

Infantry

Spring 2021

THE INFANTRY SERGEANT: OUR ARMY'S SOURCE OF OVERMATCH

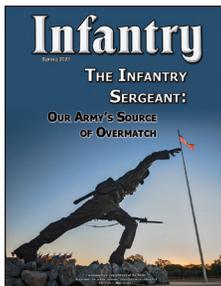


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FRONT COVER:

The Infantryman statue stands in front of Fort Benning's McGinnis-Wickam Hall. This statue is a replica of the original that was created in 1960, which now stands as the centerpiece of the rotunda of the National Infantry Museum. (Photo by Patrick A. Albright)

BACK COVER:

Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, conduct a combined arms live-fire exercise at Fort Bragg, NC, in October 2020. (Photo by SGT John Lytle)



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Commandant's Note

MG DAVID M. HODNE



The Infantry Sergeant: *Our Army's Source of Overmatch*

The "Infantryman" statue sits on hallowed ground in front of the historic McGinnis-Wickam Hall, just as it has since 1960. It represents the essence of every Infantryman, past, present, and future. This likeness also sits in the rotunda of the National Infantry Museum, welcoming all, a prelude to the historical displays inside. I have been in awe of this statue since my days as a Lieutenant. Thirty years later, informed by experiences and shared hardships with my fellow Soldiers, I only hold higher regard for this statue and all it represents. This 12-foot high bronze statue is without a doubt the quintessential **Infantry Sergeant**. Boldly charging forward and signaling others to follow and close with the enemy, this Sergeant echoes the rallying cry of the Infantry, "Follow Me." It is clear that the Infantryman statue displays the leadership qualities of the combat Infantryman not only tested, but proven, in combat. This statue, and more importantly this Sergeant, also represent those qualities we seek to develop in our very best NCOs and officers here at the Infantry School.

When coaching young Infantry officers bound for their first assignments as Rifle Platoon Leaders, I point to "their Sergeant" as the one they will learn their craft from; the one who will teach them the standard; and the one who won't let them, or their Soldiers, down. I also remind them "their Sergeant," the Infantryman who stands in front of Building 4, is also the one whom these young officers must lead and inspire. This powerful relationship between officers and noncommissioned officers inspires all of us to be better.

In my often diverging responsibilities as both the Chief of Infantry and Director of the Soldier Lethality Cross-Functional Team within Army Futures Command, I also remind future leaders that while America's industrial base puts remarkable material technology and associated advantages in the hands of our Soldiers, the Infantry Sergeant long remains the steadfast cornerstone of our Army, and unquestionably remains the heart and soul of any Infantry unit. This Infantry Sergeant also remains our true source of overmatch against any adversary. Technology is a valuable enhancer to our profession, but it is and always will be the Infantry Sergeants who train and inspire young Americans, coach them in our values, teach them the profession of arms, lead their formations

against our Nation's enemies, and ensure victory on an increasingly dynamic battlefield.

I am immensely proud of the capable instructors in the Infantry School who seek to instill and inspire the Spirit of the Bayonet in all who train here. As Infantry Soldiers continue to prepare to close the last 100 yards in defeating our enemies, they begin their journey with their first 100 yards here at Fort Benning. Following 22 weeks of Infantry One Station Unit Training (OSUT), today's Infantry Soldiers are more physically fit, more lethal, and more disciplined as a result of the tireless hours put in by their Drill Sergeants and cadre. Their indoctrination starts on day one of the program of instruction (POI) under the inspiring example of Sergeants who issue the instruction, "Follow Me." The new Infantry OSUT POI emphasizes close adherence to the fundamentals of physical training, Soldier discipline, and marksmanship, among other key elements. The first 22-week course attrition rate was under 6 percent, a significant improvement from the previous 10-12 percent attrition rate of the most recent 14-week course. Other benefits are being achieved as well. Bonding results from shared hardships, challenges met and overcome, and the shared sense of accomplishment at earning skills that translate to lethality and survivability. Very few young Americans can claim the enhanced sense of self-awareness that is gained through the Infantry OSUT experience.



The fundamental concept, and the innate value, of the role of capable instructors and NCOs was underscored and codified with the publication of Training Circular (TC) 3-20.40, *Training and Qualification, Individual Weapons*. The Training Circular hosts major upgrades to training standards and qualifications for each weapon system and featured major updates concepts to small arms target systems. The improvements reflected in TC 3-20.40 continue to yield outstanding results in Infantry OSUT. The Drill Sergeant graduates of the Marksmanship Master Trainer Course (MMTC) learn the intricacies of TC 3-20.40 and the new course of fire. They become skilled at how to mentor trainees to help them fully realize their maximum potential as they hone their marksmanship skills. We observe the trust that develops between Soldiers and their Drill

Sergeants resulting in the highest qualification scores across the Army. Initial data shows Infantry OSUT trainees average 32 out of 40 in their rifle qualification scores after following the training progressions outlined in TC 3-20.40. I have interacted with several training companies hosting 75 percent of their Trainees firing expert, and recognized other companies hosting up to 20 Trainees who fired a perfect 40 out of 40 on the new course of fire. These impressive examples of excellence reinforce individual Soldier skills as both the foundation of any rifleman and the source of overmatch that assures victory. Ultimately, our Drill Sergeants immediately elevate unit readiness in the conduct of their duties here and even after they complete their drill sergeant duties and return to the force.

Every day, capable Sergeants across the U.S. Army Infantry School make a difference for our Army. The recurring, and often relentless, cycle of instructing professional military education and functional skills courses hones our sergeants' crafts and advances an expertise that is not developed overnight. This skill is the result of repetition and dedication, and following their assignment here at Fort Benning, this skill will improve the readiness of our maneuver formations. Again, every day here, there are notable examples of the exceptional professionalism and skill of our instructors. In our Basic Airborne Course, Black Hats instruct then reinforce standards and discipline needed to safely produce paratroopers in an inherently dangerous program of instruction. These professional instructors also lead, reform, and inform the broader community on initiatives to improve airborne operations.

Another example of Infantry Sergeants driving change occurs in the U.S. Army Sniper Course. The military sniper's role is well established throughout history, but as tactics and target priorities change, we see modifications to the sniper's mission and equipment. The Maneuver Capabilities Development and Integration Directorate (MCDID) at Fort Benning, GA, working with the Sergeants at the Sniper School discovered the inability of current M110 sniper rifles using 7.62x51mm ammunition to provide precision fire beyond 1,200 meters. They helped develop the MK22 and its complementary Leupold MK5hd scope, which is superior to the current inventory with increased accuracy, portability, versatility, munitions, and both day and night target acquisition. With these weapon systems in place, the sniper team is better equipped than ever before. Incorporating updated tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) and technology, the team will be able to conduct operations in all environments, against any enemy, and under any condition. We have the weapons and the technology, we have the facilities and the Soldiers to retain our dominance of the sniper environment, and we have the Infantry Sergeants whose commitment, patience, and sheer technical mastery of their craft keep them at the peak of their profession.



Approaching nearly three years here in the U.S. Army Infantry School, I can recount countless more examples of the incredible contributions of Sergeants across our dozens of Infantry programs of instruction. We credit our success here at the U.S. Army Infantry School to seasoned, dedicated Sergeants who transform young Americans into Soldiers who display an inherent Spirit of the Bayonet. We similarly credit both the success and readiness of maneuver formations to our capable Infantry Sergeants at echelon. The envy of all other Armies, friend and foe alike, our Sergeants remain our Army's source of overmatch. As we mutually invest in both the long term health of the Infantry Branch and corresponding readiness of our Army, we must recognize the service, expertise, and important contributions of these dedicated leaders.

I am the Infantry! Follow Me!

The “FIRST 100 YARDS”

1. To the first professional U.S. Army Infantry Soldiers, the Trench...meant safety...a brief respite from the horror of war.
2. Leaving the trench, however...meant the opposite. For those who bravely clawed and climbed out of the illusion of security the trench provided....their character and commitment demands respect.
3. Going “Over the Top” was an expression Soldiers used in World War I when referring to leaving their own trenches to assault the enemy.
4. Leaving the trench...meant mustering the courage to cross the first 100 yards of “No Man’s Land” only to face withering machine gun fire...and certain death.
5. Leaving the trench...meant you believed in yourself. You believed you would make it.
6. More importantly, leaving the trench...meant you believed in your teammates. When the chips were down, you would not fail your fellow Soldiers...and they would not fail you.
7. Leaving the trench...also meant you had faith in your leaders. You believed they had the wisdom to make the call, they would lead you through the unknown obstacles ahead, and they had the experience needed to guarantee victory. They lived our motto, “Follow Me.”
8. Leaving the trench...and the courage required to step off into the unknown...the first 100 yards... is something you will never forget.
9. Lastly, leaving the trench was only the beginning. The work of the Infantry was not complete until we closed with and destroyed the enemy.
10. Embarking on the “First 100 yards” takes personal courage. Completing the mission by closing with and destroying the enemy in the last 100 yards yields victory...and charts our legacy as the Infantry.
11. Life in the Infantry, the foot Soldier, is one of both hardship and pride. This journey starts with going “over the top” and the “First 100 Yards.”





The Expert Infantryman Badge: *The Credential of a Professional Infantry Soldier*

CSM ROBERT K. FORTENBERRY

The Expert Infantryman Badge (EIB) is the gold standard for evaluating expertise and mastery of those core Skill Level I tasks required for the base tactical/technical knowledge of the Infantryman. It is the cornerstone from which all infantry tactics are derived and is the hallmark of a tactically disciplined unit. The history of the EIB is entwined with the Combat Infantryman Badge (CIB). Both badges were formally established by the War Department under the Army Chief of Staff, George C. Marshall, on 27 October 1943, at the height of World War II in order to honor the U.S. Army Infantryman. The badge is a simple 3-inch rectangular bar with a background of Infantry Blue and a silver border. An embossed M1795 Springfield Musket is centered in the badge, un-cocked, for it has not yet been fired in combat. GEN Marshall's intent for the badge was to provide prestige in a career field that requires living a tough life, enduring hardships under the most difficult conditions, and succeeding in accomplishing many undesirable yet essential tasks.

The intensity and integrity of the EIB program have developed and prepared our Infantrymen since 1943 and continue to test the Infantry Soldier for the future fight in large-scale combat operations (LSCO). The EIB and its associated events are the core of Infantry Skill Level 1 tasks, often referred to as Warrior Tasks, which are important to all Career Management Fields (CMFs) in the U.S. Army. A unified level of proficiency should be a standard that all other CMFs aspire to achieve to ultimately increase overall lethality of any formation, regardless of the CMF. However, the pursuit of task mastery and expertise are a must for all Infantry Soldiers to most effectively perform their duties. The EIB's rigorous standards and the physical and mental hardships endured during the testing period replicate the decision cycle and the required clarity of thoughts and focused actions under hardship, under stress, and in tough conditions to achieve success. The EIB test is designed to be a crucible event where the margin of error

is measured in seconds and requires consistent attention to detail. The EIB is the true mark of a professional Infantry Soldier and signifies mastery under test conditions for expertise of individual infantry tasks. It is the building block for collective level training required to face the enemy in the last 100 yards of ground combat and should be planned and executed annually in support of training progressions across units with Infantry Soldiers.

The EIB is part of the individual to collective training progression, designed to build confidence at the individual level before progressing to collective and mission-essential task training. Throughout my career, including earning my EIB in 1998, I witnessed the EIB building tremendous confidence to succeed and challenging me and other Infantry Soldiers to continue to strive for excellence over the last 30 years. The EIB event assists leaders in establishing more than well-trained Soldiers. Great units always established two consistent attributes — not measured in metrics, flow charts, or qualification scores — but in the positive climate and culture they established. The data and statistics are a by-product of a positive command climate and a culture that use the EIB and other team-building events to encourage personal growth and professional development. The EIB establishes

An NCO with the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division demonstrates how to properly execute a functions check on an M4 Carbine during Expert Infantryman Badge training on 23 April 2019.

Photo by SSG James Avery



the confidence and training repetition for all Infantry Soldiers to want to succeed and set themselves apart as experts, wanting to aspire to be more within the organization. Leaders who sustain the EIB training event solidify, through their deeds, that the opportunity for individual success of the Infantry Soldiers they lead is important to the command. It establishes a climate and culture that provide individual opportunity and can often be a catalyst for other mission-enhancing courses such as the Ranger, Master Gunner, and Jumpmaster Courses that increase the lethality of the collective organization. It is a simple human need to succeed. Nobody joins the Infantry to be average. Infantry Soldiers need a challenge. They need opportunities to contribute to something bigger than themselves. It is the core of who we are as Infantry Soldiers.

The integrity of the EIB is protected by the strict adherence to U.S. Army Infantry School (USAIS) Pamphlet 350-6, which is governed by the Infantry School Commandant and a team of USAIS EIB lane evaluators. The combination of EIB written standards, senior officer oversight, and NCO hands-on inspections maintain the integrity of the EIB program. The legacy of the EIB is maintained in this manner by preventing iterative deviation of the EIB over time, which would dilute and undermine the intent of original framework drafted by GEN Marshall and his team. On two occasions, while facilitating 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division's EIB and operating as an EIB Lane NCOIC for 1st Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, I personally witnessed the USAIS EIB Committee act as not only the standard bearers for the EIB, but as a critical professional resource for the execution of the EIB to standard. The team on both occasions spent much of its time assisting in lane development and EIB packet validation by using best practices from across the entire enterprise. The unit's EIB senior leaders found the assistance invaluable and instrumental in training and testing to a consistent standard in both of those formations. In the current generation of our Army where outsourcing validation through virtual technology appears to be an efficient option, I caution that it will likely create iterative deviation, and we must be hesitant and vigilant before we attempt to change a process that has never failed to deliver excellence. The EIB measures consistent expertise across the entire Infantry Branch regardless of location because it is validated with one unified standard with no deviations.

Finally, the EIB is a five-day testing event that requires minimal resources, if followed in accordance with USAIS Pamphlet 350-6. It is best executed at the brigade level for maximum training throughput that measures expertise of Skill Level 1 infantry tasks by applying both physical and mental hardship in a controlled environment. I also find it to be a perfect example of This Is My Squad (TIMS) and the most genuine level of measurable leadership in our Army. It encapsulates

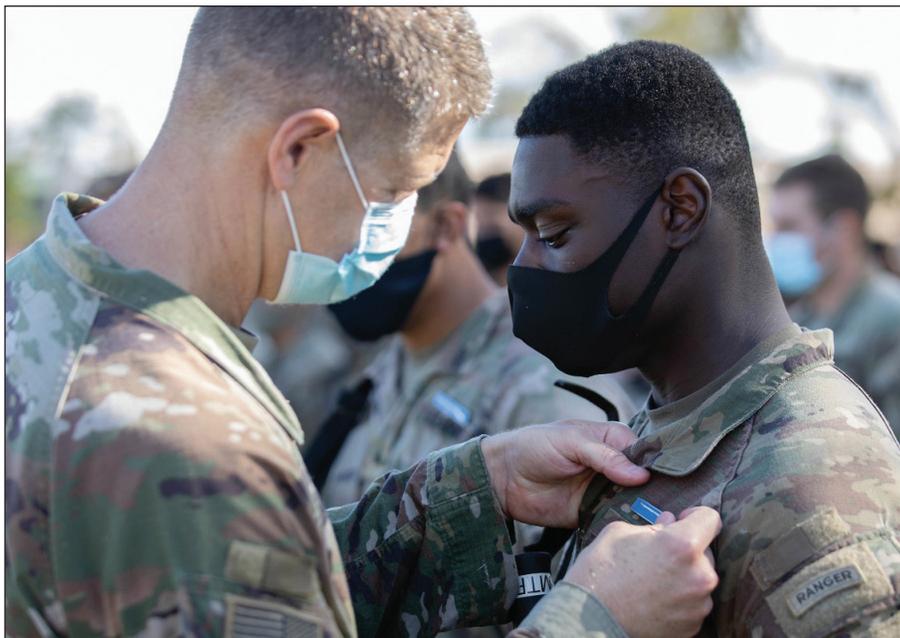


Photo by SSG Alan Brutus

MG James Jarrard, commanding general of the 25th Infantry Division, presents 1LT Andrew King, a mortar platoon leader in the 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, with the Expert Infantryman Badge at Schofield Barracks, HI, on 25 September 2020.

the essence of an Infantry squad by sharing in the hardship of the event; teaching, coaching, and mentoring; and producing results in a measurable example of effective leadership. Leaders who attempt to earn their EIB are true examples of humble leaders who inspire others to never stop learning, developing, and becoming better versions of themselves. When old Soldiers stop and ask, "What will this generation of Soldiers and leaders need to carry on the legacy that made us successful?" I think we all have an example of our days trying to stay true-blue on an EIB site with leaders who inspired us to succeed. It is my opinion, as we look for ways to decrease Combat Training Center (CTC) rotation safety violations, it is leader involvement and Infantry Soldier expertise that will inspire our next generation of Infantry leaders. We do not have to look for more classroom instruction or social media communications; it is right in front of us, the EIB... the mark of the Infantry Soldier.

CSM Robert K. Fortenberry served as the U.S. Army Infantry School command sergeant major at Fort Benning, GA, from 25 March 2019 until 25 February 2021. During his career, CSM Fortenberry served as a brigade command sergeant major, battalion command sergeant major, battalion operations sergeant major, operations sergeant, first sergeant, platoon sergeant, drill sergeant, U.S. Army Sniper School instructor, rifle squad leader, team leader, 4.2 inch mortar team member, M249 SAW gunner, grenadier, and rifleman. He has served with the 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry Battalion, 10th Mountain Division, Fort Drum, NY; 2nd Battalion, 3rd Infantry Regiment (SBCT), Joint Base Lewis-McChord, WA; 173rd Special Troops Battalion (Airborne) in Bamberg, Germany; E Company, 2nd Battalion, 19th Infantry Regiment, Fort Benning; A Company, 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, TX; A Company, 3rd Battalion, 67th Armor Battalion, 4th Infantry Division, Fort Hood; B Company, 2nd Battalion, 47th Infantry Regiment, Fort Benning; U.S. Army Sniper School, Fort Benning; and B Company, 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry Battalion, Schofield Barracks, HI. CSM Fortenberry has deployed four times to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Inherent Resolve and most recently to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.



Airborne Soldiers Test New Handheld Leader Radios

RICK MICHAEL

Airborne Soldiers with the 1st Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, recently completed almost two weeks testing the Army's newest small leader radio (LR) packages. The Handheld, Manpack and Small (HMS) Form Fit/Tactical Radio variants are two-channel handhelds that are used at the company and platoon levels by squad and team leaders to talk to each other and to aircraft to improve battlefield situational awareness.

MAJ Brian Ramirez, leader radio test officer with the Fort Hood-based U.S. Army Operational Test Command's Mission Command Test Directorate (MCTD), said the LR system is designed as an interoperable family of advanced software-reprogrammable, dual-channel, net-centric reliable communications radio sets.

The Generation 2 Manpack (GEN2 MP) Radio is a two-channel, software defined, multi-waveform, general purpose user (GPU) radio designed to support mounted and dismounted operations. The HMS MP will be fielded primarily to brigade combat team (BCT) battalions, companies, and platoons.

The GEN2 MP is deployed in three configurations: a tactical operations center (TOC) kit for command posts; mounted configurations integrated into the Army's tactical and combat platforms; and a rucksack-held configuration to support Army dismounted operations.

MAJ Ramirez said operational testing of the radios is no different than an improved tank or new weapon system.

"These radio systems are subjected to weather, terrain, and the daily regimen of light Infantrymen in an effort to replicate the actual operational environment to which they will be subjected if selected," he said. "Operational testing helps determine the effectiveness, suitability,

and survivability of operational systems Soldiers can use that works."

The test adjusted its daily operations to cope with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Once cleared into their specific environments, all attempts were made to maintain social distancing between operations and test support functions, reducing interaction between test support personnel and test unit Soldiers.

"Operational testing is about assisting the Army in providing modern software-defined radios with the latest technology for Soldiers," said COL Patrick Curry, director of MCTD. "It is about making sure that the communication systems developed assist the Soldier in their mission and ensuring Soldiers are effective against all enemies in any operational environment."

Rick Michael serves with the Mission Command Test Directorate, U.S. Army Operational Test Command.



Photo by Nicholas Robertson

A team leader with the 1st Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment directs movements of his team using the Harris Leader Radio during an assault on an objective as part of the initial operational test of the Leader Radio Manpack at Fort Bragg, NC.



Army Expeditionary Warrior Experiment Key to Small Unit Modernization

EDWIN F. DAVIS JR.

The Army Expeditionary Warrior Experiment (AEWE) has been in execution for the past 15 years, albeit in the early days by a different name. Since its inception, AEWE has informed Army decisions in materiel development, training, organizations, and how to fight. The AEWE campaign has been the sole sustained and resourced experiment that keeps a finger on the pulse of small unit modernization. Now an Army Futures Command experiment, it is managed by the Maneuver Capabilities Development and Integration Directorate (MCDID) and executed by the Maneuver Battle Lab.



changes. AEWE morphed during the Future Combat Systems era, again during Network Combat Systems era, again during Network Integration Experiments and the follow-on Joint Warfighting Assessments, and is now adjusting to the Army's priority for experimentation — Project Convergence. AEWE supports the Army prioritization efforts and the Big Six modernization programs and is key to maneuver brigade combat team and Soldier modernization.

The AEWE campaign has impacted small unit modernization in a monumental manner. The outcomes to the Army are numerous. For illustrative purposes, the following are but a few:

- The campaign's work in lightweight weapons and ammunition, integrated power, and fire control informed the Small Arms Configuration Study, which in turn was the

AEWE is a low-cost experimentation venue that partners with industry, the Army labs, Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), and the acquisition community to routinely put capabilities in the hands of Soldiers in a rigorous operational environment to solve Army small unit problems. The Army labs and DARPA hold Army investments and use the AEWE campaign as Soldier touch points for operational evaluation along the continuum of technology maturity. These touch points bring the community together to define and underpin capabilities for potential transition to acquisition programs. Likewise, industry brings innovative capabilities to AEWE to help solve Army problems and continue to evolve small units' lethality and survivability. Ironically, industry brings solution sets to the Army at no cost. By conservative estimates, industry investment is ten-fold the execution cost of an AEWE. The interaction between Soldiers, capability managers, and industry drives collective learning and influences industry internal technology investments.

AEWE also brings the international component to interoperability experimentation. The United Kingdom established an AEWE-like experimentation venue called the Army Warfighting Experiment (AWE) under the U.K. Army Futures Command, and the U.K. has a reciprocal agreement for Soldier participation in the respective experiments. The same community that participates in AEWE also has the opportunity to participate in AWE. Less formal agreements have Australian, Canadian, and Dutch forces participating, with other allied forces interested.

The AEWE campaign continues to change as the Army



Photos courtesy of MCDID

Soldiers with the Maneuver Battle Lab's Experimental Force (EXFOR) test innovative technologies, providing critical Soldier feedback during the Army Expeditionary Warrior Experiment.



EXFOR Soldiers assess the capabilities of small unmanned aerial systems in tactical operations during the Army Expeditionary Warrior Experiment.

catalyst to springboard the Soldier Lethality Cross-Functional Team to a new squad weapon with fire control.

- The fielded Soldier Borne Sensors and soon-to-be fielded Rucksack-Portable Unmanned Aerial Systems (RPUAS) had their developmental pathway through AEWE.

- AEWE and the Fires Center of Excellence aggressively developed the Digital Precision Fires system into both a dismounted and mounted Army Fires Program of Record. Portions of the program have spun off to the U.S. Marine Corps and U.S. Air Force systems.

- The AEWE campaign started the discussion that small unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) would become a threat to U.S. forces and that the Air Defense Strategy was ill-equipped to deal with them. Fast forward several years, counter-unmanned aerial systems (CUAS) now has a Joint Counter-Small UAS office.

- Laser warning systems evaluated in AEWE are now fielded on our Abrams fleet. Counter defilade capabilities at the small unit level are a major area of emphasis. AEWE has provided several solution sets including direct fire, aerial fires, and precision munitions. Although the Army has not made a decision in these areas, AEWE does and will continue to provide options and alternatives for decision makers.

AEWE is a laboratory for the Maneuver Center of Excellence (MCoE) capability and requirements combat developers. The experiment provides the opportunity to think about future conflicts and how to equip and

train our forces. This venue immerses combat developers, engineers, and Soldiers into a warfighting environment that ultimately will result in better and more realistic capabilities and requirements in the short and mid-term time horizons. Further, it provides a more integrated approach to achieving overmatch. Lastly, promising technologies are provided to opposing forces during the experiment. Not only does the Experimental Force (EXFOR) leverage the advantages that technologies provide, but we must concurrently pit them against like capabilities that are and will be available to threat forces.

As we start the live-fire phase of AEWE 21, we still continue to work the AEWE 20 outcomes. A major finding during AEWE 20 was the maturity of several tactical resupply UASs that can deliver emergency resupply at the point of need on the battlefield. This capability is a partial solution to the continuing problem of Soldier load. It might limit the need to expose expensive manned airframes forward on the battlefield to

deliver emergency resupply. The MCDID recommended the Army make these capabilities available to an infantry brigade combat team (IBCT) to further develop the concept. The XVIII Airborne Corps recently agreed and it, the Sustainment Center of Excellence, and the MCoE will work the concept during AEWE 21 to push to an IBCT in the near future.

The question is not why conduct an AEWE campaign, but why would you not? An annual small unit modernization experiment provides the opportunity to make half-time adjustments for showtime with the threat force. Small units make contact with threat forces up close and personal — we need to ensure those are not fair fights.

Edwin F. Davis Jr. is the deputy director for the Maneuver Battle Lab, Maneuver Capabilities Development and Integration Directorate, Fort Benning, GA.



The Maneuver Battle Lab's EXFOR participates in the U.K.'s Army Warfighting Experiment.

Soldiers assigned to 1st Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division engage opposing forces on 4 November 2019 during Joint Readiness Training Center rotation 20-01 at Fort Polk, LA.

Photos courtesy of Joint Readiness Training Center Operations Group



Fighting for Time at JRTC

**LTC REX A. HOWRY
MAJ CALEB J. GOBLE
MAJ MATTHEW S. LEWIS**

Most Combat Training Center (CTC) struggles tie back to “time” and “stuff.” The military decision-making process (MDMP) typically takes too much time, and the brigade combat team (BCT) has more enablers than it can effectively leverage. Three methods to buy back time during MDMP are: “fighting products,” good commander’s guidance, and efficient wargaming. To effectively manage span of control, commanders must empower field grades, operationalize the headquarters and headquarters company (HHC) commander, and leverage specialty platoon leaders (PLs) and enabler leadership.

Over the span of nine months, the 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st BCT, 10th Mountain Division, had the opportunity to execute two Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) deployments. In October 2019, the “Triple Deuce” deployed to defeat the Arianan aggressors after just freeing Atropia in February of the same year. Although we performed admirably during JRTC rotation 20-01, Geronimo gave us a fight around every corner and challenged us each battle period. Our battalion’s performance improved dramatically since our last experience during JRTC 19-04, and this article will share what we changed.

CTCs’ Operations Groups and observer-controller-trainers (OCTs) consolidate and distribute trend slides to highlight the challenges faced by brigades and battalions during their rotations. Common examples include failing to conduct effective reconnaissance, not following the one-third/two-thirds rule, and failing to conduct rehearsals — all basic concepts that seem easy to conduct in theory. Yet, despite being heavily publicized across the force, these trends tend to remain constant rotation after rotation and with little variance across multiple years of data and dozens of separate BCTs. The authors have a combined total of 17 CTC rotations and can unequivocally state that the trends slide portrayed in preparation for our October 2019 deployment varied little from previous rotations.

If almost every BCT is experiencing the same glaring issues rotation after rotation, this can only mean one of two things. Either:

- (a) We are identifying problems but are failing repeatedly as an Army to fix them, or
- (b) We are merely identifying symptoms of the problem and not the core issues.

We believe the latter is correct; the trends CTCs observe

every month are symptoms of a deeper problem. Instead of identifying and rectifying the root cause of the problem, battalions and BCTs are playing “whack-a-mole” on fighting symptoms.

The CTCs have done a superb job identifying these symptoms; however, the question we must now ask is: What are the root causes of these poor performances? To do this, we must look at the constants that every BCT/battalion shares every rotation. We believe the two constants are the MDMP framework and the overwhelming number of enablers given to both a BCT and a battalion. Plainly speaking, almost all of the symptoms reported by the CTC tie back to “time” and “stuff” — full MDMP typically takes too much time, and the BCT simply has gained too many additional assets for the fight.

Consequently, when commanders and their staffs try to execute a complicated, time-intensive process while managing too many things in a time-constrained environment, there tends to be imbalance in the growth of the importance of stuff that should not matter relative to the stuff that should. This growth typically manifests itself in getting overwhelmed by random enablers and on producing the data, products, and presentations tied to MDMP rather than focusing on the “so what” (deductions) that actually help the commander make a decision. While well intentioned, the staff tends to focus on the wrong things thereby handicapping the commander’s decision making. This is when things such as effective reconnaissance, the one-third/two-thirds rule, and rehearsals are sacrificed in the name of products.

Time (Never Enough)

A complicated issue is one in which the components can be separated and dealt with in a systematic and logical way that relies on a set of static rules. It may be hard to see at first, but there’s a fixed order that is merely complicated and allows you to deal with it. Once you figure out how to do these things, you can keep doing them at will.¹ An automobile assembly line is a good example.

A complex issue is one in which you cannot get a firm

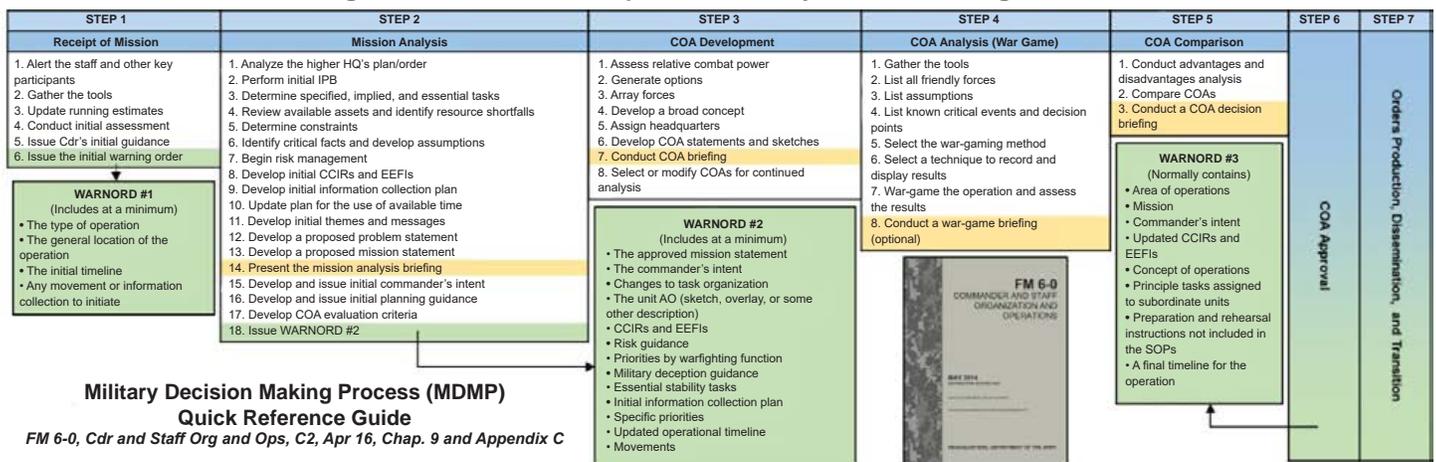
handle on the parts and there are no rules, algorithms, or natural laws. Things that are complex have no such degree of order, control, or predictability.² A complex thing is much more challenging — and different — than the complicated one.

That being said, MDMP is a framework that facilitates analysis, with commander input throughout, that results in a plan. It comprises seven steps (with 43 total sub-steps), thereby making it a complicated process versus a complex one (see Figure 1). Army doctrine includes MDMP because it is a defined process to address virtually any tactical problem; it ensures a consideration of factors bearing on the problem and resources available to develop a feasible plan. In a perfect world, the staff is practiced and proficient; and all staff members know the sub-steps they are responsible for and are motivated to produce those outputs.

The reality, however, is far from this ideal. There are two problems at the battalion level: experience and manning. Typically, the only individuals on the staff with MDMP experience are the battalion commander, command sergeant major (CSM), executive officer (XO), operations (OPS) sergeant major (SGM), and S3. The rest are typically lieutenants, pre-command captains, and junior NCOs who have little experience and passing interest. Compounding the problem is the manning churn within the unit. No matter how many tactical operations center exercises (TOCEXs) and staff exercises (STAFFEXs) are completed prior to a CTC rotation, it is unlikely that the team members executing MDMP at the CTC are the same individuals who got the prior “reps and sets.”

While MDMP has its challenges, it is not to say that we should throw it out the window. Seasoned managers of MDMP know which sub-steps are critical, which briefs are necessary, and are ruthless at keeping planning timelines on track. MDMP’s limiting factors are that it is inherently time consuming and requires experienced practitioners to actually drive rapid decision making in hyper time-constrained environments. Since you cannot produce more time, you can only become more efficient by knowing what to prioritize.

Figure 1 — The 43 Sub-Steps of the Military Decision-Making Process



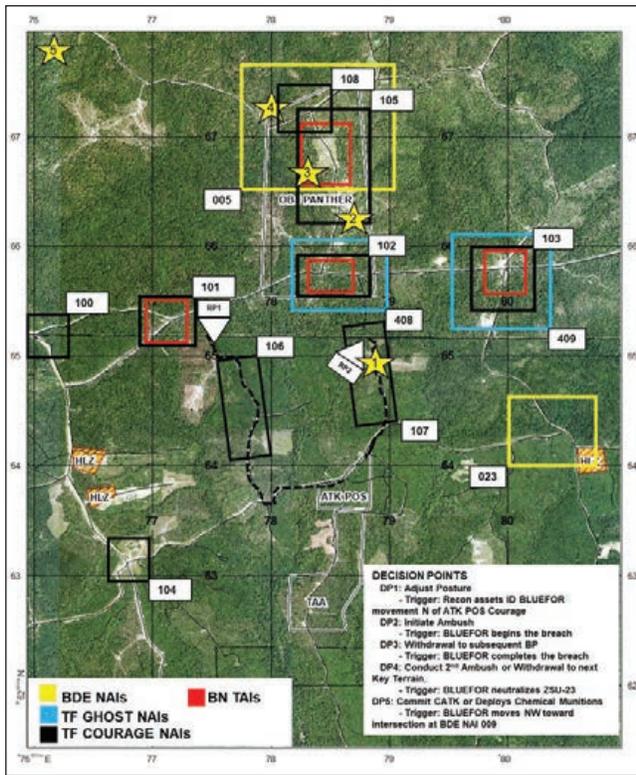


Figure 4 — Example Event Template

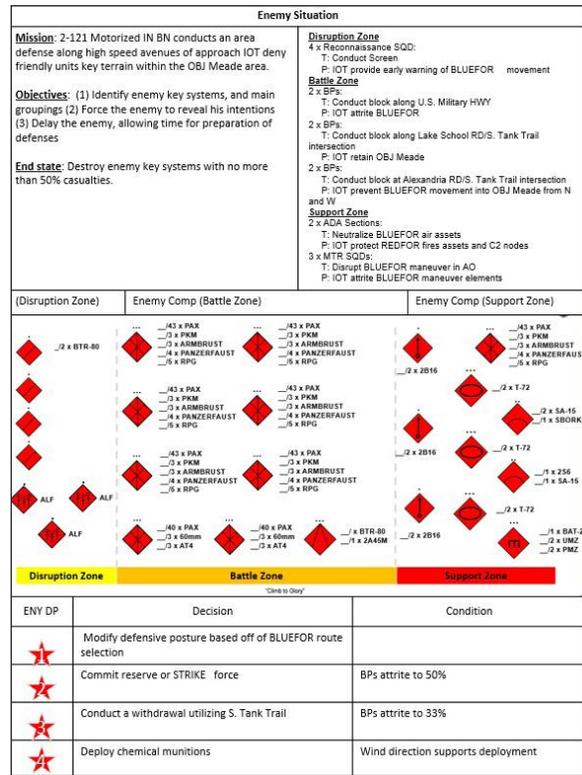


Figure 5 — Example Kill Card

areas of interest (NAIs) which then drives your intelligence collection plan. Again, these can be digital or analog on a map board.

Kill Card — S2 (Figure 5)

The kill card helps create shared understanding for all unit commanders to visualize what exactly they will face on the battlefield, determine if they have enough resources to defeat it, and reallocate resources as needed. When overlaid with the event temp, it then gives them an idea of when they will face that threat. A kill card broken down to the squad level is the easiest way to answer simple questions such as, “Do I have enough anti-tank (AT) weapon systems to destroy the number of BMPs I am likely to face?”

Synchronization Matrix — S3 (Figure 6)

Synch matrixes often become bloated, colored messes attempting to depict every moving piece on the battlefield down to the minute and end up resembling Russell Crowe’s office wall in *A Beautiful Mind*.

Rather than “time” based, we utilized a “phase”-based matrix which simply listed when each phase begins and ends, task and purpose for each maneuver unit and critical enabler by phase, and priority of fires/support by phase.

Figure 6 — Example Synch Matrix

Synch Matrix by Phase/Execution Timeline

PHASE	I (Recon)	Iia (Breach OBJ SIG)	Iib (Breach OBJ GLOCK)	Iic (Destroy OBJ HK)	Iid (Clear OBJ TAURUS)	III (Transition to Defense)	
BEGINS	SCTS SP ATK POS BEAR	A CO SP ASLT POS ALBANY	OBJ SIG breach lanes secure	OBJ GLOCK breach lanes secure	Far side security set on OBJ HK	On order	
ENDS	COs established in ASLT POS	OBJ SIG breach lanes secure	OBJ GLOCK breach lanes secure	Far side security set on OBJ HK	OBJ TAURUS clear	BPs established	
A CO	T: Occupy ASLT POS ALBANY	PH1a ME T: Conduct FPOL w/ scouts IVO PL ALASKA P: Enable attack on OBJ PANOTHER T: Breach OBJ SIG P: Allow B CO (DO) to attack OBJ GLOCK	LOA PL CALIFORNIA T: Pass B CO through OBJ SIG	PH1b ME T: Conduct FPOL w/ A CO P: Enable attack on OBJ GLOCK T: Breach OBJ GLOCK P: Allow D CO to attack OBJ HK	LOA PL COLORADO T: Stage D CO through OBJ GLOCK	PH11d ME T: Conduct FPOL w/ D CO P: Enable attack on OBJ TAURUS P: Prevent envelopment of DO	T: Establish hasty defense IVO OBJ GLOCK oriented north P: Prevent counterattack from the north
B CO	T: Occupy ASLT POS BOSTON	T: Stage at PL ALABAMA	PH1b ME T: Conduct FPOL w/ A CO P: Enable attack on OBJ GLOCK T: Breach OBJ GLOCK P: Allow D CO to attack OBJ HK	LOA PL COLORADO T: Stage D CO through OBJ GLOCK	PH11d ME T: Conduct FPOL w/ D CO P: Enable attack on OBJ TAURUS P: Prevent envelopment of DO	T: Establish hasty defense IVO OBJ SIG oriented west P: Prevent counterattack from the west	
C CO	T: Occupy ASLT POS COLUMBUS	ASLT POS CHARLOTTE	T: Stage at PL ALABAMA	T: Stage at PL ALASKA	PH11d ME T: Conduct FPOL w/ D CO P: Enable attack on OBJ TAURUS P: Prevent envelopment of DO	T: Establish hasty defense IVO PL ALASKA oriented east P: Prevent counterattack from the east	
D CO	T: Occupy ASLT POS DETROIT	T: Block ASR COPPER P: Allow DO FOM	T: Stage at PL ALASKA	PH11c ME T: Conduct FPOL w/ B CO P: Enable attack on OBJ HK T: Destroy EN on OBJ HK P: Allow C CO (SO4) to clear OBJ TAURUS	LOA PL KANSAS T: Pass C CO through OBJ GLOCK	T: Establish hasty defense IVO PL ALABAMA oriented south P: Prevent counterattack from the south	
HHC	TOC in TAA PANTHER TAC in TAA PANTHER	TOC in TAA PANTHER TAC in ASLT POS DETROIT	TOC in TAA COURAGE TAC at KT 2	TOC in TAA PANTHER TAC at KT 2	TOC in TAA PANTHER TAC at KT 2	TOC in TAA PANTHER TAC at KT 2	
G CO	T: CTCP OPS VIC TAA PANTHER	T: CTCP OPS VIC TAA PANTHER	T: CTCP OPS VIC TAA COURAGE	T: CTCP OPS VIC TAA COURAGE	Lift package staged at ASLT DETROIT	Transport C CO from OBJ TAURUS to PL ALASKA	
SCTS	PH1 ME T: Screen IVO ASR COPPER P: Provide early warning T: Conduct area recon of OBJ PANOTHER (LOA PL ALASKA) P: ID disposition, composition, and location of obstacles and T-80s.	T: Screen IVO ASR COPPER P: Allow A CO to attack OBJ SIG	T: Screen IVO ASR COPPER P: Provide early warning	T: Screen IVO ASR COPPER P: Provide early warning	T: Screen IVO ASR COPPER P: Provide early warning	T: Screen IVO ASR COPPER P: Provide early warning	
MTRS	Mortars in MFP 1 and MFP 2	Fire: AP1000 Suppress dismounts	Fire: AP2000 Suppress dismounts	Fire: AP3000 Suppress dismounts			
CAS	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
FIRES	Fire: AP1100, AP1101 Suppress, obscure OBJ SIG	Fire: AP2100, AP2101 Neutralize EN ADA on OBJ HK Obscure OBJ GLOCK	Fire: AP3100 Suppress OBJ HK	Fire: AP3101 Obscure OBJ TAURUS			

**Execution Checklist (Excheck)
— S3 (Figure 7)**

The excheck helps flatten communication higher, lower, and laterally while breaking complex operations into a generally linear tracker which aids the commander in identifying when conditions are set or if the fight is progressing as planned.

Target List Worksheet — Fire Support Officer (FSO)

The target list worksheet is a must for battalion and company FSOs to facilitate fires planning and execution during the operation. It can be easily used in an analog format.

Fire Support Execution Matrix (FSEM) — FSO (Figure 8)

The FSEM is a concise, easy planning tool to visually portray the many factors of a complicated fire support plan. It identifies priority of fires, final protective fires, priority targets, specific targets, and groups for mortars, howitzers, and attack aviation.

During our actual rotation, we strove to produce physical copies of these eight products for each operation, preceded by warning orders (WARNORDs) sent either over the Joint Battle Command-Platform (JBC-P) or FM. E-mail was only used for communication with brigade, keeping our upper tactical internet (TI) footprint extremely low. To produce and distribute the orders, the S3 shop had two cheap, stand-alone “all-in-one” printers, and each staff section had a stand-alone computer that was not hooked up to a network. If time allowed, each staff section would produce its section of the order/fighting product on its computer, print via USB hook-up, and the plans officer would compile the order into waterproof document protectors. If time was severely constrained, each staff section would hand-jam their inputs onto blank, laminated templates of the fighting products, and the plans officer would make copies of the filled-out products and compile into an order. Depending on the environment, the orders were then distributed via runner or with the logistic packages (LOGPACs) to the companies.

Which Steps of MDMP to Prioritize

The staff concentrated our efforts on three steps of MDMP: mission analysis, course of action (COA) development, and the wargame. Intel drives fires... fires drives maneuver... and sustainment enables the realm of possibilities within fires and maneuver. Therefore, a deliberate mission analysis is absolutely critical to framing the problem and answering the first three questions above:

- 1) What does the enemy look like?
- 2) How will he fight?
- 3) What do we have to fight with?

The kill card and event template answer questions one and two, and the staff running estimates answer question three.

OPERATIONS COURAGE ASCENT EXCHECK						
LINE #	TIME		NET	TO	FROM	PROWORD
		MORTARS EST MFP 1 AND MFP 2	BN CMD	COURAGE TAC	WOLFPACK 6	AMBER
		SCOUTS LD FROM TAA COURAGE	BN CMD	COURAGE TAC	WATCHDOG 6	ASHLEY
		SCOUTS SET IN SCREEN IVO ASR COPPER	BN CMD	COURAGE TAC	WATCHDOG 6	ANNA
		ANVIL SP2 ATK PSN BEAR	BN CMD	COURAGE TAC	ANVIL 6	ARLENE
		BUSHMASTER SP2 ATK PSN BEAR	BN CMD	COURAGE TAC	BUSHMASTER 6	BEVERLY
		DESTROYER SP2 ATK PSN BEAR	BN CMD	COURAGE TAC	DESTROYER 6	BONNIE
		CHAOS SP2 ATK PSN BEAR AND CONDUCTS FOLLOW AND ASSUME WITH B CO	BN CMD	COURAGE TAC	CHAOS 6	BRITTNEY
		ANVIL OCCUPY'S ASLT PSN ALBANY	BN CMD	COURAGE TAC	ANVIL 6	CAROLINE
		BUSHMASTER OCCUPY'S ASLT PSN BOSTON	BN CMD	COURAGE TAC	BUSHMASTER 6	CHARLENE
		DESTROYER OCCUPY'S ASLT PSN DETROIT	BN CMD	COURAGE TAC	DESTROYER 6	CHRISTINA
		DESTROYER ESTABLISHES BLOCKING PSNS ALONG ASR COPPER	BN CMD	COURAGE TAC	DESTROYER 6	CLARISSA
		ANVIL SP2 ASLT PSN ALBANY	BN CMD	COURAGE TAC	ANVIL 6	CHEY
		BUSHMASTER SP2 ASLT PSN BOSTON	BN CMD	COURAGE TAC	BUSHMASTER 6	DIANNE
		ANVIL BUSHMASTER COMPLETES FPOL WITH WATCHDOG	BN CMD	COURAGE TAC	WATCHDOG 6	DANA
		ANVIL INITIATES BREACH ON OBJ SIG	BN CMD	COURAGE TAC	ANVIL 6	DEBORAH
		BUSHMASTER INITIATES BREACH ON OBJ GLOCK	BN CMD	COURAGE TAC	BUSHMASTER 6	DESTINY
		DESTROYER STAGES ALONG PL ALABAMA	BN CMD	COURAGE TAC	DESTROYER 6	
		ANVIL COMPLETES BREACH ON OBJ SIG	BN CMD	COURAGE TAC	ANVIL 6	
		BUSHMASTER COMPLETES BREACH ON OBJ GLOCK	BN CMD	COURAGE TAC	BUSHMASTER 6	
		BUSHMASTER ESTABLISHES LANE SKOAL	BN CMD	COURAGE TAC	BUSHMASTER 6	
		ANVIL ESTABLISHES HASTY SECURITY ALONG PL CONNECTICUT	BN CMD	COURAGE TAC	ANVIL 6	EMILY
		BUSHMASTER ESTABLISHES HASTY SECURITY ALONG PL CONNECTICUT	BN CMD	COURAGE TAC	BUSHMASTER 6	EVELYN
		DESTROYER CROSSES PL ALABAMA	BN CMD	COURAGE TAC	DESTROYER 6	FELCIA

Figure 7 — Example Execution Checklist

PHASE:							
TASK(S)/PURPOSE(S):							
METHOD:							
POF:							
FST	TARGET	TRIGGER	LOCATION	OBSERVER	DELIVERY SYS	AGM/ME	COMMO
ALLOCATIONS:							
POSITIONING GUIDANCE:							
RESTRICTIONS/FSCMs:							
EFFECTS:							

Figure 8 — Example Fire Support Execution Matrix Template

While the staff focused on those three steps, the commander focused on writing his commander’s guidance in such a way that the specificity would ensure that the concept produced in COA development would meet his intent. COA development is the area where experienced and self-aware commanders can save a substantial amount of time. By clearly communicating their guidance prior to starting COA development (especially when developing multiple COAs), there is less time wasted preparing a COA brief that does not achieve the commander’s intent and ends with the dreaded phrases “blended COA” or “go back to the drawing board.” A common critique of staffs is that they fail to take plans from conceptual form and translate them into sufficient detail. Clear commander’s guidance is where you buy the time to get to that level of detail — especially if it’s day 13 in the “box” and your battalion just got ordered to attack Sangari in 12 hours. In this situation, you do not have the time or staff experience to execute an iterative COA development process; you need commanders who clearly outline their guidance and make a decision. Only then can you execute the important things like reconnaissance, subordinate planning, and rehearsals. A decent plan rehearsed multiple times is superior to a perfect plan not rehearsed at all. Time gives you that opportunity.

During LTP we did multiple COAs; however, at JRTC 20-01 we generally only focused on one COA; this is where the commander's judgement comes into play and the art of command outweighs the science of control. Commanders use their experience, education, and intuition to weigh risk and make a decision. This is literally the most important thing commanders get paid to do: exercise good judgement, weigh risks, and make decisions. The combination of clear commander's guidance and one directed COA allowed us to issue a detailed mission order within the one-third time frame allowing for subordinate planning, rehearsals, and refinement.

Once the staff completed mission analysis, the battalion commander, S2, S3, and FSO gathered around the map and the event template to discuss options, and then the commander issued his COA guidance. This allowed us to get our reconnaissance out early with refined NAIs and priority information requirements (PIRs), allowed the commander to get out on the ground with company commanders to receive bottom-up refinement and appraise the situation with his own eyes, and most importantly allowed the staff to execute a thorough wargame.

The wargame is where you identify gaps, false assumptions, and ensure that the requisite detail is added to the COA. It is where you turn a 75-percent COA into a 90-percent executable plan. For example, after completing mission analysis for our defense of Geronimo Drop Zone, the commander directed the staff to develop a mobile defense COA along three likely enemy avenues of approach (AoAs). However, during the wargame — using our kill cards in conjunction with the event template — we identified that our company battle positions did not have enough AT weapons to fix the enemy long enough for our striking force to destroy the enemy.

This led the commander to make the decision to accept risk on the enemy's least likely AoA (west) by reallocating the vast majority of combat power to the center and the east. To mitigate the risk, we emplaced a blocking obstacle overwatched with scouts and fires, which would buy time to shift combat power should the enemy execute the unexpected. This decision proved critical in stopping the enemy attack. Had we skipped the wargame, we would have never identified this critical gap and would likely have lost the battle.

Stuff (Too Much of it)

"The average human brain finds its effective scope in handling three to six other brains."

— **General Sir Ian Hamilton**

Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 6-0, *Mission Command: Command and Control of Army Forces*, states that "generally, commanders can effectively command and control two to five subordinate headquarters."⁴ An infantry rifle battalion already exceeds this limit with a modified table of organization and equipment (MTOE) of six companies. Add in a civil affairs (CA) team, psychological operations

(PSYOP) team, low-level voice intercept (LLVI) team, Avenger section, explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) team, sapper squad, Q-50 radar, military police (MP) platoon, and the chaplain — who reminds you every 10 minutes that he needs to conduct a religious support rehearsal of concept (ROC) drill — and you have vastly exceeded the number of units you can effectively command and control. "There is a balance to be struck between how much an attachment adds value because of the corresponding loss of freedom of action" to the gaining unit.⁵

Since you cannot control every element, you must find a way to command it. We accomplished through this through three ways.

Let the XO and S3 Run the Planning Process

As tempting as it was for the commander to get in the weeds on every planning effort, we saw greater success when he took the time to write clear commander's intent and then let the XO and S3 run with it. This allowed the staff to "make the sausage" without being interrupted every five minutes and allowed the commander to circulate the battlefield and receive firsthand input from his company commanders.

Operationalize the HHC Commander

Often, there is a tendency to park the HHC commander in the company trains command post (CTCP) and the FSC commander in the brigade support area (BSA) and simply put them in charge of logistics and sustainment. The problem is that when there are two people in charge of sustainment, there is not a clear delineation in responsibility; assumptions get made, and the next thing you know your Charlie Company gets a resupply of toilet paper instead of Javelins prior to an enemy attack. Instead, we used the HHC commander as a fifth "maneuver" commander while making the FSC commander directly responsible and accountable for all sustainment.

This can take many forms; the HHC commander can maneuver the battalion reserve element or LOGPAC security forces, or control a "cross-functional team" of enablers (example: CA, PSYOP, medics, and security) in the consolidation area. Most importantly, he or she is available to command the scout, mortar, and medical platoons. HHC commanders should not only train their specialty platoons in garrison but should also command them in the field, just as rifle company commanders maneuver their rifle platoons. This means assisting the scout platoon leader (PL) in planning the intelligence collection scheme of maneuver, mentoring the mortar PL with establishing survivability move criteria, and guiding the medical officer (MEDO) to use factors such as terrain, time, distance, and security to emplace the battalion aid station. Our HHC commander briefed the applicable schemes of maneuver and concepts of employment for all three specialty platoons and all attached enablers during the COA development brief. This ensured ownership of the plan and enabled him to command and control them during execution.

Place Enabler LNOs in the TOC

Clearly delineated roles and responsibilities are absolutely critical when controlling and leveraging the myriad of enablers assigned to a battalion. This starts with assigning a commander direct responsibility for each enabler. We took it a step further by requiring a liaison officer (LNO) for each enabler to participate in MDMP as well as the execution of the operation. This flattened communication across the organization, helping us mass the effects of our enablers' capabilities during critical phases of each operation. Additionally, it prevented us from "firing and forgetting" certain enablers and committing common CTC blunders such as leaving behind our Q-50 radar or forgetting to collect our LLVI team after an attack.

Conclusion

None of what we have said is new. We did not invent fighting products, commander's guidance, or leveraging LNOs in the TOC. However, rather than trying to combat every deficiency trend listed in the LTP after action reviews (AARs), we focused our efforts on buying back time and managing our "stuff." Consequently, by prioritizing the sub-steps of MDMP and consolidating our span of control, we saw a sharp reduction in the aforementioned symptoms

between JRTC Rotations 19-04 and 20-01. As a result, we were able to produce good (not perfect) orders sooner, which allowed us to employ effective reconnaissance, give our subordinates more time to plan, and conduct quality rehearsals.

Notes

¹ Theodore Kinni, "Smart Leaders Know the Difference Between Complex and Complicated," Inc.com, 19 July 2017. Accessed from <https://www.inc.com/theodore-kinni/smart-leaders-know-the-difference-between-complex-.html>.

² Ibid.

³ COL (Retired) Michael Kershaw, former brigade commander, served as the Leader Training Program coach for 2-22 IN prior to JRTC Rotations 19-04 and 20-01.

⁴ The ADRP 6-0 referenced is the May 2012 edition, which was updated in July 2019 and now states: "A commander's span of control should not exceed that commander's capability to command effectively. The optimal number of subordinates is situation-dependent."

⁵ COL Kershaw.

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MAJ Caleb J. Goble currently serves as the commandant of the Northern Warfare Training Center in Black Rapids, AK. He holds a bachelor's degree and a Master Teacher's Certification from the U.S. Military Academy (USMA) at West Point, NY. During his career, MAJ Goble has deployed seven times to Iraq and Afghanistan while serving with the 75th Ranger Regiment, 25th Infantry Division, and 10th Mountain Division. He also served as a course director and instructor in the Department of Military Science at USMA.

MAJ Matthew S. Lewis currently serves as the executive officer of 2-22 IN, 1st BCT, 10th Mountain Division at Fort Drum. He holds a bachelor's degree from the Citadel and a master's degree from Central Michigan University. Over the past 12 years, MAJ Lewis has conducted eight JRTC rotations, deployed six times (Haiti, Iraq, and Afghanistan), and served with the 82nd Airborne Division, 10th Mountain Division, and 75th Ranger Regiment. He also manages www.yourewelcome.blog, a website dedicated to teaching young Soldiers about money, health, and fitness.



Soldiers assigned to 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, conduct a live-fire exercise on 24 October 2019 at Fort Polk, LA.

A Case for Company Commanders to Senior Rate Squad Leaders

CPT EVAN HORNER

Across the Army, company commanders rely on the squad and its leader for mission accomplishment, but commanders are often relegated to supplementary reviewers in the rating process of squad leaders. This detachment is disjointed from the focus required to train and certify squad leaders. In fact, squad leader rating is incongruous with the way the Army manages every other echelon. Brigade and battalion commanders' rating schemes support and enhance their ability to effect the echelon two levels down. Realigning rating schemes to follow the Army's paradigm drives company commanders to participate in the development of junior NCOs. This change increases the ability to effectively integrate squad training to sustain or improve readiness, but it also builds "People First" teams.

Implementing the Change

The foremost critique of the proposed rating scheme is based on an assumption that company commanders do not have enough time to know each squad leader, conduct counselings, write evaluations, and lead the organization. Army Regulation (AR) 623-3, *Evaluation Reporting System*, cautions against the senior rater from being too far separated from the rated Soldier. "When commanders, commandants, and organization leaders establish rating chains, they will ensure pooling of the rated population does not occur."¹ Hidden in this critique is the tacit assumption that there might be pooling involved. AR 623-3 defines pooling as

"elevating the rating chain beyond the senior rater's ability to have adequate knowledge of each Soldier's performance and potential, in order to provide an elevated assessment protection for a specific group."²

This critique holds weight, but if reviewed closely, commanders can utilize methods employed at higher echelons to ensure this perception is not founded. Much like a battalion commander who has a staff, subordinate commanders, and leaders to inform individual evaluations, the company commander must leverage the executive officer (XO), first sergeant (1SG), and platoon leadership to participate in the development and to make an accurate assessment of potential in the squad leader.

One might also say that this approach cuts the platoon sergeant out of the rating chain, but the senior NCO's role of advising and leading within the formation is unchanged. Critical input from the NCO support channel improves the individual Soldier's growth and maturation and ensures each rated staff sergeant receives a fair evaluation of performance and potential. While platoon sergeants will not sign the evaluations, they should not be pushed aside and uninvolved in rating decisions.

AR 623-3 provides fundamentals for establishing rating chains and clearly supports the proposed rating change.

A squad leader drills Soldiers during a rifle marksmanship range at the Bemowo Piskie Training Area in Poland.

Photo by CPT Evan Horner



“Established rating chains will correspond as nearly as practicable to the chain of command or supervision within a unit or organization, regardless of component or geographical location.”³ This guidance instructs commanders to follow the chain of command. Utilizing the chain of command, the squad leader should be rated by the platoon leader and senior rated by the commander. Another positive result is the commander has the rating population to give the deserving “most qualified” at the available 24 percent of the formation. Overall, the rating scheme is intended to ensure the best are selected for promotion and increased responsibility, and the commander and first sergeant have the best vantage point in a company to make decisions about squad leaders.



Photo by CPT Evan Horner

A squad competes in a combat physical fitness event to test readiness and build team cohesion.

Counseling

When senior rating squad leaders, a commander must plan and allocate adequate time for counseling and developing of each individual. A technique that can maximize interactions with the rated population is to counsel as an extension of physical training with squad leaders and their squads. This method increases the time a commander spends getting to know all of the squad leaders, along with an opportunity to interact with Soldiers in the squad. Using this model, a commander can counsel all squad leaders in three weeks without adding additional time infringing on daily duties.

This counseling technique also provides a commander the ability to maintain an accurate assessment of each squad as a team. The commander will understand who needs additional training and resources to manage their challenges. Most importantly, the additional counseling offers both the commander and squad leaders more opportunities to shape their working environment. A commander is able to individually discuss upcoming training or ask for organizational feedback. Squad leaders are able to understand how their squad fits into larger processes, seek mentorship, and ask for assistance.

While recurring counseling can be conducted in a near costless manner, a commander must spend additional time counseling at the end of the rating period. If counseling is conducted honestly and often, these evaluation counselings will not be difficult to fit into the routine. Consider making these discussions more formal to talk about the rating period, perception of performance, potential, future jobs, and feedback on organizational health.

Rating and Managing Performance

At all ranks, the senior rater has a huge impact on who is promoted and preparing junior leaders for increased responsibility. Placing junior leaders in environments that

provide them the best opportunity to succeed is not only great for the individual but also for the Army. A commander has served with many NCOs with different levels of capability, but leveraging the experience of senior NCOs in the company will lead to a clear understanding of those who are and are not excelling. The involvement of company leadership to include the platoon leader and platoon sergeant will not only help identify those ready for the next challenge but also to balance talent within the platoons.

These conversations can be reinforced during platoon leadership, XO, and the 1SG counseling. These discussions with platoon leaders and platoon sergeants can help them better communicate each squad leader's strengths, weaknesses, and career aspirations. As the squad leaders develop and progress, the need to have periodic candid conversations will inform and guide the follow-up counseling for the rated individuals. Platoon leaders and platoon sergeants will also receive feedback on the overall rating of their intermediate leaders and can assist in the training and mentorship to best serve the organization and individual.

The most important piece of these rating discussions is developing a plan for each staff sergeant. The 1SG and commander can utilize the rating discussions to build an NCO professional development program that meets the unit where it is and addresses the unique needs of individuals to prepare for upcoming training.

Leader Development and Certification

A focused NCO leader development program designed to prepare squad leaders to validate competencies to be successful on the battlefield is important, but it should also be organized to train them to become sergeants first class. Changing the rating scheme demonstrates the responsibility of a commander and the 1SG to develop squad leaders.

The increased focus and discussions about performance and potential directly shape the ability to understand gaps in knowledge. It also identifies which junior leaders need additional opportunities to grow or display potential. Consider utilizing observer-controller-trainer augmentation to give staff sergeants additional repetitions to learn from other organizations. A commander can set training goals to upcoming training events to create opportunities to improve. Clear guidance and intent in mission orders develop confidence to build cohesive teams, create shared understanding, and exercise disciplined initiative in training battle drills or planning events.

Squad leader certification is generally tied to situational training and live-fire exercises, but a commander can miss opportunities to certify other parts of squad leader duties. While tactical employment is critical to unit success, it is not the only skill squad leaders will require and is not an effective predictor of success at the next level. Effective verbal and written communication should be part of certifying junior NCOs. Examples are receiving and issuing an operation order, writing awards, and conducting evaluations. While initially time consuming, the investment will pay off with less administrative corrections, concise mission orders, and increased understanding of the commander's intent. These positive results are great for the organization, but this training and certification are parts of leader development that junior NCOs are owed.

While a commander can use many methods to develop and certify squad leaders, the additional time the 1SG and commander spend with staff sergeants is one of the greatest sources of development. The shared insights and one-on-one discussions are incredible opportunities for junior NCOs and demonstrate the command's commitment to the people they lead. Only then can the commander understand who

has potential, who needs more opportunities, and who needs special attention.

Conclusion

After reviewing AR 623-3 and analyzing the counter points, commanders should consider changing their rating schemes to senior rate squad leaders. This change will effectively impact the organization at the squad level. As the squad leaders and the commander build relationships, these junior NCOs will develop increased trust to train their squads. Commanders will also be able to better shape and lead their company from the insights gained from junior leaders.

The most important effect of the rating change is the additional effort 1SGs and commanders spend preparing squad leaders for their ultimate job. The Army has been focused on the ability to "fight tonight," and we all realize we will go to war with the team we have and not the one we want. Chief of Staff of the Army GEN James McConville stated, "Without our people, we're just a bunch of combat equipment sitting in motor pools, hangars, and arms rooms... It's the people that are going to allow us to win on the battlefield. It's the people that are going to allow us to have readiness and modernization and reform, and that's what we're committed to as we move forward."⁴

By spending the time and energy to train people, commanders can successfully develop increased trust that directly improves their ability to win on the battlefield. A new rating scheme doesn't change the responsibilities of a commander, but it provides additional opportunities to focus on people first with an end state on winning.

Notes

¹ Army Regulation (AR) 623-3, *Evaluation Reporting System*, 14 June 2019, 8.

² *Ibid*, 2-2.

³ *Ibid*.

⁴ Michelle Tan, "Putting People First: McConville Looks to Revolutionize How Soldiers Serve," Association of the United States Army, 3 October 2019. Accessed from <https://www.ausa.org/articles/putting-people-first-mcconville-looks-revolutionize-how-soldiers-serve>.

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A Soldier engages targets during a squad live-fire range at Grafenwoehr Training Area, Germany.

Photo by SSG Bradford Alex



‘The Man in the Arena’

How Famous Quote Applies to Army Leadership

1SG AARON N. BAEZA

“It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.”

— Theodore Roosevelt¹

President Theodore Roosevelt is renowned for many motivational quotes. The quote above, known as “The Man in the Arena,” continues to resonate in relation to command climates within the Army. This quote can be applied to all levels of the Army and can positively impact the overall efficiency of the organization in many ways. First, when a leader is not in a “grassroots” leadership position, it is easy to get focused on too broad a picture and experience a “can’t see the trees for the forest” effect. Second, complementary to the first point, it is often difficult to recognize that leaders are “men in the arena” in their own right. Last, the ability to recognize that we are all in our own arena can further the development of Soldiers that “makes” the Army the organization it is. In a sense, having the ability to apply “The Man in the Arena” to subordinates, superiors, and to the Army as a whole can not only make or break a career but also the direction of the Army in general.

A common friction point between leaders and their subordinates is the perception of the leaders’ viewpoint noted in the quote, where the leader is the observer viewing the man in the arena: the subordinate. Subordinates are at risk of feeling as though their hard work — the “great enthusiasms, the great devotions” — are under-appreciated or insufficient based on critiques from leaders, specifically those further removed from training. The more distance up the chain of command a leader is, the further removed he/she inevitably is from the training. When leaders observe training for example, it is their duty to point out areas of improvement.² However, when “higher-ups” have the opportunity to observe training, they may be too far removed from the direct implementation of training to understand the reasoning behind certain training standard operating procedures. They then, as per their duties and responsibilities, provide feedback from their perspective. Their scope of mission, of course, comes from their superiors, and will be applied to the training they observe. Unless enough

effective communication is made a priority, there may be too much separation between lower-level efficiency of training and large-scale mission scope for individuals operating in either group to see eye to eye. The Roosevelt quote is a fantastic reminder to all leaders to not fall in the trap of “not being able to see the trees for the forest.” The issue with having too broad of perspective can cause subordinates to lose respect for leaders who may be perceived as being overly critical, which in turn puts unit morale at risk. Roosevelt reminds us to see the “man in the arena” — or the Soldiers — putting in the effort to contribute their best to the Army. After all, it is he who Roosevelt gives the credit to. Roosevelt’s words challenge us to see the hard work put in versus the insignificant stumbles or faults along the way. If subordinates feel their time or efforts are not being appreciated, they may become demoralized and unmotivated. It is leaders’ responsibility to give recognition to the hard work and dedication of subordinates, while also guiding them to refine training to accomplish the mission at hand more effectively.

On the opposite end, there are the perceived actions of the leader from the subordinates’ point of view. Often, subordinates may not understand why leaders do what they do because they lack the broader perspective of higher-ups’ mission or intent. Subordinates may view the actions of the leaders as illogical, and they may also feel as though leaders require unnecessary tasks. This can lead to leaders feeling as though their efforts, successes, or failures are for nothing. However, they too are attempting to fight their own fight. Leaders often “strive valiantly” to complete the mission or fulfill their leaders’ intent.³ It is a long-time Army tendency to request that subordinates act without asking questions. This leads to misguided impressions of leaders’ actions and requests, and subordinates may be prone to feeling as though a leader is wasting their time or not doing things efficiently. This is due to a lack of effective communication either from the subordinate,

who may have a better idea of how to accomplish a task, or from the leader, who may not have effectively explained why something needs to be done a certain way. The development of overly critical subordinates who fail to see leaders also as “men in the arena” can negatively impact unit morale and the overall efficiency of the organization. Subordinates may become discouraged by perceiving themselves as overly criticized and under-appreciated, so too can leaders. This has the same demoralizing effect on leaders as it does on subordinates; we are all human at the end of the day.

The ability to recognize that we are all in our own arenas can enhance Soldier development at all levels if an environment of effective communication and understanding can be fostered between leaders and subordinates. It is critical to apply the concept behind “The Man in the Arena” within the Army to increase motivation and buy-in to the organization. One of the most critical ways this can impact the Army is when considering the longevity of a Soldier and his/her desire to pursue a full career to retirement within the Army. Many Soldiers decide not to complete the full 20 years due to a lack of fulfillment. This often comes from poor communication, a sense of hyper-focus on faults, and insufficient recognition of one’s commitment during their time of service. Roosevelt’s quote can have immediate implications for both those who consider ending their time in service prior to retirement and everyone working with those considering separation. If Soldiers apply themselves with an understanding that they can directly impact the direction of the Army because they feel appreciated and their hard work is recognized, the organization as a whole could see an increase in both the

efficiency and longevity of Soldiers. This could allow for more advanced military training of Soldiers due to Soldiers staying in longer and receiving greater professional development. There will always be individuals who decide before they join that they intend to serve a full 20-plus years; these individuals also stand to benefit from being professionally and morally mindful of Roosevelt’s quote. Not only will they eventually be responsible for fostering a positive command climate, but they will also be responsible for the foundation of countless professional careers, both military and civilian. With that said, it is every Soldier’s duty to take individual responsibility in the type of environment he or she helps create and to ensure it is a professional, respectful, and disciplined one.

Whether an individual plans to make a career of the Army or use it as a stepping stone, the professional applications of the quote can contribute to the individual’s success as well as the success of an entire institution. Those who have served in the Army are often sought-after in the civilian world in part due to the concept that all Soldiers are leaders and professionals and are disciplined enough to act accordingly. “The Man in the Arena” forces one to look above and below within the chain of command to obtain a broader perspective on where to place focus. Not on small faults, but in true dedicated effort and relentless commitment. Be not overly critical of blunders and stumbles, but caution all “observers” on being critical of someone who is wholeheartedly applying themselves in the arena. This concept, when applied on a broad scale, could have drastic impacts on the entire command climate of a unit, organization, or institution.

Soldiers from 198th Infantry Brigade maneuver as an infantry rifle squad on 21 August 2020 on Fort Benning, GA.

Photo by Patrick A. Albright



Quotes live on long after those who spoke them are gone if they carry both a meaningful and applicable impression on those who hear them. “The Man in the Arena” is undoubtedly one such quote as it was delivered as part of a speech from Teddy Roosevelt more than 100 years ago on his travels through Europe. The speech, “Citizenship in a Republic,” was delivered in Paris in 1910, and while Roosevelt did not intend for it to be applied to the Army, it is both relevant and applicable to innumerable life situations. His words of wisdom resonate to this day if only one can find a means to apply his cautions and guidance. One significant take-away from the whole concept is to not allow the perspectives and opinions of others, in regards to your efforts, to impact your ability and willingness to “strive valiantly” and to “spend (yourself) a worthy cause.”⁴

Regardless of looking up or down the chain of command within the Army, one must make an effort to communicate thoroughly in order to be mindful of how criticisms are received, as well as ensure credit is given where credit is due for the values upon which our Army is built. This applies to the Soldier or leader in the “observer” role viewing the other as the “man in the arena”, as all people are subject to fall prey to perceiving themselves being observed by a critic as Roosevelt cautions against. A significant take-away from this quote lies within the realm of individual responsibility to not let your perception of others’ opinions impact your own motivation, determination, and buy-in to the organization. This caution only serves to strengthen the foundation of the Army and its core values. At the end of the day, each one of us sees himself/herself as “The Man in the Arena” striving with enthusiasm and devotion.

Notes

¹ Theodore Roosevelt, “Citizenship in a Republic” (speech, Paris, 23 April 1910).

² Army Doctrine Publication 7-0, *Training* (July 2019).

³ Roosevelt, “Citizenship in a Republic.”

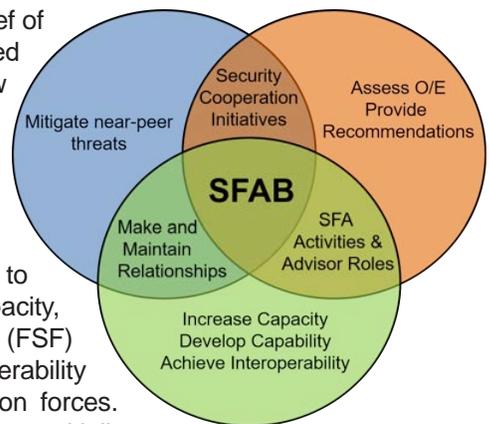
⁴ Ibid.

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The Value of the SFAB

SGM THOMAS I. THORNHILL JR.

In December 2016, the Chief of Staff of the Army announced the creation of a new formation known as security force assistance brigades (SFABs). SFABs are specifically manned, equipped, and trained to perform security forces assistance (SFA) activities to increase partner nation (PN) capacity, develop foreign security forces (FSF) capability, and achieve interoperability between FSF, U.S., and coalition forces.



Advisors within SFABs are combat multipliers for the U.S. Army who conduct SFA tasks of organizing, training, equipping, rebuilding/building, advising, and assessing (OTERA-A) FSF. Our investment in manning, equipping, and training the SFABs has been great. The value of the SFAB manifests in two ways:

(1) The SFAB’s ability to assess and influence operational environments (OE) throughout the conflict continuum while providing objective security cooperation recommendations to combatant commanders (CCDRs) in support of U.S. strategic interests; and

(2) Mitigating near-peer influence and transnational threats by increasing PN capacity, developing FSF capabilities, and achieving interoperability between FSF, U.S., and coalition forces.

Background

The 2018 National Security Strategy (NSS) identified a U.S. strategy centered on competition as the response to increasing threats from near-peer competitors globally. Furthermore, the 2018 NSS codified the mechanism to assist partners and allies to increase their capacity and capabilities and to achieve strategic partnerships. The SFAB advances American influence by building effective, long-lasting relationships and preserves peace through strength that is grounded in preserving shared national security interests. SFAB units (brigade, battalion, company, teams) exercise regional specialization capable of employment over large geographical areas simultaneously to cultivate strategic partnerships that provide tangible proof of U.S. commitment to regional stability and mitigate influence from potential adversaries.

Assessing the OE and Making Security Cooperation Recommendations

The National Defense Authorization Act of 2017 mandated the Department of Defense (DoD) take necessary steps to identify a “return on investment” regarding security cooperation programs. In response, DoD Instruction 5132.14, *Assessing, Monitoring, and Evaluating Security Cooperation Programs*, outlines the steps the DoD must take to ensure SC programs are effective. One function of the SFAB is to conduct environmental, institutional, operational, and organizational assessments of FSF from the tactical through strategic levels. These assessments provide the necessary data for an SFAB commander to make informed

security cooperation recommendations to the combatant command, joint force commander, and/or country team. By thoroughly understanding the OE and its effect on the FSF, SFAB commanders leverage the personal relationships built with their counterparts to influence their actions leading to improved conditions that may otherwise adversely affect both the FSF and advising teams.

Mitigating Influence: Increasing Capacity, Capability, and Interoperability

Deterring transnational threats is accomplished through security cooperation programs and initiatives. Joint Publication 3-20, *Security Cooperation*, states, “Through complementary efforts of the Joint force, other U.S. Government agencies, and assuring partners and allies, unity of effort will be the main driver of mitigating the effects of adversaries around the globe.” Advisors achieve unity of effort between FSF, U.S., joint, and coalition forces by negotiating access to joint enablers (support role) for FSF partners and acting as liaison (liaise role) from the tactical through strategic levels within FSF headquarters, coalition headquarters, and embassies. As part of a whole-of-government approach to stability, the advising team, alongside their FSF counterparts, maintains a persistent presence in regions deemed vital to U.S. interests while providing tangible reassurance of U.S. resolve. Improving PN capability and capacity while achieving interoperability increases FSF confidence and demonstrates that the U.S. is committed to regional security and stability.

Supporting Information

The Army has historically performed SFA by either tasking individuals to deploy in support of combatant commands (COCOMs) or by stripping the leadership structure out of already deployed brigade combat teams supporting regionally aligned missions. This practice has increased risk to the force by removing critical leaders from formations and consumed readiness by forcing those leaders to perform SFA instead of their combat functions. The SFAB specifically addresses these practices and will ultimately eliminate the need for CCDRs to rely on less capable forces to build FSF capability.

The SFAB is a low-cost, small-footprint, conventional option available to CCDRs. According to budget analysis conducted by the Security Forces Assistance Command (SFAC) G-8, the total annual cost to train an SFAB from individual training through collective training, culminating in a brigade-level Combat Training Center (CTC) deployment readiness exercise, is approximately \$9 million. According to the Joint Readiness Training Center staff, the cost estimate for a single infantry brigade combat team is about \$30 million to conduct its CTC rotation alone.

Because of their unique mission, advisors

are required to teach combined arms warfare at the graduate level. According to BG Curtis Taylor, 5th SFAB commander, NCOs and junior officers serving in an SFAB enjoy a three-year long leadership development program where they strengthen four vital competencies to become:

- a) Masters of the fundamentals of warfighting at the platoon/company level,
- b) Experts at small unit training management,
- c) Practitioners of decentralized mission command and intent-based orders, and
- d) Fluent in cross-cultural dialogue with partners and allies.

As these advisors return to lead tactical formations in the conventional force, each of these four skill sets provides a valuable return on investment to our combat formations without sacrificing readiness.

Summary

Our investment in the SFAB is worth it. These brigades provide unique support for our national strategic objectives by increasing FSF capacity, capability, and interoperability without degrading readiness which makes the SFAB invaluable to the Army, joint force, and combatant commanders. FORSCOM Commanding General GEN Michael X. Garrett recently said, “SFABs are the most agile force that we have in FORSCOM.” The SFAB is capable of meeting CCDR requests for SFA resources and will achieve more significant effects from the tactical through strategic levels by cultivating and reinforcing relationships, understanding and influencing the OE, and making objective SC recommendations critical to maintaining regional stability, mitigating influence, and deterring threats.

SGM Thomas I. Thornhill Jr. most recently served with the Army Capability Manager Security Force Assistance Brigade, Maneuver Capabilities Development and Integration Directorate, Fort Benning, GA.



Photo courtesy of MCDID

Advisors from 5th Security Force Assistance Brigade work with allied partners from the Indo-Pacific Command region at the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, LA.

To Rush or Not to Rush:

Are We Teaching IMT Incorrectly?

MAJ SETH T. VARAYON

The 3-5 second rush has been one of the three individual movement techniques (IMTs) taught to initial entry Soldiers since World War II. However, is this method still the most viable, survivable, relevant, and efficient method of IMT in the contemporary operating environment, especially in urban terrain?

While assigned as the operations officer for the Live-Fire Division at the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC), I observed 10 rotational units executing collective live-fire exercises (LFXs) at the company, battalion, and brigade level. Live-fire training is the culminating event of training for a unit at each echelon up to brigade level. During LFXs, units fire live ammunition at targets to simulate real combat. Anyone who has conducted a live fire at JRTC is familiar with Peason Ridge and Objective Grizzly, where LFXs are conducted. Objective Grizzly consists of three sub-objectives — Objectives Cougar, Bengals, and Bobcat. Objective Cougar is a battalion-sized objective with 26 buildings, Objective Bengals is designed for a platoon attack, and Objective Bobcat is designed for a company minus. On all three objectives, units must conduct combined arms breaches of mined and wired obstacles to access the village and destroy the enemy. Depending on how units approach the objective, they may need to negotiate up to 150 meters of terrain between the last covered or concealed position, the obstacle, and the nearest building. Live-fire observer-coach-trainers (OCTs) and I observed that units do not move through the breach onto the objective using the same IMT. Some units strictly adhered to the 3-5 second rush rule while others appeared to be less stringent, rushing up to eight seconds before getting back down into the prone, while other units just sprinted from point A to point B. Across all the units, the speed of Soldiers' movement varied. Why is there so much disparity between units?

If you ask Soldiers which is the fastest of the three IMTs, they will respond with the 3-5 second rush. Ask them why we rush for 3-5 seconds, and the answers will vary. Historical references, such as Field Manual (FM) 7-5, *Organization and Tactics of Infantry: The Rifle Battalion*, mention the rush or squad rush.¹ Written during World War II, this publication represented the emergence of new tactics to counter advances

in enemy doctrine and weapon technology.

Referring to FM 7-5, Dr. Earl J. Catagnus Jr., an assistant professor of history and security studies at Valley Forge Military College, argued that “this field manual prescribed tactics, techniques, and procedures similar to those of the vaunted German army.”² Regardless of when the rush tactic or the 3-5 second time frame became the prevailing paradigm, there is little scientific evidence showing this method as being the most effective means of movement when the tactical situation requires it.

Discussion

This article questions the validity of the 3-5 second rush and recommends solutions to determine the optimal method for crossing open areas under fire or when time is critical, asking:

1. Is the 3-5 second rush the most effective method of quickly covering large distances under fire?
2. Is there research, experience, or historical evidence that supports the affirmative?
3. How can the U.S. Army determine the most effective IMT method?

I could not find any documentation of any research or experiments that corroborated why the Army teaches 3-5 second rushes. I contacted the chief of the Infantry Brigade Combat Team Doctrine Branch, Maneuver Center of Excellence (MCOE); the U.S. Army Center for Initial Military Training, the U.S. Army Infantry branch historian; Dr. Catagnus; the U.S. Marine Corps Historical Reference Branch's History Division; and conducted research with support from research librarians



at the Ike Skelton Combined Arms Research Library at Fort Leavenworth, KS. The closest reference for why 3-5 seconds is preferred can be found in Training Circular (TC) 3-21.75, *The Warrior Ethos and Soldier Combat Skills*:

“The rush is the fastest way to move from one position to another... Each rush should last from 3 to 5 seconds. Rushes are kept short to prevent enemy machine gunners or riflemen from tracking you. However, do not stop and hit the ground in the open just because 5 seconds have passed. Always try to hit the ground behind some cover. Before moving, pick out your next covered and concealed position and the best route to it.”³

What should a Soldier do if there is no cover available between their current position and their intermediate objective, but they recognize that it would take longer than five seconds to traverse the entire distance?

INFANTRY Magazine’s April-July 2016 issue featured an article by MAJ Nick Barringer and Martin Rooney that focused specifically on the 3-5 second rush. While the article — titled “The Rush: How Speed Can Save Lives” — focused on the 3-5 second rush, it also advocated for lower body strength training to increase Soldier speed while conducting 3-5 second rushes. MAJ Barringer and Rooney assert loose connections between the 3-5 second time frame to historical doctrinal references for past physical fitness requirements but do not clearly define the reasoning behind the significance of the

3-5 seconds. The article highlights the historical significance of the rush dating back to 1940 and attributed the origin of the rush to German storm trooper tactics from World War I. They referenced that the mean engagement time is actually three seconds or less while focusing on the optimal distance covered.⁴ A criticism of the article is the explanation of how the authors determined the optimal speed during a sprint. They briefly mentioned consulting marksmanship experts to determine the speed. They based their scoring system on the “assumption that a target moving at 15 miles per hour or 6.7 meters per second would be extremely difficult to accurately engage,” but they failed to address the variables of shooter skill, angle, distance from shooter to target, or a tangible definition of extremely difficult.⁵ This is a serious oversight because the basis of the authors’ scoring system is subjective.

Recommendation

Because of the lack of tangible evidence and the importance of the IMT subject, the Army must consider the following courses of action to address the issue.

Course of Action (COA) 1 (Experiment): The Army can conduct a study, research, and experimentation to test and rate IMTs using Soldiers of varying fitness levels carrying various combat loads. Subjects must traverse varying types of terrain with enemy riflemen and machine gunners

A fire team with the 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, assaults an objective at the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, LA, on 27 October 2020.

Photo by SGT Thomas Calvert



of varying skill level firing from different angles, elevations, and fighting positions. Researchers could use non-lethal training ammunition or laser and sensor systems (such as the Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement System [MILES]) to conduct this experiment.

COA 2 (Simulation): The Army can conduct computer simulations to test and rate IMTs using Soldiers of varying fitness levels carrying different combat loads. Subjects traverse several types of terrain with enemy riflemen and machine gunners of varying skill level firing from different angles, elevations, and fighting positions.

I propose comparing the COAs against the below criteria:

Suitable: The solution directly addresses survivability in various tactical situations using a 3-5 second rush compared to other IMT options such as longer rushes or indefinite sprints until arriving at the intended cover, concealment, or intermediate objective.

Feasible: The solution can be conducted with Army funds, assets, or minimal additional funding if outside entities are required.

Acceptable: The solution can define the parameters of the study as well as address basic tactical variables such as distance covered, slope, covering fire, enemy location, skill, weapon system, speed of individual mover, load carried by an individual, and concealment available such as smoke or darkness.

Distinguishable: The solution is a deliberate effort to answer the research question regarding the 3-5 second rush.

Complete: The solution can confirm or deny the 3-5 second rush as the best method of IMT for covering larger distances with little to no cover or concealment. If the solution determines a more effective method of timing for the rush, then it also reveals the optimal method or the conditions which support optimal or different speeds/timings of rushes or sprints.

After screening against the criteria, the advantages of COA 1 are that it traditionally addresses the issue and will find alternate solutions or affirmations regarding the IMT. It can be conducted by any unit, organization, or outside agency. The disadvantages of COA 1 are that it is the most time and resource-intensive and it may require doctrine updates depending on the results. The advantages of COA 2 are that it does not require Soldiers, facilities, research area or space, and coordination to conduct. The disadvantages are that it may not be able to replicate conditions and other variables such as Soldier skill, speed, and physical fitness.

Conclusion

The Army currently teaches the 3-5 second rush as the fastest of the three IMTs. TC 3-21.75 clearly states that 3-5 seconds is a guide to help Soldiers minimize their exposure to enemy combatants.⁶ This method has been in Army publications since 1940. No one has researched or experimented to confirm that the 3-5 second rush is the most

effective way for Soldiers to move across large open areas. Therefore to remain relevant in contemporary operating environments, Soldiers and leaders must know why they teach and direct their Soldiers to conduct certain IMTs. Research into this subject is low cost, requires minimal resources, and can cover a wide range of scenarios for tactical movement. Could sprinting directly from point A to point B given adequate and sustained supporting fire be a more effective method for Soldiers to move tactically with the added benefit of quicker maneuver time and conserved energy available to conduct the rest of the operation? I submit this argument because Soldiers conducting 3-5 second rushes take more time to get down in the prone, rise to continue their next rush, and ultimately expend more energy stopping and starting their sprint each rush. Experimentation and simulation will provide answers.

Given the relatively small scale of being able to conduct actual research in support of COA 1, COA 2 bears a slight advantage with substantially fewer resources required. While COA 2 does not require units, personnel, research space, or facilities (beyond that of the simulation center and personnel working there), COA 2 is less time-constrained. COA 2 can run more simulations and change parameters with relative ease compared to COA 1. COA 1 and COA 2 can be conducted independently of each other; sequentially or simultaneously. I recommend a hybrid course of action where COA 1 is conducted initially to further develop parameters and scenarios which will guide research in COA 2. Upon completion of the study, if data indicates more effective methods compared to 3-5 second rushes, the Army must adjust doctrine and IET curriculum. If not, current Army doctrine remains unchanged but validated with data to support the training methodology.

Notes

¹ Field Manual (FM) 7-5, *Organization and Tactics of Infantry: The Rifle Battalion*, 1940, retrieved from <https://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p4013coll9/id/741/>.

² Earl J. Catagnus Jr., "Infantry Field Manual 7-5 Organization and Tactics of Infantry: The Rifle Battalion," *Journal of Military History* 77(2) (April 2013): 657-666.

³ Training Circular (TC) 3-21.75, *The Warrior Ethos and Soldier Combat Skills*, 7-2. Accessed from https://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/DR_pubs/DR_a/pdf/web/tc3_21x75.pdf.

⁴ MAJ Nick Barringer and Martin Rooney, "The Rush: How Speed Can Save Lives," *INFANTRY Magazine*, 105(2) (April-July 2016): 9-12. Accessed from [https://www.benning.army.mil/infantry/magazine/issues/2016/APR-JUL/pdf/4\)%20Barringer_Rush.pdf](https://www.benning.army.mil/infantry/magazine/issues/2016/APR-JUL/pdf/4)%20Barringer_Rush.pdf).

⁵ Ibid, 10.

⁶ TC 3-21.75.

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Down Is Not Always Out:

An Infantry Leader's Guide to Persons Hors De Combat Under the Law of War

MAJ MATT D. MONTAZZOLI

"After I fired the first two shots, the man sat up 12 meters directly in front of me, swinging a machine gun in our direction. I released four more rounds, sending them into his chest. McCauley opened up just after me, firing his pistol, while Tayo simultaneously shot the man in the thigh. At that point, the man either fell back into his hole or ducked down into his position. We couldn't be sure, so we kept firing to keep his head down. I wasn't taking any chances.

It wasn't but a few seconds before Ray came tearing in from the right ... 'Cease Fire!' Ray yelled, and as I did, I also grabbed McCauley's pistol to make sure he did the same. Ray briefly halted, aimed, and fired three shots from his carbine. Then he yelled, 'Clear!'"¹

The situation above illustrates a "gray area" inherent in modern combat operations. By pausing, aiming at, and engaging a downed enemy, were the Soldiers conducting a lawful attack or committing a war crime?² Were their actions in accordance with Army training, and how can leaders ensure their Soldiers have the confidence to operate in accordance with the law of war while maintaining lethality?³ (Note: I do not intend to cast aspersions or second-guess the actions of these Soldiers, but merely employ this situation to illustrate the potential complexity and ambiguity inherent in combat. See end notes for more information.) The goal of this article is to equip infantry leaders with the knowledge required to train their Soldiers to make confident, split-second decisions in combat. While this article is not a substitute for legal advice from a unit's servicing judge advocate, it will provide basic information, dispel common myths, and serve as a starting point for leaders who want to improve training for their unit or conduct deeper research.⁴

The American military complies with the law of war during all armed conflicts and carries out all military operations consistent with the law of war's fundamental principles and rules, which include the principles of military necessity, humanity, distinction, proportionality, and honor.⁵ The law of war principle of distinction, sometimes called discrimination, requires Soldiers to distinguish lawful targets from persons protected from attack.⁶ Unless theater policy or rules of engagement (ROE) require it, under the law of war Soldiers do not need to wait for an enemy to exhibit hostile intent or commit a hostile act when conducting status-based targeting — they may attack and kill enemy troops on sight.⁷ Enemy

troops are lawful targets because of their status as members of an armed force or organized armed group and may be attacked unless their status changes to grant them protection.⁸ Persons receiving protection include civilians but also include enemies classified as *hors de combat*. *Hors de combat* is the French term used in international treaties to mean an enemy who is out of the fight due to wounds, surrender, or capture.⁹ Persons who are out of combat are protected from further attack, even if they are a member of enemy armed forces.¹⁰ In addition to distinction, the principles of military necessity and humanity also prohibit engaging enemies who are out of the fight, as attacking them serves no valid military purpose and their suffering would therefore be unnecessary.¹¹

Army doctrine specifically identifies "wounded personnel who are out of combat" as no longer being lawful targets, and Soldiers are trained not to engage enemies once those enemies are out of the fight.¹² This requirement applies throughout the range of military operations including large-scale combat operations and stability operations, and it may not be rescinded by policy or ROE because it is an obligation imposed by the law of war.¹³ It applies to *all* enemies, from uniformed enemy soldiers to terrorist fighters.¹⁴ However, not *all* wounded personnel are *automatically* out of combat.¹⁵

An enemy who is out of the fight is protected and cannot be attacked or reengaged, but whether an enemy is out of the fight is not always immediately obvious. An enemy who is wounded is not automatically out of the fight. Wounded combatants can continue to fight, and the tactic of "playing dead" is common in the current operating environment.¹⁶⁻¹⁷ There are three factors that are required for an enemy to be considered out of combat due to wounds:

- 1) He must be wounded;
- 2) The wound must make him incapable of defending himself; and
- 3) He must abstain from any hostile act and may not attempt to escape.¹⁸

As a general rule, once a Soldier is reasonably certain that an enemy is a lawful target, that person remains a lawful target until the Soldier is convinced the enemy is out of the fight.¹⁹ The applicable standard for determining whether an enemy is out of the fight is "common sense and good faith."²⁰ Lying still on the ground is insufficient to determine that a target has fallen out of the fight, especially if an individual's hands are not visible or there is reason to believe he may

be wearing a suicide vest. Also, the mere appearance of visible wounds is probably not enough, unless the nature of those wounds makes it clear the person is unable to defend himself or continue to fight. Clear indicators an enemy is out of combat include decapitation or an amount of pooling blood that makes it plain and obvious the enemy's wounds were mortal. If a Soldier is not convinced an enemy is out of the fight, that enemy continues to be a lawful target and can be attacked; however, the practice of automatic, *indiscriminate* attacks on downed enemies to include a technique or standard procedure of firing "security rounds," "double-taps," or "death checks" would be unlawful. Soldiers can employ controlled pair techniques so long as they discriminate and only engage individual targets after they make a good faith determination that those specific targets remain in the fight."²¹

Units must review and train standard operating procedures or techniques to ensure they do not train Soldiers to engage all downed enemy as they clear an objective, including those who are obviously out of combat.²² A unit risks unlawful engagements if techniques are applied indiscriminately to all downed enemy without regard to the specific circumstances. Soldiers may lawfully engage targets if they are not convinced the targets are out of the fight, but they should be trained not to attack individuals they believe are out of the fight with indiscriminate "death checks," to include individuals who are obviously dead.²³ If the circumstances cause a Soldier to be reasonably certain an individual is an enemy but the Soldier is not reasonably convinced that enemy is out of the fight, that enemy remains a lawful target.²⁴

Context is important, but there is no military necessity exception to the prohibition on deliberately targeting enemies out of the fight. The possibility of a theoretical, general threat is insufficient — Soldiers must have a good faith belief that each specific enemy may not be out of the fight to engage that specific enemy.²⁵ There is no requirement to provide an enemy with the opportunity to surrender before attacking him, but if viable surrender is offered it must be accepted.²⁶ Soldiers must understand that the presence of an enemy out of the fight does not furnish a "protective bubble" or "human shield" for other enemy who remain in the fight. Soldiers can engage the remaining enemy so long as their target is not the individual who is out of the fight, and so long as they take feasible precautions to avoid attacking the enemy who is out of combat.²⁷ Feasible precautions does not mean weapon effects are not permitted to impact the enemy out of the fight, just that the enemy who is out of the fight may not be targeted for *direct attack* and that the attacker must use practicable precautions to avoid effects on him.²⁸ For example, if Soldiers attacking an enemy bunker shoot an enemy who falls inside the bunker and the Soldiers are convinced that particular enemy fighter is out of combat, but other enemy fighters continue to engage the Soldiers from the same bunker, the Soldiers could employ direct fire, fragmentation grenades, a recoilless rifle, or close air support to silence the bunker, as the target of their attack is the enemy fighters who remain in the fight. Soldiers should take feasible precautions to reduce effects on the individual

Paratroopers assigned to the 173rd Airborne Brigade approach fallen enemy role players during a simulated ambush scenario at Dandolo Range in Pordenone, Italy, on 18 January 2018.

Photo by Davide Dalla Massara



who is out of combat, but his presence does not prevent them from winning the fight and he is not considered a civilian for proportionality purposes.²⁹

Units should avoid standard operating procedures or techniques that tie the authority to reengage the enemy to a location on the objective or other administrative control measure. The calling of a “cease fire” or reaching a limit of advance (LOA) is not legally significant. A LOA is a control measure used to control the forward progress of an attack.³⁰ For dismounted formations, the LOA can be a designated linear terrain feature such as a road, but for small units it is frequently an imaginary line located one bounding movement past the last enemy position.³¹ A LOA is generally employed in attacks such as ambushes. During an ambush, “an assault is launched into the kill zone with heavy fire and violence to complete destruction” of the enemy.³² Typically, an assault element will clear through the kill zone to the LOA before establishing local security and conducting actions on the objective, such as searching enemy corpses.³³ The assault element will be prepared to move across the kill zone using individual movement techniques if there is return fire once they begin to search, but otherwise move by bounding fire teams, and should meter their violence of action to ensure dominance but avoid overkill.³⁴ If an assault force is clearing through an objective and observes an enemy lying on the ground, without wounds that are clearly mortal and with a weapon in reach, the members of the assault force could make a good faith determination that he remained a lawful target and could engage him to ensure he was killed or rendered out of combat, including the use of a controlled pair or other appropriate use of force. Regardless of the movement technique employed, Soldiers must employ individual target discrimination to determine whether downed enemy remain lawful targets but must avoid engaging those who are out of the fight.

Techniques that tie engagement decisions to proximity to the LOA or that falsely suggest all engagements are lawful so long as the shooter has not assaulted past the enemy’s location are counterproductive, as the enemy’s location in relation to the LOA and whether the assault element has moved past the enemy are not legally significant. The key is making informed, individual decisions about whether or not an enemy is out of the battle. Incorporating vignettes and scenarios into training are best practices for inculcating the muscle memory and confidence necessary to make rapid, lawful decisions in combat.

Another training technique is to involve the unit’s servicing judge advocate or paralegal in conducting mock investigations into *hors de combat* incidents as part of planned training vignettes or incidents that develop organically during training.³⁵ Many commanders recoil from incorporating investigations into training in this manner, lamenting that the military is already over-lawyered and tends to investigate unnecessarily.³⁶ However, all U.S. personnel are required to report alleged law of war violations, and commanders are required to conduct an appropriate

The key is making informed, individual decisions about whether or not an enemy is out of the battle. Incorporating vignettes and scenarios into training are best practices for inculcating the muscle memory and confidence necessary to make rapid, lawful decisions in combat.

investigation or inquiry into credible allegations of war crimes.³⁷ Incorporating investigations as training injects has the benefit of de-mystifying the investigative process for Soldiers, as well as providing training for the legal team and potential investigating officers from the unit. The conduct of war crimes investigations is incorporated as a “best practice” at the Army’s Combat Training Centers.³⁸ Soldiers will gain an understanding of the investigative process, and their faith that they will be treated professionally and fairly will increase. In particular, Soldiers will learn that investigations are designed to protect them and the institution.³⁹

Under the so-called Rendulic Rule, the standard for a war crimes investigation is whether actions were reasonable under the conditions as they appeared at the time, taking into account the split-second nature of decisions and the imperfect information available during combat.⁴⁰ Under international law, the standard for determining whether a target is out of the fight is whether, given the information available to the attacker in the moment, the target “should be recognized by a reasonable [person] as being *hors de combat*.”⁴¹ Soldiers will not be held criminally responsible for “a mere error in judgment.”⁴²

In a future characterized by compressed decision cycles and reaction times, it is critical that Soldiers maintain the confidence and legal maneuver space to operate in accordance with the law of war while maximizing lethality.⁴³

Author’s Note

The views expressed in this article do not constitute legal advice, nor do they reflect the views of the Department of Defense, although I have attempted to harmonize the article with existing DoD policy. Wherever possible, hyperlinks to digital resources are provided to assist leaders in conducting research and preparing training, although the pagination of the electronic resources will not always match the article’s pinpoint citations.

Notes

¹ Andrew Exum, *This Man’s Army: A Soldier’s Story from the Front Lines of the War on Terrorism* (NY: Gotham Books, 2004), 169-170.

² I do not intend to cast aspersions or second-guess the actions of these Soldiers, but merely to employ this situation to illustrate the potential complexity and ambiguity inherent in combat. The author believes this was a lawful re-engagement, and a contemporaneous command investigation appears to have reached the same conclusion. See Exum, *This Man’s Army*, 197-199.

³ For a deeper discussion of the effectiveness (or not) of the Army's Law of War training regime, see Chris Jenks, "The Efficacy of the U.S. Army's Law of War Training Programs," *Articles of War*, 14 October 2020, <https://lieber.westpoint.edu/efficacy-u-s-armys-law-of-war-training-program/>.

⁴ Leaders should consult with their servicing operational law attorney, especially when conducting multinational operations. Many nations have differing interpretations of international law, and U.S. forces need to be aware of and account for such differences during planning for training and operations. See U.S. Department of Defense [DoD], Joint Publication 3-16, *Multinational Operations*, 1 March 2019, chap. III, para. 5.

⁵ DoD Directive 2311.01, *DoD Law of War Program*, 2 July 2020, para. 1.2a, <https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/dodd/231101p.pdf>. This article primarily uses DoD's preferred term "law of war" to refer to the treaties and customary international law binding on the United States that regulate: the resort to armed force; the conduct of hostilities and the protection of war victims in international and non-international armed conflict; belligerent occupation; and the relationships between belligerent, neutral, and non-belligerent States. The law of war is sometimes called the law of armed conflict, the law of land warfare, or international humanitarian law.

⁶ DoD, *Law of War Manual*, December 2016, <https://www.defense.gov/Newsroom/Publications/>, select "filter," select "keywords," enter "law of war manual," para. 2.5; see also U.S. Army, the Judge Advocate General's Corps Legal Center and School, National Security Law Department, *Operational Law Handbook*, 2020, <https://tjagclspublic.army.mil/tjagclsp-publications>, select "deskbooks and handbooks," select "national security law," select "Operational Law Handbook 2020," chap. 3, para. V.B.

⁷ Remarks by LTG Charles N. Pede, the Judge Advocate General, at Duke University Center for Law and Ethics in National Security, 25th National Security Law Conference, 7 March 2020, <https://sites.duke.edu/lawfire/2020/03/07/ltg-pede-on-the-coin-ct-hangover-roe-war-sustaining-targets-and-much-more/>. There are nuances between status-based targeting and conduct-based targeting which are beyond the scope of this article, to include the fact that classifying "enemy" may turn on their membership in an organized armed group or the degree of their direct participation in hostilities, both of which are separate and legally complicated tests applied above the level of close combat. See E. Corrie Westbrook Mack & Shane Reeves, "Tethering the Law of Armed Conflict to Operational Practice: 'Organized Armed Group' Membership in the Age of ISIS," *Berkeley Journal of International Law*, Vol. 36, 3 November 2018, https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3315725.

⁸ Geoffrey Corn, Ken Watkin, and Jamie Williamson, *The Law in War A Concise Overview* (NY: Routledge, 2018), 88-89 ("...the law permits the use of highly lethal combat power against all members of the enemy armed group, but that authority terminates once an individual member of that group is rendered *hors de combat* by wounds..." (italics in original)).

⁹ DoD, *Law of War Manual*, para. 5.9.1. This article employs and interchanges the terms "out of the fight" and "out of combat" in place of the French term of art *hors de combat*.

¹⁰ Hague Convention (IV) Respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land, October 18, 1907, <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/us-treaties/bevans/must000001-0631.pdf>, Article 23(c) ("...it is especially forbidden ... [t]o kill or wound an enemy ... having no longer means of defence...").

¹¹ Field Manual (FM) 6-27, *The Commander's Handbook on the Law of Land Warfare*, August 2019, para. 1-29 ("...if an enemy has been incapacitated (rendered *hors de combat*) by being severely wounded or captured, no military purpose is served by continuing to attack that incapacitated enemy.").

¹² Army Techniques Publication (ATP) 3-21.8, *Infantry Platoon and Squad*, April 2016, para. 1-30.

¹³ Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the Field, 12 August 1949, 75 UNTS 311949, <https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/UNTS/Volume%2075/volume-75-I-970-English.pdf>, art. 3(1).

¹⁴ FM 6-27, para. 1-70 ("...unprivileged belligerents who are *hors de combat* may not be made the object of attack and must be treated humanely.").

¹⁵ Even the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC), an international organization that frequently takes positions on issues of international law distinct from those of the United States, finds uncontroversial the notion that wounded and *hors de combat* are not the same. See ICRC, *Commentary on the First Geneva Convention: Convention (I) for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces*

in the Field, 2nd edition, 2016, <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/ihl/full/GCI-commentary>, para. 1344 (acknowledging that individuals can be "wounded or sick, whether severely or not, but who are not (yet) incapacitated by their medical condition.").

¹⁶ See U.S. Army, Official Citation SSG Clinton L. Romesha Medal of Honor Operation Enduring Freedom, <https://www.army.mil/medalofhonor/romesha/citation.html> ("Undeterred by his injuries, Staff Sergeant Romesha continued to fight..."); see also U.S. Army, Official Citation SFC Leroy A. Petry Medal of Honor Operation Enduring Freedom <https://www.army.mil/medalofhonor/petry/citation.html> ("...wounded in both legs, Staff Sergeant Petry led the other Ranger to cover Despite the severity of his wounds, Staff Sergeant Petry continued to maintain [his] presence of mind...").

¹⁷ Alex Chadwick, "No Court-Martial for Marine Taped Killing Unarmed Iraqi," *National Public Radio*, 10 May 2005, <https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4646406>; Jerry Meyer and Carter Malkasian, *Insurgent Tactics in Southern Afghanistan 2005-2008* (Arlington: CNA Strategic Studies, 2009) ("In Farah province in 2007, a large group of insurgents played dead and held their fire after airstrikes, and then opened fire..."). Of note, pretending to be *hors de combat* to launch an attack constitutes the war crime of perfidy.

¹⁸ *Law of War Manual*, para. 5.9.4; see Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts, 8 June 1977, <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/ihl/INTRO/470>, select "Art. 41," Art.41(2). This article is focused on persons *hors de combat* due to wounds, but individuals can also come out of the fight due to surrender or capture. See *Law of War Manual*, paras. 5.9.2-5.9.3.

¹⁹ International law tends to speak in terms of "good faith," but I have chosen to use the more familiar construct of reasonable certainty — the concepts are co-extensive.

²⁰ ICRC, *Commentary on the First Geneva Convention*, para. 1347.

²¹ Matthew Milikowsky, "There are No Enemies after Victory: The Laws Against Killing the Wounded," *Georgetown Journal of International Law*, Vol. 47, 1221 (Summer 2016), available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2745222>.

²² David B. Mercer, answer to "Is it a war crime to shoot dead enemy soldiers to verify they're dead?," 20 March 2017, <https://www.quora.com/Is-it-a-war-crime-to-shoot-dead-enemy-soldiers-to-verify-theyre-dead> ("If you have no friendly troops in front of you, then you are the forward line of battle, and anyone in front of you, even if lying down appearing dead, we were instructed to double-tap (shoot twice) in the head before we passed them. Once we passed them, they are to be considered EPWs (enemy prisoners of war) if they are still alive, and we don't want to have to deal with them."). This internet site contains numerous opinions on the question presented, many of them wrong, several of them advocating war crimes, and none of them a substitute for advice from a competent operational lawyer.

²³ A dead person is not *hors de combat*, he is dead. That said, corpses are entitled to respect and protection from being despoiled. See Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick, Art. 18.

²⁴ ICRC, *Commentary on the Additional Protocols of 8 June 1977 to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949*, Eds. Yves Sandoz et al. (Geneva: ICRC, 1987), 491 ("...the prohibition extended only to attacks directed against persons who were, in fact, recognized to be *hors de combat* and those who, under the circumstances, should have been recognized by a reasonable man as *hors de combat*.").

²⁵ *Blackman v. Regina*, 2014 EWCA Crim 1029 (22 May 2014) (affirmed as manslaughter by 2017 EWCA Crim 190 [15 March 2017]), <https://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWCA/Crim/2014/1029.html> ("We cannot accept the submission, in connection with the circumstances of the shooting, that the fact that the patrol was under threat from others has any real bearing on the finding of the Court Martial that there was no threat from the wounded Afghan insurgent. We accept, of course, that the patrol was certainly at risk from other insurgents and that if the Afghan insurgent had attempted to shoot or in any way injure the appellant or those under his command, he would have been lawfully entitled under the rules of engagement to return the fire with equal force. However, that was not the position. It is evident from the findings of the Court Martial and from the video that there was no threat from the wounded Afghan insurgent. He was plainly very seriously injured and had been disarmed. True it may be that there may have been other insurgents in the vicinity, but that played no causative effect in the appellant's decision to fire at the wounded insurgent and kill him.").

²⁶ *Law of War Manual*, para. 2.2.3.1.

²⁷ *Ibid*, para. 5.10.2.

²⁸ See Scott R. Adams, “Lancelot in the Sky: Protecting Wounded Combatants from Incidental Harm,” *Harvard Law School National Security Journal*, 8 August 2017, <https://harvardnsj.org/2017/08/lancelot-in-the-sky-protecting-wounded-combatants-from-incident-harm/> (“The *hors de combat* concept, rather than converting a combatant to a civilian or noncombatant, is a situation-specific standard where an enemy combatant is protected by the law from direct attack.”).

²⁹ *Law of War Manual*, para. 17.14.1.2 (“Persons who are part of armed forces or groups, however, are deemed to have accepted the risk of harm due to deliberate proximity to military objectives. Although the presence of such persons does not serve to exempt nearby military objectives from attack due to the risk that such persons would be incidentally harmed, feasible precautions to reduce the risk of harm to such persons ... must be taken.”). As discussed in note 5, some U.S. interpretations of international law are not universal, and this is a good example of an issue where multinational partners may differ in opinion and practice. See Commonwealth of Australia, Australian Defence Forces, Australian Defence Doctrine Publication 06.4 *Law of Armed Conflict* (Canberra: Australian Defence Headquarters, May 11, 2008), para. 7.8 (“Soldiers who are ‘out of combat’ and civilians are to be treated in the same manner and cannot be made the object of attack.”). The United States agrees that neither civilians nor persons *hors de combat* may be targets of direct attacks but treats civilians and persons *hors de combat* differently for proportionality purposes.

³⁰ FM 1-02.2, *Military Symbols*, 10 November 2020, Table 5-9.

³¹ FM 3-90.1, *Offense and Defense*, Volume 1, 22 March 2013, para. A-80.

³² Marine Corps Tactics Publication 3-01A, *Scouting and Patrolling*, 24 July 2020, para. 3-9.

³³ ATP 3-21.8, para. 6-133.

³⁴ *Ibid*, para. 6-156.

³⁵ See Jenks, “The Efficacy of the U.S. Army’s Law of War Training Programs.”

³⁶ See generally Arthur L. Rizer, “Lawyering Wars: Failing Leadership, Risk Aversion, and Lawyer Creep Should We Expect More Lone Survivors?,” *Indiana Law Journal* Vol. 90, Iss. 3 (2015), <https://www.repository.law.indiana.edu/ilj/vol90/iss3/1>; see also William G. Hyland Jr., “Law v. National Security: When Lawyers Make Terrorism Policy,” *Richmond Journal of Global Law & Business*: Vol. 7, Iss. 3 (2008), <https://scholarship.richmond.edu/global/vol7/iss3/2/>.

³⁷ DoD, Directive 2111.01, para. 4.2a(2).

³⁸ Telephone conversation with Legal observer-controller-trainer, Joint Readiness Training Center, 24 November 2020.

³⁹ Dan Mahanty, “In Search of Answers: U.S. Military Investigations and Civilian Harm,” *War on the Rocks*, February 20, 2020, <https://warontherocks.com/2020/02/in-search-of-answers-u-s-military-investigations-and-civilian-harm/> (“For military commanders, an investigation can help to ensure unit and soldier discipline, and provide operational or tactical insights to prevent such incidents from recurring. Several military sources of guidance also emphasized the value of investigations in exonerating involved servicemembers of wrongdoing.”).

⁴⁰ *United States v. List, et al.*, (The Hostage Case), 11 Trials of War Criminals Before the Nuernberg Military Tribunals Under Control Council Law No. 10, Nuernberg, Oct. 1946–Nov. 1949, at 1297, https://www.loc.gov/frd/Military_Law/pdf/Law-Reports_Vol-8.pdf.

⁴¹ ICRC, Commentary on the Additional Protocols of 8 June 1977 to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, Eds. Yves Sandoz et. al. (Geneva: ICRC, 1987), 491.

⁴² U.S. Army Office of the Judge Advocate General, *Law of War Compliance Administrative Investigations and Criminal Law Supplement* (Charlottesville, VA: The Judge Advocate General’s Legal Center and School, 10 September 2018), para. 6a (citations omitted).

⁴³ The Army Strategy (2018), para. II, https://www.army.mil/e2/downloads/rv7/the_army_strategy_2018.pdf.

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Building a Unit Combatives Program

MAJ ROBERT M. SQUIER

In June of 1744, the College of William and Mary invited the Native Americans of the Six Nations to send 12 of their young men to their institution to receive a civilized education. The offer was intended to bridge the gap between the Europeans and the Native Americans in hope of assimilating the tribes into the growing colonial population. The following is the reply received from the chiefs of the Six Nations:

Sirs,

We know that you highly esteem the kind of learning taught in Colleges, and that the maintenance of our young Men, while with you, would be very expensive to you. We are convinc'd, therefore, that you mean to do us good by your proposal; and we thank you heartily. But you, who are wise, must know that different nations have different conceptions of things; and you will therefore not take it amiss, if our ideas of this kind of education happen not to be the same with yours. We have had some experience of it. Several of our young people were formerly brought up at the College of the Northern Provinces; they were instructed in all your sciences; but, when they came back to us, they were bad runners, ignorant of every means of living in the woods, unable to bear either cold or hunger; knew neither how to build a cabin or take a deer; or kill an enemy, spoke our language imperfectly, were therefore neither fit for hunters, warriors, nor counsellors; they were totally good for nothing. We are, however, not the less oblig'd by your kind offer; tho' we decline accepting it; and, to show our grateful sense of it, if the Gentlemen of Virginia will send us a dozen of their sons, we will take care of their education, instruct them in all we know, and make men of them.¹

The tribal leaders knew that training methods influence training outcomes. The life skills that their warrior culture demanded could

Soldiers engage in a double ankle lock during the Fort Bragg Combatives Tournament on 29 August 2019.

Photo by SGT Brian Micheliche

not be instilled through academics; the young braves had to experience challenges, endure hardship, and overcome obstacles. The old chiefs knew that warriors are not built in a classroom. Today, that reality is unchanged. As we pursue lethality and readiness as a force, we must remember that these characteristics begin with an individual who internalizes the Warrior Ethos and commits to developing a skill set and a mindset that is combat ready.

The Army Vision Statement lays out an impressive image of a force that is modernized, integrated, and agile; however, the phrase that most caught my attention was that this effort is “centered on exceptional leaders and Soldiers of unmatched lethality.”² Lethality is improved in two ways: better training or better tools. Too often we gravitate towards spending money on technological tools rather improving our training. As an example, the 2019 Army Modernization Strategy projects spending more than \$6 billion just on the “Soldier Lethality” modernization priority over the next five years.³ However, I believe that our first and most important step in developing “Soldiers of unmatched lethality” is to begin by training the warrior mindset. Training Circular (TC) 3-25.150, *Combatives*, states that “the defining characteristic of a warrior is the willingness to close with the enemy.”⁴ The willingness to assault through the breach, go through the



door, or push through a close ambush defines the warrior mindset. This mindset must be trained if we are serious about producing Soldiers of unmatched lethality. Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery once said that “of all the factors, which make for success in battle, the spirit of the warrior is the most decisive.”⁵ Lethality begins in the mind that internalizes the warrior mindset; this mindset is empowered through a well-trained physical body and then magnified with weapons. If we can develop a weapons chassis (Soldier) that is inherently lethal, then any tool (weapon) that the Army provides becomes a force multiplier. The best training tool that leaders have to develop these attributes in their formations is the Modern Army Combatives Program (MACP).

MACP Purpose

The MACP is carefully constructed to address two critical training objectives: skill-set training and mindset training. Skill-set training is necessary because we have a real need to learn realistic, combat-proven techniques that work on the modern battlefield. Our hand-to-hand skills must be grounded in the reality of the battlefield — not sport or classic martial arts requirements. This means our program must be well rounded and address all elements of the fight (striking, grappling, clinch fighting, weapons, etc.). Secondly and perhaps more importantly, our program must develop the mindset of a warrior within our Soldiers. This is accomplished by carefully choosing a training method that requires Soldiers to face their fears and overcome stressful situations. Like the tribal chiefs in our example, we must realize that developing warriors is not an academic exercise; it requires Soldiers to overcome fear through physical challenges to gain the confidence they need to succeed on the modern battlefield.

The purpose of a unit combatives program is ultimately derived from our understanding of what it means to be a Soldier and a member of a warrior profession. The U.S. Army’s mission is to “fight and win our nation’s wars by providing prompt, sustained land dominance across the full range of military operations and spectrum of conflict in support of combatant commanders.”⁶ The phrase “sustained land dominance across the full range of military operations” describes a fighting force that is capable of victory in any phase of land combat. This spans the spectrum of conflict from long-range precision fires to subterranean warfare in dense urban terrain. Units that ignore any of these phases of the fight are unprepared for the full range of military operations. Increasingly there is a belief that technology will lead to a form of warfare that is more remote; while this is partly true, current conflicts have shown that the increasingly urban landscape will place combatants in closely confined battlespaces that require skills in the hand-to-hand range of the fight. At its core, warfare is a fierce and destructive interaction between humans; this truth remains unchanged despite the changing technology of war. The spirit of the Soldier to engage and win this fight is most effectively trained in the hand-to-hand phase of combat because it is here that this violent interaction is most intense and personal.⁷

MACP Warrior Skill-Set Development

To better understand how the MACP develops fighting skills, it is worth taking a moment to discuss the motor learning process. Motor learning describes the process of how humans learn new physical skills. This process is broken down into three stages: cognitive, associative, and autonomous.⁸ The cognitive stage of learning describes how Soldiers intellectually learn what they are to do to accomplish the task. This stage requires significant guidance, instruction, and feedback as Soldiers learn how to perform the technique correctly.

The second stage of motor learning is the associative stage. In this stage Soldiers understand the movement but still must consciously think about performance. There is less verbal input, but this stage is characterized by constant adjustments, awkward movements, and slow task completion. During the associative stage, Soldiers are working to string together the steps learned in the cognitive stage and make them smooth and fluid. This stage is where the most time must be spent to master a skill.

Finally, we come to the autonomous stage of motor learning. This stage describes Soldiers who no longer consciously think about the skill; they merely react to a stimulus and their body responds with little processing required. Consider point guards on a basketball team, when they are running up the court on a fast break they do not have to give any conscious thought to dribbling the basketball — their minds are occupied with the tactics of the game, not the mechanics. This is the level of basic fighting skill that we need from our Soldiers. We need them to think tactically during the fight, not be completely preoccupied with survival. This means that our training programs must account for the thousands of repetitions needed to build this competency. Learning to fight is a process not an event, and our training must take this into consideration if we hope to build long-term competence.

The MACP address all three stages of motor learning through instruction, drills, and sparring. Basic instruction in any technique must be taught to address the cognitive stage of learning. However, this does not need to be a full day of training or attending a Basic Combatives Course (BCC — previously known as Level 1 Combatives). Soldiers can begin participating in drills and positional sparring with a foundation of four or five techniques. These can easily be taught in an hour. Once the Soldier understands the technique and moves on to the associative stage of learning, leaders need a mechanism to accumulate the thousands of repetitions necessary to achieve mastery. MACP addresses this problem through a drill-based learning format. The creatively named “Drills 1, 2, and 3” provide a framework for training. Each drill is cyclical in that it progresses through a series of dominant body positions until the training partners’ original positions are reversed, allowing each to train the same sequence without ever having to reset positions. This makes for very efficient use of training time, and it subconsciously emphasizes a sense of objective while fighting. These drills make it a simple matter to



Photo by Justin Connaher

A Soldier from the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division demonstrates grappling techniques at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, AK, on 6 February 2020.

accumulate repetitions in a safe and efficient manner and can easily be modified to accommodate new techniques. Lastly, MACP trains the autonomous stage of learning through live sparring. As Soldiers' technique improves, they must test their learning in a simulated "real" fight against a fully resistant opponent. This is the phase of learning where a Soldier learns to constantly problem solve and recognize opportunities provided by the opponent. As skill improves, their response to their opponent will become automatic.

MACP Warrior Mindset Development

The motor learning process and the MACP drill-based approach show leaders how to address the skill-set training necessary for developing a combatives program. The mindset must be taught through live sparring. Drill-based training for fighting will never train the warrior mindset because it does not induce fear; everything is scripted and predictable. Full-speed training against a resisting opponent is stressful. The first time you are trapped beneath an opponent or caught in a submission, you must fight through your initial urge to panic, remain calm, and work through the problem. This is exactly the thinking process that we must instill in our Soldiers for the tactical fight. I do not know of any other training method that is as effective for training the portion of the fight that "happens between the ears." Aristotle believed that courage is developed by routinely performing courageous acts, and research supports that courage is a learned habit developed through practice.⁹ It is easy to assault through a close ambush in training when you know the enemy is only shooting blanks; when real bullets are flying, the body's natural biological response is to run. This response is only overcome through training that forces Soldiers to overcome fear and teaches them that the only way to win is to aggressively close with the

enemy and gain control. Combatives teaches Soldiers the lesson that you cannot quit in a fight; all that does is make it easy for your opponent to dominate you.

MACP Program Design

If we accept that combatives training is valuable both for developing a useful tactical skill set and a warrior mindset, the question then becomes: "How do I fit this into a packed training schedule?" Commanders evaluate training priorities through the rubric of available training time, resources available, and impacts on Soldier readiness. Stated another way, commanders want to know: "Do I have time for this training, how much will it cost, and what is the level of risk?" A well-developed combatives training plan must address these concerns and avoid terminating training events. Terminating training describes a training event that does not account for follow-on training. Commanders often assign one day on

the training calendar to focus on combatives or attempt to certify the entire unit in the Basic Combatives Course without a follow-on training plan. These approaches will fail because terminating training events ignore the reality of the process by which Soldiers learn physical skills. The stages of psychomotor learning must be addressed in the training of physical skills to achieve a lasting effect.

To successfully build a unit combatives program that achieves lasting proficiency and addresses commander's concerns, leaders must do three things:

- 1. Establish a unit culture that values fighting ability;**
- 2. Integrate combatives training into physical readiness training (PRT); and**
- 3. Integrate combatives training into existing tactical training events.**

Unit culture is established by the commander's priorities. Commanders communicate their priorities by what they routinely inspect or require their Soldiers to do. A culture that values fighting ability is created through unit competitions and incentivizing performance. Competitions must be held routinely and can be formal or informal. Formal competitions consist of organized tournaments with recognized unit champions. These are valuable for inspiring excellence and raising the level of performance within the organization. Informal competitions can happen at any time; this is the routine sparring that happens as a part of training. This informal competition builds basic competence because all Soldiers are required to participate, and substandard Soldiers are quickly revealed and forced to improve or risk losing respect. Lastly, commanders can communicate their focus by incentivizing performance through recognition, rewards, or schooling opportunities. The Basic Combatives

Course and the Tactical Combatives Course are offered at every Army installation. Leaders can encourage units to send NCOs to the Combatives Master Trainer Course at Fort Benning, GA, to further aid their program and build greater expertise within the system. Emphasizing these opportunities and committing to training junior leaders communicate the commander's focus.

Secondly, the primary place to integrate combatives training is into PRT. This ensures that it can be done routinely and that it will not steal time from other training. The drill-based approach of MACP makes it very easy to integrate into a PRT workout. The combatives drills could be used as part of the morning warm-up before the primary workout or integrate sparring or punching bags into a circuit workout. The training takes very little time; why not finish off your five-mile run with three two-minute rounds of sparring? It is a great workout and you are training Soldiers to be ready to fight once they reach an objective.

The point is that combatives training is a perishable skill. To keep the skills fresh, it is better for Soldiers to do a little bit every day or every week instead of a single-day training event once every six months. It reduces the impact on other training, reduces the risks of injuries, and builds better long-term proficiency. Another common approach to combatives training is to dedicate an entire PRT session to combatives on a weekly basis. Unfortunately, this approach has some drawbacks that make it difficult to sustain. First, it is difficult to make the session truly PRT focused. To fill 90 minutes of training time will likely require significant instruction time. This is time that is largely not beneficial for improving physical performance, so it undermines the PRT program. Secondly, in order to feel like they gave the Soldiers a good workout, leaders often resort to long sparring sessions at the end of training. While this is a smoker, it also poses an increased risk of injury, especially in the early stages of training. The better approach is to integrate elements of combatives training into the existing PRT training plan as warm-up drills, portions of circuits, or to cap off other workout elements.

Next, the basic skills acquired during PRT training must be placed in the battlefield context. Combatives training should be incorporated into any scenario-based training event. Stand-alone, combatives-focused scenario training is impractical because of the amount of resources required to train an individual skill. Combatives training must be integrated into collective training events. Basic room clearing is an easy scenario to envision. Commanders are not being honest about their training status if they state that their unit is "trained" at room clearing without

evaluating Soldiers' ability to physically control a combatant in the room. Commanders can place an unarmed combatant in an impact reduction suit in the room and force Soldiers to gain control over this attacker using combatives techniques. Detainee operations, search procedures, cuffing techniques, checkpoint operations, vehicle extractions — all these training events require Soldiers to control personnel without using lethal force. This is the domain of the combatives program, and it is the opportunity for commanders to build the bridge between the skills developed during PRT and the tactical fight. In my opinion, it is a moral failure if commanders ignore the need to train on personnel control techniques that cover the contingencies between willing compliance and the use of lethal force. Basic combatives techniques give Soldiers the skill set and confidence to control ambiguous situations without resorting to vicious beatings or lethal force unless absolutely necessary.

MACP Risk Mitigation

Finally, I will address how leaders can manage risk within the combatives program. Often the biggest challenge to combatives training is the perception that it is somehow extremely high risk. The reality is that more injuries happen during unit sports and standard PRT than happen in the combatives program. The leading cause of non-combat related medical evacuations from Iraq and Afghanistan between 2001 and 2013 was sports/physical training.¹⁰



Photo by Paolo Bovo

Paratroopers assigned to 1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade, put their combatives training to use during an exercise in Italy on 26 September 2017.

Here in the Department of Physical Education at the U.S. Military Academy, we train more than 4,000 Cadets per year in a series of five core physical activity classes that includes combatives. Survival swimming is the only course that has a lower injury rate than combatives.¹¹ Our injury rate is below three percent in a course that requires Cadets to fight in most of their training sessions.

As in any training event, leaders must learn to manage risk and train safely. Combatives injuries are primarily caused by exuberance and ignorance. Unskilled, excited fighters in a competitive environment either get hurt or hurt other people. Leaders can mitigate these risks by limiting the amount of sparring until a Soldier attains some basic skill and familiarity with the techniques. A good guideline is to prevent Soldiers from sparring until they can demonstrate proficiency in the basic positional drills. This eliminates the misguided approach of many junior leaders of teaching two or three techniques and then staging a platoon tournament. Sparring sessions should be short and can be constrained to make them safer (fight for dominant positions not submissions, start in a position on the ground [mount, guard, etc.] instead of standing or neutral). Leaders should emphasize the drilling portions of training over sparring initially, then slowly add in the intensity. Lastly, the atmosphere around training must emphasize team improvement over personal ego. Leaders must reinforce good training partner behavior by establishing expectations before training and controlling the environment during training.

MACP and Leadership

A last obstacle to effective training that must be addressed is the ego of the leader. Often unit combatives programs die in their infancy because leaders know that they must participate, and they are afraid of being embarrassed. Leaders will default to several common excuses to avoid training: "It's too dangerous," "We don't have the certified personnel," "I'm not combat arms," or the ever popular, "I would just shoot you." It is important to understand that none of these excuses are grounded in reality; they are contrived to protect the self-esteem of the leader and reveal that the leader does not truly have the Warrior Ethos. It is impossible to make a cogent argument for the position that it is not important for U.S. Army Soldiers to know how to fight. And yet, units routinely shut down combatives programs for any of the excuses previously mentioned. This is a formidable and well-entrenched problem. Leaders must address this obstacle by first recognizing the excuses for what they are and offering well-planned training solutions that address the concerns. This returns to step one of building a successful program: Establish a unit culture that values fighting ability. Leaders must realize that losing a fight does not undermine their credibility as a leader; refusing to fight undermines their credibility as a leader because it demonstrates the lack of commitment to developing the Warrior Ethos both personally and within the organization. Soldiers do not expect leaders to be the best at every Soldier skill, but they do expect them to be competent and resilient.

Leaders must realize that losing a fight does not undermine their credibility as a leader; refusing to fight undermines their credibility as a leader because it demonstrates the lack of commitment to developing the Warrior Ethos both personally and within the organization.

Unit combatives training is a tool that commanders at all levels can leverage to impact the culture of their organization. Combatives provides a realistic skill set that is increasingly relevant in the modern close quarter battle that requires judicious application of lethal force. Even more importantly, combatives training builds the warrior mindset in a way that few training events can.

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Improved Doctrine, Improved POIs, Improved Soldiers:

Using a Cognitive Approach to Refine Marksmanship Methodology

SSG ADDISON OWEN
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The hard lessons learned from nearly 20 years of sustained combat operations, coupled with a number of studies aimed at improving Soldier performance and lethality, triggered orders to overhaul the U.S. Army weapons training strategy, associated doctrine, and methodology. This overhaul was centered on the innate cognitive ability within each Soldier. These changes are catalysts for building the modern Infantry Soldier and have enabled the 198th Infantry Brigade (One Station Unit Training) to refine its programs of instruction (POIs). The U.S. Army is now equipped with a more versatile and lethal Infantry Soldier who is ready to “fight tonight.” While recent Infantry Soldier graduates have been indoctrinated with this updated methodology, it is essential that all operational units continue to ingrain this new methodology and strategy within all Soldiers, Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) immaterial.

A Needs-Based Holistic Assessment

Numerous studies aimed at gaining an honest assessment of Soldier proficiency levels have been conducted in recent years. Doctrine writers and training development teams found the most merit with the studies that assessed overall Soldier

Above, a Soldier in Infantry One Station Unit Training with the 198th Infantry Brigade fires his weapon during marksmanship training.

Photo by Markeith Horace

marksmanship proficiency levels and those that examined Soldier cognitive ability.

A 2013 National Research Council of the National Academies study titled “Making the Soldier Decisive on Future Battlefields” was conducted due to “recognition by the U.S. Army that a great disparity exists between the decisive overmatch capability, relative to prospective adversaries, of major U.S. weapon systems (such as tanks, fighter aircraft, or nuclear submarines) and the relative vulnerability of dismounted soldiers when they are operating in small, detached units (squads).”¹ The study concluded that “an essential principle for achieving overmatch capabilities is to recognize that integrating the human dimension with materiel advances is at the core of all TSU (tactical small unit) improvements.”²

A Program Executive Office for Simulation, Training, and Instrumentation study in 2014 titled “Squad Overmatch Study: Training the Human Dimension to Enhance Performance” further supported the importance of the human dimension

with respect to warrior skills training. The study stated that “integrating cognitive skills development into warrior skills training, leveraging Foundation Training and Practical Application, and using enhanced training devices will produce more cohesive and consistent squads having improved human performance — thus, filling a significant gap in Army readiness.”³ The results clearly indicated that at the time of the study Soldiers lacked the requisite higher-level cognitive understanding required to survive and win during large-scale combat operations (LSCO) within multi-domain operations, and the U.S. Army needed to address this shortcoming within its training methodology.

Several studies on marksmanship proficiency also yielded similar findings of shortcomings within the Army weapons training strategy. An Army Research Institute (ARI) study in 2014, titled “Marksmanship Requirements from the Perspective of Combat Veterans — Volume II: Summary Report,” surveyed 1,636 leaders across 14 different branches to identify perceived weapons proficiency requirements. These requirements included some skills that were not reflected in the previous carbine qualification course of fire such as engaging moving targets, firing from different positions, changing magazines, and discriminating between friendly forces, enemy forces, and noncombatants.⁴

The sentiments of the 2014 ARI study were validated by data and reports coming from the operational force. A Fiscal Year 2017 report from the 82nd Airborne Division highlighted trends from ranges with an enduring mission focus to conduct Table VI qualification. Across the entire division, the average “cold qualification” for Paratroopers with the M4 carbine was 25.44 out of 40 engagements under the previous Table VI.⁵ It is reasonable to assume that similar statistics can be found across units throughout the U.S. Army, clearly validating the concern which triggered the initial 2013 National Research Council study on Soldier decisiveness.

A Paradigm Shift: Integrated Weapons Training Strategy

This small sample of studies provides a snapshot of the concern over a lack of Soldier cognitive development and lethality. In response, the Army set out to overhaul the entire weapons strategy for both individual and mounted platforms. One of the early outputs of this overhaul mission was the release of the inaugural version of Training Circular (TC) 3-20.0, *Integrated Weapons Training Strategy* (IWTS). The ultimate intent of the TC was to provide an overarching, integrated, and standardized training strategy for U.S. Army maneuver brigade combat teams (BCTs).⁶ With a principal target audience of trainers, planners, master gunners, and commanders, TC 3-20.0 provides the training path strategy for weapon, system, and unit proficiency.⁷

TC 3-20.0 highlights numerous overarching critical principles that guide the IWTS methodology. The significance of this is depicted within the six individual tables in which live rounds are not fired until Table IV, with preceding tables being reserved for preliminary marksmanship instruction

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(Table I), pre-live-fire simulations (Table II), and drills (Table III). This is a significant paradigm shift for commanders. All echelons are now required to conduct this training prior to Table VI qualification. Furthermore, the existence of Table II indicates that aspects from the Squad Overmatch Study from 2014 were integrated into the IWTS to maximize virtual systems. The use of virtual systems should be a key indicator to commanders that the Army is fully committed and vested with both time and resources in the human dimension and the enhancement of overall performance.

How to Plan and Prepare for Individual Weapons Training

While TC 3-20.0 provides the overarching training strategy, leaders will also need to reference TC 3-20.40, *Individual and Qualification - Individual Weapons*. This TC provides the nuts and bolts for building a unit training plan for individual weapons. TC 3-20.40 is comprised of four overarching chapters that provide key information that must be applied when training all individual weapon systems.

Chapter One — Individual Weapons Training — provides users with insight into how the IWTS is synthesized into other weapons, systems, platforms, maneuver echelon training strategies, and the table structure.⁸

Chapter Two — Unit Training Plans — provides the structure for developing a unit plan as well as a detailed description of a marksmanship master trainer (MMT). This enables unit MMTs to synthesize commander’s guidance into a detailed training plan and timeline that will serve as a planning and preparation guide.⁹ Chapter two also includes a detailed description of how an MMT can address a number of critical skills to include communications, force protection, battle drills, and other various warfighting skills in an integrated unit training plan.¹⁰ This enables commanders to buy back time and alleviates concerns with the required time investment.

Chapter Three provides leaders with guidance on range requirements to develop plans which facilitate effective training events for individual small arms weapons training, qualification, and sustainment.¹¹ The details listed in this chapter enable trainers to proof ranges and ensure all targets and scenarios meet the standard for each course of fire.¹²

Chapter Four covers duties, procedures, planning, and preparation for executing small arms live-fire ranges. Arguably the best features of the chapter are the sections covering detailed descriptions of range support personnel and medical evacuation procedures. While useful for any end user, this critical information can mitigate the gap of both knowledge and experience in junior officers and NCOs typically charged with the conduct and safety of a small arms range.

While not all encompassing, TC 3-20.40 in many ways can be considered the go-to document for planning and conducting individual skills training density, and it should be a staple in every range box and company leader's inventory of doctrinal publications.

Upgrading the Individual Weapon Training Circular

The final component of the ongoing overhaul to weapons training strategy and training and education updates are the TCs for each respective weapon system. In order to address the human and cognitive dimensions sought by Army leadership, an upgrade to the instructional methodology for employment of each individual weapon system was required. While this article does not have time to cover each individual system, TC 3-22.9, *Rifle and Carbine*, will be reviewed due to the commonality of the M4 carbine across most formations.

The Army introduced its dramatically overhauled approach to weapon system employment with the implementation of TC 3-22.9. Significant in this new employment strategy was the

introduction of the shot process and the functional elements of the shot process.¹³ The shot process outlines an individual engagement sequence that all firers — regardless of the weapon employed — must consider during an engagement. This process encompasses all assessments, decisions, and actions leading up to the firing of the weapon. It also shows that Army and doctrine writers restructured marksmanship methodology with consideration for the Soldier cognitive process.

The shot process is broken down into three phases: pre-shot, shot, and post shot.¹⁴ The need to break away from the fundamentals of marksmanship was derived from knowledge gained through real-world combat experience and a far more combat-centric approach to marksmanship. The advantage of this paradigm shift in approaching marksmanship not only produces more lethal shooters but lends to the innate cognitive ability in each Soldier. For example, a Soldier utilizing an optic estimates the distance to a standard 40x19.5-inch E-Type silhouette as 400 meters. After building a position and engaging, the Soldier observes the round impact slightly to the left of the target. Through the understanding of the shot process, the Soldier calls the shot as the shot breaks, prior to observing the round impact just to the left of the target. Through a higher order understanding of complex engagements and an estimated no value wind call based on visual observation, the Soldier assesses a lapse in trigger control. Rather than adjusting his hold on the target, the Soldier re-engages using the proper application of the shot process and successfully neutralizes the target. While the shot process is absolute, the

Rangers assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment conduct training on Joint Base Lewis-McChord, WA.

Photo by SPC Gabriel Segura



Pre-shot	Position
	Natural Point of Aim
	Sight Alignment / Picture
	Hold
Shot	Refine Aim
	Breathing Control
	Trigger Control
Post-shot	Follow-through
	Recoil management
	Call the Shot
	Evaluate

Figure 1 — Shot Process Example (TC 3-22.9)

functional elements of the shot process are simultaneously independent and interdependent variables that directly correlate to any successful engagement, depending on the engagement and associated considerations.

The functional elements of the shot process — stability, aim, control, and movement — should not be confused as mere replacements for the fundamentals of marksmanship. At the core of the shot process is a holistic system of weapons handling and a target engagement sequence aimed at supporting a host of learning styles and experience levels. For example, a Soldier assesses an engagement at 150 meters and begins his or her shot process with assessing stability. The environmental considerations, enemy capabilities, on-hand equipment, ability level, and kinesthetic awareness are among several factors to consider when assessing the required stability when building a position. In this case the Soldier must assess the requisite amount of stability to successfully engage a target at 150 meters. Therefore, stability in conjunction with aim, control, and movement can be altered based on the complexity of the engagement based on the surrounding dynamics and atmospherics.

Without a comprehensive understanding of TC 3-22.9 and the overall shot process methodology, Soldiers will fail to meet the standard within the updated rifle qualification outlined in TC 3-20.40. This Table VI course of fire includes shortened target exposures, additional firing positions, and seamless transitions requiring magazine changes. Considering the increased pace of the updated qualification, Soldiers must now process information quicker and possess the ability to perform several tasks at a level of automaticity. Similar requirements have been built into the other individual weapon system qualifications within TC 3-20.40. These updates give further notice to leaders that the Army demands Soldiers who possess metacognitive skills and creative problem solving skills.

Finally TC 3-22.9 features a number of critical upgrades from the previous rifle and carbine manual. Included are upgrades such as the six carry positions, 12 firing positions,

complex engagements, drills, ballistics, and ammunition. All of these updates are nested within the previously mentioned IWTS within TC 3-20.40 and are paramount to Soldier success.

Everyday Strategies to Amplify Training Success

These TCs provide clear and predictable training glide paths that enable units to plan efficiently and effectively. This weapons training strategy can be further amplified with a few successful tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) and tools aimed at augmenting Soldier training.

TC 3-22.9 Appendix D, *Drills*, features a set of given drills that should be performed on a regular basis.¹⁵ These dry-fire drills help reinforce weapons employment techniques, and like physical training should be performed on a daily basis. Drills are critical to ensuring that Soldiers can manipulate a given weapon at a level of automaticity, thus enabling them to focus on the shot process and fully maximize their given cognitive potential, and can be augmented by a number of critical training aids.

Some of the training aids utilized to amplify training already exist within the U.S. Army inventory. The AN/PEM-1 Laser Borelight System (LBS) is a tool often neglected by units prior to conducting zeroing procedures. A little-known feature of the LBS is the pulse setting which enables a brief activation of the laser through the rifle bore. While the LBS does not account for the external ballistics of ammunition, efforts have been made in the commercial sector to develop a target that accounts for the ballistics of various types of ammunition. When the LBS is used in conjunction with an M150 Rifle Combat Optic (RCO) M855A1 dry-fire target, Soldiers can receive hundreds of additional dry-fire repetitions with

Figure 2 — Firing Position Stability Example (TC 3-22.9)

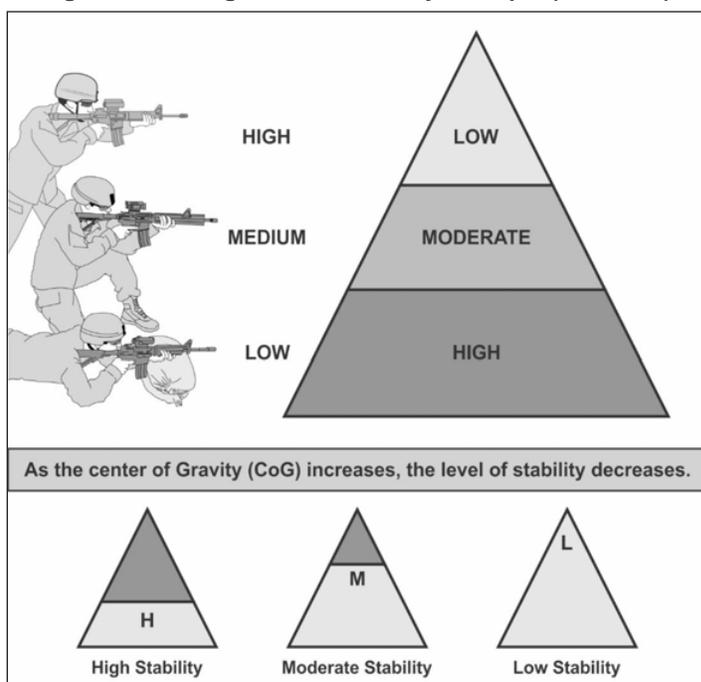




Photo courtesy of authors

Members of the 198th Infantry Brigade at Fort Benning, GA, utilize a dry-fire target to conduct Table III, Drills, in preparation for upcoming live-fire gates during the Infantry One Station Unit Training 11B program of instruction.

feedback allowing them to assess the shot process. The use of smart sensor rail systems provides feedback on weapon movement throughout the shot process. These simple rail attachment sensor systems provide Soldiers with real-time data feedback which enables them to analyze and diagnosis a Soldier's shot process in both the dry and live-fire settings. Sensor system tools allow units to have virtual system feedback in any environment and better enable cognitive learning.

Conclusion

Soldiers must be ready to step into any assigned role within their unit with the assumption that they may have little to no time to integrate within a formation and receive additional training on an assigned weapon system. While the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command is building better Soldiers, it is the responsibility of all Army units to continue to integrate the new and improved marksmanship and weapons training strategy. It is imperative that the IWTS and new approaches to lethality are ingrained into each Soldier.

Notes

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⁴ Jean L. Dyer, "Marksmanship Requirements from the Perspective," U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, February 2016, <https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/1006163.pdf>.

⁵ Raymond Miller, "Fiscal Year 2017 Enduring Range Reports," 82nd Airborne Division, 29 September 2017.

⁶ Training Circular (TC) 3-20.0, *Integrated Weapons Training Strategy*, 11 June 2015.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ TC 3-22.9, *Rifle and Carbine*, May 2016.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

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Training Notes

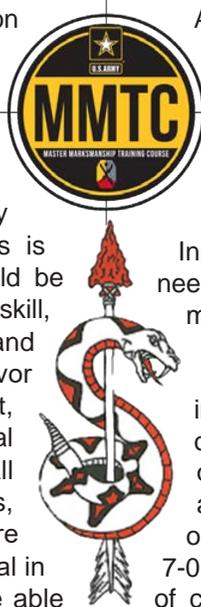


Building Overmatch

1SG KEVIN L. SIPES

In 2017 GEN Mark A. Milley laid out modernization priorities in order for Soldiers to become “more lethal.” Lethality quickly became the buzzword in the halls of the institution and from the podiums of instructors. Have NCOs stopped to think about that word and defined it? Lethality is nothing more than being capable of causing death or being deadly in the application of force. Running with scissors is therefore an exercise in lethality. The focus should be on overmatch. Overmatch is applying a learned skill, employing equipment, leveraging technology, and applying proper force to create an unfair fight in favor of the Soldier. It requires a Soldier to be smart, fast, lethal, and precise. Lethality is one functional element of overmatch, but we need to train on all four. As leaders in the profession of combat arms, how do we build overmatch? How do we make it more than just a word to our Soldiers? In order to be lethal in current and future operations, Soldiers need to be able to overmatch the enemy. The Marksmanship Master Trainer Course (MMTC) and U.S. Army Sniper Course (USASC) transform Soldiers from novices into proficient employers and trainers of the equipment required to achieve overmatch.

Overmatch fundamentally begins with Soldiers — each one coming from different parts of the country and possibly the world. Each brand new Soldier experiences initial training differently and may be struggling with past experiences. In order for Soldiers to perform, they need to be grounded and healthy. Comprehensive Soldier and Family Fitness (CSF2) is often scoffed at, but it is a critical part to ensuring Soldiers show up ready to perform. The five pillars are physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and family.



Anyone struggling or failing to communicate about issues in these pillars is already at a disadvantage and may be performing poorly in the organization. NCOs cannot expect to achieve overmatch and deliver lethality if they cannot understand what is going on in their squad and guide Soldiers in improving these facets.

In order for the U.S. Army to achieve overmatch, it needs Soldiers to perform tasks. These tasks cover multiple domains but all require performance. The ability to perform tasks builds overmatch and drives lethality. In addition to individual task proficiency, individual weapons proficiencies form the backbone of the unit's ability to execute more complex and dynamic collective training under live-fire conditions and ultimately the unit's ability to successfully execute operational missions. Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 7-0, *Training*, also states that an integral component of collective training includes the successful and lethal employment of a unit's weapon systems.¹ This training is tied not just to a Soldier's proficiency with individually



Photo by SPC Zack Stahlberg

A Soldier assigned to the 2nd Cavalry Regiment fires his M4 carbine during the Marksmanship Master Trainer Course at Grafenwoehr Training Area, Germany, on 3 February 2021.



Photo courtesy of the U.S. Army Sniper Course

Sniper Course students practice engaging targets from a hasty urban position.

assigned weapons, but also to the proficiencies gained as part of collective teams. Proficiency in both crew-served and platform weapon systems requires the same level of constant attention and training as those at the individual level. NCOs and Soldiers need dedicated training to learn these skills, employ the equipment, leverage technology, and apply the proper force.

A Soldier learns the employment of weapons and equipment during Initial Entry Training (IET) and Advanced Individual Training (AIT) or One Station Unit Training (OSUT). Soldiers are exposed to multiple weapon systems, attachments, and equipment. They are required to display base-level knowledge on the equipment and then are sent to a duty station. NCOs are then required to pick up the training and build Soldiers' experience. Without dedicated courses that build mastery of training, NCOs are just regurgitating what they can remember from experience or their initial training.

The MMTC and USASC provide doctrinally based training and performance-oriented evaluations. Soldiers who attend the USASC learn technical and tactical skills that provide a commander with the ability to deliver long-range precision fires on select targets, targets of opportunity, and the critical ability of collecting and reporting battlefield information. The course is open to 11B, 19D, or 18-series Soldiers in the rank of private first class to staff sergeant. Graduates earn the additional skill identifier of B4. Snipers and their ability to achieve overmatch for the formation through precision fires, indirect fires, and information reporting is eroding slowly across the U.S. Army. Soldiers need to utilize the tools available to them and the lessons they learned in the course to communicate effectiveness. The doctrine, tasks, and historical data is there. Communication needs to be achieved not just verbally but through demonstrated proficiency and performance in training. Commanders and command sergeants major should not forget to man and assess these assets within their formation.

NCOs who run these platoons and squads need to doctrinally assess and prepare these Soldiers. Send them to the course with knowledge and potential. The unit will only be better for it.

Through 18 years of continuous operations, the U.S. Army knows how Soldiers are tested on the battlefield. NCOs and commanders recognize that rifle and pistol qualifications demonstrate a baseline proficiency on these weapons alone. Every target is stationary, a threat, and presents itself at known distances for specified times. It sets a baseline standard to ensure Soldiers can safely manipulate their weapon, engage the target, and not hurt themselves or anyone left and right of them. Soldiers are required to execute these qualifications once a year. Lessons learned in combat and from watching our adversaries prepare and engage in conflict demonstrate that a higher degree of performance is necessary to achieve overmatch.

NCOs must train Soldiers past the ability to load, fire, reduce stoppage, and maintain a rifle or pistol. These tasks are skill level one and simple. Even scores on qualification do not demonstrate overmatch or lethality because nicking the target achieves the same result as a center of visible mass strike. The MMTC trains sergeants through sergeants first class on how to train to and after qualification on the rifle/carbine, pistol, and M249 Squad Automatic Rifle, and build unit training plans for them as well as the squad designated marksman rifle and sniper weapon systems. Graduates of this five-week course are proficient at each table of the weapon training strategy and how to plan it for the unit. They receive extensive training on how to train past qualification on weapons and equipment both day and night. These NCOs receive the additional skill identifier of E1 and know how to plan, prepare, execute, and assess this training for your unit. The course is open to all Military Occupational Specialties.



Photo by Patrick A. Albright

A Sniper Course student participates in the ghillie wash on 5 February 2021.

MMTC does not just teach these NCOs how to shoot. Inherently it will improve Soldiers' performance, but it builds NCOs who can doctrinally train the formation and avoid skill regression or deterioration. Without marksmanship master trainers (MMTs), the Army cannot truly achieve overmatch. Soldiers need to be trained and immersed in the training circulars that MMTC trains your NCOs on. MMTs are the bridge between the environment and the Soldier. They can build or design training that trains Soldiers on how and when to apply the proper amount of force to attain an unfair advantage over the threat. This includes employment of equipment to its maximum effective range, moving targets, environmental conditions, limited exposure targets, multiple targets, threat and non-threat decision making, and overall understanding of the direct fire engagement and shot processes.

The most important part in force modernization has to be Soldiers and the NCOs who train them. The U.S. Army will continue to fund, test, and approve materiel solutions for Soldiers. These are amazing solutions that in the end still need professionals operating them. The need for NCOs and Soldiers to truly understand performance is critical.

In operations, Soldiers and units are led by trained and qualified leaders — officers and NCOs. These leaders have a direct and decisive role in unit training. NCOs are directly responsible for training individual Soldiers, crews, and small teams. Additionally, NCOs coach other NCOs,

A Soldier assigned to the 2nd Cavalry Regiment fires his M4 carbine during the Marksmanship Master Trainer Course at Grafenwoehr Training Area, Germany, on 3 February 2021.

Photo by SPC Zack Stahlberg

advise senior leaders, and help develop junior officers. Leaders implement a strong chain of command, high esprit de corps, and good discipline. As the unit trains, leaders mentor, guide, listen to, and offer solutions by thinking with subordinates to challenge their depth of knowledge and understanding.²

Soldiers need to know individual performance, team or collective performance, and how they fit into higher echelon performance. NCOs need to continually seek new information, experiment and improve the ability to explain and demonstrate performance, as well as assess their Soldiers' performance. Soldiers cannot stop learning or striving to achieve certifications or qualifications. It cannot be good enough to say you know information. Performance cannot be talked about; it has to be trained, measured, and improved. The goal of training should be to obtain the most progress you can make in the time allotted. This means doing as much work as your body and mind can handle... productively.

Notes

¹ Army Doctrine Publication 7-0, *Training*, July 2019, 1-7.

² *Ibid*, 3-5.

At the time this article was written, **1SG Kevin L. Sipes** was serving as the first sergeant of the Combat Marksmanship Company (C Company, 1st Battalion, 29th Infantry Regiment), overseeing the U.S. Army Sniper Course and U.S. Army Marksmanship Master Trainer Course at Fort Benning, GA. 1SG Sipes currently serves as a first sergeant in the 1st Security Force Assistance Brigade.



Updating the Reconnaissance and Surveillance Leader Course

CPT KEVIN LUCAS

The Reconnaissance and Surveillance Leader Course (RSLC) provides conventional maneuver commanders with a leader they can trust to train and lead their scout squads. During a 26-day program of instruction (POI), junior officers (O1-O3) and NCOs (E4-E6) learn how to employ reconnaissance elements in accordance with a commander's information collection plan and reconnaissance guidance.

Historically, the course has remained a product of its heritage with the curriculum focusing on tactical tasks of long-range surveillance (LRS) units. RSLC identified a need to modernize its curriculum based on observations of units at Combat Training Centers (CTCs), force-wide surveys, and reviews of doctrine. Over the past year, the Airborne and Ranger Training Brigade reviewed and updated RSLC's lesson plans to better align with the needs of dismounted reconnaissance organizations in infantry brigade combat teams. The alterations to curriculum manifested as newly redesigned land navigation instruction, alignment of tactical scenarios with an infantry battalion scout platoon, and situation-dependent squad employment techniques. The



updated curriculum is broken into three phases: foundations, techniques, and a culminating field training exercise (FTX).

The first nine days of the course form the foundations phase, which starts by providing students with advanced land navigation training. Students arrive with a solid foundation in map reading and land navigation, enabling instructors to develop proficiency in route planning and movements to objectives at the maximum range of infantry battalion organic weapon systems. Students conduct night movements as they would in a real-world situation by using night-vision goggles (NVGs) and avoiding roads and trails. In between land navigation practical exercises, students become familiar with the equipment they need to collect information. They receive hands-on training with binoculars, spotting scopes, cameras, and thermal devices. Students learn how to convert that information into sketches and NATO reports in analog and digital form. To complete this phase, students spend three days learning how to employ ultra high frequency (UHF), high frequency (HF), and satellite communication (SATCOM) radio platforms to send both voice and data information to their higher echelons.



Photos courtesy of the Reconnaissance and Surveillance Leader Course

Above, a Reconnaissance and Surveillance Leader Course (RSLC) student participates in a graded patrol during a field training exercise (FTX). At right, RSLC students plan their last FTX mission before graduation.

The techniques phase builds on foundations by teaching planning and tactical employment of their squad. During this phase, students conduct six practical exercises across 11 days that teach doctrinally sound small-unit tactics, observation position construction, urban surveillance, and mission planning. These exercises train students to employ their squads in more than just traditional static surveillance sites. Rather, they will learn multiple squad employment options, including multiple active reconnaissance elements and use of security teams, providing battalion commanders with agile leaders who can adapt to the situations they face.

Finally, students complete the course by conducting a series of graded patrols that present students with multiple scenarios and force them to determine courses of action. Students rotate through graded positions, serving as team leader, assistant team leader, and radio-telephone operator (RTO). They experience multiple insertion methods, including airborne and vehicle insertions. At the end of this phase, students have demonstrated their ability to lead a dismounted squad ahead of the forward line of troops in support of a commander's information collection plan.

At the end of the course, students will have a firm understanding of reconnaissance fundamentals, confidence in the use of optics and cameras, and demonstrated competence with multiple radio platforms. They will be able to plan, prepare for, and execute a reconnaissance or security mission in support of their battalion operation. RSLC graduates provide a marked advantage to dismounted reconnaissance units, providing leaders able to develop and lead reconnaissance teams.

To learn more about the Reconnaissance and Surveillance Leaders Course, view the course page on the Airborne and Ranger Training Brigade website at <https://www.benning.army.mil/Infantry/ARTB/RSLC/> or visit the course Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/ReconSurvLeaderCourse>.

CPT Kevin Lucas currently commands E Company, 4th Ranger Training Battalion, Airborne and Ranger Training Brigade, at Fort Benning, GA. He previously commanded C Troop, 1st Squadron, 3rd Cavalry Regiment at Fort Hood, TX, and served in C Troop, 5-73rd Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, as a scout platoon leader and executive officer. He has completed multiple deployments in support of Operation Inherent Resolve in Iraq. He is a graduate of the U.S. Army Ranger School, honor graduate of RSLC Class 05-14, and a senior-rated jumpmaster. CPT Lucas earned a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, NY.

CPT William Gerhardt assisted in editing this article.



RSLC students receive training on basic individual and equipment camouflage techniques.



Students from RSLC Class 03-21 plan a reconnaissance and surveillance operation using the troop leading procedures.

Learning after CTC Rotations: *An Approach*

MAJ RYAN DUFFY
MAJ JOSHUA LINVILL

“The paradox of learning a really new competence is this: that a student cannot at first understand what he needs to learn, can learn it only by educating himself, and can educate himself only by beginning to do what he does not yet understand.”¹

After a Combat Training Center (CTC) rotation, it is difficult to ensure battalion-sized organizations learn. The unit finishes the rotation, people are exhausted, relationships may be strained, and generally, people want to get back to home station and recover. At some point, we will address what we learned, right? Oftentimes, the answer is no. Upon return from a CTC, significant recovery operations begin, leadership changeover increases, and the focus of the unit shifts to the next major event. Meanwhile, the fight to train and maintain readiness continues. Individuals learn lessons during the CTC rotation, but the fixation on events after the rotation prevents efficient organizational learning for the unit.²

One way to combat the trend of failing to learn from a CTC rotation is to plan time for the unit to reflect on its

previous experience. After exercise Dragoon Ready 19 at the Hohenfels Training Area in Germany, the 3rd Squadron, 2nd Cavalry Regiment set aside valuable time to reflect by conducting weekly working groups focused on one warfighting function (WFF) per week.

Conducting a working group with leaders at all levels serves two functions: increases learning for the unit and facilitates leader development. The battalion commander should chair the working group, so the staff and company commanders can hear his or her input. This process is important because it helps improve the unit through reflection and improves subordinates through feedback and dialog — two critical steps to learning.³

Depending on the schedule and the nature of the fixes for deficiencies in the rotation, the working group can have the full staff or just key players in attendance. Making allowances for the training calendar, it is good to spread understanding among the staff about how the unit functions as a system. For example, having the maintenance chief in the working

Soldiers with 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, run through the breach point on 27 October 2020 during the unit's rotation at the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, LA.

Photo by SGT Thomas Calvert





Photo by Markus Rauchenberger

A 2nd Cavalry Regiment Soldier fires an M2 .50 caliber machine gun during a live-fire exercise as part of Dragoon Ready in Germany on 17 October 2018.

group might give him or her better understanding of how the tactical operations center (TOC) functions with the combat trains command post (CTCP) and the field trains command post (FTCP), and the chief's input into the flow of deadlined vehicle tracking and recovery might help the system for reporting and dispatching recovery assets from the forward support company (FSC).

By conducting these working groups once a week and only focusing on one WfF at a time, it is easy to track organizational improvements. The executive officer can keep track of the improvements in standard operating procedures (SOPs), maintenance, supplies, or any other readiness issues that caused problems during the rotation.

An example of a post-CTC focus on reversing trends:

After exercise Dragoon Ready 19, the 3rd Squadron, 2nd Cavalry Regiment had multiple after action review (AAR) comments from the observer-controller-trainers (OCTs) regarding a lack of SOPs on chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear (CBRN) operations. There was no SOP for marking "dirty" (contaminated) routes or for chemical casualty evacuation. The CBRN team (chemical officer, chemical NCO, and chemical specialist) met with the S3 operations section leadership and medical staff to discuss techniques for CBRN operations. After discussion, the decision was made to come up with a simple way of labeling routes (troop name + "DIRTY") that would be extremely easy to understand. For medical evacuation, due to concerns with contaminating medical Strykers, an SOP was devised where casualty evacuation (CASEVAC) would be done for chemically contaminated patients using non-medical vehicles, preserving the medical Strykers for trauma cases. The squadron XO recorded this on a tracker designed for capturing AAR topics and tasked the staff officer working on SOP refinement to incorporate

the changes into the squadron tactical SOP (TACSOP).

The working group can be formal or informal, with formal sessions immediately following the rotation, and possibly transitioning to a working lunch as improvements are solidified. The XO or other designated representative is the keeper of the tracker that records AAR fixes.

One note on SOPs: If you have big (many page) products for SOPs, very few people will read them. A technique that has proved helpful is to not replicate information that is available in doctrine, taught in professional military education (PME) courses, or technical knowledge. SOPs should be "this is how this unit does business," not an attempt to recapitulate doctrine. Ideally, the SOP should be about 40 pages at max — something someone can commit largely to memory.

We hope this idea can help commanders and staffs. CTC rotations are costly, frustrating, and exhausting. Our Soldiers deserve our best efforts to continually improve our organizations, and we hope these meetings can be a tool to avoid letting these key experiences go to waste after return to home station.

Notes

¹ Donald A. Schön, *Educating the Reflective Practitioner* (San Francisco: John A. Wiley and Sons, 1987), 93.

² Peter Senge, author of the *Fifth Discipline*, describes the fixation on events as an organizational learning disability because generative learning cannot be sustained in an organization if people's thinking is dominated by short-term events.

³ Carey Walker and Matthew Bonnet discuss the importance of feed and dialog to improve subordinate learning in their Army University Press article "A Better Approach to Developing Leaders." Accessed from <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/Military-Review/Online-Exclusive/2016-Online-Exclusive-Articles/A-Better-Approach-to-Developing-Leaders/>.

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MAJ Josh Linvill is a planner for the 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry). He recently returned from a deployment as a planner for Resolute Support in Kabul, Afghanistan. He is a graduate of SAMS at Fort Leavenworth. He commissioned from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, NY, in 2008. MAJ Linvill is a graduate of Ranger School among other courses. He has also served as a platoon leader in 3rd Squadron, 2nd Cavalry Regiment and troop commander in the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment (Opposing Force).

You Are *DOING IT WRONG* and the MCoE Can Help!

The Army's Culture of Fitness is Changing

SFC PHILLIP ANDREW
 1SG JOHN A. BANDY
 1SG JAMES FETHERSON
 1SG BRANDON ROBERTS
 1SG GIDEON WILKINSON

The Army's culture of fitness is changing. While the Army has looked at mental and spiritual fitness for years, the word fitness has primarily meant physical fitness. If this is true for you, know that you are doing it wrong. But don't worry, the Army is changing organizations to support leaders and the new culture of fitness. If you want to know how, simply look to the Maneuver Center of Excellence (MCOE) at Fort Benning, GA, where leaders have been ahead of the curve to see what the future looks like.

The first thing leaders must understand is that physical fitness is now just a part of a larger scheme. Recent revision of Field Manual (FM) 7-22 turned the Army's focus from physical readiness training (PRT) to holistic health and fitness (H2F). This encompasses the total Soldier. Physical readiness is now only part of the H2F framework that encompasses all aspects of human performance. Mental, nutritional, sleep, and spiritual readiness are all parts of the total concept of fitness alongside PRT. This change "represents a cultural shift from the industrial-scale approaches of the past where massed formations received the same training in a one-size-fits-all approach."¹

Senior leaders support this change. In an October 2020 letter to the force, Secretary of the Army Ryan McCarthy, GEN James McConville, and SMA Michael Grinston wrote:

*"The Army is changing policies to reinforce our focus on people... This will include a review of readiness policies (how we evaluate, track and report readiness)... As we implement these policy changes, Army staff and Army commands will identify simple, yet specific metrics to measure progress. Divisions and brigades will routinely inspect unit systems that focus on their people including... physical, mental, and spiritual health... Army senior leaders will track progress and provide guidance through routine updates."*²

FM 7-22 is an extension of this statement. It provides guidance and places emphasis on the creation of individualized programs that will bring out the best performance in everyone.

U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Commanding General GEN Paul E. Funk is also backing this change. In an article in *INFANTRY* Magazine's Fall 2020

edition, he argued: "We must adopt a culture of Holistic Health and Fitness (H2F). Changing culture is hard but necessary. Many will argue that we have always valued fitness, but our pursuit of physical fitness has been unevenly applied and has not incorporated all components of fitness. In our current and future fights, every part of our force — every occupational specialty and every unit — must value and adopt a culture of fitness."³

This change to holistic health is a critical change. Even though people are living longer, they are experiencing chronic stress and fatigue. They are consuming nutrient-depleted foods. And they are being exposed to harmful chemicals in the air, water, cleaning products, and personal-care products on a daily basis. Addressing one area of fitness while ignoring others often leaves problems unaddressed and leads to discouraging results. Broadening one's view of fitness is important because we have to view and support the body as the incredible system it is in order to achieve optimal wellness.

This does not mean cultural change will be easy, and there are several hurdles that leaders must overcome to affect change. Some recent developments provide opportunities for change.

Physical Readiness

The first obstacle is the required shift in focus from increasing the fitness level of the group to raising the fitness level of the individual.⁴ Soldiers of the World War I era conducted calisthenics and body-weight exercises in mass formations. More than 100 years later, we are still primarily conducting physical fitness training with body-weight exercises in large groups and with very little focus on the individual.⁵ We still think large formation runs are necessary to build esprit de corps, and planning basic traditional body-weight workouts in formations is still the easy choice for company-level leaders stuck in a high-operations tempo (OPTEMPO) environment that leaves little time to innovate and plan. The challenges of COVID-19, however, might have a silver lining in this regard, as leaders spent most of 2020 conducting individual physical training or only gathering in small groups. This provided an unexpected opportunity for a cultural shift.

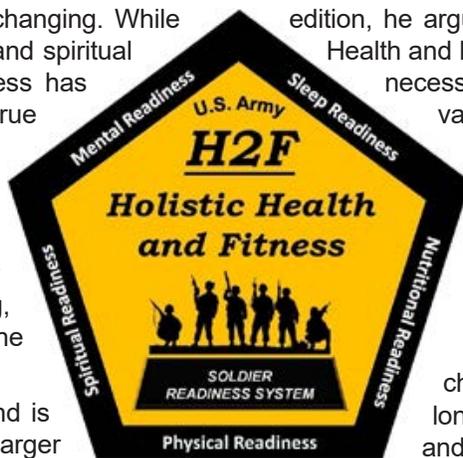




Photo by MSG Michel Sauret

SGM Daniel Lai from the U.S. Army Human Resources Command warms up for the deadlift prior to performing a practice Army Combat Fitness Test at Fort Eustis, VA, on 25 October 2019.

A lack of required equipment has also historically constrained individualized physical training. Without a variety of medicine balls or weights, each suitable for a different type of person, mass formations and body-weight training provided the greatest payoff for time. The new Army Combat Fitness Test (ACFT) changes this. Though the Army initially faced major logistical issues fielding equipment for the ACFT, units now have a variety of ACFT training equipment in various forms all across the Army. Units no longer need to reserve limited gym space or fight for scarce resources. Leaders today find themselves with a capability for individualized training that previous generations of leaders could only dream about.

Ensuring decision makers have the knowledge needed for individualized training is another hurdle. Individualized training must be managed at the squad level where the trust and knowledge exists between squad mates to ensure proper individual care. While master fitness trainers (MFTs) have been around for a while, there have never been enough for each squad in the Army. Instead, MFTs are usually an afterthought — a check the block for an additional duty.

This lack of knowledge is exacerbated by overconfidence in leaders. Many have their own preferred workout style and think this makes them an expert across the board. It seems like every battalion-level leader is a master of running form, every young captain thinks he is an expert on CrossFit, and every young staff sergeant says he knows the right way to lift. But most company commanders, first sergeants, and sergeants major are not properly trained or equipped to create individually tailored physical training programs. Worse still, some leaders simply rely on perseverance and grit fueled on coffee and nicotine instead of science-based training protocols. This leads to planning and executing training with a narrow perspective. Experienced and battle-hardened NCOs often plan and execute training based simply on what has worked for them in the past. All too often the underperforming

Soldiers they lead are told to suck it up like they had to.

To overcome these obstacles, the Army is building institutions and changing organizations. The MCoE is leading this change with the Fort Benning Tactical Athlete Performance Center (TAP-C), a state-of-the-art facility that opened in March of 2019 with the ability to train, assess, and provide individualized programs. The facility can train up to 180 Soldiers at once. Not only does the TAP-C provide individually tailored training, it provides education that primarily focuses on training leaders. This training provides the tools necessary for leaders to return to their units and identify deficiencies within their formations and create training programs. These training programs are tailored to individuals,

addressing their deficiencies with a holistic approach to health and fitness.

TAP-C's main training program is the Performance Extender Program. The program is led by a strength and conditioning coach who is assisted by other trained and certified Soldiers from the installation. It provides a one-on-one approach to educate leaders on correct movement patterns and the scientific principles behind H2F. It also includes training on micro-design: how to properly incorporate anaerobic, strength, aerobic, endurance and recovery days into their day-to-day Army schedules. This would also include how to account for planned range days and mandatory physical training events.



Photo by Markeith Horace

The goal of the Tactical Athlete Performance Center on Fort Benning is to increase Soldier readiness, lethality, survivability, sustainability, and retention through education and training.

This curriculum is the cutting-edge of modern physical training. It is the same training that allows today's professional athletes to be faster and stronger than those in previous decades. But while professional athletes may use advances in science to push the envelope, today's military leaders have the inverse problem: how to bridge the gap between the sedentary lifestyle of the average American and give them the tools and training to become athletes capable of combat.

Mental Readiness

"Mental readiness is the capacity to adapt successfully in the presence of risk and adversity."⁶ Installations across the Army have been pushing for all Soldiers to be ready and resilient (R2). Fort Benning teaches its Soldiers to be mentally fit through the R2 program. The TAP-C works alongside the performance psychologists employed by R2 to teach Soldiers how to use the skills learned through yearly resiliency training and apply them in real-world situations. FM 7-22 broadens the understanding of mental readiness stating that mental readiness depends on five factors: character, behavior, resilience, cognitive skill, and social acuity.

Spiritual Readiness

Units across Fort Benning utilize chaplains to increase spiritual readiness within Soldiers. Chaplains host spiritual events that help prepare Soldiers for challenges they may face in the future. They develop spiritual readiness through discussions on faith, scripture, and the importance of interpersonal communication in order to build healthy relationships. Several of the initial military training (IMT) chaplains attend workshops with their unit's drill sergeants at the TAP-C. The 199th Infantry Brigade Chaplain hosts spiritual retreats such as the Strong Bonds program for married and single Soldiers alike. Another great effort is from the 3rd Battalion, 81st Armor Regiment chaplain, who is linking spiritual and physical fitness by hosting "Spiritual Fitness Hikes" at Providence Canyon in Lumpkin, GA.

Nutritional Readiness

Fort Benning is also making changes to its dining facilities (DFACs); clearly labeled foods are now put in order of precedence of which are most healthy to least healthy. The "Go for Green" campaign highlights the healthiest "green" options first so Soldiers fill up their plates with the healthiest foods before moving further down the line to the less healthy yellow and red categorized foods. The goal is to have Soldiers reach for the most nutritious options first. For many new Soldiers going through IMT, the DFACs may be the first time they are introduced to how to make healthy eating choices. Fort Benning DFACs are also educating more than just new trainees; they also reach Soldiers attending many of the professional military education (PME) courses in addition to those assigned as permanent party. There are many options available besides the DFACs to include fast food establishments available on and off post that are convenient. Eating healthy will continue to require the discipline of making smart choices. Idealistically through the indoctrination and experience established beginning

with IMT and reinforced through PME, Soldiers will make the healthiest choices no matter where they eat.

The Army's utilization of strength and conditioning coaches is a critical aspect in the continuing commitment of the Army's culture of fitness. However, most installations will take several years to develop brigade-level H2F facilities. The Fort Benning TAP-C is fortunate to have several strength and conditioning coaches. The TAP-C is responsible for teaching lifelong fitness and movement skills, improving athletic performance, and reducing injuries which ultimately leads to increasing physical dominance and lethality capabilities. To make positive change across the force, leaders at multiple levels need educational development and increased familiarization with using strength and conditioning coaches. Training Soldiers attending MCoE PME courses accomplishes this. The strength and conditioning coaches at the TAP-C currently train future Army leaders across all career branches by developing Soldiers attending Officer Candidate School (OCS). They further influence the culture of fitness by working with students from the Infantry Basic Officer Leader Course (IBOLC), Maneuver Senior Leader Course (MSLC), and Maneuver Captains Career Course (MCCC). Each year, thousands of leaders will be able to take and apply the skills they learn at the TAP-C to influence change in the culture of the U.S. Army, which is the ultimate goal of H2F.

Notes

¹ FM 7-22, *Holistic Health and Fitness*, October 2020. Retrieved from https://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/DR_pubs/DR_a/ARN30714-FM_7-22-000-WEB-1.pdf.

² Secretary of the Army Ryan McCarthy, GEN James McConville, and SMAMichael Grinston, "Focus on Its People Is No. 1 Army Priority," *Fort Campbell Courier*, 15 October 2020, accessed from https://fortcampbell-courier.com/army_messaging/article_32aa915e-0f5f-11eb-85be-ffb3921532a2.html.

³ GEN Paul E. Funk II, "Maintenance – People Readiness," *INFANTRY Magazine* (Fall 2020): 42.

⁴ D.J. Bigham, "Improving the Army's Physical Training Culture with the Tactical Athlete Performance Center (TAP-C) at the Maneuver Center of Excellence (MCoE)," 6 November 2018.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ FM 7-22, 3-9.

SFC Phillip Andrew served as the first sergeant (1SG) for the Maneuver Center of Excellence (MCoE) Band at Fort Benning, GA. His next assignment will be as a small group leader for the Army Band's Senior Leader Course at the U.S. Army School of Music at Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek in Norfolk, VA.

1SG John A. Bandy currently serves as the 1SG for A Company, 3rd Battalion, 81st Armor Regiment (MCoE Headquarters and Headquarters Company), Fort Benning.

1SG James Fetherson currently serves as the 1SG for B Company, 3-81 AR and Maneuver Captains Career Course.

1SG Brandon Roberts currently serves as 1SG for C Company, 3-81 AR, International Military Student Office.

1SG Gideon Wilkinson served as 1SG for HHC, 199th Infantry Brigade, Fort Benning. He is currently serving as 1SG for B Troop, 6th Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, at Fort Bliss, TX.



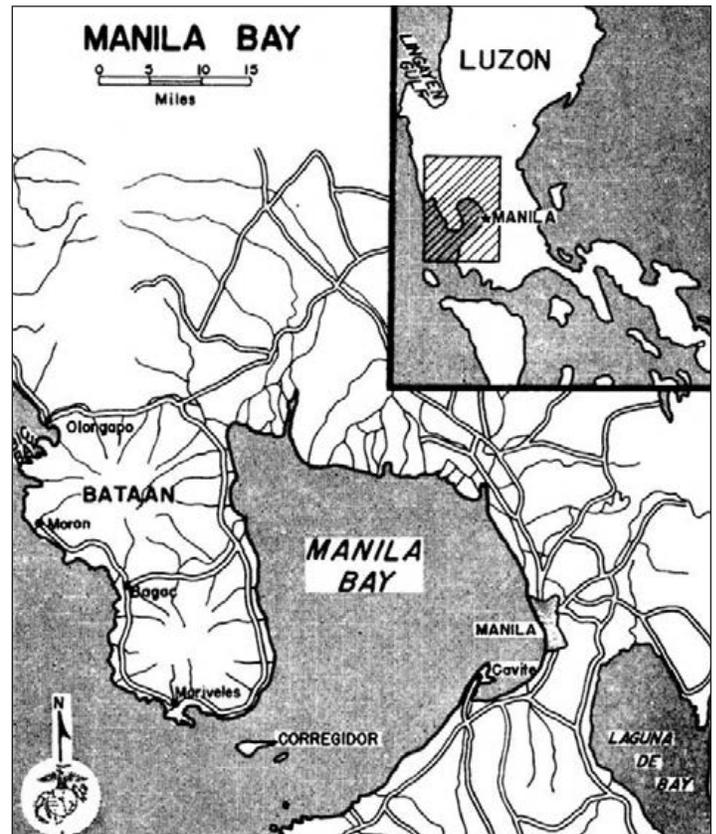
The Battle of Corregidor: *Then and Now*

SSG HARPER H. EVANS

There is nothing new in war. The weapons and fields may change, but since Alexander the Great conquered the known world with its first “fire and maneuver,” conflict has been decided by aggression, discipline, and decisive leadership.

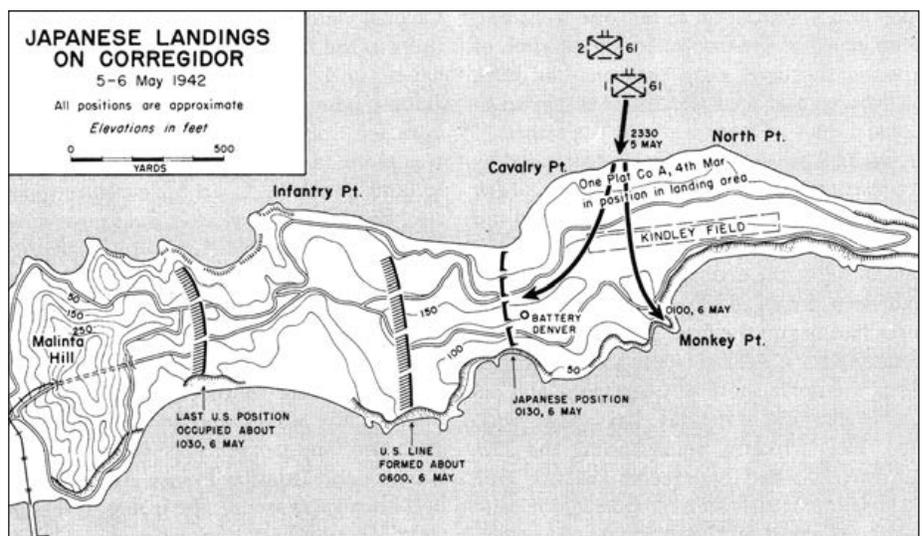
I was given the exceptional privilege to represent the 1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade, as we commemorated the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Corregidor. While it is well established that history is relevant to our operations today, the event — which gave me unique insight and otherwise inaccessible stories of this incredible undertaking — marked a highlight of my career. What I experienced walking the island was a combination of some of warfare’s worst terrain: dense jungle foliage, steep hills, dug-in defenses, and coastal cliffs which denied any possibility of reinforcement, retrograde, maneuver, and — should the landing zones or beachhead fall — escape. What I met in the people of Manila was a community that still fiercely remembers our shared struggle against indescribable tyranny and oppression.

While the Japanese capture of the island in May of 1942 was hard fought, the loss was felt in the American homeland. Not just a critical strategic stronghold, the millions of dollars invested in Fort Mills on the island prior to World War II made it the symbolic and tactical last stand with the best chance at halting the Japanese invasion as it swept across the Philippines. This mythos grew as the island held fast, the only point in the otherwise unstoppable wave where the enemy failed to meet its timetables. The American and Allied defenders’ prolonged resistance allowed for strategic withdrawal that preserved massive amounts of combat power. Their eventual surrender saved the lives of thousands of civilians but at the cost of the last stronghold of the Pacific; the homefront knew its first defeat of the war.



From Shanghai to Corregidor: Marines in the Defense of the Philippines by J. Michael Miller

Map 1 — Manila Bay of the Philippines



The Fall of the Philippines by Louis Morton

Map 2 — Japanese Landings on Corregidor, 5-6 May 1942

Nearly three years later, America returned on the heels of the Airborne. Surprise, adaptability, and tenacity had won the beach on D-Day, but the transition to a traditional warfront and the recent calamity of Operation Market Garden had cast significant doubts on the future of the paratroopers in warfare. Despite the 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment's successes following airborne assaults in Markham Valley and Noemfoor (remembered to this day by two of the three parachutes on the Distinctive Unit Insignia of the 503rd), the regiment struggled with desperately low morale as cavalry units led the charge to liberate Bataan and Manila. Despite the doubts of senior command (both American and Japanese, as fate would have it), paratroopers would be given a chance to lead the recapture of "The Rock" as General MacArthur embraced flexibility and aggression to fulfill his promise of 1942: "I shall return."

The aggressive terrain created one of the most dynamic and difficult battlefields imaginable. To my modern jumpmaster's eyes, the drop zones were shockingly small — a literal parade field that couldn't fit my battalion. Once members of Rock Force hit ground pulverized by a month of bombardment, they would face impenetrable jungle with visibility in knife-fight distances or the lethal vista of Topside's commanding view over the beaches below. This was the harsh reality that cost the Japanese naval assault force 2,100 casualties when it took the island in 1942. The commander of their defense, Captain Ijn Itagaki, committed completely to their prior experience and doctrine. While he anticipated American employment of paratroopers, three years of forced labor had prepared formidable defenses against the only attack that made sense — a combination of amphibious and airborne assault on the relatively forgiving terrain at Monkey Point or Middleside (the tail and middle of Corregidor's "tadpole" shape).

On 16 February 1945, the stage was set: aggressive Allied flexibility versus rigid Axis doctrine. The fate of the Pacific,

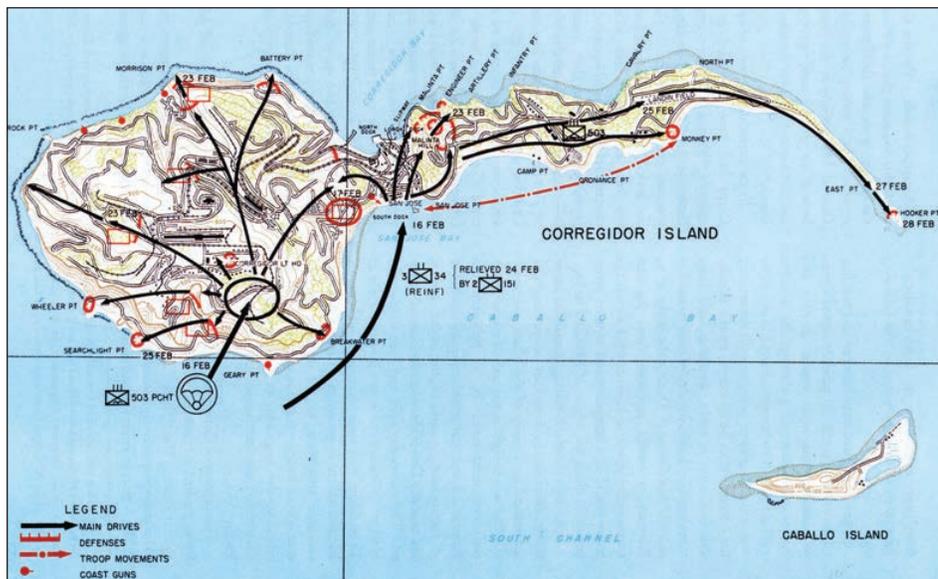


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Paratroopers, supported by ground forces, land on Corregidor during the combined assault launched on 16 February 1945.

the eyes of the nation, and the future of the Airborne hung in the balance. An entire theater of war came to rest on a drop zone the size of a football field and an impenetrable island to be pried from the grip of a fanatical enemy one bloody yard at a time.

Map 3 — Recapture of Corregidor, 16-28 February 1945



Reports of General MacArthur: The Campaigns of MacArthur in the Pacific, Volume I

Embracing the lessons of D-Day, the American offensive to recapture Corregidor relied on two key factors. First was flawless coordination between land, sea, and air. Across every inch of the island, dozens of Soldiers and literal tons of bombardment were separated by minutes or seconds. The complexity of this part of the operation relied on the unsung diligence of planning staff and the absolute trust of the Soldiers on the ground.

The second factor was the sheer, unpredictable boldness of the plan. The concept was simple: establish a foothold on Topside with paratroopers to deter enemy defenses from hindering the larger amphibious assault. The execution was by design and, quite literally, inconceivably difficult.



Photo by SSgt David Owsianka, USAF

Bobby Bell, American Battle Monuments Commission deputy superintendent, talks to 503rd Infantry Regiment Soldiers during a ceremony commemorating the 75th anniversary of the retaking of Corregidor Island in Manila, Philippines, on 17 February 2020.

The concept was the same one we train today: Each paratrooper understands the commander's intent to mass combat power and establish a foothold at all costs. Unlike today's mass tactical jumps, pilots of the 317th Troop Carrier Group watched from their flight altitude of 500 feet or less as paratroopers were dragged by high winds off the cliffs surrounding the drop zone; sticks were reduced to as few as three jumpers per pass. Though the final strafing runs against the two small drop zones had ended just one minute before the first jumper, sporadic but fierce Japanese resistance was met on the ground. The 2-503rd spent the first few desperate hours struggling to establish a tenuous perimeter. Without a foothold on Topside, the island couldn't be taken, but with any understanding of the attack plan the Japanese defenders easily could have overwhelmed the drop zones.

The enemy commander's commitment to the most likely avenue of attack lasted just long enough to cause their overwhelming downfall. Captain Itagaki and his staff were positioned near Breakwater Point, observing the oncoming amphibious assault and preparing for a coordinated counteroffensive that could, with one timely piece of intelligence, have been directed towards the drop zones. His observers were so intent on their sectors that they failed to notice the guns had lifted off Topside.

Of the many paratroopers dragged by their parachutes (which had no quick release at the time) off the drop zone, 17 were carried south of the golf course used as "Drop Zone B." Unable to climb back up the cliffs and without a senior NCO or officer to lead them, these men executed the most sacred battle drill of the airborne: They formed little groups of paratroopers (LGOPs), marched to the sound of guns, and caused mayhem along the way. Unnoticed, they observed a

group of Japanese soldiers along their route back to Topside; firsthand accounts mention a brief discussion of bypassing the enemy to get directly back to the relative safety of their company, but violence of action quickly won out. What these young paratroopers didn't learn until weeks later was that the enemy position they had silenced included the enemy's commanding officer of the entire island.

This moment would define the success of the entire battle and summarize the ethos of the paratrooper; in the absence of orders, they took initiative, seized opportunity, and shaped the battlefield. The remainder of the enemy's 6,700-man defense force, without orders, dug in. In those few hours of confusion, the Allied assault established a decisive foothold on Topside and the landing beaches of Middleside. Although the commitment of the remaining defenders was absolute, the outcome of the rest of the battle was determined by the first day.

On the home front, the recapture of "The Rock" was the decisive return blow for the black eye of Pearl Harbor. On the eastern front, the tactical victory on the island marked a massive strategic and logistical turning point in the protracted "island-hopping" campaign to recapture the Pacific. The Battle for Corregidor was long, painful, and won by more than just paratroopers. The battle for the Pacific would drag on, but a thousand good men, at the right time and in an impossible place, inevitably tipped the scales.

Just as today's paratroopers are taught to commit completely only at the decisive point, the eyes of an entire theater rested on the locked door of the only deep-water port that could allow us to finish the fight our enemy started. As the paratroopers fell on Topside, so fell any hope of a Japanese victory. As the foothold was established, we established the inevitable victory in the Pacific. The legacy of the Rock Regiment was born in one day on one tiny island, yet it echoes to this day — a legacy of the discipline, adaptability, pride, and trust of the American paratrooper.

As a final note, I'd like to extend my deepest gratitude to our hosts, both on and off the island, who welcomed us so graciously to the Philippines. It is rare and humbling to see our heritage cherished so deeply. I strongly encourage those with ties to the airborne, the 173rd, or who possess a passion for history to explore the exceptionally rich living history of the island.

SSG Harper H. Evans enlisted as a combat medic and served in the 3rd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment and the 1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade. While serving as a medical training NCO and jumpmaster in Vicenza, Italy, he has earned opportunities to revisit history and represent the 173rd Airborne Brigade at the 75th anniversaries of D-Day in Normandy and the Battle of Corregidor in Manila, Philippines.

