



LANDPOWER ESSAY SERIES



No. 99-7

October 1999

A Proven Alternative for Replicating the Combat Training Center Battle Command Experience

by

Lieutenant Colonel Ronald L. Bertha, USA

Introduction

In war while everything is simple, even the simplest thing is difficult.

—Carl von Clausewitz

Battle command, more than any other combat function, is critical in order for Army commanders to effectively employ their units. It is only through the mastery of battle command that a commander visualizes the enemy, terrain/weather, and his own organization, as well as adjacent and supporting forces. Battle command also ensures the proper employment and synchronization of all combat assets in time, space and purpose, resulting in victory over one's opponent. However, as important as it is, battle command is an art that leaders can develop only over time and predominantly through experience. "To my mind the art of battle command is only gained through experience. The less experience you have, the more problems you are going to have with teaching and understanding the art of battle command. Therein lies the problem the Army has to come to grips with."¹

The U.S. Army's official account of the Gulf War credits our Combat Training Centers (CTCs) with "resounding success" in helping our units prepare for war.² In actuality, the CTCs have been vital not only for improving combat readiness, but more importantly, for nearly 20 years, CTC rotations have given commanders at the corps level and below the most opportunistic experience short of real combat to develop the art of battle command.

As successful as CTCs may be, they are expensive to maintain and are impractical to rely upon for the only source of battle command experience. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to examine a proven alternative to the CTCs that can replicate an effective battle command experience. This is a very relevant issue, because as training costs increase and available time and training dollars decrease, efficient alternatives to the CTCs must be developed to help our Army maintain its fighting edge.

Landpower Essay Series is published by AUSA's Institute of Land Warfare. The series is designed to provide an outlet for original essays on topics that will stimulate professional discussion and further public understanding of the landpower aspects of national security. The content represents the personal opinions of the author and not necessarily the position of the Association of the United States Army or its members. Candidate essays of 5,000 words or less may be submitted to: AUSA Institute of Land Warfare ATTN: Landpower Essay Series, 2425 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington, VA 22201. For more information about AUSA and the Institute of Land Warfare, visit our Web site at www.ausa.org.

My argument is simple. The best, most proven way to replicate the CTC battle command experience, and thus to develop this essential art in today's Army leaders, is adequate home-station field training. As simple as this may sound, recent phenomena show that necessary field training in units has not occurred to the degree or standard that is necessary to prepare commanders and units for combat. As identified in September 1998 by our Army's then Chief of Staff, General Dennis J. Reimer, "This degradation of both soldier and unit training levels has been evident when units arrive for their rotations at our Combat Training Centers."³ Furthermore, Forces Command (FORSCOM) recently recognized that the amount of and level at which field training exercises are conducted does matter. "In an attempt to reverse declining performance at its two stateside combat training centers, the Army will require units to conduct battalion-level field exercises before deploying to Fort Irwin, California and Fort Polk, Louisiana."⁴ These Army posts are the CTC homes of the National Training Center (NTC) and the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC), respectively.

We must recognize that multiple opportunities already exist or are being developed, especially in the area of simulations, to help replicate the CTC battle command experience. Though useful, such alternatives have not proven themselves to be nearly as effective as properly planned and executed field training. In fact, because of the way simulations are used and the overreliance upon them, they often produce negative training benefits. Commenting recently on the results of the NTC rotation of the 116th National Guard (NG) Enhanced Brigade in July 98, Army National Guard director Major General Roger C. Schultz said,

Simulations do not totally prepare a commander to fight the OPFOR [Opposing Force] at NTC. Accordingly, simulations will likely never totally prepare any commander for war. There is simply nothing that completely replicates the fog of being employed against a free-thinking enemy with 24-hour-a-day presence.⁵

The focus of this paper is at the tactical level, with emphasis at the battalion/task force level. Therefore, references made to the CTCs will pertain to NTC, JRTC and the Combat Maneuver Training Center (CMTC), omitting inferences to the Battle Command Training Program which is designed to help train brigade, division and corps commanders and their staffs. However, before exploring the subject of home-station field training, it is essential to examine the art of battle command, to investigate why the CTCs have been so successful, and to determine the root cause of our Army's current lack of training readiness. Each of these issues will be important as we argue not only for, but also how to conduct effective home-station field training.

I write this paper as a former Mechanized Infantry Battalion Commander (August 1995–July 1997), as both an Opposing Force (OPFOR) and Blue Force (BLUFOR) player at the NTC for several rotations, and as a recent observer/controller (Senior Mechanized Infantry Task Force Trainer) at NTC (July 1997–July 1998).

Battle Command

*Know the enemy, know yourself; your victory will never be endangered.
Know the ground, know the weather; your victory will then be total.*

–Sun Tzu

Army Field Manual 100-5, *Operations*, defines battle command as:

The art of battle decision making, leading, and motivating soldiers and their organizations into action to accomplish missions. Includes visualizing current state and future state. Then formulating concepts of operations to get from one to the other at least cost. Also includes

assigning missions; prioritizing and allocating resources; selecting the critical time and place to act; and knowing how and when to make adjustments during the fight.⁶

As clear as this may be conceptually, all current and former commanders must agree with the current commanding general of NTC, Brigadier General William G. Webster, that in practice, “executing battle command is an extremely complex and difficult task.”⁷ Even though it is complex and difficult, few can argue against the importance of battle command, especially considering that its two vital components—decisionmaking and leadership—capture the essence of what being a commander is all about.

Much research has been conducted and many publications have been written on battle command since 1993 the then commander of U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), General Frederick M. Franks, Jr., instituted the change in terminology from “command and control.”⁸ In fact today, the U.S. Army even has Battle Command Battle Laboratories at Fort Gordon, Georgia and Fort Huachuca, Arizona. The critical question behind this plethora of interest is how to effectively develop the art of battle command in leaders.

In his Academic Year 1996 Strategic Research Project at the Army War College on this subject, Lieutenant Colonel Michael T. Hayes argues not only the importance of battle command, but more importantly, how the Army can help develop this art in leaders. His recommendations include a change in officer management and assignment policies to give potential future commanders more time in troop units in order to learn critical leader competencies, essential for developing the art of battle command.⁹ Even the U.S. Navy recognizes the importance of troop experience, as it requires those officers designated for command to fulfill a complete tour as a ship’s executive officer before assuming command of the ship. On 1 October 1998, the Army enacted the Officer Professional Management System, which, among other purposes, will help to provide potential battalion-level commanders and above more operational assignments focused on developing experience and knowledge required of future commanders.

However, mere multiple assignments to tactical units in themselves do not provide the necessary experience to develop the art of battle command. This art is based on intuition, and is “demonstrated by the commander who by combat experience, training, and study—or any combination of the three—reads the battlefield and does the right thing faster, more accurately and more decisively than the enemy.”¹⁰ Thus, short of invaluable combat experience, it is through a combination of professional studies and the conduct of tough, realistic leader and unit training that leaders develop the intuition necessary to be effective combat commanders.

Like job assignments, professional education is an important part of the leader development process. The Army’s institutional training and an officer’s independent study are vital in developing a leader’s conceptual, analytical and critical thinking capability. In return, these capabilities are immeasurable for a commander to make good, timely and objective decisions. Even Colonel Hayes recommends more emphasis in teaching battle command in our TRADOC schools.¹¹ However, teaching battle command in a classroom is like teaching a team to play football on a chalkboard; it has its limitations. Furthermore, like football, exercising battle command is not a spectator sport; one learns by doing.

According to our Army’s training doctrine, “training is the means by which the Army’s quality soldiers and leaders develop their warfighting proficiency and exercise the collective capabilities they will require in combat.”¹² Thus, training not only improves unit performance, but it also improves the individual and leader skills necessary for successful mission accomplishment in war. More specifically, among other benefits, the repetitive experiences of training help to develop the necessary intuitive sense

in leaders that is the essence of battle command. Of course, the important issue here is how to most efficiently conduct training, particularly focused on improving decision-making and leadership.

In this period of reduced training dollars, the Army is working hard to leverage technology through simulations as a means to train more efficiently. While much of this technology shows distinct promise for developing technical and even tactical skills, even Lieutenant General Thomas Burnette, the Army's Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans, warns of the inherent short-comings of simulations. In his article entitled "The Second Training Revolution," he reminds us that "live training remains the foundation of current training strategies,"¹³ especially since virtual simulators and constructive training tools "cannot fully replicate all aspects of the live training environment."¹⁴

Beyond training technical and tactical skills (essentially the leadership aspect of battle command), simulations have proven to be of little value in helping to develop a commander's intuition—the critical factor for making good and timely decisions. In fact, commanders can and often do gain negative lessons from simulations. For instance, gaining smoke effects in JANUS—the Army's battle-focus training simulation for leader development at the company and team level—is a constant because wind does not change, inversion effects are not applied, and indirect fire is unrealistically responsive. It is much more challenging to achieve the necessary effects of smoke at an actual breach site on the ground under actual environmental conditions, while trying to synchronize it with security forces, direct and indirect fire suppression, and obstacle reduction assets. Of course one would never know how difficult this really is if it is only attempted using JANUS. According to the former commander of Operations Group at NTC, Brigadier General J.D. Thurman, "everything always works in simulation."¹⁵ It is no wonder that the following is a common phrase of rotational commanders, heard by observer/controllers at (O/Cs) NTC: "This is not the way it happened in JANUS."

A continuing requirement for effective battle command is "visualizing the battlefield."¹⁶ According to General Thurman, this is virtually impossible even with the virtual reality of modern-day simulations. Among other shortfalls, he cites the following main disadvantages of simulations: lack of friction and rigor; inadequate replication of terrain and logistical functions; oversimplification of the communication architecture; and the inability for a commander to learn the true difficulty and importance of synchronization and integration of combat multipliers.¹⁷

In effect, the lack of realism in simulations does not help to promote leader confidence or competence, essential for bold and decisive leadership. The intuition necessary for a commander to make good and timely battlefield decisions must be developed through realistic experience, like the type of training available at the CTCs. Only through the most realistic experiences—both seen and felt—can a leader learn effective battle command. "Nothing in the 'synthetic' world will ever equal the effectiveness of high-quality field training exercises and combined arms live fires."¹⁸

If indeed training is still our Army's top priority,¹⁹ as General Reimer and former Chiefs of Staff General Gordon R. Sullivan and General Carl E. Vuono have proclaimed, we cannot simply train for training's sake. Furthermore, if it is true that "live exercises must and will remain the foundation of future Army training,"²⁰ we cannot afford to use financial limitations or time-constraint excuses to not conduct necessary and effective home-station field training. Rather, we need to use the proven training doctrine and practices that caused us to win the Gulf War. As then Major General Barry McCaffrey, commander of the 24th Infantry Division, told the Senate Armed Services Committee shortly thereafter, "This war didn't take 100 hours to win, it took 15 years."²¹

Combat Training Centers

The more an Army sweats in peace, the less it will bleed in War.

The reality of a CTC was born in October 1981 when the first Army maneuver units rotated through the NTC at Fort Irwin.²² It was developed based on the studies of combat experience in previous wars which indicated a method was necessary to steepen the learning curve prior to combat in order to significantly reduce battle casualties.²³ NTC's purpose then and now, as well as that of JRTC and CMTC, which were developed later, is to provide the most realistic battlefield training short of actual combat.²⁴

Without a doubt, the CTCs have been instrumental in improving the combat readiness of our Army. General Reimer has referred to them as “the crown jewels of our training program.”²⁵ General Vuono said, “The value of the CTCs cannot be overstated, and the payoff is measured in the performance of our units in battle.”²⁶ It is no wonder that many countries throughout the world have or are trying to develop similar training centers.

The overwhelming success of the CTCs has made them the cornerstone of our Army's training readiness. Because of personnel turbulence which often occurs just after a CTC rotation, many argue that the greatest value of the CTCs is the tough, realistic, hands-on training experience that they provide leaders and soldiers, rather than preparing units for combat. Additionally, these centers not only help train individuals and units, but just as important, they are instrumental in the overall force development process as they help to: establish doctrine, determine standards for training and leader development, provide organizational and materiel requirements, and give keen insights for soldier needs.

The effectiveness of the CTCs cannot be duplicated by any other training method. So what makes the CTCs so successful, particularly as a superb battle command experience for leaders? Certainly the training realism provided by the intense scenarios, real terrain and weather, and a free-thinking, professional OPFOR are key ingredients of the CTC experience. General Thurman includes the following as essential elements for providing realistic training at the CTCs: true replication of time and space, and the need for commanders to exercise battle command to integrate and synchronize all combat functions (nothing is notional); above all, commanders are put under pressure and they have to perform. Furthermore, he considers the observer/controllers (trainers) and the after-action review (AAR) process, which ensures immediate feedback, as the most important reasons for the success of our CTCs.²⁷

It is difficult to replicate the CTC realism using only simulations. However, most of it can be nearly duplicated in any field environment. Except for the sophisticated instrumentation system that helps to enhance AARs, and a professional OPFOR, the CTC experience can be adequately replicated during home-station training in the field. In fact, many of the recent units who have performed well at the CTCs have developed a training program that replicates that of the CTC. More importantly, however, because of their high cost (up to \$12 million for a heavy brigade combat team at NTC) and the limited number of CTC rotations (10 rotations per year at each CTC), we must maximize the opportunity presented by a CTC rotation. According to General Reimer, “We must continue to strive to get the maximum benefit from CTC rotations. The Army must move more toward a ‘continuum of training.’ Training realism must be achieved at home and at the CTCs.”²⁸ A former senior maneuver observer/controller at CMTC adds: “Units must arrive at the CTCs ready for a ‘graduate-level’ training experience. This demands comprehensive home-station training. . . . Otherwise, the full potential of the CTC experience will not be realized.”²⁹

Ultimately, we must be concerned not only with training for CTCs rotations, but with training for war. Realizing its importance, FORSCOM recently renewed a regulation that requires every battalion task force scheduled for a CTC rotation to conduct a minimum five-day maneuver-training exercise against an OPFOR.³⁰ This measure certainly has the potential to help those units and their commanders

prepare for their rotation, and thus “get the maximum benefit”³¹ from the CTC experience. But will commanders truly make the most of this force-on-force maneuver-training requirement? Do they know how to effectively conduct battalion-level maneuver training? The answer in many cases is “no.” Our CTCs over the years may have “infused in field commanders an institutional obsession to train realistically for combat,”³² but for various reasons (to be examined next) we have not satisfied this obsession through training at home station.

More importantly, what is the impetus to ensure that units not scheduled for an upcoming CTC rotation will conduct necessary and appropriate home-station field training, especially at the battalion task force level? Even without real-world deployments, battalion-level units have the opportunity to rotate through a CTC only every 18 to 30 months. Some battalion task force commanders never have a CTC battle command experience at all. We cannot wait for a CTC rotation to conduct effective field-training exercises, even at battalion level. We must use home-station opportunities to maintain our combat readiness for war. In the words of General Reimer, “Our Army *never* has an ‘off-season.’ Commanders must train within the band of excellence throughout the year. Home-station training plays a large role in sustaining readiness within that band of excellence.”³³

Training Readiness

In no other profession are the penalties for employing untrained personnel so appalling or so irrevocable as in the military.

–General Douglas MacArthur

The deteriorated readiness of our armed forces has recently captured the critical interests of not only the military itself, but congressional leaders as well. This was indicative in September 1998, when Congress called for hearings on the subject of “readiness.” Few will forget the emotional discussion between the Joint Chiefs of Staff and members of the Senate Armed Forces that Harry Summers referred to as a war between our military leaders and Congress.³⁴ Additionally, there has been a plethora of interest, both spoken and published, on the issue of readiness during the past year. Understanding the importance of this issue and its particular impact on training readiness is essential before we explore the subject of training itself.

In his 1998 annual report to the President and Congress, Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen identified the following four readiness challenges currently facing our armed forces: “attracting and retaining quality people, training the forces, keeping equipment ready, and ensuring ready forces.”³⁵ Without doubt, each of these challenges are related to one another, and the Army is certainly not void of them. And even though they are nothing a little money could not solve, we should expect to deal with these challenges for the next several years.

Recruiting and retaining quality people has been a concern to our Army since the start of the all-volunteer force in 1973. However, many refer to our force not as all-volunteered, rather as all-recruited, emphasizing the importance of marketing and salesmanship. While both recruiting and retention are largely affected by the economics of society, as well as the pay and benefits given to servicemen, the later is also greatly affected by the degree of job satisfaction that soldiers have toward their jobs in the military.

“In the 1980s, 28 percent of recruits departed before completing their first year of service, whereas recent figures are around 35 percent.”³⁶ In fact, this figure may even be as high as 40 percent for 1998.³⁷ If the Army is recruiting the highest-quality soldiers ever, why is attrition the highest ever? General Reimer has blamed increased competition with other career opportunities, continued strength of our nation’s economy, and “the growing concerns of our soldiers about military pay and benefits

(particularly with regard to retirement, health, housing, and base facilities)³⁸ as the reasons for our retention problems.

While I am certainly not in a position to discredit our former Chief of Staff, I do believe that training readiness, or the lack thereof, also greatly impacts on personnel readiness. Command Sergeant Major Clifton P. O'Brien concurs, as he included training shortfalls caused by a lack of training funds as one of the reasons he was retiring after 26 year of service, four years prematurely.³⁹ In fact, I would venture to say that most quality soldiers enter or want to stay in the Army because they gain the pride of job satisfaction. However, how can soldiers be satisfied with their job, career or profession when they are not given the opportunity to train to their individual potential and that of their unit? Among many other reasons, soldiers, especially officers who can normally have a better quality of life outside the service, stay in the Army because they enjoy what they do. The inability to effectively train and adequately prepare for a war or crisis, where lives will be at stake, is certainly no way for soldiers to "be all they can be." Money may be tight, but being able to train the basics through battalion-level field exercises is imperative, not only for the sake of combat readiness, but also in order to retain quality soldiers and leaders in our Army.

Even though the Army will somehow work through its current short-term challenges in recruitment and retention, what are the long-term consequences? Will we have adequate experience at all grades 10 to 15 years into the future? General Reimer has been quoted as saying, "To prepare for the future, we have had to shift more money into future readiness and accept greater risk in current readiness."⁴⁰ Investing in future technologies and modern equipment is certainly essential for long-term readiness. However, will we have the skilled leaders tomorrow to lead our modernized units if we do not provide them the necessary training experiences today? It takes 15 to 18 years to develop battalion commanders, and today's battalion commanders will be our corps commanders in 2010. Therefore, along with risking near term-readiness to invest in future readiness, we are mortgaging the battle command expertise of future commanders today.

Training readiness has suffered not only at the expense given to future modernization, but it has also been the bill-payer for insufficient base operations and real property maintenance funds. As General Reimer told the Senate Armed Forces Committee:

Our commanders have been forced to migrate funds from training accounts to base support. This migration of funds, necessary to ensure minimum quality of life standards at our installations, has reduced home-station training. Commanders across our Army are experiencing difficulty in funding battalion- and brigade-level home-station training that was once common in our Army, and was a key ingredient of the highly trained units that won the Gulf War.⁴¹

There is little doubt that a lack of training dollars has significantly impacted upon the training readiness of our Army, particularly at the battalion level. However, recent evidence indicates that readiness problems also exist at company/team level and below, despite the fact that this level of training has always been resourced. Sergeant First Class Gregory Schwendeman, a Scout Platoon observer/controller at NTC, has summarized the perspective of many CTC OACs and commanders:

What was once the run phase (or "test," if you will) of unit readiness, the NTC is now being used as the walk and sometimes crawl phase of their training. This trend is noticeable down to the individual soldier. What were once basic skills are lost to the lack of training done at home station.⁴²

So what has gone wrong? Why are we no longer training effectively even at the unit levels in which training is funded? Has the absence of multiechelon training opportunities, which used to be provided

through battalion field exercises, made an impact below battalion level? Based on his 18 months of experience as commander of Operations Group at NTC, General Thurman probably gives us the most perceptive answer to these questions. Beyond a lack of training dollars, he attributes inadequate training readiness to commanders who fail to comply with our training doctrine, based on Field Manuals 25-100, *Training the Force*, and 25-101, *Training the Force: Battle Focused Training*.⁴³ Indeed, executing effective and efficient training seems to have become a lost art. Despite the most proven training models used by the CTCs, we have forgotten how to translate this type of training to home station, where it is much less costly but nearly as effective.

So in summary, we must find the funds to resource battalion-level training beyond that which FORSCOM has recently authorized for units preparing for the CTCs. Reflecting on the words of Brigadier General Paul O'Neal, Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans at FORSCOM, "If you believe that training for combat is the most important thing we do, then everything else comes in a distant second."⁴⁴ Equally, if not more important, we must ensure all training resources are used in the most efficient matter. How to train effectively, particularly the conduct of home-station field training, will be the subject of the next and last section.

Training

No American soldier must ever die in combat because we failed to provide the tough, realistic training demanded by the battlefields of today.

–General Carl E. Vuono

When discussing training, we must keep in mind both the nine principles and the eight-step model for training. Our capstone training manual, Field Manual 25-100, *Training the Force*, captures the following nine principles of U.S. Army training: train as combined arms and services team; train as you fight; use appropriate doctrine; use performance-oriented training; train to challenge; train to sustain proficiency; train using multiechelon techniques; train to maintain; and make commanders the primary trainers.⁴⁵ Just as important is the Army's eight-step training model: plan the training; train and certify leaders; recon the site; issue the plan; rehearse; execute; conduct AAR; and retrain.⁴⁶

"Train the way we fight" is not just an Army training principle and slogan. It is a philosophy that captures the fundamental reformation of Army training that occurred shortly after the formation of TRADOC in 1973.⁴⁷ This battle cry pushed soldiers and leaders out of the classroom and into the field to train under the most realistic conditions possible; and it became the impetus for our CTCs. In fact, using "task, condition, and standard" to assess training, training effectiveness is often determined by the realism or difficulty of the existing conditions.

"Training as one fights" is not only important for soldiers' and small-unit training, but the Army has recently realized it is important at the battalion level as well, particularly before a rotation to one of the CTCs. However, it is interesting to note the specific requirement for this battalion-level training calls for a five-day minimum combined-arms maneuver exercise, using an OPFOR, and external observer/controllers to provide feedback.⁴⁸ In effect, FORSCOM is now requiring units again to train using the CTC model in order not only to prepare for NTC/JRTC/CMTC, but to maximize training effectiveness.

Such training clearly follows the nine principles of U.S. Army training and the eight-step training model, either in an obvious manner or as it has already been specified. However, a few important points are necessary. First, as espoused by Brigadier General Russell Honore, assistant commandant of the Infantry Center at Fort Benning, Georgia and the most skillful trainer I have ever known, force-on-

force exercises using the Multi-Integrated Laser Engagement System (MILES) are the most challenging (and effective) training available today because of the unconstrained competitive environment in which both BLUFOR and OPFOR units operate. Second, battalion-level, combined-arms training emphasizes multiechelon techniques specifically designed “to use available time and resources most effectively.”⁴⁹ Finally, using appropriate doctrine includes training to standard, not to time; conducting AARs after all training; and conducting retraining as necessary. Just as a commander cannot learn to synchronize all the combat functions during a task force deliberate-breach operation using simulations (like JANUS), he (and his subordinates) cannot fully understand how such an operation is conducted by doing it once on the ground. Effective training requires repetition. While discussing the difference between training and education, a four-star senior military official said during a lecture as part of this year’s U.S. Army War College Commandant’s Lecture Series, “It’s training that teaches us to drive a plane, ship or tank, or even the tactics of maneuvering a battalion, and training requires repetition.”⁵⁰ As much as many of us would not like to admit it, maybe the eighth and final step of our Army’s training model—retrain—is indeed the most important.

The model of training provided by the CTCs can be replicated very nearly at home station, if enough resources and planning are put into this effort. Many would argue that cost is a prohibiting factor, but it does not have to be. Today, there are heavy equipment transports (HETs) on every heavy force installation to save operational tempo (OPTEMPO) dollars in getting tracked vehicles to and from the field. Additionally, effective exercises do not have to take place over large areas of terrain; many posts do not have such training areas anyway, and the more miles vehicles drive the more OPTEMPO dollars it costs. Actions on enemy contact through actions on the objective are normally what has to be emphasized, and large amounts of terrain are not required for even battalion-level exercises. Furthermore, costs not in terms of dollars but in time to plan and execute, and in manpower to support and provide OPFOR and O/Cs, are the keys to conducting this type of training. Besides, instead of making excuses why full-scale battalion task force field exercises cannot be conducted at home station, let us heed the words of former OPFOR commander Colonel Guy Swan, when he says, “From our point of view, there appears to be no effective substitute for training the combined arms team as one team under realistic field conditions.”⁵¹

I remember at Fort Stewart, Georgia, a battalion task force with two company teams and an engineer company conducting a five-kilometer attack to breach a wire/mined obstacle and seize a company-size objective. Four of these operations were conducted over a period of eight days, requiring the task force to plan four different operations, recocking to reiterate the full planning process and changing out one of the company teams each time. To include terrain model and full rehearsals, as well as redos, the task force conducted 16 attacks, each consisting of at least an attempt to breach the obstacle. It was not surprising that this task force went to NTC and conducted three successful breaches in three attempts against the mighty “Krasnovian” OPFOR. NTC, like the other CTCs, is modeled on our perception of combat. There is no wonder why among others, General William R. Richardson, former TRADOC Commander, refers to training as “preparation for war.”⁵²

Recommendations

Training: Our Army’s top priority and don’t you forget it!

–General Dennis J. Reimer

Many quickly resort to the excuses of insufficient training time and a lack of training dollars to explain why their units seldom conduct any more battalion-level field training exercises modeled on the training at our CTCs. I want to respond to the former reason with a lesson I learned from one of my

first company commanders: "There is never enough time to train, so we have to use the time available in the most effective manner."

In reality, despite having only 10 divisions instead of the 18 we had during the 1970s and being involved in more operations throughout the world than ever, not all our combat units are actively engaged in contingency operations. Except for units preparing for, on or recovering from real-world missions, units today are not necessarily any busier than they ever were. In the last several years, until the 1st Cavalry Division was alerted for the Bosnia mission, none of our divisions in the Continental United States (CONUS) were deployed on an operation that caused an inability to conduct superb field training.

Many soldiers from Fort Stewart, the home of the 3rd Infantry Division (Mechanized) (3ID), would argue that they have been quite busy on deployments for the past several years. For instance, a brigade (minus) from 3ID participates in the biannual Bright Star exercise just like other divisions support other exercises. However, these exercises allow for intensive battalion-level field training, even more than at home station. Furthermore, during Desert Thunder in 1998, the 1st Brigade of 3ID conducted a CTC-like force-on-force training with MILES in Kuwait, which was even supported with an observer/controller team from NTC. Good units, made that way because of their commanders, will certainly find the time to train.

The shortage of training dollars is a much more legitimate reason for reducing field-training opportunities. According to Sean Naylor of *Army Times*, "Recently released figures show that in fiscal 1998 the active Army fell more than 15 percent short of its goal of putting 800 training miles on the odometers of its Abrams main battle tank."⁵³ Even though funded at 800 miles per tank, units drove only 652 miles per tank—the difference was used to finance other program areas such as infrastructure that were critically underfunded. However, we cannot continue to "rob from Peter to pay Paul." What makes matters worse, the average mileage of 652 miles includes an Army average of 75 miles per tank used for training at NTC—mileage that until Fiscal Year 1998 was not included in the annual mileage of 800 miles. Money is undoubtedly the primary problem, and as it has been said previously, the Army must either find the necessary additional training dollars or prohibit using training and maintenance funds for other programs, or it will continue to accept a less than ready force.

FORSCOM has already agreed to find the funds that will allow units to meet the requirement to conduct a five-day battalion-level maneuver training exercise prior to a CTC rotation. However, we must squeeze that turnip even more to ensure our complete force—not just those units scheduled for a CTC rotation in the near future—is adequately trained. It should be of major concern to the U.S. Army that the 2d Infantry Division "drove fewer [tank] miles in fiscal 1998 [(551)] than their counterparts in either the United States or Germany, despite the fact that Korea is considered one of the world's most dangerous flashpoints."⁵⁴ And by the way, the units in Korea never get the opportunity to train at a CTC. Therefore, providing adequate training dollars to train our force, including the conduct of battalion-level maneuver training exercises, must continue to be our Army's first priority.

Second, recognizing that requirements always have and always will drive training, the U.S. Army must establish battalion-level field training exercises as an annual requirement (at a minimum) for all combat units. I realize that requirements without resources cause difficult problems for commanders. However, given priorities, commanders can make things happen. For example, in Fiscal Year 1998, the 1st Infantry Division (Mechanized) (1ID), headquartered in Germany, drove its tanks an average of 906 miles, over 100 miles more than funded. Granted, the division was coming off the Bosnian mission and was training to return to high-intensity conflict standards. However, an Army source in the Pentagon attributed the 1ID's high OPTEMPO to the aggressive training philosophy of the division's commander, Major General David Grange. Realizing the importance of training, he used funds

provided to buy new equipment to train his units beyond the level to which he was funded.⁵⁵ Using training requirements, in this case self-imposed, IID is thus conducting the necessary training for all their units.

Maybe, even without additional training dollars, the requirement to conduct periodical battalion-level field exercises will force commanders to learn innovative ways to use available training dollars more efficiently—at least for the 652 OPTEMPO miles that they currently use. As has already been suggested, more use of HETs, developing reduced-range scenarios, and emphasizing multi-echelon training are a few ways to increase training efficiency. Furthermore, commanders must use the Army's training doctrine, proven at our CTCs, to make training the most effective that it can be. So, while the U.S. Army as an institution takes positive steps to correct training readiness problems throughout our force from the highest levels, it must also scrutinize more closely the use of training funds and training methods by subordinate commanders.

Finally, the U.S. Army must reverse the trend of using simulations as a replacement for field training. Too often we try to reduce field-training opportunities and training funds because of the availability of virtual simulations and constructive training tools. We should procure such devices and systems not as a means for an OPTEMPO trade-off, but rather with the intent to use them in order to enhance live training.

Currently, the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Force Management and Personnel (OASD FM&P) has the responsibility to ensure training does not decline because of added training simulators and training devices. However, OASD FM&P has admitted that the cost and training effectiveness analysis it conducts tends to focus less on the training value or the benefit, and more on the cost. "This tends to result in some 'cheap solutions' which, many times, cost the training community much in the form of additional time and personnel and certainly results in units less trained for operational readiness."⁵⁶ It is no wonder then that the Rand Corporation is currently conducting a study for the U.S. Army, to determine the effectiveness of a new simulation system, the Close Combat Tactical Trainer, that has already been bought and has significantly reduced the field OPTEMPO of units at Fort Hood, Texas. Therefore, as promising as some simulators and training devices may be, such technology has deficiencies that only live training can overcome. As a result, we need to use simulations for their intended purpose—to enhance live training, not to replace it.

Conclusion

Man for man, one division is as good as another. They vary only in the skill and leadership of their Commanders.

--General Omar N. Bradley

The art of battle command is an essential element of all leaders. For the United States to maintain its fighting edge into the future, it is imperative to develop this art in our potential commanders. This art takes years to develop, and can best be learned through realistic combat experiences. However, short of war, such experiences can be best gained through realistic and tough field training—the exact model that has made our CTCs so successful.

In this period of declining training funds, we must be cautious of the promises made by virtual simulators and constructive training tools. Even though we must maximize their effectiveness, we must also guard against allowing them to totally replacing live training. Multiechelon field-training exercises at the battalion level, supported with OPFOR and O/Cs, are an essential means not only to prepare units for the CTCs, as FORSCOM has realized, but to prepare units for war, while giving leaders essential and realistic battle command experience.

To ensure our forces in the field once again conduct such training, the U.S Army must take the following steps: ensure sufficient training funds are provided to and used by commanders, even if it requires prohibiting the migration of training funds to other necessary programs; make it a requirement to conduct (at a minimum) annual battalion-level field-training exercises modeled after the training methods proven to be successful at our CTCs; scrutinize training dollars to ensure commanders at all levels are enacting innovative and cost-saving methods to train more efficiently and according to our doctrine; and reverse the current trend that emphasizes the use of simulations as a replacement for rather than an enhancement of live training.

Endnotes

1. Anonymous senior official at one of the Combat Training Centers quoted in Colonel Paul Herbert and others, *Combat Training Centers: The 21st Century Schools for the Application of Military Art and Science* (Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: U.S. Army War College, May 1995), p. 12.
2. Brigadier General H. Robert Scales, Jr., *Certain Victory: The U.S. Army in the Gulf War* (Washington, D.C.: Brassey's, 1994), p. 21.
3. General Dennis J. Reimer, statement before the United States Senate Committee on Armed Services, speaking on the subject of "Readiness," during the second session of the 105th Congress, 29 September 1998.
4. Sean D. Naylor, "Size Does Matter," *Army Times*, 16 November 1998, p. 18.
5. Major General Roger C. Schultz <SchultzR@ngb-armg.ngb.army.mil>, "RE: Requesting Your Permission," electronic mail message to Lieutenant Colonel Ron Bertha <BerthaR@pa.net>, 25 February 1999.
6. Department of the Army, Field Manual 100-5, *Operations* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 14 June 1993), p. G-1.
7. Lieutenant Colonel William Glenn Webster, "Enhancing Battle Command with the Tools of the 21st Century," *Notes from the Box* (Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: U.S. Army War College, March 1995), p. 5.
8. James W. Lussier and Terrill F. Saxon, *Critical Factors in the Art of Battle Command* (Alexandria, Va.: U.S. Army Research Institute, November 1994), p. 4.
9. Lieutenant Colonel Michael T. Hayes, *Battle Command—What Is It, Why It Is Important, and How to Get It* (Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: U.S. Army War College, 15 April 1996), pp. 1-26.
10. Department of the Army, TRADOC Pamphlet 525-200-1, *Battle Command* (Fort Monroe, Va.: Headquarters, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, 1 December 1994), p. 4.
11. Hayes, *Battle Command*, pp. 21-23.
12. Department of the Army, Field Manual 25-101, *Battle Focused Training*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 30 September 1990), foreword.
13. Lieutenant General Thomas N. Burnette, Jr., "The Second Training Revolution," *ARMY*, October 1997, p. 116.

14. *Ibid.*
15. Brigadier General James D. Thurman <ThurmanJ@irwin.army.mil>, "NTC Info," electronic mail message to Lieutenant Colonel Ron Bertha <BerthaR@pa.net>, 9 January 1999.
16. Department of the Army, FM 100-5, *Operations*, pp. 2-14.
17. Thurman, "NTC Info."
18. Burnette, "The Second Training Revolution," p. 118.
19. General Dennis J. Reimer, "Training: Our Army's Top Priority and Don't You Forget It," *Military Review*, July-August 1996, p. 55.
20. Burnette, "The Second Training Revolution," p. 118.
21. Scales, *Certain Victory*, p. 35.
22. Anne W. Chapman, *The Origins and Development of the National Training Center, 1976-1984* (Fort Monroe, Va.: Headquarters, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, 1997), p. 1.
23. Scales, *Certain Victory*, p. 20.
24. Combat Maneuver Training Center, 7th Army Training Command, U.S. Army, Europe, "Combat Training Centers," undated; available from <<http://www.cmtc.7atc.army.mil/links/ctc.htm>>; Internet; accessed 22 December 1998.
25. Reimer, "Training: Our Army's Top Priority and Don't You Forget It," p. 60.
26. General Carl E. Vuono, "A Trained and Ready Army," *The Collected Works of the Thirty-First Chief of Staff, United States Army* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1994), p. 435.
27. Thurman, "NTC Info."
28. Reimer, "Training: Our Army's Top Priority and Don't You Forget It," p. 61.
29. Lieutenant Colonel G. Chesley Harris, in *Combat Training Centers: The 21st Century Schools for the Application of Military Art and Science* (Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: U.S. Army War College, May 1995), p. 10.
30. Naylor, "Size Does Matter," p. 18.
31. Reimer, "Training: Our Army's Top Priority and Don't You Forget It," p. 61.
32. Scales, *Certain Victory*, p. 22.
33. Reimer, "Training: Our Army's Top Priority and Don't You Forget It," p. 61.
34. Colonel (Retired) Harry G. Summers, Jr., "Joint Chiefs at War with Congress," *Army Times*, 26 October 1998, p. 54.
35. William S. Cohen, Secretary of Defense, *Annual Report to the President and the Congress, 1998* (Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1998), p. 96.
36. Michael E. O'Hanlon and Jerre Wilson, "Shoring Up Military Readiness," Policy Brief #43 – January 1999; available from <<http://www.brookings.edu/comm/PolicyBriefs/Pb043/pb43.htm>>; Internet; accessed 20 January 1999.
37. Jane McHugh, "Fewer Soldiers, More Perks," *Army Times*, 4 January 1999, p. 14.
38. Reimer, "Readiness."

39. Command Sergeant Major Clifton P. O'Brien, "Why I Am Getting Out," *Army Times*, 26 October 1998, p. 31.
40. General Dennis J. Reimer, "Total Army Update," address to the National Guard Association of the United States, 7 September 1998.
41. Reimer, "Readiness."
42. Sergeant First Class Gregory Schwendeman, "More Training Needed in the Basics at Home," *Army Times*, 17 August 1998, p. 26.
43. Thurman, "NTC Info."
44. "Finding the Money for Training," *Army Times*, 16 November 1998, p. 29.
45. Department of the Army, Field Manual 25-100, *Training the Force*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 15 November 1988), pp. 1-3 to 1-5.
46. Reimer, "Training: Our Army's Top Priority and Don't You Forget It," p. 58.
47. Scales, *Certain Victory*, p. 12.
48. Naylor, "Size Does Matter," p. 18.
49. Department of the Army, FM 25-100, *Training the Force*, p. 1-4.
50. This statement is from the remarks made by a speaker participating in the 1998-1999 U.S. Army War College Commandant's Lecture Series.
51. Colonel Guy Swan, "Defeating Force XXI Capabilities—OPFOR Observations," memorandum, Fort Irwin, Calif., 24 September 1998.
52. General William R. Richardson, "Training: Preparation for Combat," *Military Review*, January-February 1997, p. 84.
53. Sean D. Naylor, "Are Heavy Divisions Going the Extra Mile for the Training?," *Army Times*, 8 February 1999, p. 18.
54. *Ibid.*
55. *Ibid.*
56. Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Force Management and Personnel, "Cost & Training Effectiveness," 26 June 1996; available from <<http://www.ist.ucf.edu/labsproj/projects/cte.htm>>; Internet; accessed 22 December 1998.

Bibliography

- Alexander, Michael W., Major. *Operational Battle Command: The Doorway to Versatility*. Fort Leavenworth, Kans.: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, December 1995.
- Antal, John F., Lieutenant Colonel. "Training the Command-Staff Team for Battle Command and Rapid Decisionmaking." *Landpower Essay Series*. Arlington, Va.: Association of the United States Army, February 1995.
- Bender, Bryan. "Interview: Gen Joseph Ralston, Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff." *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 22 April 1998, 32.
- Blackwell, Paul E., Lieutenant General. "Winning the Wars of the 21st Century." *ARMY*, October 1994, 121-134.
- Bralley, Neal H., Lieutenant Colonel. "Improving Battle Command Skills: The Brigade Command and Battle Staff Training Program." *Military Review*, November-December 1995, 49-52.
- Burnette, Thomas N., Jr., Lieutenant General. "The Second Training Revolution." *ARMY*, October 1997, 111-118.
- Chapman, Anne W. *The Origins and Development of the National Training Center, 1976-1984*. Fort Monroe, Va.: Headquarters, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, 1997.
- Chapman, Anne W. *The National Training Centers Matures, 1985-1993*. Fort Monroe, Va.: Headquarters, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, 1997.
- Clancy, Tom. *Into the Storm, A Study in Command*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1997.
- Clinton, William J., President of the United States. "Military Readiness." *ROA National Security Report*, The Officer/November 1998, 27.
- Cohen, William S., Secretary of Defense. *Annual Report to the President and the Congress, 1998*. Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1998.
- Cohen, William S., Secretary of Defense. *Report of the Quadrennial Defense Review*. Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, May 1997.
- Cole, Stephen V., editor. "Are We Ready to Fight?" *For Your Eyes Only*, 28 September 1988.
- Collins, Arthur S., Jr., Lieutenant General (Retired). *Common Sense Training*. Novaton, Calif.: Presidio Press, 1978.
- Combat Maneuver Training Center, 7th Army Training Command, USAREUR. "Combat Training Centers." Undated. Available from <<http://www.cmtc.7atc.army.mil/links/ctc.htm>>. Internet. Accessed 22 December 1998.
- Courtney, Smiley E., Jr. "Crisis in Defense for 21st Century." *Army Times*, 23 November 1998, 58.
- Faculty of Combat Studies Institute. *Studies in Battle Command*. Fort Leavenworth, Kans.: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, undated.
- Hayes, Michael T., Lieutenant Colonel. *Battle Command—What is it, Why it is Important, and How to Get it*. Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: U.S. Army War College, 15 April 1996.

- Hartzog, William W., General, and Susan Canedy. "Training the 21st Century Army." *ARMY*, February 1997, 22-28.
- Herbert, Paul, Colonel, Colonel Gary Swartz, Lieutenant Colonel Doug Blake, Lieutenant Colonel Bruce Brant, Lieutenant Colonel George C. Harris, Lieutenant Colonel Lyle D. Hohnstine, Lieutenant Colonel John Rosenberger, and Lieutenant Colonel Glenn Webster. *Combat Training Centers: The 21st Century Schools for the Application of Military Art and Science*. Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: U.S. Army War College, May 1995.
- Holzer, Robert. "Experts Slam National Security Strategy." *Army Times*, 23 November 1998, 26.
- Lamar, Patrick, Colonel, Lieutenant Colonel Billy J. McCollum, Lieutenant Colonel John A. Collier, Jr., and Major Edwin J. Kuster, Jr. "Battle Command Laboratories: Where Tomorrow's Victories Begin." *Military Review*, May-June 1996, 53-61.
- Lussier, James W., and Terrill F. Saxon. *Critical Factors in the Art of Battle Command*. Alexandria, Pa.: U.S. Army Research Institute, November 1994.
- Martin, Peter J., Major. *Leader Competencies: Implications for Force XXI*. Fort Leavenworth, Kans.: TRADOC Analysis Center, June 1995.
- McHugh, Jane. "Fewer Soldiers, More Perks." *Army Times*, 4 January 1999, 14-15.
- Naylor, Sean D. "Are Heavy Divisions Going the Extra Mile for the Training?" *Army Times*, 8 February 1999, 18.
- Naylor, Sean D. "Army IG Confirms Combat Training Woes." *Army Times*, 15 February 1999, 20.
- Naylor, Sean D. "Readiness: More Than a Can-do Spirit." *Army Times*, 4 January 1999, 12-13.
- Naylor, Sean D. "Readiness Problems Expected to Continue/Personnel Shortages, High Optempo, Lack of Cash Put Crimp in Strength." *Army Times*, 5 January 1998, 18.
- Naylor, Sean D. "Size Does Matter." *Army Times*, 16 November 1998, 18-20.
- Naylor, Sean D. "We Need More Money for Home Station Training." *Army Times*, 21 December 1998, 3.
- New, Larry, Colonel. "Command and Control for the Virtual Battlespace." *The Air Land Sea Bulletin*, August 1998, 4.
- Newman, Richard J. "Can Peacekeepers Make War." *U.S. News & World Report*, 19 January 1998, 38-44.
- Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Force Management and Personnel. "Cost & Training Effectiveness." 26 June 1996. Available from <<http://www.ist.ucf.edu/labsproj/projects/cte.htm>>. Internet. Accessed 22 December 1998.
- O'Brien, Clifton P., Command Sergeant Major. "Why I Am Getting Out." *Army Times*, 26 October 1998, 31.
- O'Hanlon, Michael E. and Jerre Wilson. "Shoring Up Military Readiness." Policy Brief #43 – Jan 1999. Available from <<http://www.brookings.edu/comm/PolicyBriefs/Pb043/pb43.htm>>. Internet. Accessed 20 January 1999.

- Reimer, Dennis J., General. "CSA 98-17 Random Thoughts While Running." Electronic mail message from Lieutenant Colonel Kurt Weidenthal <WeidentK@AWC.Carlisle.Army.mil> to Lieutenant Colonel Ron Bertha <BerthaR@AWC.Carlisle.Army.mil> via Colonel Thomas P. Watts, via Lieutenant Colonel Joseph P. Robinson, via Lieutenant Colonel Patrick W. Shull. 21 October 1998.
- Reimer, Dennis J., General. Statement before the United States Senate Committee on Armed Services, speaking on the subject of "Readiness." 105th Congress, 2d session, 29 September 1998.
- Reimer, Dennis J., General. "Total Army Update." Address to the National Guard Association of the United States, 7 September 1998.
- Reimer, Dennis J., General. "Training: Our Army's Top Priority, and Don't You Forget it." *Military Review*, July-August 1996, 55-62.
- Richardson, William R., General (Retired). "The 'Training Revolution' That Built Today's Army." *ARMY*, September 1996, 8-12.
- Richardson, William R., General. "Training: Preparation for Combat." *Military Review*, January-February 1997, 84-86.
- Scales, Robert H. Scales, Jr., Brigadier General. *Certain Victory: The U.S. Army in the Gulf War*. Washington, D.C.: Brassey's, 1994.
- Schultz, Roger C., Major General <SchultzR@ngb-amg.ngb.army.mil>. "RE: Requesting Your Permission." Electronic mail message to Lieutenant Colonel Ron Bertha <BerthaR@pa.net>. 25 February 1999.
- Schwendeman, Gregory, Sergeant First Class. "More Training Needed in the Basics at Home." *Army Times*, 17 August 1998, 26.
- Steele, Dennis. "Virtual TRADOC." *ARMY*, February 1997, 29-31.
- Sullivan, Gordon R. "Washington Tightwads Are Creating a Hollow Military." *The Wall Street Journal*, 22 September 1998
- Summers, Harry G., Colonel (Retired). "Joint Chiefs at War with Congress." *Army Times*, 26 October 1998, 54.
- Swan, Guy, Colonel. "Defeating Force XXI Capabilities—OPFOR Observations." Memorandum. Fort Irwin, Calif., 24 September 1998.
- Thurman, James D., Brigadier General <ThurmanJ@irwin.army.mil>. "NTC Info." Electronic mail message to Lieutenant Colonel Ron Bertha <BerthaR@pa.net>. 9 January 1999.
- U.S. Department of the Army. *Battle Command*. TRADOC Pamphlet 525-200-1. Fort Monroe, Va.: Headquarters, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, 1 December 1994.
- U.S. Department of the Army. *Battle Command*. Draft 2.1. Fort Leavenworth, Kans.: Battle Command Battle Laboratory, 22 April 1994.
- U.S. Department of the Army. Field Manual 25-101. *Battle Focused Training* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 30 September 1990.
- U.S. Department of the Army. *National Training Center*. Advertising Pamphlet. Fort Monroe, Va.: Headquarters, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, 10 March 1980.

- U.S. Department of the Army. Field Manual 100-5. *Operations*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 14 June 1993.
- U.S. Department of the Army.. Field Manual 25-100. *Training the Force* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 15 November 1988.
- Vuono, Carl E., General. "A Trained and Ready Army." *The Collected Works of the Thirty-first Chief of Staff, United States Army*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1994.
- Webster, William Glenn, Lieutenant Colonel. "Enhancing Battle Command with the Tools of the 21st Century." In *Notes from the Box*. Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: U.S. Army War College, March 1995.
- "An Open Letter to the Army Generals." *Army Times*, 8 June 1998, 30.
- "Finding the Money for Training," *Army Times*, 16 November 1998, 29.
- "Hearing, Heeding Voices from the Field." *Army Times*, 31 August 1998, 28.
- "Hollow Force, or Ready?" *Army Times*, 6 July 1998, 34.
- "Hollow Force? Spend a Few Weeks in the Field." *Army Times*, 31 August 1998, 29.
- "Washington Report: Congress Holds Hearings on Readiness." *ARMY*, November 1998, 6-7.