

# A CASE AGAINST BATTLE DRILL SIX

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An overemphasis on training for close quarter combat (CQC), or close quarter battle (CQB), in recent years has resulted in its overuse in combat, often in situations where more appropriate options exist.

Platoon by platoon, the Army is learning the hard way how hazardous it is to fight room to room against a well prepared and often suicidal opponent. We can no longer afford to learn the lesson individually. It is time for a candid discussion on this subject, and to address the problem as a responsive, learning, and adaptive Army.

## Roots of CQC

Specialized units developed and refined CQB tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) over many decades. The Army gradually adopted these methods, renaming them CQC, and in recent years they have been put to the test extensively in the real world. Unfortunately, little in the way of methodology and risk assessment has been transferred along with the tactics.

These special mission units developed these TTPs almost exclusively for hostages rescue operations. It was understood that any such operation would be of great strategic importance and therefore worth great risk and cost. It was also understood that to have any reasonable chance of success, the assault must be conducted with *complete surprise, simultaneously* entering the *critical point* from as many *unexpected* directions as possible, ending the fight almost immediately. It was assumed that if the operation failed to accomplish this in the opening seconds and a protracted fight resulted, the opportunity for a successful resolution would quickly evaporate, hostages would be lost, and casualties would mount.

It was also understood that this would be a onetime operation, and that the units involved would have years to recover from their casualties before being called on to perform again, if ever.

How often do our day-to-day operations fit the above criteria? Rarely do conventional units find themselves conducting hostage rescue operations, yet it is disturbingly common to see units utilize these CQC techniques as if it were an in extremis situation.



It is a challenge for any unit to train its Soldiers to an acceptable level of proficiency in the necessary individual tasks, then to train collectively as teams, squads, platoons, etc. This can also mean routinely starting over as new individuals are integrated and leadership changes take place. Battle Drill Six requires a lot of time and effort in training to get it right. The hardest tasks always do require more training time. The elite origins of CQC add appeal and may also contribute to overtraining. All of this emphasis in training conditions a response. We go into autopilot mode, default to what we are most familiar with, “close with and destroy the enemy, eliminate the threat at close range” We find ourselves employing *high-risk tactics* against *low-payoff targets*.

### Historical perspective

As students of military history we are familiar with past armies who dismissed new technologies, fortifications, artillery, etc., and focused on the offensive spirit and the bayonet as the core of their military doctrine, as if spirit alone were the decisive factor in warfare.

We are also familiar with what happened when their infantry assaults as well as their élan were shattered by an army who had embraced technology and firepower. How often have you seen squads dismount Bradley fighting vehicles, leave them lined in the street with all the firepower and protective armor they offer, to enter and clear buildings on an equal footing with the occupants? In truth, when the occupants turn out to be hostile, they have had ample time to plan and prepare their defense for the purpose of achieving successful escape or martyrdom, whichever they prefer. This puts the attacking troops at a decided disadvantage no matter how perfectly they perform their CQC drills.

When MILES (Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement System) and simunitions scenarios produce light casualties, we should realize that live bullets will over penetrate bodies and many walls. They will ricochet and create secondary casualties further down range than our training weapons can produce, and grenades and improvised explosive devices will cause carnage impossible to replicate in training. Those “light casualties” in training scenarios should be interpreted as the tip of an iceberg that will fully reveal itself only in the real world.

Use of fire and maneuver have been fundamental to the U.S. Army for decades. Have we now come full circle? Is CQC the modern equivalent of the bayonet charge? Should CQC be our last resort, utilized only after all other options have been exhausted?

More than 100 years ago, General Philippe Pétain, struggling to get his army to accept his modern theories on firepower said, “Cannon conquers, infantry occupies.” He once made a promise to a decimated regiment: “You went into the assault singing the Marseillaise. It was magnificent. But next time you will not need to sing the Marseillaise. There will be a sufficient number of guns to ensure your attack’s a success.”

No responsible commander would order troops to assault a piece of terrain without giving them supporting firepower sufficient to ensure their success. A building is a piece of urban terrain, and given its potential as a defensive position, deserves *at least* the same respect as any other defended terrain.

Clearly, flattening a building with firepower at the drop of a



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*Soldiers from the 173rd Airborne Brigade practice building clearing procedures during training at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center in Hohenfels, Germany.*

hat is not the first option unless the *assessed threat is high enough to justify it*. Neither should the bayonet charge be the first option unless the *assessed threat is low enough to justify it*. Somewhere in between, depending on the situation, is the right answer.

### Threat assessment

CQC training is a high-risk training event. Before any such event, a leader is expected to do a risk-assessment. He will identify hazards associated with the event, establish control measures and provide assets to mitigate the risks and to ensure a reasonable degree of safety. A threat assessment could be considered a risk assessment with the addition of the enemy capabilities and intent, with careful thought given to risk vs. benefits.

When a building is empty or occupied by a non-hostile opponent, our CQC techniques work well. How could they not?

When specific intelligence indicates that a bad group or a high-value target occupies a site, we need to reassess our methods. Any combative group of insurgents will have planned and rehearsed actions on contact in preparation for a coalition raid.

Our raid objective will usually be kill-capture. The decisive point of the operation is containment or preventing escape, not rapidly eliminating the threat as it would be if hostages were at stake.

CQC training conducted against inanimate paper targets has not conditioned us to anticipate the enemy’s response. It is this

*enemy course of action* that is critical to the threat assessment. They will anticipate the most likely avenues of approach, choke points, etc., and prepare their defenses accordingly. His purpose will likely be to buy time to facilitate escape, to inflict as many casualties as possible as he martyrs himself, or both. Foiling his plan is our highest priority. Falling into his trap is the last thing we want to do.

Given all of the resources available to us, is there no way to separate the combatants from the noncombatants, and to drive the combatants from their defensive position? The enemy's escape is our mission failure. Trapping him is success. Identifying his potential escape routes is our planning priority. Blocking them is our execution priority. Once he is effectively trapped, we have many safer options than CQC to finish the fight. Selecting the appropriate level of force is our next move.

### Target Discrimination and Escalation of Force

We will always have the legal, moral, and ethical responsibility to separate combatants from noncombatants, to engage positively identified threats with force proportional to the threat, and to take every reasonable measure to safeguard innocent lives. We are obligated to take some risks in order to accomplish this. This does not mean that conducting CQC in and around

civilians is the safest way to separate them from the combatants, despite the greater risk to our own troops.

Escalation of force is more than a rigid set of procedures. It is more than traffic control. It is the *principle* of alerting and warning innocent civilians, allowing them to avoid potentially hazardous situations. It is forcing a hostile enemy to show his hostile intent earlier than he would have chosen. It is accomplishing this while keeping our own troops at a safe distance making use of available cover, concealment, and stand-off. It should be the philosophy that guides every operation we conduct.

Whether in traffic or in a building, escalation of force requires getting the attention of the subjects in question, and then giving them clear instructions to comply with. Compliance demonstrates non-hostile status. Lack of compliance with clear instructions triggers each subsequent level of force, until compliance or clear hostile intent is achieved.

Given the opportunity, most noncombatants will choose to depart a building and comply with the instructions of an interpreter. They will answer an interpreter's questions as to whether anyone else or any hazards exist in the building. Based on the consistency of the various stories obtained, we can continue our threat assessment and determine our next course of action.

### Determining Hostile Intent

If we are satisfied that the building has been emptied of all occupants, sending an element to clear it by CQC may be an appropriate course of action. If we are not satisfied that the building has been emptied, jumping to CQC is probably premature.

Is noncompliance at this point to be considered hostile intent? Or must we provoke any remaining occupants to fire on us first? If so, how should we probe them to prompt a clear hostile act? A single high explosive (HE) round into the front door may be enough to cause an insurgent to lose his nerve and announce his presence. A pause and a final warning will ensure that we have done everything possible to separate the innocents.

The ultimate goal is to give innocents every opportunity to escape, and to avoid sending troops into a trap until we are satisfied of no hostile intent, or we have positively identified that hostile intent, and eliminated the threat with the appropriate fire power.

In any event, at the first sign of resistance, the only appropriate response is to back off, and once again reapply appropriate firepower.

How many levels of escalation satisfy our legal and moral obligations? Only a commander, under the advice of his JAG, can answer that.

### Conclusion

If we make it our goal to surprise, close with and destroy the enemy faster than he can defend and/or escape, how fast can we realistically be? What price will we pay if we miscalculate and lose the critical element of surprise?

How often will we trigger a fight or flight response in innocent home owners, and how often will that result in a fight that would not have otherwise happened?

If our goal is to trap and surround, and the enemy chooses to fight, what have we lost?

Shouldn't we assume that we will never have the right conditions necessary to conduct low-risk CQC until we have taken steps to create those conditions ourselves?

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*Soldiers from the 173rd Airborne Brigade practice building clearing procedures during a training event at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center in Germany.*

# AAEF: AIR ASSAULT EXPEDITIONARY FORCE CAMPAIGN OF EXPERIMENTATION

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The Air Assault Expeditionary Force (AAEF) experiment is the Army's principal live, prototype, discovery experiment that began in 2004 at the direction of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) and is in the third year (Spiral C) of a four-year campaign designed to evaluate emerging technologies and operational concepts in order to inform development efforts related to both current and future forces and enhance risk reduction for the Future Combat System Program of Record.

AAEF brings numerous government and Army organizations along with industry partners together in a unique venue that places more than 40 emerging technologies, linked through a network, in the hands of Soldiers during the conduct of 10 tactical missions. This type of collective experimentation produces synergy, shared learning and significant cost savings to both the government and industry. AAEF provides operational insights that impact and influence development decisions and assist in the risk reduction to future development efforts including the modular force, the Future Combat System, and other major Army programs.

Since its inception AAEF has provided valuable operational insights to the Army demonstrating the power of leveraging technologies and an integrated multi-tier network to enhance small unit mission success and survivability. As depicted in Figure 1, the experimental force was seven times more effective, as measured in terms of survivability, follow-on capability, and mission accomplishment equipped with the emerging technologies.

These findings are a result of the in-depth analysis and data collection efforts associated with the performance of the base case (current force/current organization) and the advance case (future force/technology enhanced). This analysis has led to DOTMLPF findings related to the ways units of the future, and current forces employing these concepts/technologies, might organize, train and fight as well as to the ways units in

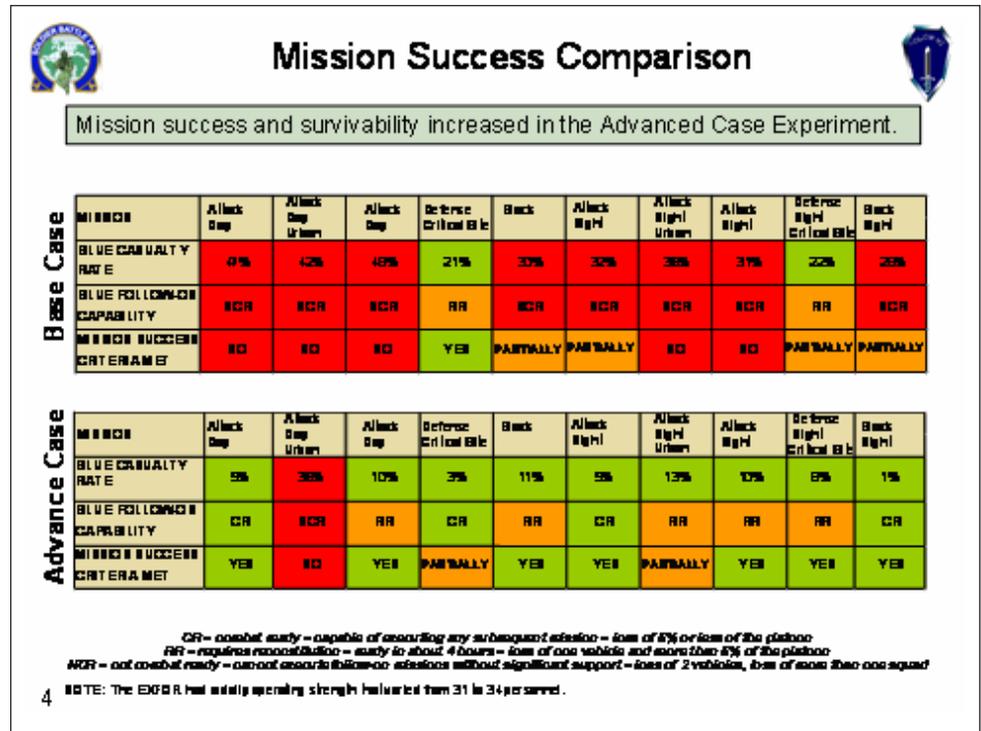


Figure 1

the future might be manned, supplied, trained and even how installations and equipment may need to be built to support such forces.

Specifically the AAEF Spiral C Experiment (October-November 2006) will be focused on garnering insights in the following DOTMLPF (doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership, education, personnel, and facilities) areas:

### Doctrine

How does the information made available through the implemented C4ISR architecture impact decision making at company and platoon levels?

How does the suite of sensors, implemented fusion processes and information management protocols impact the quality of information at company and platoon levels?

### Organizations and Personnel

What organization, equipment and personnel changes are required in the company headquarters and in the infantry platoon

to properly conduct sensor planning, sensor employment and recovery, sensor fusion and security?

**Training and Leader Development**

Document the increased complexities and mental demands on leaders that occurs from increased situational awareness, the requirements of sensor planning, employment and management, and accelerated decision cycles in a network-enabled force.

Codify training requirements of new technologies (UGVs, UAVs, sensors, battle command systems and communications).

**Materiel**

What battle command interface functionality and decision aids are essential at the company, platoon and squad levels?

How well does the network enable the flow of data and information throughout the experimental force? Which technologies enhance the effectiveness of the network and contribute to increased lethality and survivability?

Beyond the currently planned spirals, AAEF provides a critical capability as a venue to continue experimentation along the critical prototyping path and to recognize solutions to identified capability



Courtesy photo

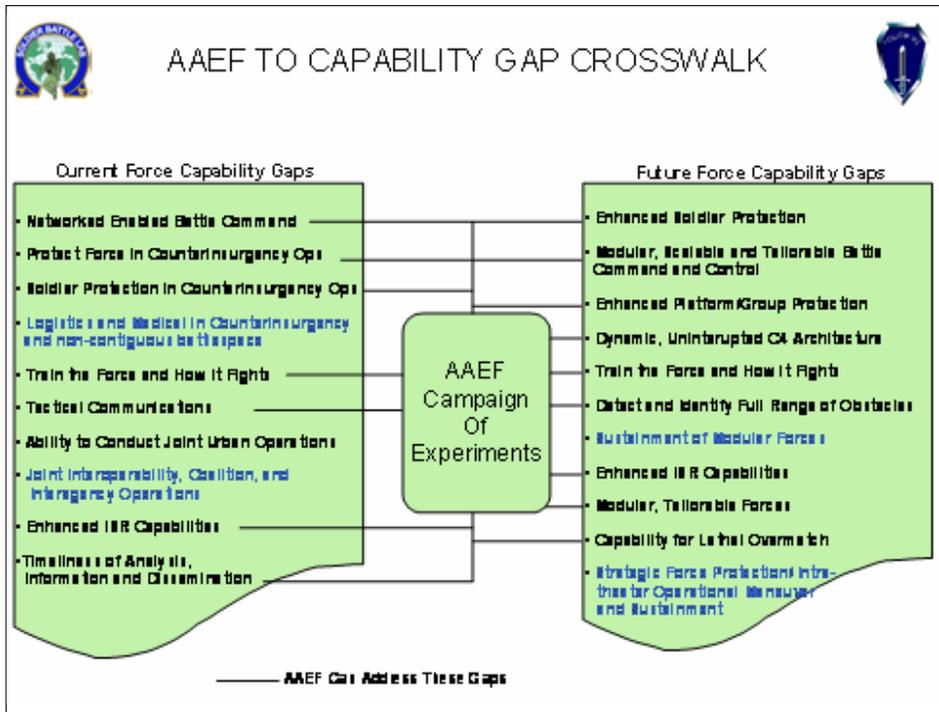
*Soldiers of the Experimentation Force (EXFOR) assault the Fort Benning MOUT facility during TRADOC's Air Assault Expeditionary Force (AAEF) experiment.*

gaps in current and future forces. (Figure 2) AAEF is a critical link within the Army's Concept and Capability Developments Plan (AC2DP) and ensures

small unit experimentation complements large-scale, system-centric future experimentation centered on the Evaluation Brigade Combat Team. The EBCT and live, small-unit field experiments, like AAEF, are both key components of the Army Concept Development Plan.

The US Army, TRADOC, and Fort Benning have made significant investments to explore new concepts, ideas and insights involving emerging technologies and their employment on the battlefield to ensure that Soldiers continue to dominate land combat in the future. AAEF capitalizes on these investments and fills a critical need in the Army Experimentation Campaign.

Figure 2



**Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Paul E. Snyder** currently serves as a project officer for the Air Assault Expeditionary Force (AAEF) Campaign of Experimentation in the Soldier Battle Lab at Fort Benning. He joined the AAEF Team after completing over 20 years of active duty service in various command and staff positions from platoon to division culminating as the Commander of the United Nations Command Security Battalion – Joint Security Area in the Republic of Korea.