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TRAINING THE COMMAND-STAFF TEAM FOR BATTLE COMMAND AND RAPID DECISIONMAKING

by

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There is no teacher but the enemy. No one but the enemy will ever tell you what the enemy is going to do. No one but the enemy will ever teach you how to destroy and conquer. Only the enemy shows you where you are weak. Only the enemy tells you where he is strong. And the only rules of the game are what you can do to him and what you can stop him from doing.¹

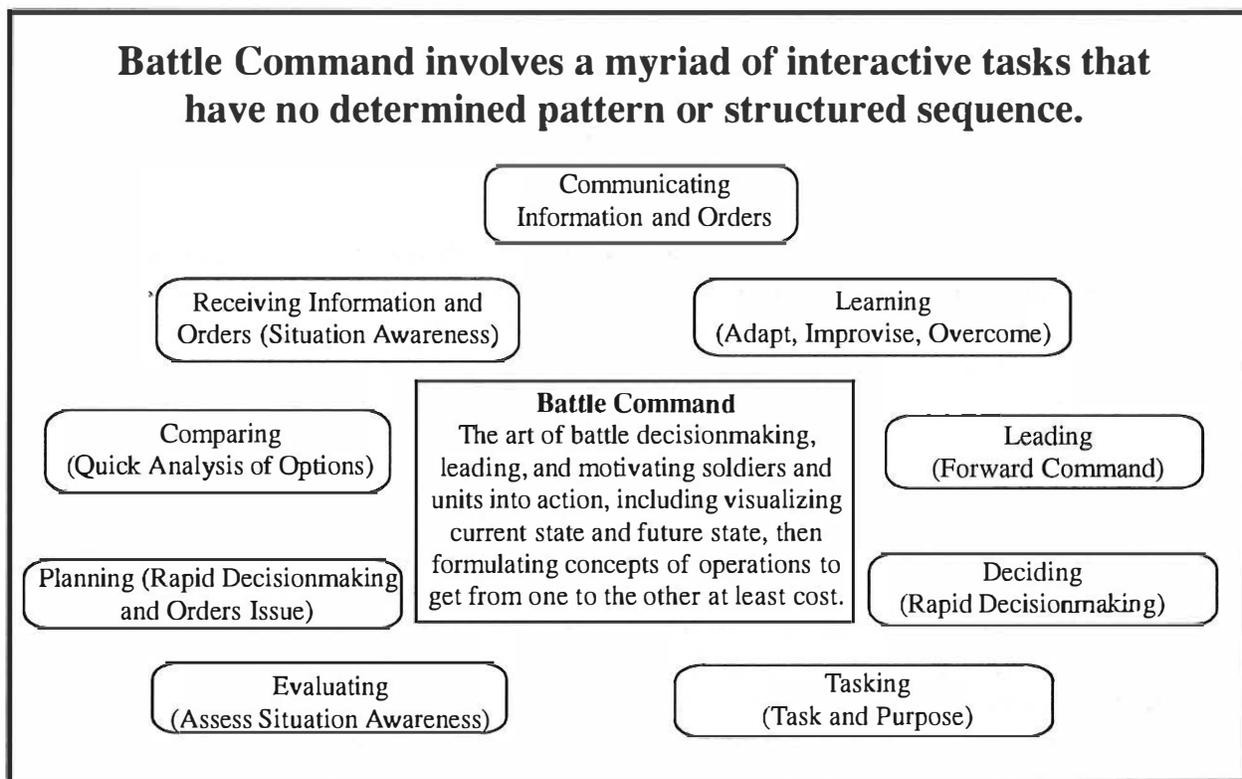
In combat, commanders and their staffs fight a battle against time. Today, more than ever before in the history of warfare, rapid decisionmaking is required at the tactical level of war. The increased tempo of 21st century warfare, called Third Wave² warfare by one author, will demand that the commander and his staff rapidly execute a command-staff process that assesses, analyzes, decides and provides a plan-of-action in minimum time. Developing a workable plan in minimum time requires well-trained staffs and decisive commanders. It is a task that takes extensive education and effective training. Thorough understanding of the methods to train the command-staff team in the art of battle command, therefore, are matters of primary interest to military professionals.

Battle command is the “art of decision making, leading, and motivating soldiers and their organizations into action to accomplish missions.”³ Battle command is executed in the dynamic environment of combat, with the friction and fog of war acting against the will of the commander. On the modern battlefield, commanders above company level execute their will with the aid of their staffs. Successful battle command, therefore, requires an effective command-staff team. This article addresses techniques to train the command-staff team to execute battle command on the tactical battlefield.

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Decisionmaking and the Art of Battle Command

The term “battle command” was added to U.S. Army doctrine with the publication of Field Manual 100-5, *Operations* in June 1993. The decisionmaking requirements of battle command, however, are not new to warfare. It may appear to the uninitiated that the tasks of tactical decisionmaking and planning should be very simple matters. The reality of combat, however, proves that these tasks are anything but simple. The diagram below shows the complexity of the art of battle command. Numerous other factors, such as command-staff team cohesion, a commonly understood doctrine, and effective command-staff training are required to execute successful battle command in combat. At the heart of this requirement is the need to conduct rapid decisionmaking in a two-sided situation where the enemy is trying to influence the outcome.



Decisionmaking can be conducted explicitly or implicitly. An explicit style consists of the traditional analytical approach to problem solving taught in the service staff schools. This approach works best when there is ample time and when conducted by a highly skilled and experienced staff. An implicit approach is more cognitive, or recognitional. Recognitional decisionmaking is based upon the intuitive knowledge or experience of the decisionmaker. “This technique emphasizes the quick mental jumps at *the* solution to a problem and the wargaming of this solution. They occur when a decisionmaker recognizes a situation as typical, recognizes the typical reaction to the situation, evaluates the reaction for feasibility, and then either implements it, improves it, or rejects it for another reaction.”⁴ This approach can provide battlewinning results in time-compressed situations. Recognitional decisionmaking is the means to produce the rapid decisions involved in the execution of battle command.

Rapid decisionmaking is the essence of battle command. Needless to say, successful rapid decisionmaking requires a highly skilled and experienced command-staff organization. The history of successful command-staff organizations, therefore, offers a starting place to investigate how commanders and staffs can develop effective rapid decisionmaking techniques. The history of warfare in the 19th and 20th centuries provides a rich record of examples of command-staff techniques that were used by armies that gained a reputation for victory in battle. From these examples we can conclude some general guidelines to help create superior command-staff teams capable of executing battle command on tomorrow's battlefields.

Historical Command-Staff Training Techniques

Since the dawn of warfare, commanders have relied on trained officers to assist them in planning and issuing orders. "Staffs had existed at least since the days when the Egyptian Pharaohs first marched organized armies onto the pages of history."⁵ The ancient Roman army, renowned as one of the most efficient fighting machines of antiquity, had a highly organized and trained staff system. There is ample historical evidence to demonstrate the expert capability of Roman armies to support complex operational maneuvers with thorough logistical preparation. Scarce information exists, however, concerning how the Romans trained these staffs. The same situation is true for the staff of Genghis Khan — one of the most successful generals in history. "We know little of the details of this system, probably because the history of his operations was mostly written by his enemies."⁶ Yet, the great Khan won victories as much through thorough planning and painstaking attention to detail — the product of an effective staff system — as to the fierceness of the Golden Horde. Orders and combat intelligence information passed rapidly through the Mongol chain of command. His intelligence, supply and orders system was the most effective of his time. Following this trend, the history of ancient warfare fails to reveal the secrets of training an effective command-staff team.

While the command and staff process was described and analyzed from time to time, few practitioners, historians or theorists dealt with exactly how the increasingly complex systems were controlled — perhaps because it was incomprehensible. Military history and science focused on the general progress of battles and campaigns, embellished by anecdotes and descriptions of events, leaving the actual functions of headquarters and signal functions and those who worked them as far out of focus as field hospitals or quartermaster depots. At the same time, many command and staff techniques and practices remained in the military "shop culture" procedures shaped by momentum, custom, word of mouth, adaptive informal practice and the inclination or whim of commanders and staffs.⁷

Finally, in the 19th century, the creation of the Napoleonic staff system was the genesis of today's modern military staffs. The Napoleonic staff system was based on function, with staff directorates in charge of operations, logistics and personnel. The complexity of warfare in the 19th and 20th centuries demanded specialized staffs. With increased staff specialization came the need to train staff officers in specialized skills. Officers and scholars studied Napoleon's system and developed improved command-staff training techniques.

The Prussians, humiliated by Napoleon in 1807, reformed their army with a vengeance once they gained independence from the French. The Prussians studied the methods of their adversaries

and improved upon the Napoleonic staff model. By the 1870s they pioneered the development of new command-staff training methods and led the world in staff training techniques. After 1870 the Prussian victory over France persuaded the armies of the world to copy everything Prussian. Many armies also copied the Prussian staff model and adopted Prussian training techniques. These training methods focused on four methods: tactical discussions, staff rides, war games and maneuvers.

Today, these methods still form the basis for all command-staff training. Faced with situations of greater complexity, the training of commanders and staffs became critical to the armies of the 20th century. The discussion below traces the development of tactical discussions, staff rides, war games and maneuvers to the present day.

Tactical Discussions

In the 19th century, the Prussians, under such men as Scharnhorst, Gneisenau, Clausewitz and Muffling, pioneered staff training through the institution of the German General Staff. The Germans carefully selected General Staff officers through a series of competitive examinations. Selected from the best and the brightest of the German officer corps, General Staff officers were considered the mechanism that would lead the German Army to organizational and operational excellence. The German staff concept worked on the principle that the “leader or leadership makes decisions and gives commands; the General Staff’s responsibility is to provide all possible support to assure that the decisions and commands are timely, sound and effective.”⁸

Tactical discussions became the cornerstone of an officer’s professional education by developing individual staff officer skills. The goal of these discussions was to develop a common understanding of doctrine and a specific military language. A typical tactical discussion consisted of a rigorous historical study of a recent battle, followed by a thorough tactical analysis. Recent battles, offering conditions that represented contemporary combat, were the best subjects for tactical discussions.

A typical tactical discussion involved a group of officers, who had thoroughly studied a selected battle. The group would discuss the battle and analyze the orders, actions, timings and counteractions. The officers would then tear the historical events apart, piece by piece, to determine what actually happened and why. Through this rigorous intellectual exploration, German officers gained a common insight into the theory, language and practice of war. Today, tactical discussions can play the same role in command-staff team development.

Staff Rides

Staff rides were another technique that became a vital part of the German command-staff training method. A staff ride, or terrain walk, involved the execution of a tactical plan on actual terrain in real time by the command-staff team. Initially, the German General Staff conducted an annual staff ride.

The purpose of those staff rides was to have the entire staff gain an intimate acquaintance with one of the potential operational areas for which the deployment and combat plans so

painstakingly prepared. For a period of a week or more, the officers would ride over the countryside, becoming familiar with the terrain, and attempting to visualize on the ground the maneuvers they had developed on maps. Every evening there would be a discussion of what they had seen and done during the day; notes would be taken... and when they got back to Berlin, the plans would be revised accordingly.⁹

Units throughout the German Army, at all echelons of command, adopted the staff ride technique to train their officers. Other armies copied this technique. In the United States Army, Major Eben Swift implemented the staff ride concept at the General Service and Staff School at Fort Leavenworth in 1906.¹⁰ Tactical terrain walks and tactical exercises without troops (TEWTs) derive from the staff ride. In varying forms, staff rides are used today by most of the armies in the world as a valuable tool to develop tactically proficient combat leaders.

War Games

War games became another very effective staff training technique. *Kriegsspiel*, or wargaming for military training and combat prediction, is considered by many to be a German invention. German tacticians experimented with war games in the 19th century. One game designer developed a game titled *The New Kriegsspiel*. He wrote a book, *Rules of a New War Game for the Use of Military Schools*, to go along with his game. This game “was played on a board whose 3,600 squares represented the terrain along the Franco-Belgian border.”¹¹ The game soon became popular with the professional German officer corps. In 1824, when General Karl von Muffling, the chief of the German General Staff, saw *Kriegsspiel* being played, he exclaimed, “It is not a game at all! It’s a training for war! It is of value to the whole Army.”¹² Under the guiding hand of the German General Staff, *Kriegsspiel* became a highly developed form of staff training. “Every Prussian regiment was issued *Kriegsspiel* and ordered to play it regularly.”¹³

War games soon became popular in other armies. In the 1880s an American author, Major William R. Livermore, produced a book titled *American Kriegsspiel*.¹⁴ In the American Navy, wargaming became part of officer instruction, simulating the movements of ships at sea with the use of lead vessels and precisely determined rules. But German-style war games never truly caught on with the American Army. In spite of the German experience with war games, many American Army officers believed that land combat was too messy to reduce to a disciplined game. From the late 1890s until the early 1970s the United States Army used “map maneuvers” and scripted “command post exercises” to practice decisionmaking. Seldom were these techniques used to train a command-staff team. In “such simulated warfare, there was no sense of enemy, no game against even a simulated opponent.”¹⁵

The United States Marine Corps, on the other hand, adopted the Navy’s enthusiasm for war games and employed a wide range of war games for officer education. The Marine Corps started serious wargaming shortly after the Spanish-American War. Marines wargamed historical battles using modern weapons. The Marine wargame tradition included, between the World Wars, “a landing at the Caribbean island of Grenada—a scenario made real in 1983. Marines studied historical battles and sometimes refought them. In the 1920s Marines reenacted Pickett’s charge at Gettysburg and the battle of Newmarket.”¹⁶

Maneuvers

Traditionally armies trained in maneuvers. Large-scale maneuvers, involving full formations of troops, are the most challenging and beneficial training exercises for command-staff operations. The German Army, for example, conducted annual large-scale maneuvers to test its mobilization and operational plans. Valuable staff training occurred. The lessons learned from these exercises concerned the mobilization, planning, preparing and movement of units across real terrain. Unlike map exercises, war games or staffrides, the friction that attacks all operations is real and all-pervasive in a large-scale maneuver. Things go wrong that cannot be waived aside as they can be in a map exercise. Orders are misinterpreted, units get lost, logistics fails to arrive, just as they do in real war.

Large-scale maneuvers, however, are expensive and historically fell short of simulating actual combat. Maneuvers seldom recreated realistic combat conditions and often devolved into an exasperating game of “who shot who.” Tactical units seldom gained much more training benefit than practice in road marches. In spite of battalions of umpires, the tactical battle could not be realistically simulated. The effects of artillery and the suppression from direct-fire weapons were beyond the technical means of the times to replicate. The point where the competing forces engaged in close combat more often resembled a college debate than a tactical engagement. The true effect of the command-staff process, therefore, was also elusive and usually consisted of more form than substance.

In the late 1970s technology came to the rescue. Sophisticated eye-safe lasers were developed that created the opportunity for realistic battle simulation. This blend of war games and maneuvers generated the greatest revolution in combat training in the 20th century. It provided the environment for military forces to train the full range of planning, preparation and execution under realistic conditions. Close battle training now contained a high degree of realism and produced a true test of soldier, unit, and command-staff skills.

The best example of a marriage of large-scale tactical maneuvers and war game is represented in the United States Army’s Combat Training Centers (CTCs). One of these, the National Training Center (NTC), challenges a brigade in its full range of war-fighting skills. At the NTC the command-staff team is stressed under rigorous near-war conditions. Few military professionals doubt the utility of the National Training Center after the success of Operation Desert Storm. Through the NTC, the words of Major General Paul F. Gorman, the man who originally proposed and nurtured the NTC concept, became a reality: “Training is rehearsal for battle.”¹⁷

At the NTC, Army combat brigades train in a competitive environment against a living, thinking opponent. Battles are fought against the “Red Force” with the use of a sophisticated laser-shooter and laser-sensor package that is attached to each vehicle, soldier and weapon. These lasers are completely safe, replicate the exact effects of the assigned weapon, and perform the function of designating direct-fire battle casualties. With this equipment, the Blue Force battles the Red Force in countless, bloodless battles to learn the difficult art of war.

The outcome of these simulated battles is determined by the actions of the players, not by umpires or a preconceived script. The key to the force-on-force concept is the employment of a professional “Red Force” called the Opposing Forces, or OPFOR. The OPFOR is the sparring partner

and principal teacher in the NTC's one-thousand-square-mile classroom. The training philosophy behind this concept is that a thinking, highly trained adversary will provide the best simulation for actual combat. It is based on a belief that soldiers, well trained and well led, win wars. Training, therefore, is seen as a dramatic force-multiplier on the battlefield. Sophisticated weapons are vital, but weapons alone cannot decide the issue. "The best troops cannot win if they are badly equipped, but good equipment in the hands of poor troops or badly led troops also cannot win."¹⁸ The value of the NTC was dramatically displayed by the effectiveness of U.S. Army forces in the 1991 Gulf War.

The opposition force tended to win. The army did lose its first battle, over and over again, but only against its own opposition force. It came to Saudi Arabia chastened, as previous American armies had been chastened by their early failures, and well aware of what it had to do. Thus in enormous contrast to previous wars, the U.S. Army which came to Saudi Arabia in 1990-91 was already somewhat battlehardened and battlewise. It proved remarkably effective when the time came to fight.¹⁹

Command-Staff Team Training Techniques

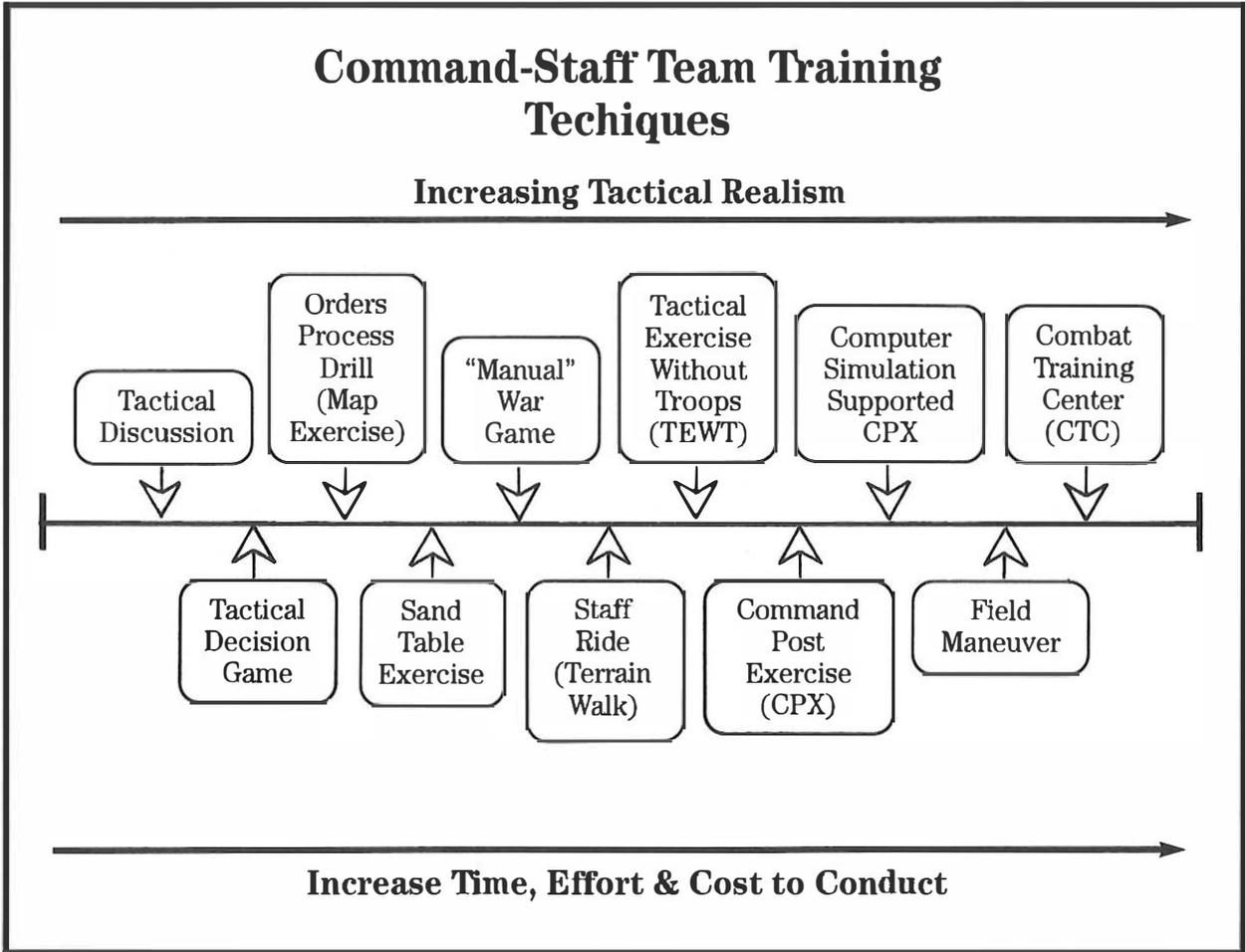
Maintaining combat readiness in an era of diminished resources is a problem that challenges the U.S. Army today. Units continue to come to the CTCs unprepared to execute brigade- and battalion-level operations to their full potential. Many staffs experience a steep learning curve at the CTC and show limited experience in rapid decisionmaking techniques. Although individual staff officers are often well educated in Army staff schools, command-staff team training at the CTCs have displayed a recurring weakness to operate effectively as a collective body during time-pressured planning episodes. This problem is nothing new.

In the late war these attack orders were of many types. Early in the game, they were most complete field orders, pages of descriptive data with annexes for every arm and service. These were usually of about as much use in action as if a football coach attempted to outline in advance each play his team should use successively during the first half. But long theoretical training at Leavenworth will bring forth such orders at the start of any offensive, so you probably will receive just such an order. They are very comprehensive and complete, but everything is based on "D" day and "H" hour which, you are told, will be announced later.²⁰

Although the above quote comes from the experience of the First World War, it could just as well have been a comment at a recent rotation at the CTC. Something more than excellence in individual staff skills is required. Training in the use of a rapid decisionmaking command-staff process is particularly weak. Staffs have particular difficulties in preparing for the CTC in their "home station" training environment. Since combat staffs will seldom experience more than one CTC rotation in their tour of duty on a particular staff, "home station" training techniques become critical.

Obviously, the U.S. Army has not institutionalized a method to train combat staffs to their full potential in the "home station" training environment. Something more than individual staff skills are required. How, then, can commanders and chiefs of staff train their staffs?

An important first step to develop superior command-staff teams is to understand all of the available staff training methods and apply the methods that best fit the command-staff team’s requirements. The diagram below depicts a list of command-staff team training techniques for battle command.



These techniques are presented in order from left to right, according to their degree of tactical realism, time, effort and cost. Techniques on the left side of the spectrum are easier to plan, prepare and execute, but offer less realism and possible benefit. Techniques on the right side of the spectrum offer the most realism and the most potential benefit but are too difficult and costly to conduct in the frequency needed to train a superior staff.

Obviously, the command-staff team trainer must balance methods and resources to achieve his training goal. Frequent command-staff team training at “home station” is required to institutionalize battle staff excellence. One brigade, in preparation for an upcoming CTC rotation, dedicated one day a week to command-staff training. In the 12 months prior to the CTC rotation the brigade staff conducted a total of 31 days of command-staff training out of the available 52 weeks.²¹ Command-staff training time, a precious commodity for any combat staff, cannot be wasted. Trainers must use techniques that will maximize training effectiveness.

Toward a “Competitive” Staff Training Philosophy

The Napoleonic staff structure used by the U.S. military is based on function, not time. The command-staff decisionmaking processes that have developed under this system have failed to provide for training methods that teach a rapid command-staff process. Rapid decisionmaking situations force the command-staff team to employ methods that are not common in traditional staff training.

No one would seriously consider training a football team on a basketball court. Neither would they consider training a football team without scrimmaging. Military staff training, however, often resembles this bizarre situation. Staffs train at “home station” by developing plans in a classroom, without time constraints, **and without an enemy**. Seldom do they practice in “real time,” in a field environment, or against a living, thinking and determined opponent. Any football team whose practice consisted of talking about football and merely running through their plays would meet with disaster on the gridiron. In the same fashion our command-staff organizations must learn the techniques of rapid decisionmaking before they deploy for the CTCs.

The key to the success of the CTC training concept is in the use of a living, thinking enemy who is determined to win. The OPFOR is the secret to the CTC’s effectiveness. The rotational units train against the OPFOR and learn from the competition. The OPFOR becomes the teacher. The Blue Force learns from the enemy. Beating the OPFOR becomes the goal of every rotation. The excitement and challenge of the competition make the learning interactive and increase the level of enthusiasm. This kind of competition is exactly what is lacking in most command-staff process training.

To employ a competitive training strategy requires a few preliminary steps. First, the staff must master the basics of the command-staff process. The staff trainer, usually the executive officer, can employ tactical discussions, tactical decision games, orders drills and sand-table exercises to help achieve this goal. Once the staff has developed the capability to work together to develop standard five-paragraph field orders, the command-staff team should conduct series of interactive war games.

The commander is a key ingredient of this effort. Much of the value of the training is lost if he does not participate. The war games should become increasingly more difficult and challenging as the commander and staff improve. These exercises can be map exercises, command post exercises, computer-assisted command post exercises or staff rides. During each of these exercises a capable officer — or opposing staff — should be selected to play the part of the enemy. Often this can be done using only one or two assistant staff officers. The key is that the staffs planning, preparing and executing actions are tested in “real time,” against a determined and trained enemy. The success of the plan and the command-staff process must be the success of the plan in battle, not the beauty of the operations order or the checklist accomplishment of all staff tasks. A staff that has produced a perfect order has failed if the operation fails.²²

In the near future, technology will unlock the means to train staffs more effectively. Software that can be applied on personal computers and the new technology of “virtual reality” will be applied to staff training. Take-home competitive staff training courses — consisting of interactive software that would allow the planning, preparation and execution of a plan on a personal computer — will provide a valuable training aid to teach command-staff fundamentals. Future simulation systems

promise to dramatically increase the effectiveness of this approach by reducing preparation time and increasing group interactive learning. The major drawback in the near term is that these simulations are becoming increasingly expensive and may not be available for every unit for the frequency required.

Until fully interactive command-staff training technologies are available and easily accessible for unit battle staff training, battalion and brigade staffs can use manual methods to improve command-staff operations to support battle command. The most critical requirement is to plan, prepare and execute the command-staff training using a competitive training strategy that pits the command-staff team against a determined opponent. A competitive training strategy can be created, with minimal effort, by using manual war games or terrain models. Personnel can be designated as umpires to assist in combat resolution, or simple combat attrition tables — found in many off-the-shelf board war games — can be used. The imagination of the command-staff team trainer is often the only barrier to effective command-staff team training in situations with limited resources.

A simple staff training competition is easy to develop and does not take sophisticated computer assistance. One method that can be conducted anywhere by any tactical staff involves a combination of a war game and a tactical discussion. An operations order and overlay are provided to a subordinate staff. The trainer develops a critical events list. This critical events list keeps the war game on focus, as the trainer, acting as the observer/controller, watches the planning and preparation phase of the orders drill. An enemy staff prepares the opposing force plan, using the enemy's doctrine, organization and tactics. Once each opposing staff has issued orders to the staff trainer, a war game is conducted on a game board, map or sand table. Graphic symbols, arranged to the exact scale of the game board, map or terrain model, can be used to help the staffs visualize the correct spatial relationships of the units and their respective areas of control. Exact planning factors for ranges and movement rates should be employed and enforced by the command-staff trainer. The trainer predicts the outcome of the battle, analyzing the force ratios and using a simple attrition table and dice to determine the outcome of engagements. A recorder should be designated to keep track of the action for use during the after-action review (AAR).

The role of the command-staff trainer in this simple command-staff team training episode is critical. The command-staff trainer keeps the war game on track, avoids distractions, and ensures quick combat resolution. He judges the actions of combat support and combat service support units. To assist him, the command-staff trainer must know the correct planning factors (movement rates, ranges, supply constraints) involved. In essence, he takes the place of the computer used in more sophisticated training simulations. In most cases an officer can be designated to play the role of the enemy. Often this will be accomplished by the commander, chief of staff or executive officer. Whenever possible, however, a separate staff, generated from subordinates within the unit or a staff from another unit, can fit the bill.

A competitive training concept should also be considered for staff school and command and staff college instruction. Too much staff school instruction involves form without action. The mechanics of making a "perfect plan" are emphasized, while the actions of the plan are rarely played out. More importantly, since operations rarely go as planned, the critical need for planning flexibility is camouflaged. Instead of practicing the writing of long detailed orders and considering the

command-staff team's job done when the ink dries, the student sections should be practicing to produce orders in real time that are tested for their validity and flexibility in competitive situations against a thinking enemy. Students could be organized into staffs, each with a functional specialty, upon entering the staff school. Students would play the role of commander, operations officer, logistics, personnel and intelligence officers and their assistants. These staffs could work together to learn the basics of the command-staff process and then progress into a tactical competition against other staff sections. A series of simple war games, executed in real time, faced with the pressures of experiencing victory and defeat, would produce a series of staffs trained in fighting battles.²³

Although a simple manual war game can be used, commercial computer war game software could be employed.²⁴ Staff groups could fight one battle after another, planning, preparing and executing their plans using the latest computer combat simulations. Winning staff groups would advance to oppose other winning staffs. Real-time exercises would teach the lessons of rapid decisionmaking and provide a forum to experiment with new techniques.

A competitive learning strategy can emphasize decisive decisionmaking, initiative and team building. The command-staff team will learn more, in a shorter time, if opposed by a living, thinking enemy than by any other means. Orders would be produced for every operation. Instead of long, written orders, staffs would discover means to use a rapid decisionmaking process that produces oral or overlay orders. The success of the training is measured by the plan's success or failure against the enemy. Group cohesion, cooperation and creativity — critical elements to any staff — would become the apparent assets of victorious staffs. Command-staff teams would generate new, more effective techniques as they learn to overcome the challenges encountered in the competition. The staff group that eventually came out on top would become the honor graduates of the course. The key to these battle command competitions is that they reward victory, not process.

Summary

Surprising little has been written on how to train military staffs in the command-staff process at the tactical level of combat. "While much has been written about how great commanders and their troops respond to war, comparatively little work has been done on how a modern staff plans, coordinates and conducts operations."²⁵ Most of what is written concerning staff training in the United States Army and Marine Corps involves training for analytical decisionmaking — a process that is often inappropriate in fast-tempo, time-constrained combat operations. Repetition in producing orders is as far as most training programs go to prepare commanders and staffs for combat command-staff operations. There is little information on how to train a commander and staff in rapid, recognitional decisionmaking.²⁶

Information-age warfare — Third-Wave warfare — will be executed at high tempo. On this digital battlefield, commanders will be expected to generate a rapid command-staff process. Recognitional decisionmaking is the essence of battle command. "In battle, it is often guided by intuition and feel gained from years of experience, practice and study."²⁷ The rapid decisionmaking command-staff process required for successful battle command demands a highly trained and effective staff. So how do we train the command-staff team to do this?

First, command-staff team training must be a priority training event. Second, command-staff team training must be competitive, pitting the command-staff team's decisions against a living, thinking enemy. Competitive training can be conducted even if sophisticated training devices are not available. The lack of sophisticated gadgets should not be used as an alibi for the lack of effective command-staff training.²⁸

The key to successful command-staff training is to execute challenging, two-sided, competitive, no-holds-barred contests that fully challenge the command-staff team's ability to execute battle command. The real education comes in the competition. **A competitive staff training approach is the surest way to develop a superior staff capable of executing a rapid-decisionmaking command-staff process that supports the art of battle command.** The most effective competitive training philosophy will place the command-staff team in a similar setting to the conditions they would experience during the planning, preparation and execution phases of an actual battle. The staff should plan, prepare and execute against a thinking, determined enemy. The use of an opponent is the key to effective staff training in the rapid-decisionmaking process.

There is no simple formula or sequence of tasks that can prepare a command-staff team for combat. The dynamics of combat are too complex to be reduced to formula. The development of the digital battlefield will provide technology that will enhance rapid command-staff operations, but rapid decisionmaking is the responsibility of a well-trained command-staff team. Man will still be required to do the thinking for a long time to come. Technology will not replace the command-staff team and will only enhance battle command if it is placed in the hands of well-trained and experienced command-staff organizations.²⁹ The challenge that remains critical for today's Army is to determine the best command-staff training methods to quickly develop superior staffs capable of executing rapid battle command decisionmaking. In the end, the enemy is the best trainer.

ENDNOTES

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18. *Ibid.*, p. 237.
19. Norman Friedman, *Desert Victory: The War for Kuwait* (Annapolis: The Naval Institute Press, 1991), p. 121.
20. Lt. Col. Thomas Shipley, *S2 In Action* (Harrisburg, Pa: The Military Service Publishing Company, 1940), p. 70.
21. Author's note: As the Executive Officer of the 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, I was able to dedicate each Thursday of the garrison training week to staff training. Needless to say, this was not a popular event with overworked staff officers. Disruptions of this schedule were routine and officers were reassigned due to normal officer rotations. It took great energy and persuasion to keep the battle staff focused on battle staff training. The training varied each week

between tactical discussions, tactical decision games, orders drills, war games and staff rides (TEWTs). The training, however, paid off in victory on the NTC battlefield. The brigade staff was recognized as an extremely effective and competent battle staff by the brigade observer controllers and the commander of the Operations Group. Without this frequent and challenging training the brigade staff could not have provided the commander with effective battle command.

22. The U.S. Army has recognized the need for a competitive staff training philosophy and has developed a trained computer simulation OPFOR to fight U.S. Army units. This trained enemy is represented in Army computer simulations such as the Battle Command Training Program (BCTP) by a group of trained computer technicians and tacticians called the World Class OPFOR. The World Class OPFOR provides a thinking, determined, human opponent to fight against U.S. Army division commanders and their staffs in sophisticated computer war games. Tactical staffs at brigade and battalion also receive some training from the BCTP program. BCTP, and its brigade and battalion equivalent Brigade/Battalion System (BBS), however, are an exercises that occurs in U.S. Army units usually only once every two years. This frequency has generally not been sufficient to produce the excellence required to execute a modern command-staff process.
23. Relatively simple combat simulations can provide competition to improve command-staff training. An excellent example of this phenomenon can be illustrated by presenting any staff with a simple tactical decision game, or TDG. Using any military map, divide the staff into two groups. Give one group the mission to seize an objective and give the other group the mission to defend. Issue specific boundaries and prescribe a specific task organization. Don't allow the groups to know the opposing force's mission or organization. Have each group develop their operational graphics on a plastic overlay. Give the groups a limited time to complete their plans. Tell them that you will determine who will win the tactical decision game by the outcome of the interaction of the two plans. If the defense is strong in the east and weak in the west, for example, and the enemy attacks in the west, the attacker has a greater opportunity to win. At the completion of the time limit have both staffs brief their plans and place the overlays on top of each other to observe the interaction of the plans. The tactical discussion that develops from the TDG competition of these two plans will astound you. If guided properly it can be the foundation for staff training during periods when sophisticated simulators are not available.
24. Commercial computer war games have reached a high level of sophistication and could be easily integrated as command-staff team training aids. Many of these games offer the same capability to depict battalion through brigade combat as the expensive JANUS computers. The advantage of off-the-shelf combat simulation software is that it is more user friendly and can be played on relatively cheap desktop or laptop computers. A good example of this type of combat simulation is *Tac Ops*, a war game produced by retired military officers.
25. Richard W. Stewart, *Staff Operations: The X Corps in Korea, December 1950* (Fort Leavenworth, Kans.: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1991), p. 8.
26. Recognition decisionmaking focuses on the commander's ability to recognize tactical patterns, decide the correct counterpattern, and apply that solution rapidly to meet the demands

of time-pressured situations. Commanders conduct this kind of decisionmaking all the time. The concept of recognitional decisionmaking, however, is not clearly represented in our doctrine or training literature and is often viewed by the uninformed as unprofessional seat-of-the-pants decisionmaking. For more information concerning recognitional decisionmaking see: *A Knowledge Elicitation Study of Military Planning* (Yellow Springs, Ohio: Klein Associates Inc., December 1987), p. 23.

27. Maj. James C. Madigan and Capt. George E. Dodge, *Battle Command Leadership and Decision Making for War and Operations Other Than War* (Fort Leavenworth, Kans.: Battle Command Battle Laboratory, 22 April 1994), p. 63.
28. Throughout this paper I have emphasized the command-staff process and the command-staff organization. The commander is the central element of this combination. Too often commanders are too busy to train with their staffs. But the training of the command-staff team is precisely what is required to conduct rapid decisionmaking. Commanders who do not practice issuing commander's guidance and describing their intent inhibit rapid decisionmaking. Commanders who do not train with their staffs do not have a trained command-staff team.
29. The promises of the digital battlefield are not without their dark side. One article, *The Qualitative Factor in the Israeli Arab Arms Race of the Late 1980s* by Zvi Lanir (Israel Defense Forces Journal, Vol. III No. 1, Fall 1985) illustrates this point:

Schematic use of command and control systems encourages a pattern of managerial leadership that may be termed "leadership through instruments". Excessive adherence to such systems, the effort to feed them information preformulated according to their requirements, constant alertness by all those who depend on them for directives, and ever increasing dependence on their smooth technical functioning could all lead to the establishment of new norms of "programmed leadership" in place of initiative and qualities of human leadership. (p. 33.)

There is inevitable tension between the C³I systems' demands for progress according to preconceived plans and the entropic reality of the battlefield with its constant creation of new and unexpected situations. Local initiatives, improvisations, and novel solutions are often imperative and give rise to "task leadership", where a local commanding officer knowing the missions of his immediate superior echelon and those of neighboring units in the field as well as his own, and in pursuing his goals has the freedom to choose whatever ways and means seem to him to be best suited to the changing circumstances of battle. The insensitive use of C³I systems is dangerous precisely because of the enormous advantages they offer. The possibility of more nearly approaching the ideal optimization is likely to encourage the preference of "engineering" a battlefield, whose entropy or, as Clausewitz termed it, "friction" is ignored at one's peril. (p. 33.)

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