assessing risk, or if he does, he may not put the level of emphasis on risk mitigation that is needed during an operation. The LNO team can assist the commander in this process, for both accidental and tactical risk. The battalion commander or staff can give guidance to the LNO team in regards to risk, and they can assist the multinational commander in the risk mitigation process. Battalions need to provide their risk management worksheets to the company commander. That way he understands how important it is, and he can utilize the battalion's plan when mitigating risk at his level.

### **What is an LNO?**

U.S. maneuver battalions must fully understand the necessity of an effective LNO team. According to Appendix E of FM 6-0, *Mission Command*, liaison is that contact or intercommunication maintained between elements of military forces or other agencies to ensure mutual understanding and unity of purpose and action. Liaison helps reduce the fog of war through direct communications. It is the most commonly employed technique for establishing and maintaining close, continuous physical communication between commands. Commanders use a liaison during operations and normal daily activities to help facilitate communication between organizations, preserve freedom of action, and maintain flexibility. Liaison provides senior commanders with relevant information and answers to operational questions. It ensures they remain aware of the tactical situation. Liaison activities augment the commander's ability to synchronize and focus combat power. They include establishing and maintaining physical contact and communication between elements of military forces.

### **LNO Manning**

Manning of the LNO team(s) will be difficult. Giving up the right Soldiers will hurt somewhere. It is critical enough that a unit should consider pulling platoon leaders with strong platoon sergeants or requesting external augmentation. Best practices have been to use LNOs with the attached multinational companies. However, the same principles can be applied when establishing LNOs with adjacent units. A battalion commander should choose a team that he trusts and a team that is competent. If the LNO team isn't thought of as a potential combat enabler, then there will be significant issues in executing disciplined initiative and facilitating the multinational partner's capabilities. The LNO team and the battalion need to clearly understand and articulate the command relationships

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between the battalion and the multinational unit. If the command relationship is not understood, it poses significant issues during the planning and sustainment phases.

The team needs to have an OIC and an NCOIC. The OIC should be a senior lieutenant or junior captain with a maneuver background to facilitate synchronization of the battalion plan along with the company. The OIC needs to be an officer that the battalion commander trusts to do the job as the team has a significant impact on his ability to conduct mission command. The OIC needs to understand the planning process as he may be assisting the commander in developing his plan.

The NCOIC should be either a senior staff sergeant or a sergeant first class but have had some type of platoon sergeant time. His platoon sergeant experience will be key because most of his time and effort will be spent ensuring the company is managing its logistics properly, whether it be sending reports or receiving supplies from battalion. Many multinational units lack the ability to plan and coordinate logistics as well as casualty evacuation.

If the LNO team is using a command and control (C2) vehicle, then it will need a driver and possibly a gunner. Best practices have been that these roles are filled by either a medic or forward observer. This way they are not only just a Soldier operating as a driver or gunner, but they serve another purpose. In some cases, the multinational companies lack medical training and supplies, so a well-trained medic can be beneficial on the battlefield. A forward observer is beneficial when calling for fire; however, a well-trained OIC or NCOIC can call for fire or control close combat attack (CCA).

### **Proposed Equipment Package for an LNO Team Integrating with Multinationals**

The LNO team must have the ability to maneuver mounted and dismounted.

**Movement and Maneuver** — The team needs to have a vehicle with a crew-served weapon (M240B, MK 19 or M2 .50 cal) if the multinational company is mounted. This will allow the LNO team to move with the multinational company as well as give them firepower to defend themselves. If at all possible, it should not stand out from the vehicles the company has as the enemy will try to destroy the C2 vehicle.

**Intelligence** — Some multinational companies have their own intelligence collection platforms and some do not. Depending on the mission of that company, it may be beneficial to include a Raven unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) with operator in the LNO team. At the very least, the battalion needs to develop a plan that keeps the LNOs aware of any intelligence updates on the battlefield, whether that be through the operations and intelligence (O&I) net or another means of communication.

**Fire Support** — The LNO team needs to have the capability to call for indirect fire as some multinational units cannot call for fire. The team should either have a forward observer as part of the package or a competent OIC or NCOIC that can plan for and call for fires.

**Protection** — Some multinational units will have very minimal hauling capabilities. This severely degrades their ability to haul Class IV around the battlefield. Equipping the LNO team with a trailer to tow behind its HMMWV is a way around this problem. This trailer will allow the LNO team to haul a Class IV package for the company in case they need to build obstacles, especially in the defense.

**Mission Command** — Vehicle platforms need to be outfitted with a Blue Force Tracker (BFT) and at least two mounted radios, one to monitor battalion command and one to monitor the multinational company command net. This is the most important piece of the package, as it allows the multinational commander to communicate with the battalion. The LNOs must have a plan to maintain mission command while dismounted as well.

**Sustainment** — As already mentioned, the multinational units can lack hauling capabilities. If the LNO team has a trailer, they will be able to haul supplies for the company. Most multinational companies have little to no Class VIII, so the LNO team must have an understanding of the Class VIII and they may have to facilitate resupply for the multinational company.

### **Conclusion**

In closing, when partnering with multinational companies, LNO teams allow the battalion to effectively execute mission command. The LNO team will allow the battalion and the multinational company to become a cohesive team and to have a shared understanding. The team will assist the battalion commander in providing his commander's intent, assist in issuance of mission orders, facilitate acceptance of risk and exercise disciplined initiative. A properly resourced and integrated team allows for a smooth integration. The task force mentioned in the opening vignette effectively utilized the LNO team which enabled successful issues of orders and his commander's intent over a secure net to the COY commander for that mission. The LNO team also ensured the COY commander exercised disciplined initiative by providing battalion with updates from the ground when assaulting the final objective. The LNO team will not provide all the solutions when integrating multinational companies and executing mission command. However, units that integrate and utilize LNO teams sooner at the company level have had successful rotations.

### **Notes**

<sup>1</sup> 2010 National Security Strategy, [https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss\\_viewer/national\\_security\\_strategy.pdf](https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/national_security_strategy.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in U.S. Army Europe special publication *Smart Europe*, [http://www.eur.army.mil/pdf/USArmyEurope\\_SpecialPublication-Web.pdf](http://www.eur.army.mil/pdf/USArmyEurope_SpecialPublication-Web.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> FM 1-02, *Operational Terms and Graphics*.

<sup>4</sup> Army Doctrine Reference Publication 6-0, *Mission Command*.

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# HEAVY WEAPONS GUNNERY

## IN AN AIRBORNE/AIR ASSAULT WEAPONS COMPANY

CPT JOHN M. HERGER

Nearly 14 years of moving troops and equipment into and out of combat has bred a unique mentality into the U.S. Army. The increased budget, expedited promotion rate, and growth of the force structure have enabled the branch to sustain combat on two major fronts while continuing to support numerous contingency activities across the globe. This mentality, reinforced by the brigade combat team (BCT) structure, has created commonalities across all units and echelons in the Army. Tankers found themselves tightening their rucksacks for dismounted patrols through the mountains while light Infantrymen rode for miles and engaged the enemy from heavy armored vehicles. The Army has demonstrated a true proficiency in adaptability, tailoring skill sets and organizations for the fights in Afghanistan and Iraq. In the spirit of that adaptability, units must now look beyond skills developed during the global war on terrorism to identify where the training and organization focus must shift for the future.

Projected in the upcoming years are slimmer budgets and fewer deployments, and as a result coveted training “white

space” is expanding. Units that were once locked into a sequential pattern that culminated in a deployment are finding the time and resources to hone skills that made the culture and capabilities of each of the Army’s divisions unique. With this shift there comes a necessity to adapt at all echelons. Leaders must identify how their units can best support the Army’s needs while expanding capabilities in those skills unique to their piece of the pie.

Developing those capabilities and skills is a unique challenge in a heavy weapons Infantry company. Delta company formations are often composed of Soldiers with a wide range of operational experience. Mechanized Infantrymen, light Infantrymen, Cavalry scouts, paratroopers, pathfinders, and Soldiers from any other variety of operational specialties find themselves adapting their individual skills to best utilize the vehicles, equipment, and task organization of the heavy weapons company. At the individual level, adaptation comes with its growing pains, but these are usually short-

*An Infantryman assigned to Dragon Company, 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) reloads his M2 .50 caliber machine gun.*

Photos courtesy of the author



lived. Collectively, however, the entire culture of a weapons company must fall in line to support the unique characteristics and missions of the organization. A heavy weapons company typically fields more property, fewer Soldiers, and one more platoon than a rifle company. Among that property there are heavy weapons, advanced optics, missile launchers, and armored vehicles — all requiring specific training for proper operation and maintenance. This results in a variety of considerations when planning, resourcing, and executing mounted training events.

The Cavalry uses the phrase “horse, saddle, rider” to prioritize the needs of the unit. The horse is how you get around, the saddle stabilizes your essential gear, and the rider makes it function. This adage applies well to a heavy weapons company. The company’s proficiency in its mission essential task list (METL) relies heavily on its vehicles, key systems mounted on those vehicles, and the operators of those vehicles. The development and assessment of these capabilities are compiled in the gunnery progression.

In the contemporary operating environment, gunnery means different things to different units. The past decade’s deployment cycle has forced heavy units to adjust training cycles, tables of organization and equipment, and priorities to better fit the theater and mission they were assigned to support. In some units, gunnery stayed true to the published mounted tables. Other units created tables evaluating strictly dismounted tasks. Still, other units found a middle ground, evaluating both mounted and dismounted tasks. Each technique serves the characteristics and culture of the unit in its own way and none are wrong, according to the first step of the 10-step training model and TC 3-20.31, *Training and Qualification, Crew*. Both sources state that a unit’s METL must first be identified and evaluated in order to drive the creation of evaluation criteria for certifying events.

Gunnery is a highly structured progression of training that begins with the assessment of basic individual skills and culminates with platoon collective training. Until recently, 12 gunnery tables outlined the tasks required for a platoon to certify on mounted platforms. Now, gunnery focuses on the six tables in which crews certify on their mounted platforms, and section and platoon gunnery certification are executed as collective training (designed at the company and battalion levels).

Crew qualification outlined in TC 3-20.31 progresses over six tables.

Prerequisite tables cover the first three tables:

\* Training Table I, Gunnery Skills Test: Each crew member must successfully complete no more than six weeks prior to the qualifying event.

\* Training Table II, Simulations: Each crew must successfully complete the required commands and procedures no more than six weeks prior to the qualifying event.

\* Training Table III, Proficiency: Each crew must successfully utilize training aids, devices, simulators, and simulations

(TADSS) to demonstrate the minimum proficiency to safely train with live rounds; this should be done no more than six weeks prior to the qualifying event.

Live tables covers tables IV through VI:

\* Table IV, Basic: Each crew trains on basic skills of the platform within the previous qualification period (six months). Table IV can be executed with the appropriate TADSS if training ammunition is not available. This is important as it allows some flexibility in the resource requirements for completing gunnery.

\* Table V, Practice: This table can be executed on the actual range where qualification will be completed; however, the targets need to be changed to execute table VI.

\* Table VI, Qualification: Table VI is also classified as the gate to live fire (GTLF). Qualifying individual crews in Table VI enables those crews to safely participate in the higher echelon live-fire exercises at the section and platoon levels. The manual is clear about the importance of qualifying individual crews before progressing on to higher-level training. Battalion-level emphasis is required to support Table VI, which is the battalion master gunner’s responsibility. The master gunner (MG) should be heavily involved throughout the entire, continual process. Coordination for outside resources, validating targets, organizing vehicle crew evaluators, and scoring and maintaining records are just a few of the key tasks that can overburden an executing company during gunnery. Additionally, an Infantry battalion is not organized to commit the required staffing to both the rifle company training progression and a robust gunnery training progression. The MG not only relieves some of that pressure by assuming those responsibilities but also enables battalion oversight of the event and the crews’ performance. The MG maintains a succinct and accurate snapshot of the heavy weapons company’s capabilities, strengths, and weaknesses while minimizing oversight of the lead-up training and archived records that are accessible (and inspectable) within the S3 shop. Essential conditions for crews to qualify are utilizing a fully operational platform and weapon, allotted ammunition, a certified vehicle crew evaluator, and full-scale targets. Given those conditions a crew must score a minimum of 700 out of 1,000 points overall (score 70 points or more on all targets on at least 7 out of 10 engagements, and at least one of those engagements must be shot at night). The target specifications can be found in the TC, but Table VI mandates a variety of stationary and moving vehicular and dismounted targets.

The gate requirement period simply allows for all crews to achieve the standard scores qualifying them in Table VI. Some crews will pass through each gate during their first iteration; some will require returning to specific engagements to earn the minimum score to pass; and other crews will require multiple executions of the entire Table VI or possibly returning to events from lower tables to ensure optics and lasers are accurately zeroed. Ultimately, all crews can achieve a rating of qualified; however, only crews that successfully complete Table VI without re-firing any engagements can



*Soldiers with Dragon Company, 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) prepare for a gunnery table.*

achieve a “distinguished” rating (scoring more than 900 points) or a “superior” rating (scoring more than 800 points). At the end of the gate requirement period, every crew that will be participating in collective training must have achieved the standards for Table VI as outlined in TC 3-20.31. It is important to note that section and platoon collective training in the gunnery progression is not broken down into gunnery tables as it has been in the past. Commanders are charged with identifying key tasks based on the units’ METL and integrating them into the collective training events utilizing the standardized key collective tasks as a baseline on which performance can be evaluated. For example, TOW (tube-launched, optically tracked, wireless-guided) tables may be integrated into collective training if resourcing allows and the unit commander has identified a TOW shoot as an essential task. This task may take the place of what otherwise could have been a machine-gun engagement or call-for-fire mission. The battalion commander (BC) maintains the authority to prioritize the training focus for the gunnery progression following the GTLF. Authorized commanders can adjust the requirements outlined in Tables I-VI only “when live and tactical proficiency is adequately displayed.” Aside from that, for crews to be qualified they must complete all key tasks in Tables I-VI identified in TC 3-20.31, according to the published standard.

The reporting period encompasses the nine months between completing a gunnery progression and the next opportunity to qualify crews. During this time units are rated “Trained” or “T” by maintaining and sustaining 85 percent qualification on all assigned main gun/ATGM (anti-tank guided weapon) crews (regardless of vehicle type) and 85 percent

of all mounted machine-gun crews (regardless of type) as defined in the standard. At a minimum, crews must qualify every nine months; however, battalion commanders are authorized to adjust the criteria by which a crew remains qualified. An example of this is a truck crew remaining qualified in crew gunnery after truck commanders (TCs) are exchanged within the formation. The BC can make the determination that since those TCs were previously qualified with a crew, they maintain that qualification as part of a new crew. This can be employed as an overarching policy or on a case-by-case basis. Whatever the determination is, that unit is only considered “Trained” when at least 85 percent of the crews are qualified according to the gunnery standard.

The way to get the delta company back to mechanical zero in mounted tasks is outlined in TC 3-20.31, and

there are a few key ways to facilitate the process. Prioritizing tasks within the company while limiting specified tasks is absolutely essential for a successful gunnery progression. With a clear priority of tasks, platoon leaders have the flexibility that allows them to employ initiative and aggression in the execution of gunnery tasks. This flexibility also enables leaders to focus on areas requiring special emphasis within their platoons, for example one platoon might require additional training on the gunnery skills test events, while another platoon is having problems refining their crew commands. Gaining flexibility in the gunnery plan by prioritizing not dictating key tasks, enables subordinate leaders to tailor their training to correct specific shortfalls in their formations.

Prioritization of tasks allows for the efficient use of the next key facilitator, which is time. There are many gates that will enable a crew, section, and platoon to properly execute gunnery. Weapons qualifications, simulators (some tables can be executed on the Reconfigurable Vehicle Tactical Trainer and Engagement Skills Trainer), licensing, maintenance, commands and gunnery skills testing are a few of those gates. At the company level, supporting those gates by protecting platoons’ time is essential. Above the company level, those gates must be structured, specified, and resourced because of the greater numbers executing the same tasks.

Another key facilitator that has a major impact on the planning and execution of mounted gunnery is knowledge of available facilities. Committing a few days to studying the evaluation criteria and applying them in real-time to the facilities that will be used enables leaders and evaluators to finalize execution plans and develop contingencies when friction points arise. Those friction points can range

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from targets malfunctioning to range operator no-shows to ammunition restrictions. Having a deep knowledge of what each facility is capable of allows leaders to compensate for unanticipated issues without sacrificing the standards of the tables. In short; the training objectives should dictate the priority intelligence requirements for your range reconnaissance.

Dragon Company, 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team (Rakkasans), 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) recently executed gunnery progressions according to both FM 3-20.21 and TC 3-20.31. As this was the first time that the company executed the gunnery training progression to the .21 and .31 standard, there were many key takeaways from the events. The first is the timeline requirements for a planning a proper unstabilized platform gunnery. If uninterrupted, an 18-crew delta company can complete the gunnery events to standard in two months. Land, ammunition, and other resources should be projected a minimum of 13-21 weeks prior to the first event of the gunnery. When all factors that might affect the timeline are totaled, the entire process (deciding that the company will execute gunnery to the last platoon completing collective training) will take around six months. The battalion MG should be involved throughout the entire process, offering guidance and outlining standards so that the company can execute a train-up that will support the performance expected during gunnery. Gates need to be identified during the planning process and integrated into the timeline. Dragon Company spent the weeks leading up to the Gunnery Skills Tests developing Table I and II skills in the motor pool and on available mounted simulators. This allowed for crew commands and operating weapons to become second nature to the Soldiers, and resulted in all crews achieving great success with minimal difficulty in the first two gunnery tables. During the planning process, you will identify the resources that will be needed to achieve the training objectives for the gunnery progression. At Fort Campbell, Range 55 was built almost exclusively to support gunnery. There are moving and stationary mounted and dismounted targets, vehicle fighting positions, two lanes on which vehicles can simultaneously travel and engage

targets, thermal-blankets to mark targets for thermal optics and the TRACR system which enables an evaluator to time engagements, deduct points for violations, and observe rounds. Paired with a knowledgeable and professional staff, the range hosts a robust set of features that can support a gunnery, but there are limitations. The two lanes minimize the maneuvering unit to one section per iteration. A platoon could execute a live-fire iteration on this range, but the layout presents strict limitations on fields of fire and maneuverability, diminishing the value of the event. The ammunition policy at the range and within the unit also requires special considerations. Currently, 90 percent of the dunnage from fired ammunition is required for turn in at a maneuver range. To overcome these limitations, the company executed Gunnery Tables I-VI at Range 55 on Fort Campbell and conducted off-site training at St. Vith's range on Fort Knox, Ky., to complete MK19 crew gunnery and section and platoon collective training. The progression worked well, enabling Soldiers to focus on the basic gunnery skills at their home station and execute collective training on an unfamiliar and more dynamic range.

The unstabilized platform gunnery progression outlined in TC 3-20.31 establishes a single, unambiguous standard by which mounted units must develop and evaluate their proficiencies. This single standard is essential for ensuring that each crew is trained in properly engaging targets from a mounted platform. It also provides every echelon in a chain of command with an accurate and readily accessible snapshot of the capabilities of their mounted units, down to the crew level. By adhering to this standard, mounted units within the Army will improve their proficiency in mounted operations and also reinforce the culture of gunnery-based evaluations.

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# THE ART VS SCIENCE OF MANEUVER RANGE PLANNING

CPT AARON GREER

*Paragraph One, Section B: "You can never use ▲ while conducting ■."*

*Paragraph One, Section C: "You can use ▲ while conducting ■ as long as you considered using ◆ first."*

In the military, wordiness and ambiguity are rarely prized commodities. However, while designing maneuver plans for ranges and training events, these are encountered frequently. This is becoming even more apparent as the military shifts from global war on terrorism deployment cycles and transitions towards unified land operations. As unit commanders are, once again, provided more latitude in training management, the importance of clear training regulations and highly trained unit level planners must also become an imperative for both range management authorities (range operations) and units conducting live-fire maneuver training.

This article focuses on the challenges presented in the primary range safety pamphlet, Department of the Army (DA) Pamphlet (PAM) 385-63, *Range Safety*; the procedural difficulties that arise between training units and this document; and the safety training knowledge organic to maneuver units. The hypothetical example used in the opening of this article is, in fact, not hypothetical at all. It is pulled from Chapter 4 of the DA PAM (Paragraph 4-1, b-c) and dictates when units may use the less restrictive cone surface danger zone (SDZ) rather than the more restrictive batwing SDZ. It states in

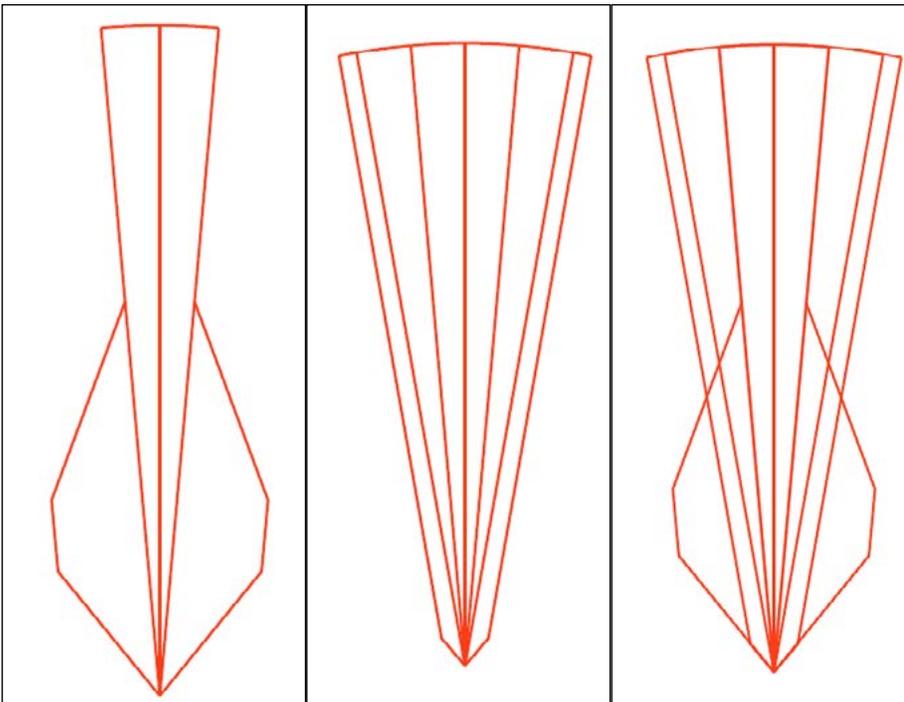
section b: "The cone SDZ may be applied when designing or conducting training on static/known distance style ranges that do not involve fire and movement or fire and maneuver." This seems pretty straight forward: Units are not authorized to use the cone SDZ for fire and maneuver (so you can never use ▲ [the cone SDZ] while conducting ■ [fire and maneuver]). However, the very next section, c, states: "The batwing SDZ provides for greater containment of all ricochets. For the Army, the batwing will be considered when designing or conducting training on ranges that involve fire and movement, fire and maneuver, flanking fire, and/or when ricochet hazards outside the range boundary may endanger nonparticipating personnel." Essentially, you can use ▲ [the cone SDZ] while conducting ■ [fire and maneuver] as long as you considered using ◆ [the batwing SDZ] first. The wording in these two sections is clearly contradictory.

The unfortunate part of the wording ambiguity that occurs in the DA PAM is that it often involves operations with higher levels of risk. The next major area of contention that is commonly brought up is the 15 degree/100 meter flanking fire portion of the DA PAM. This section allows, under a very specific set of conditions, units to shorten both the

***U.S. paratroopers from Company C, 1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade, shoot during close quarters marksmanship tables with M4 carbines at Foce Reno Training Area, Ravenna, Italy, on 2 December 2015.***

Photo by Elena Baladelli





**Figure 1 — Example Batwing SDZ, Cone SDZ, Overlaid Cone & Batwing**

batwing and cone SDZ to a new, smaller 15 degree cone off of the gun target line (GTL). This is a very useful training tool that facilitates realistic training but clearly raises the level of risk while troops maneuver very close to the GTL. The restrictions are listed in 17-4, o:

“Small arms (5.56mm, 7.62mm, and .50 caliber), ground-mounted or vehicle-mounted machine guns may be fired at low angles of elevation (near the flank of an individual or unit). For the SDZ, there must be an angle of 15 degrees or 100m (whichever is greater) between the limit of fire and the near flank of the closest individual or unit and all impacts are beyond the individual or unit. For the batwing SDZ, all non-participating personnel must be outside of the SDZ. Tripod, traversing, and depression stops will be used on machine guns to maintain the required angle and distance between the line of fire and the near flank of an individual or unit.”

The most convoluted areas in this section involve a simple comma placement and the definition of “traversing and depression stops.” Semantically, the comma in the first line after “small arms” indicates that small arms rifles may be used with cone SDZ angles of 15 degrees. However, this provides very few safety measures as the “tripod, traversing, and depressions stops” referred to in the last sentence only apply to machine guns. Those traversing and depression stops are also undefined, so units may wish to use the traversing and elevation knob on the 240B machine gun tripod while Range Operations may require stakes and sandbags around the barrel. Furthermore, how does the unit and Range Operations ensure that the stakes and machine gun are set in at the correct angles? Is it a unit-level responsibility to ensure each position is “stopped” correctly prior to firing, or does Range Operations need to confirm that each firing position is “safed” prior to firing?

The catch-all here is the next section, 17-4, p, which states: “Range SOPs will address firing and maneuver unit locations to ensure no unprotected personnel are exposed to training fires.” Thus, it is imperative that the local Range Operations develops a SOP covering the ambiguous definitions listed above as well as delineating responsibility for proofing each firing position. Without SOPs, the above mentioned areas present a major hindrance to smooth range planning and execution in medium and high risk training.

The result of the DA PAM vagueness is twofold. First, proactive units that are versed in DA PAM 385-63 arrive at Range Operations with training plans that use the less restrictive interpretation of the regulations. “We considered the batwing and want to use the cone,” is a common phrase. “Small arms rifles aren’t machine guns so I don’t need a depression/traversing stops, and I can still

fire at 15 degrees from friendly troops,” is another. The unit commanders seek to maximize the realism of their training, which is entirely understandable, and often choose the most permissive readings of the regulations. Range operations, on the other hand, generally takes the more restrictive view, as it is the safer reading. The conflict that can arise when these two interpretations collide is the art versus the science of small arms maneuver range planning.

How do we, as training units and training enablers, change that to the art and science of range planning? This is a two step process. First, units must train their range planners. The lack of knowledge of SDZ construction within most light Infantry units is prevalent. The primary culprit here is a lack of training. For example, senior mechanized 11B NCOs receive in-depth training in SDZ use and maneuver planning through the Bradley Master Gunner Course; 19K NCOs have the Abrams Master Gunner Course. In both of those courses, SDZ development is taught over a multi-day period and graded rigorously. The Small Arms Trainer Course (SATC), on the other hand, targets service support personnel, does not have a maneuver focus, and only covers a brief overview of the differences between a cone and batwing SDZ. The Small Arms Master Gunner Course, which is run by the National Guard, focuses solely on marksmanship training and sees only a handful of active duty participants each year. Furthermore, the Ranger-trained leadership in light units bring a strong background in maneuver training but without the restrictions that come with live-fire training. In fact, the only training that covers a large body of light Infantry personnel is a single block of instruction during the Maneuver Captains Career Course (MCCC). After the block of instruction in the company phase, students are expected to design safe maneuver operations based on SDZs. While that is beneficial to the officer corps,

it still leaves out all the NCOs that will make up the Infantry formations that the MCCC graduates will lead as the officers enter company command. Armor and Infantry officers in Bradley units, conversely, will have the benefit of master gunner-trained NCOs within their ranks. What conclusion can be drawn from this? A detrimental training gap exists between heavy and light Infantry units.

The value of senior NCOs and officers versed in ballistics and SDZ knowhow is vast to company and battalion-level training, and can facilitate maneuver planning that will align with safety expectations from range operations. The Inter-Service Resident Range Safety Course, (IRSC) is the end-all be-all for SDZ development. The IRSC teaches proper SDZ development and application. It also has the secondary benefit of teaching the effects that each weapon system can bring to the fight via the capabilities demonstrated inherently in the SDZs. However, that course is little-known and underutilized in the "light" world. An increased focus on ensuring that plans shops are equipped with IRSC or master gunner-trained NCOs will enhance range planning and provide a critical benefit to unit training. The importance of this is currently evident with units training abroad in support of Operation Atlantic Resolve. Training on installations where U.S. forces have never set foot before and without regulations that cover U.S. weapon systems is now commonplace. Units without master gunner-qualified personnel are at a distinct safety disadvantage, which is inherently risky and even more imperative given the political ramifications of accidents occurring in sensitive foreign environments.

The other necessary step to bring unit expectations and range safety regulations together is constant improvement of Army regulations regarding range safety. DA PAM 385-63 is generally updated annually (the last update was April 2014) and continually seeks to reduce the ambiguities that this article addresses. Additionally, the range management authority at each training installation must use range-specific SOPs to fill in the gaps in the DA PAM and tailor safety needs towards each respective training area. The net result of these procedures will reduce conflicts between training units and range operations as well as enable safe and realistic training for maneuver units.

Range policies and safety restrictions apply across all branches and units without exception. As such, training only select branches, units, or ranks on those restrictions is a detriment to unit training and readiness. However, this is a correctable problem with opportunities already available to enhance range safety knowledge within units through master gunner and intermediate range safety courses. With unified land operations and fewer deployment cycles, units and range staff must place a renewed focus on providing realistic training that meets safety requirements and bridges the gap between the art and science of maneuver range planning.

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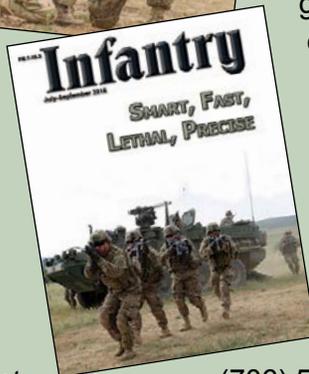
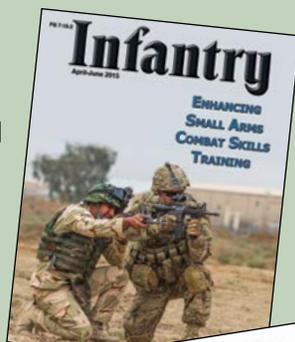
**CPT Aaron Greer** is currently serving as the Grafenwoehr Training Area safety OIC, Joint Multinational Training Center, Germany. He is a graduate of the following courses: Airborne, Joint Fires Observer, Inter-Service Resident Range Safety, and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for Range Control Staff. He earned a bachelor's degree from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y.

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## DEFENDING THE STRONGPOINT: *THE TEXAS REPUBLIC'S VICTORY AT SALADO CREEK, 1842*

MAJ NATHAN JENNINGS

*"The passive defense is always pernicious; the active may accomplish great successes."*

— Antoine-Henri Jomini  
*The Art of War, 1862*

The Republic of Texas was wrought in the fire of frontier warfare. Embattled throughout its brief existence from 1836 to 1845, the expanding polity fought a series of bloody conflicts against Amerindians to the north and Mexicans to the south as all sides sought dominance over the lower Great Plains. The Battle of Salado Creek, in particular, emerged as a pivotal event in the contest for South Texas in 1842 when Texian infantry decisively turned back a much larger Mexican invasion.<sup>1</sup> By leveraging a key technological advantage, maximizing terrain, and emphasizing combined arms cooperation, the outnumbered frontiersmen not only repelled the invaders back across the Rio Grande but preserved San Antonio indefinitely as a Lone Star — and ultimately American — possession.

This article examines how an ad hoc militia of 225 Texian volunteers unleashed their single-dimensional overmatch in precision firepower, while defending from a naturally defensible strongpoint, to defeat a Mexican expedition of 1,500 infantry, cavalry, and artillerymen.<sup>2</sup> Using the characteristics of the defense outlined in FM 3-21.20, *The Infantry Battalion*, to guide assessment, analysis reveals that the Anglo defenders' modest combined arms effort incorporated elements of preparation, disruption, security, massing effects, and flexibility to "defend temporarily to create the conditions necessary to resume offensive operations" while minimizing the invaders'

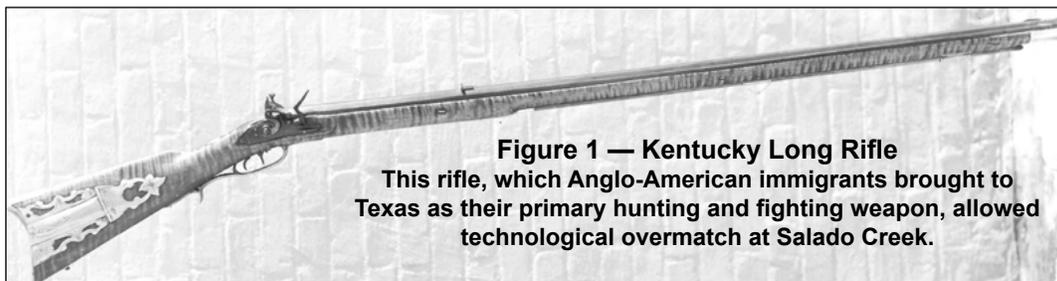
superiority in mass, initiative, and maneuver.<sup>3</sup> This event, though overshadowed by the earlier Battle of San Jacinto and the later Mexican-American War, offers an instructive example for execution of tactical fundamentals.

### The Frontier Environment

The militarization that defined southern Texas throughout the 1840s stemmed from territorial disputes that remained unresolved after Texan independence. Though Sam Houston had defeated Santa Anna de Lopez's reconquest invasion in the 1836 San Jacinto Campaign, Mexico yet claimed the lands between the Nueces River and Rio Grande. The frontier town of San Antonio, serving as governing post for the region, offered an ideal target for Mexican incursions. Since the penurious republic had proven utterly incapable of maintaining a professional army and by 1842 relied upon inactive county militias and small ranger patrols for security, the embattled nation stood strategically vulnerable to invasion.

Despite its dearth of military, industrial, and financial sophistication, Texian society pursued aggressive — and intermittently successful — territorial expansion at the expense of both Indian and Mexican opponents. As a result of intensifying Anglo-Hispanic enmity, exacerbated by the republic's failed attempt to seize Mexican Santa Fe, a vengeful Mexico invaded southern Texas three times in 1842. While the republic utterly failed to defend against the first incursion, and managed to achieve only an inconclusive result during a second near the Gulf Coast, it won a decisive, if improbable, victory near San Antonio against the third and largest invasion.

The Texians' successful employment of advanced firepower and defensive tactics at Salado Creek in 1842 rested on practical infantry tactics learned through years of frontier adaptation. The ubiquitous "Kentucky Rifle," a long-barrel hunting firearm favored by Anglo-American settlers, served as the weapon of choice. As a muzzle-loading, single-shot musket, it fired a caliber between .36 and .45 that offered killing range at 300 meters. In contrast,



**Figure 1 — Kentucky Long Rifle**  
This rifle, which Anglo-American immigrants brought to Texas as their primary hunting and fighting weapon, allowed technological overmatch at Salado Creek.

Photo courtesy of the West Point Museum

the outdated Brown Bess smooth-bore musket utilized by the Mexican Army could strike less than half that distance with even less accuracy. This qualitative differential, though precariously conditional, allowed a narrow tactical advantage over opponents.<sup>4</sup>

Despite its superior qualities, the frontier rifle suffered from a crucial limitation: it was slow to reload and unwieldy, especially on horseback. The weapon consequently required dismounted, supported, and graduated rates of fire to prevent exploitation of loading intervals by Amerindian arrow flights and close combat assaults.<sup>5</sup> Noah Smithwick, an early Texan colonist, attested that “an Indian could discharge a dozen arrows while a man was loading a gun, and if they could manage to draw our fire all at once they had us at their mercy unless we had a safe retreat.”<sup>6</sup> These limitations compelled the settlers, who often fought isolated against larger Comanche warbands on western plains and prairies, to develop tactics that maximized their technology while negating vulnerabilities.

An instructive event that foreshadowed Texian methodology at Salado Creek occurred on 10 August 1838, when rangers under the command of veteran cavalryman Henry Karnes executed a strongpoint defense against a larger Comanche force. The incident began when a Native warband surprised the Texians as they paused to rest and water their horses while on patrol west of San Antonio, near the Seco River. As reported by the *Telegraph and Texas Register*, “a party of about 200 warriors made an attack near the Aronjo Seco, upon a company of 21 men.”<sup>7</sup> The Amerindians’ forceful maneuver, exemplifying audacity prized in FM 3-20.971, *Reconnaissance and Cavalry Troop*, compelled the Texians to form a hasty defense.<sup>8</sup>

Karnes, a veteran soldier of the Texas Revolution, immediately fortified his outnumbered company along a defensible ridge. Understanding the capabilities of his musketry, he dismounted his men and organized them into sections. The frontiersman then controlled their fire through alternating volleys, thereby preventing any lapse during reload cycles. Settler John Henry Brown recorded that the rangers’ “aim was deadly, and warriors rapidly tumbled to the ground.” He also called it “successful defense against immense odds,” while the *Telegraph* boasted that the Indians “were completely defeated and driven from the field with the loss of several of their best warriors and a number of horses.”<sup>9</sup>

This encounter reflected the culmination of defensive tactics favored by outnumbered Lone Star infantrymen that yet relied upon single-shot firearms prior to adoption of Colt revolvers. Through two decades of unconventional fighting, Texians had learned to concentrate massing effects from covered positions that were “synchronized in time and space,” as defined in FM 3-21.20, thereby mitigating Plains Indian mobility and close combat skill.<sup>10</sup> Brown emphasized this method by describing how the rangers “fired in alternate platoons, by which one-third of their guns were always loaded to meet the attack at close-quarters.” Finally, in an action that foretold his future as

the premier Texas Ranger, young Indian fighter John Coffee Hays won special distinction at Arroyo Seco by killing the Comanche chief with a long-ranged rifle shot.<sup>11</sup>

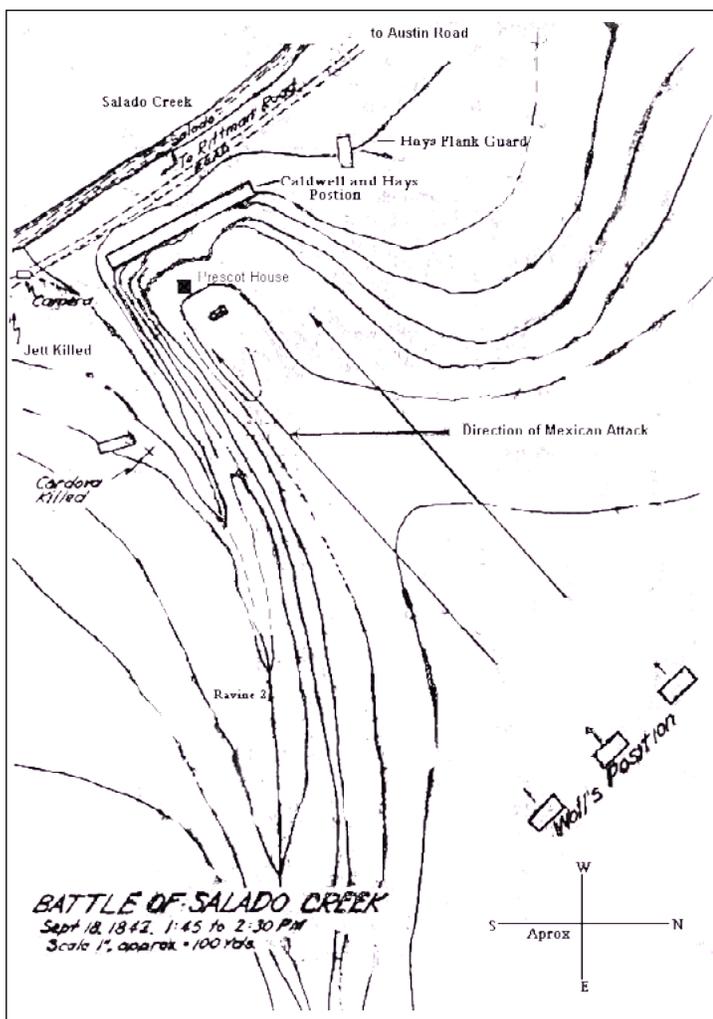
### **The Battle of Salado Creek**

By the fall of 1842, when the Mexican Army again seized San Antonio, Texian infantry tactics had achieved full maturity. Thousands of veteran frontiersmen now served in inactive county militias or in active ranger companies that patrolled contested spaces. Yet despite limited capacity at the tactical level, the struggling republic remained strategically unprepared for conflict beyond small-scale raiding and interdiction. The *New Orleans Bulletin* dramatically emphasized the nation’s vulnerability to conventional attack, lamenting that “never since the declaration of independence was Texas more unprepared for a vigorous contest than at this moment.”<sup>12</sup>

Seething with frustration over territorial provocations, and yet bitter from defeat in the Texan War of Independence six years prior, Mexico elected to punish, and potentially reconquer, its former colony. In September of 1842 French mercenary general Adrian Woll led elements of the Second Division of the Army of the North across the Rio Grande and seized San Antonio with almost no resistance. The combined arms brigade comprised approximately 1,000 regular infantry and 500 irregular cavalry, with field cannon to support. One hundred local Tejano volunteers and 40 Cherokee scouts joined the army, offering “light” infantry mobility. The size of the invasion and density of infantry indicated that Woll intended a permanent occupation until follow-on forces could expand the Tejas campaign.<sup>13</sup>

As the Mexicans advanced, Hays — now commanding mounted Texas Rangers — directed surveillance by two companies (one Tejano and another Anglo) but failed to locate the invaders. Woll skillfully advanced undetected by marching overland and then approaching San Antonio circuitously from the north while the rangers patrolled the expected roads from the south and west. Moving with surprising alacrity, the Mexicans captured the town and its citizenry on 11 September, inflicting a heavy cost for the scouts’ lapse.<sup>14</sup> The Texians’ inability to disrupt the invaders’ advance — doctrinally defined as the requirement to “subvert an attacker’s tempo, formations, and synchronization by countering his initiative” — had cost the republic the town without a fight.<sup>15</sup>

With San Antonio occupied by a formidable garrison, the whole of South Texas was lost. Realizing any consolidated militia stand would now be made closer to population centers at Austin or Houston, Hays and his rangers rode northeast to unite with the gathering defense. A participant named Zachariah Morrell recalled the militia mobilization: “We gathered what ammunition we could at Gonzales and left for Seguin with instructions that recruits coming from the east should follow our trail.” The volunteer then noted their movement towards the expected site of confrontation, citing that “on Tuesday morning we marched on within 20 miles of San Antonio.”<sup>16</sup>



**Figure 2 — Battle of Salado Creek**

While the Texian militia gathered to contest the invasion, Morrell transferred from the riflemen to join Hays's mounted scouts. He described how the ad hoc ranger unit formed and deployed: "In a few minutes we were off, and soon men with Henry McCulloch joined us with 13 men, swelling our numbers to 27." The militiaman also noted that, "the command was organized on the spot, with Jack Hays as captain."<sup>17</sup> Now unified and democratically commanded, the company rode south to San Antonio and captured a stray Mexican soldier. The rangers then brought the prisoner to the militia command at Seguin, where he confirmed the threatening posture and composition of Woll's army.<sup>18</sup>

By 17 September the Texians had assembled just 202 men under the command of a veteran soldier named Mathew Caldwell. Realizing his limitations, Caldwell selected Salado Creek, a defensible position seven miles north of San Antonio, as an ideal location for confrontation. Given the vast numerical disparity between the Mexican and Texian forces, the colonel aimed to maximize his advantages in weaponry with a reverse-slope defense. The fact that the defenders were willing to offer battle under such disproportionate circumstances indicated their confidence in rifled firepower. The ranger company, which would prove critical in provoking

the general engagement on favorable terms, supported with cavalry mobility.<sup>19</sup>

Morrell, again riding with Hays, described how the rangers clashed with enemy horsemen that night. After making visual contact, the settler narrated: "We retreated until they were drawn from the timber, when, under the order of our gallant leader, we wheeled, and 40 Mexicans failed to stand the charge of 13 Texians."<sup>20</sup> The invaders retreated without casualties on either side. This action, encompassing the defensive characteristic of security, facilitated crucial counter-reconnaissance that denied Woll information about the defender's numerical limitations and the strength of their prepared position. Representing ideal use of the Texians' limited mobility, it further exemplified the doctrinal necessity to "prevent the enemy from gaining an unexpected advantage."<sup>21</sup>

The next day, 18 September, the Texians sought to entice a general engagement on favorable terms. According to James Nichols, one of the participating rangers, "Caldwell ordered Hays with his spy company to town to draw the enemy out."<sup>22</sup> Once in sight of San Antonio, the horsemen demonstrated in front of the town in order to galvanize pursuit. To the rangers' surprise, a battalion of heavily armed and armored Mexican cavalry immediately thundered out of the gates towards them. The rapidity of the sally indicated the invaders were already prepared for movement when the Texians arrived.

Hays proceeded to lead his enemy in a long, and at times desperate, chase to the infantry line at Salado Creek. The fresher Mexican horses nearly caught the exhausted Texian mounts during the pursuit, revealing an unanticipated setback. Morrell offered a spirited account of the chase as the company finally turned to face their pursuers: "Under our chosen leader, we sallied out and skirmished with the enemy at long range, killing a number of Mexicans, and getting two of our men severely wounded. In a short time they retired, and we fell back to the main command."<sup>23</sup> Once at Salado Creek the rangers dismounted to augment the Texian line while the Mexican forces, having identified the enemy's position, called up reinforcements under Woll. The assault force included 400 infantrymen and an artillery section, along with the Cherokee auxiliaries and Tejano expatriates.

The invaders deployed into attack formation as they approached the battlefield. Nichols, from his elevated vantage point in the Texian line, described the exposed assault that Woll launched against the defenders. He recorded that "the Mexicans marched on to the crest of the hill, filed to the right, marched to the opening between the heads of the two ravines, displaying his whole force in full view of Caldwell's men."<sup>24</sup> With a bristling line of long rifles aimed across the open ground, this action proved a critical mistake. In an attempt to mitigate the Texian defensive advantages, the Mexicans brought their field cannon to support the infantry assault.

The French general commenced the battle with "grape canister and round shot... for near an hour," which proved

ineffective, while his companies marched on the Texian line. This tactic reflected typical Napoleonic procedure of employing artillery to degrade enemy positions until infantry could make contact. Unfortunately for the Mexicans, the cannonade dispersed amongst the treeline and ridge while the Texians remained prone behind cover. For the defenders, the rangers' security patrols and the infantry's defensive preparation were paying tactical dividends.

The assault that followed proved disastrous for Woll and his men. Morrell observed from his position how attack began with a decisive, yet archaically vulnerable, maneuver: "The Mexicans now advanced upon us, under a splendid puff of music, the ornaments, guns, spears and swords glistening in plain view."<sup>25</sup> The reference to the invaders' reliance on edged weapons illustrated one of the primary differences between the opposing armies. While the Texians relied on American rifled firepower, the Mexicans maintained conservative, European reliance on spears, swords, and short-ranged muskets.

This manner of engagement offered combat which the Texians understood best: precision marksmanship from protected positions to, as prescribed by FM 3-21.20, employ massing effects to "break the enemy's offensive tempo and disrupt his attack."<sup>26</sup> They had utilized the tactic against Amerindian opponents and now wielded it against a conventional opponent. Morrell described his countrymen's' first volley, explaining that "some of the Mexican infantry were within 30 feet of us before a gun was fired. At the first fire the whole of them fell to the ground." The militiaman noted that, "soon however, all that were able rose to their feet, but showed no disposition to advance further upon our line."<sup>27</sup> Nichols, who still lay in the firing line, recounted their technological superiority: "We would crawl to the top of the bank and fire, and it was seldom a Texas rifle fired that there was not one seen to bite the dust."<sup>28</sup>

Throughout the engagement Caldwell complemented efforts of his static formations with counterattacks by smaller, more mobile elements designed to cause disruption. When Woll dispatched an infantry force early in the battle to turn the Texian line with a flank attack through the woods, Caldwell countered with a picked group of fighters armed with the most lethal close-combat weaponry of the era: shotguns. Hiding until the Mexicans came to within 30 feet, the irregulars suddenly closed the gap and decimated the advancing infantry with massed buckshot. This maneuver, stemming from lessons previously learned against Comanche tactics, reflected an adept use of active defense by the Texians to mitigate their primary vulnerability.<sup>29</sup>

The Mexican regulars were not the only attackers that suffered



Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress

**John Coffee Hays**

during costly flank attacks. At the height of the contest, Woll dispatched his Cherokee augmentees, led by former insurgent Vincente Cordova and moving fast as light infantry, to attempt another indirect assault. Militiaman John Jenkins observed, as before, that a second swift-moving reserve contingent "with double-barrel shot-guns had been detached" and "stationed above to prevent it." Demonstrating operational flexibility, a central tenant of active defense, the defenders repulsed the Cherokees and killed Cordova, finally eliminating an agitator who had long frustrated Texian authorities.<sup>30</sup> By the close of the day, the Mexican Army lost over 60 killed and hundreds wounded while the militia suffered only several injured and one dead. Recognizing diminishing prospects of victory under such attrition, Woll ordered an ignominious retreat back to San Antonio.<sup>31</sup>

The defense at Salado Creed ended as an unqualified success for the Texas Republic, yet the frontiersmen suffered unexpected and peripheral defeat elsewhere. At the close of the main engagement, the Mexican cavalry, conspicuously absent at Salado Creek, intercepted an Anglo reinforcement company en route from nearby La Grange. The larger Hispanic battalion, consisting of several hundred horsemen with light cannon support, immediately surrounded and overwhelmed the company. According to one survivor's recollection, the Texian captain "raised a white flag in token of his surrender and was instantly shot down."<sup>32</sup> The invaders killed most who surrendered and eventually took 15 men as prisoners. Two militiamen escaped to tell the bloody tale.

### Transition to Offensive Maneuvers

Like the mass killings at the Alamo and Goliad in 1836, this slaughter enraged the defenders and catalyzed a dogged pursuit by Hays and Caldwell. On 21 September, the vengeful Texians caught the retreating army at the Arroyo Hondo, a small creek south of San Antonio. The Mexican retreat suffered from logistical privation as well as organizational disarray common in defeated armies, and thus provided an ideal target for retaliation. Hays and his mounted rangers, again providing reconnaissance for the infantry in the manner of conventional light cavalry, identified Woll's rearguard on elevated ground above the creek. The Mexicans supported the picket with a cannon on the road, making the position hazardous for any frontal assault.

According to Morrell, again riding with the rangers, Hays determined to attack immediately. This success of this action hinged on internalizing audacity, an offensive fundamental which reflects "the commander's ability to see opportunities for action, to decide in time to seize opportunities, and to

accept calculated risks.”<sup>33</sup> Morrell described the charge that followed: “Away went the company up a gradual ascent in quick time. In a moment the cannon roared, but according to Mexican custom overshot us. The Texan yell followed the cannon’s thunder.” He then boasted that “shotguns and pistols were freely used...every man at the cannon was killed as the company passed it.”<sup>34</sup>

Despite the success of the charge, the rangers could not retain the high ground and captured cannon. The Texian infantry companies, under Caldwell, failed to reinforce the attack and the horsemen abandoned their gains. The militiamen then stalled until the next morning as they debated the hazards of offensive action. The loss in momentum likewise reflected the indecision and disunity festering within the command. The Texian failure to achieve offensive concentration, a characteristic that FM 3-21.20 correlates to “superior timing” and “precision maneuvers,” allowed the invaders to escape back into Mexico intact.<sup>35</sup>

### Maximizing Tactical Potential

The Battle of Salado Creek offers an illustrative historical case study where a defending force, outnumbered five to one, shaped battlefield events to allow maximal impact of their one and only advantage: precise, long-range marksmanship. Choosing to fight from a natural strongpoint that facilitated technological overmatch, the Lone Star militiamen catalyzed a sequence of events that, as phrased by modern American infantry doctrine, allowed them to “deceive the enemy into attacking under unfavorable circumstances, defeat or destroy his attack, and regain the initiative for the offense.”<sup>36</sup>

This operational success, which incorporated characteristics of the defense to lure an uninformed enemy into an ideal engagement area, resulted from combined arms cooperation towards a common defensive scheme. While the Texians effectively employed mounted rangers for reconnaissance and counter-reconnaissance, riflemen for massing effects, and light skirmishers for flank protection, the Mexican Army failed to dominate the information contest with a larger cavalry force, achieve envelopment by both heavy and light infantry, or degrade with artillery effects. Not surprisingly, the victorious militiamen likewise revealed their own operational limitations upon transitioning to the offense when their amateur organizational culture proved unsuitable for aggressive maneuver.

Despite the lost chance to destroy the retreating Mexicans at the Arroyo Hondo, the Texian victory at Salado Creek remains a tactical triumph that enabled larger strategic success. Mexico’s attempt at a second reconquest was decisively thwarted, in large part, because the frontier infantrymen fulfilled the Army Capstone’s mandate to “dictate the terms of operations and render enemies incapable of responding effectively.”<sup>37</sup> Yet while the victory ensured South Texas remained Lone Star territory for the immediate future, the final decision over the dispute would wait for United States’ annexation of Texas and the Mexican-American War. In that conflict, like at the strongpoint defense perfected on

the banks of the Salado, Texan volunteers would again prove their effectiveness as rangers and riflemen.

### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> “Texian” was the self-described and nationalistic identification for citizens of the Texas Republic.
- <sup>2</sup> Joseph Nance, *Attack and Counter-Attack: The Texas-Mexican Frontier, 1842* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1964), 318.
- <sup>3</sup> FM 3-21.20, *The Infantry Battalion*, 13 December 2006, 5-1.
- <sup>4</sup> Frederick Wilkins, *The Legend Begins: The Texas Rangers, 1823-1845* (Austin: State House Press, 1996), 59.
- <sup>5</sup> Charles Sawyer, *Firearms in American History* (Northwood: The Plimpton Press, 1910), 144.
- <sup>6</sup> Noah Smithwick, *The Evolution of a State* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983), 159-160.
- <sup>7</sup> Telegraph and Texas Register, 1 September 1838.
- <sup>8</sup> FM 3-20.971, *Reconnaissance and Cavalry Troop*, August 2009, 5-2.
- <sup>9</sup> John Henry Brown, *Indian Wars and Pioneers of Texas* (Austin: L. E. Daniell, Publisher, 1880), 51; Telegraph and Texas Register, 1 September 1838.
- <sup>10</sup> FM 3-21.20, 5-6.
- <sup>11</sup> James Greer, *Colonel Jack Hays: Texas Frontier Leader and California Builder* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1952), 28.
- <sup>12</sup> *New Orleans Bulletin*, 27 September 1842.
- <sup>13</sup> Nance, 318.
- <sup>14</sup> Wilkins, 128-130.
- <sup>15</sup> FM 3-21.20, 5-5.
- <sup>16</sup> Z. N. Morrell, *Flowers and Fruits in the Wilderness; or Forty-six Years in Texas and Two in Honduras* (Dallas: W. G. Scarff & Co., Publishers, 1886), 163.
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 166.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>19</sup> Nance, 343-346.
- <sup>20</sup> Morrell, 164.
- <sup>21</sup> FM 3-12.20, 5-5.
- <sup>22</sup> Nichols, 98.
- <sup>23</sup> Morrell, 168-169.
- <sup>24</sup> Nichols, 98.
- <sup>25</sup> Morrell, 170.
- <sup>26</sup> FM 3-21.20, 5-5.
- <sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>28</sup> James Nichols, edited by Catherine McDowell, *Now You Hear My Horn: The Journal of James Wilson Nichols, 1820-1887* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1967), 99.
- <sup>29</sup> Wilkins, 136.
- <sup>30</sup> John Jenkins, *Recollections of Early Texas: The Memoirs of John Holland Jenkins* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1958), 97.
- <sup>31</sup> Greer, 73-78.
- <sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>33</sup> FM 3-21.20, 4-2.
- <sup>34</sup> Morrell, 176-177.
- <sup>35</sup> FM 3-12.20, 4-2.
- <sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 5-1.
- <sup>37</sup> TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1, *The U.S. Army Operating Concept: Win in a Complex World*, 31 October 2014, iii.

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**MAJ Nathan Jennings** is currently a student at the Command and General Staff Officer’s Course, Fort Leavenworth, Kan. His previous assignments include serving as an assistant professor of history, U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y.; commander of Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 4th Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team (BCT), 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas; commander, C Troop, 4-9 CAV, Fort Hood and Kirkuk, Iraq; platoon leader, Company B, 1st Battalion, 34th Armored Regiment, 1st BCT, 1st Infantry Division, Fort Riley, Kan. and Baghdad; and Cavalry scout, 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment (Light), Fort Polk, La. MAJ Jennings earned a master’s degree in history from the University of Texas at Austin and is a selectee to attend the School of Advanced Military Studies.

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# Book Reviews



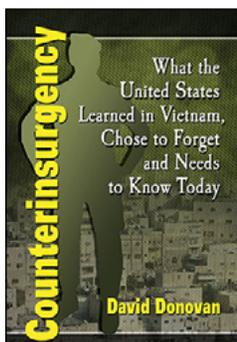
## ***Counterinsurgency: What the United States Learned in Vietnam, Chose to Forget and Needs to Know Today***

By David Donovan

Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2015,

224 pages

Reviewed by LTC (Retired)  
Rick Baillergeon



As a young company grade officer in the mid-1980s, I vividly remember reading David Donovan's *Once a Warrior King*. In it, Donovan discusses the time he spent as a military advisor in South Vietnam's Mekong Delta. It was a book that articulated the human dimension of war as well as any I had read. Without question, this volume had a huge impact on me and many of my peers who had read it early in their military careers.

Since the publication of his book, Donovan (pen name for Terry Turner) has kept a very quiet profile in military history literary circles. For many years (decades), I had hoped and looked for another book by Donovan. However, as I later found out; he had focused his attention in academia and science. Much to my surprise, I recently discovered he had just published *Counterinsurgency: What the United States Learned in Vietnam, Chose to Forget and Needs to Know Today*. Needless to say, my anticipation and expectations were extremely high.

Within *Counterinsurgency*, Donovan has taken his Vietnam War experience and combined it with decades of reflection. The result is a book that concisely addresses counterinsurgency (COIN) operations in the past, present, and future. Within the past, he keys on the practices and lessons learned of the Vietnam War. The present obviously addresses operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Finally, in regards to the future, Donovan offers expert advice and vision on an area that is clearly not going away in the near or far term.

To address this continuum, Donovan is aided by the book's simple yet highly efficient organization. He divided the volume into nine chapters, each focusing on a specific aspect of COIN. These chapters range the gamut from questions a country should ask itself before considering COIN operations to recommendations for the advisors on the ground. In total, Donovan provides readers with an incredible amount of information and advice in roughly 200 pages.

Donovan's writing skills have clearly not eroded in the past three decades. He has taken a topic many authors tend to overcomplicate and made it understandable for readers. As he displayed throughout *Once A Warrior King*, Donovan is

extremely gifted in gaining and then maintaining a reader's attention. These attributes combined with the conciseness of the volume make this a very quick read.

I believe there are two things that differentiate Donovan's effort from the preponderance of books written on COIN. First, I have found that many of the more popular books tied to COIN are more academically written and focused. There is clearly a need and an audience for these books. Donovan, on the other hand, has strived to craft a book that does not possess the academic overtones to it. Because of this, readers will find it easy to comprehend and should have little difficulty grasping Donovan's excellent teaching points.

Second, most COIN books published are either focused at the strategic level or with the boots on the ground. Donovan has attempted to address both. As he states in his introduction, "The discussions in this book are intended for those who think about counterinsurgency from a policy perspective as well as to those who do counterinsurgency in the field." Donovan is able to treat both areas effectively as well as those in-between areas which make COIN operations so challenging.

Within *Counterinsurgency*, Donovan makes excellent use of the insight of other former Vietnam War advisors. To achieve this, he has inserted dozens of their vignettes throughout the book. Each is filled with critical lessons learned. Donovan addresses their value and the apparent underappreciation by others when he states, "Those experiences are as relevant today as when they were freshly learned. Sadly, they have been available for decades, a repository of experience and knowledge apparently overlooked and certainly uncalled upon."

Donovan has crafted another incredible book. *Counterinsurgency* is superbly written, impeccably organized, and will unquestionably benefit everyone who reads it. It clearly exceeded the high expectations I had for it. I will now anxiously look forward to his next book. Let's hope it is not another 30 years between volumes!

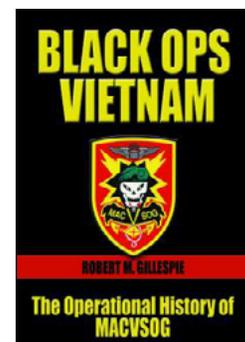
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## ***Black Ops Vietnam, The Operational History of MACVSOG***

By Robert N. Gillespie

Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute Press, 2011, 305 pages

Reviewed by Chris Timmers



U.S. foreign policy in the Far East took a fairly strong beating in the late 1940s with the "loss" of China

(Mainland China). The beaten back threat of Communist guerillas in the Philippines was also fresh on the minds of State and Defense Department planners in the early 1950s. Creeping Communism was in further evidence as the French were booted out of Vietnam in 1954. The U.S. was committed to blunting this advancement as it moved, in varying degrees. Vietnam could not be abandoned to the unrestricted advance of Communism; new democratic states in Southeast Asia would be threatened by the fall of Vietnam, so the U.S. had only one choice: Oppose this Communistic/totalitarian advance by all means possible. Remember that the French retreat had entailed only the removal of French forces up to the 17th parallel and the removal of all French troops in the northern part of the country, Laos, and Cambodia; the part of Vietnam south of that border ("South" Vietnam) was not included in the Paris Peace treaty of 1954. But that distinction was no problem for the Communists in North Vietnam; they began a campaign of infiltration and guerilla warfare almost immediately before the ink had dried upon the document.

So what did the U.S. do given this reality? In January 1964 it formed the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam Studies and Observation Group (MACVSOG). MACVSOG is now known, if it is known at all, as a covert, Special Operations outfit which contained elements of the Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and South Vietnamese defense forces.

But from the start the whole program was beset with problems. To begin with, senior Army officers (who, after all, really ran things) were not supportive of the effort. Gillespie includes remarks by Army Chief of Staff GEN Harold Johnson who referred to Green Beret soldiers as "fugitives from responsibility." Furthermore, GEN William Westmoreland, commander of U.S. forces in Vietnam, was highly skeptical of unconventional forces. He was a straight-laced West Pointer who had grown up through the ranks of airborne Infantry and was a conventional Soldier all the way.

Other problems would soon manifest themselves: Vietnamese members of infiltration teams would often "turn" and betray their South Vietnamese allies. Additionally, finding officers and NCOs with experience in unconventional warfare proved to be more difficult than thought.

Given all the challenges MACVSOG faced, particularly the highly ambitious mission it was given and the lack of support from the highest echelons in the U.S. Army, is it any wonder that the organization never produced any tangible, successful, and lasting results? That a force of just over 10,000 combat effectives would be expected to fight and win in three countries (North Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia) and inflict damages and casualties designed to discourage North Vietnam's designs is, in retrospect, fanciful. Ten thousand troops isn't even a full division. The U.S. had the equivalent of six full divisions in South Vietnam alone, and we know the difficulties they had.

The story of MACVSOG is told professionally and with the right amount of passion. I can say that, as a former Infantryman, I would have liked a greater read on the pilots (U.S., Taiwanese, South Vietnamese) who flew missions deep into enemy territory. They are some of the many unsung

heroes of this conflict.

But my problem with this book is in one of its conclusions. Gillespie writes, "It was the supreme irony that the United States, with its revolutionary origins and the sacrifices made by both sides during its own Civil War... which failed to comprehend the dedication of the Vietnamese people to the creation of a unified state. So bound up was the United States in the Cold War ideology... that it failed to see its own values, determination, or history reflected in those of the enemy."

Excuse me? "The dedication of the Vietnamese people to the creation of a unified state?" It was not the dedication of any peoples to the unified state of Vietnam but the dedication of a Communist cadre to impose state totalitarianism over the southern section of Vietnam. Our revolution was against the British and sought to expel totalitarianism; the Communist North Vietnam sought to install it. Our revolutionary heroes had absolutely nothing in common with the soldiers who marched in step with of the Vietcong, Viet Minh, or NVA. If our revolutionary heroes are not different from the "heroes" who united Vietnam, how does one explain the thousands of boat people who were the result of North Vietnam's victory?

No, our failures in Vietnam were many, but not appreciating the zeal of the Vietnamese to "unite" their country is not among them.

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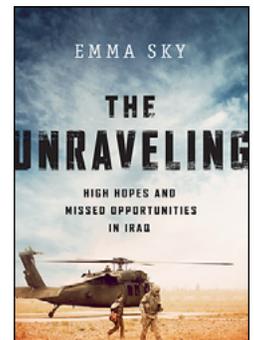
***Unraveling: High Hopes  
and Missed Opportunities  
in Iraq***  
By Emma Sky  
NY: PublicAffairs, 2015,  
400 pages

Reviewed by CPT Sam Wilkins

Emma Sky's *The Unraveling: High Hopes and Missed Opportunities in Iraq* presents a timely narrative of the

American involvement and ultimate failure in Iraq. Sky, a British native and graduate of Oxford, served in Iraq as the representative of the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) in Kirkuk from 2003-2004 and as the political advisor (POLAD) to GEN Raymond Odierno from 2007-2011 in spite of her vocal opposition to the invasion of Iraq in 2003. Sky's unique perspective and deep understanding of Iraqi political culture make *The Unraveling* a valuable contribution to the evolving historical narrative of the campaign in Iraq. Her astute analysis and observations offer the most cogent explanation, to date, of the failure of the American "endgame" in Iraq from the sectarian fissures under Nouri al-Maliki's government to the consequential rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham (ISIS) or Da'ash.

Sky's work begins in the strategic city of Kirkuk in 2003. Located on the ethnic fault lines between the resurgent Kurds and Sunni Arabs and lying astride vast quantities of oil, Kirkuk represented a microcosm of the difficulties facing



the American occupation in 2003. Sky illustrates with skill and wit the deep historical animosities between the Kurds and the Arabs. Her cultural acumen and political savvy earned her the moniker “Miss Bell” among the Iraqis, in reference to the legendary female anthropologist and political officer Gertrude Bell. Following her time in Kirkuk and with the CPA, Sky returned to Iraq for an unprecedented four years with GEN Odierno, the corps and later theater commander of U.S. forces in Iraq.

As the political advisor to GEN Odierno, Sky witnessed the struggles of the pre-Surge campaign, the hard fighting and eventual success of the Surge, and the eventual unraveling of American interests during the precipitous 2011 withdrawal. Unlike many triumphalist military memoirs emerging from the Iraq campaign, *The Unraveling* provides a balanced, nuanced, and skeptical view of the campaign, coalition leaders, and of the U.S. Army. Her poignant criticisms of coalition policies, such as releasing airstrike footage (which she called “American jihadi videos”) and framing the conflict in Manichean terms by “lumping together all the violent actors as AIF (anti-Iraqi forces),” helped shape GEN Odierno’s guidance and implementation of the Surge.

The bottom-up Sunni rejection of al-Qaida in Iraq (AQI) proved to be the tipping point of the Surge campaign. While American military commanders at all levels quickly recognized the value of the reconciled Sunni insurgents, attempts to institutionalize reconciliation by including Sunni formations into the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) faced fierce opposition from the suspicious Maliki regime. Maliki, Sky explains, “viewed the volunteers as insurgents who might turn on him at any moment.” GEN Odierno noted privately to Sky in late 2007 that “while I constantly stand up for him in public, in my heart I think he is truly sectarian.”

Maliki’s resistance to reconciliation foreshadowed the eventual downfall of his regime and collapse of the ISF at the hands of Da’ash seven years later. The U.S. Surge strategy assumed that once sectarian violence stopped, political reconciliation would follow. This assumption, Sky notes, depended on “the same politicians who had instigated much of the violence in order to serve their own narrow interests.” The American-led reconciliation of the Sunni insurgency and the security gains from the Surge of forces allowed for temporary peace, but the sectarian competition for power

continued in the political arena. Iran played a critical role in this competition. In February 2010, GEN Odierno noted that his “greatest fear is that we stabilize Iraq, then hand it over to the Iranians in our rush to the exit.”

The pervasive effect of Iranian influence became apparent during the electoral stalemate that followed the March 2010 national elections. Iranian pressure eventually broke the deadlock between the secular, non-sectarian Allad Allawi and the increasingly divisive and authoritarian Maliki. Sky astutely notes that “the formation of the government was perceived as a battle between Iran and the U.S. Everyone realized this except for the Americans.” However, according to Sky, President Barack Obama’s administration’s sole interest in Iraq “was ending the war.” The administration ignored GEN Odierno’s advice that Maliki had become a “genuinely feared” leader whose refusal to heed the election results and resign illustrated his authoritarian and sectarian nature. The administration backed Maliki and thereby “renege on promises it had made to Iraqis to protect the political process.” “Instead,” Sky continues, “it had reverted to supporting the status quo” that accelerated the U.S. withdrawal but “was not tenable.”

While Sky’s official tenure ended with GEN Odierno’s change of command in August 2011, she remained close with her contacts from Iraq and returned many times to visit her old friends and acquaintances. From this perspective, she witnessed the Sunni uprising against the Maliki regime and the lighting success of Da’ash in the summer of 2014. While the Syrian conflict reinforced many of the sectarian narratives inside Iraq, Sky places the campaign in the context of a larger Sunni revolt against the excesses of the Iranian-controlled Maliki regime. This campaign, like the 2006 civil war in Iraq, represents a brutal struggle for political power in the guise of a religious conflagration. Sky notes that “the moustaches and the beards have come together against Maliki,” referring to the unlikely alliance of Baathists and the Islamists against the Shia-dominated Iraqi government.

This book is a useful tool for Soldiers and leaders as the U.S. Army continues to advance American interests in the challenging operational environment of Iraq. Infantrymen would do well in future operations to emulate the deep cultural understanding, genuine rapport building, and enduring commitment that characterized Emma Sky’s campaign in Iraq.

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