

Military Review

THE PROFESSIONAL JOURNAL OF THE U.S. ARMY

November-December 2023

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By Order of the Secretary of the Army:

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General, United States Army
Chief of Staff

Official:

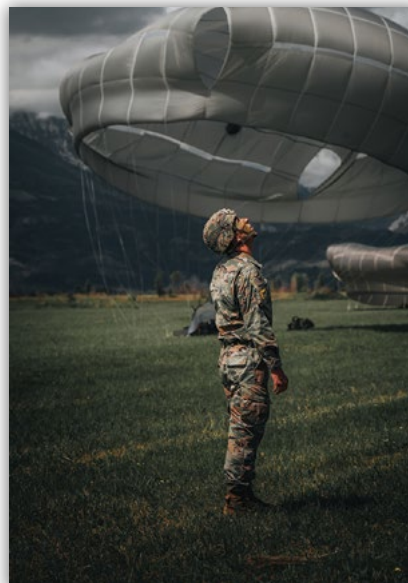


MARK F. AVERILL

Administrative Assistant

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Cover photo: A U.S. Army paratrooper assigned to the 173rd Airborne Brigade looks up at the sky as fellow paratroopers descend to the ground during an airborne operation on Frida Drop Zone, Pordenone, Italy, 31 August 2023. (Photo by Sgt. Mariah Gonzalez, U.S. Army)



Back cover photo: U.S. Army paratroopers assigned to the 173rd Airborne Brigade descend on Frida Drop Zone, Pordenone, Italy, 31 August 2023. (Photo by Sgt. Mariah Gonzalez, U.S. Army)



Chief Priority!

Ignite a Renaissance in Military Scholarship and Writing

Col. Todd Schmidt, PhD, U.S. Army

The chief of staff of the Army (CSA) is making professional writing a top priority. To prove it, he is incentivizing professional writing through personal recognition, and Army University Press is playing a major role in achieving this important objective.

Over the past year, the team at Army University Press has been calling for a renaissance, revival, and reawakening of thought, scholarship, and writing within the community of military professionals. Contributing to the professional body of knowledge is a fundamental part of being a “professional.” Our pleas for making scholarship, writing, and intellectual engagement an Army priority have been echoed on the pages of other complementary outlets such as the Modern War Institute.¹ Our call was heard, and action is now in progress.

A select group of leaders from around the Army are now preparing to meet at the U.S. Military Academy to plan a campaign that, if it meets its objectives, will have a profound impact on our Army. The chief priority of these attendees is to understand how to renew, reinvigorate, and improve professional writing and discourse across the Army enterprise.

To punctuate this priority, on Patriot’s Day, 11 September 2023, Gen. Randy George, Gen. Gary Brito, and Sergeant Major of the Army Michael Weimer published an article calling for military professionals to make vital investments to improve our expertise through scholarship and writing. Plainly stating, “We can assure you: we do not have all the answers,” these senior leaders are calling on soldiers of all ranks to sharpen their minds, sharpen their arguments, sharpen their pencils, and engage in professional writing. They understand that this dialogue strengthens the profession.²



Col. Todd Schmidt, PhD, U.S. Army
Director, Army University Press

The U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, charged with the mission of developing future leaders, will guide this effort on behalf of the Army, ensuring the allocation of resources required to meet the goals and objectives of the CSA. Requirements will include updating twentieth-century policy, providing modern capabilities, and extinguishing archaic thinking about how the Army engages the profession in the twenty-first century.

In recent articles calling for renewal of professional writing, elementary analysis utilizing descriptive statistics demonstrates a decline in professional journals across the Army. Journals and authors are publishing fewer articles less often.³ Our publishing platforms have not evolved and have been allowed to wither away. As the cost of maintaining professional editorial staffs and publishing hard-copy publications skyrockets, the transition of products from print to online products has increased exponentially. Limited resources are, or have

been, redirected to other priorities, particularly over the course of the past two decades of conflict and war.

In tandem, military readers have migrated to non-military sources of information. More popular, current blogs and websites offer the ability for contributors and consumers to express more opinionated writing, offer and gain near real-time feedback and commentary, and share interesting opinion pieces on other social media outlets. There is more personal gratification and less professional editorial process that can slow the exchange of ideas.

If the Army is to truly engage with twenty-first-century audiences and capabilities, we must remove antiquated, if well-meaning, barriers to utilizing safe, modern, mobile-friendly, online website platforms and social media. We must ensure the body of knowledge related to military affairs is easily accessible and optimized for internet search engines. Likewise, the Army must improve its understanding of how current and, most importantly, future military students learn; how they research, read, and write; and how to incentivize quality scholarship and professional contribution.⁴

In the near-term, the CSA is selecting well-written articles each month by a diverse community of authors for recognition and amplification of their scholarly work. These articles will be highlighted and promoted on the Army University Press homepage, and authors will be receiving a congratulatory note and gift from the CSA. In 2024, other major, prestigious initiatives will be unveiled (look for an announcement in the January-February 2024 issue of *Military Review*).

Lt. Gen. Milford Beagle, commanding general of the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, recently encouraged leaders to read the book *The Disruptive Mindset* by Charlene Li.⁵ A prominent message for leaders in the book is that if an organization such as the Army is to remain relevant, it must possess certain qualities. It must be adaptive. It must be willing to transform. It must have a healthy command climate. It must have a viable, future-focused strategy. It must focus less on

where it is and more on where it needs to be in relationship to itself, its adversaries, and the Nation.

Our senior leaders today are tested warfighters who now find themselves in corporate positions, leading the Army institution in an “interwar period” characterized by great power competition. Although our Army is not directly engaged in high-intensity conflict, we are not able to lower our guard or “take a knee.” To borrow from the Navy, we still require “all hands on deck” to ensure our intellectual and human capital is invested in maintaining our relative cognitive advantage over future adversaries. Technological advancements and advantages, cornerstone capabilities of the U.S. military, are not enough. We require soldiers and leaders who can outthink the enemy at every level. This necessitates continued education, training development, and repetition, particularly as it relates to professional reading, critical thinking, and writing.

The real work will be done at the lowest levels, as soldiers engage in forums that inform the force, connecting with peers across the institution to share lessons learned, write, engage in scholarly discourse, improve military doctrine, optimize training, and achieve these objectives on platforms, outlets, and mediums that require enabling, twenty-first-century policies. At the beginning of 2023, Army University Press laid out a challenge to military professionals. That challenge is now supported by our CSA. I will end my letter for the last 2023 issue of *Military Review* the same way I ended the first:

I challenge those who subscribe to the moniker of military professional to write, to share, to engage, to think. Help the profession improve. Cast off and banish any hint of anti-intellectual cynicism or undertone that shames those that seek education and professional development. You can start ... by working with Army University Press, submitting articles or book reviews for publication. Contact us and let us help you reach the full calling and requirement of a true military professional. Write!⁶ ■

Notes

1. For example, see Matt Cavanaugh, “Follow the Yellow Brick Wall: The Reasons Why Military Officers Do Not Write,” Modern War Institute, 23 February 2016, <https://mwi.westpoint.edu/follow-the-yellow-brick-wall-the-reasons-why-military-officers-do-not-write/>.

2. Randy George, Gary Brito, and Michael Weimer, “Strengthening the Profession: A Call to All Army Leaders to Revitalize Our Professional Discourse,” Modern War Institute, 11 September 2023, <https://mwi.westpoint.edu/>

[strengthening-the-profession-a-call-to-all-army-leaders-to-revitalize-our-professional-discourse/](#).

3. Zachary Griffiths, "Bring Back Branch Magazines," Modern War Institute, 27 April 2023, <https://mwi.usma.edu/bring-back-branch-magazines/>; Zachary Griffiths, "Low Crawling toward Obscurity: The Army's Professional Journals," *Military Review* 103, no. 5 (September-October 2023): 17–28, <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/Military-Review/English-Edition-Archives/September-October-2023/Obscurity/>.

4. Ibid.

5. Charlene Li, *The Disruptive Mindset: Why Some Organizations Transform While Others Fail* (Oakton, VA: IdeaPress Publishing, 2019).

6. Todd Schmidt, "Where Have All the Warrior-Scholars Gone? A Challenge to All Military Professionals," *Military Review* 103, no. 1 (January-February 2023): 1–2, <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/Military-Review/English-Edition-Archives/January-February-2023/Letter-from-the-Editor/>.

2023 General William E. DePuy Special Topics Writing Competition Winners

"Implementing FM 3-0, Operations"

1st Place

"Convergence and Emission Control: Tension and Reconciliation"

Maj. Matthew Tetreau, U.S. Army

2nd Place

"FM 3-0: A Step Forward in Approaching Operational Art"

Maj. Christopher Salerno, U.S. Army

3rd Place

"Obstacles to Implementation: A Dialectic between Old and New"

Maj. McLeod Wood, Australian Army

Honorable Mentions

"The Convergence Algorithm: Leveraging Artificial Intelligence to Enable Multidomain Operations"

Lt. Col. Michael B. Kim, U.S. Army

"Deep Six Chapter Seven: Qualitative and Practical Analytical Arguments for Removing Chapter 7 from FM 3-0"

Lt. Col. Mohamed. B. Massaquoi, U.S. Army

"Returning Context to Our Doctrine"

Maj. Robert G. Rose, U.S. Army

"Through a Glass Clearly: An Improved Definition of LSCO"

Maj. John Dzwonczyk, U.S. Army

Maj. Clayton C. Merkley, U.S. Army

For information on the General William E. DePuy Special Topics Writing Competition, including the 2024 topic and how to submit an entry, visit <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/DePuy-Writing-Competition/>.

Write for Military Review

Suggested Writing Themes and Topics—2024

- From the U.S. military perspective, what are the greatest external threats to the United States? Why, and how?
- Are there nations that consider themselves to be at war with the United States? If so, how are they conducting war, and what would increase the probabilities of their success?
- Is there a new “Cold War”? If so, who make up the new confederated blocs (i.e., the new “Axis” powers) aligned against the United States, and how do they cooperate with each other? What types of treaties or agreements do they have that outline relationships they share to reinforce each other?
- Who best synchronizes DIME (diplomacy, information, military, and economic elements of power) to achieve strategic goals? Contrast and compare employment of DIME by China, Russia, Iran, and the United States. How should the United States defend itself against foreign DIME?
- Does China have an “Achilles’ heel”? What is its center of gravity? If it has one, how can it best be attacked/exploited?
- What does China view as the United States’ “Achilles’ heel” or center of gravity? (e.g., Trade relations? Resource shortages? Diminishing technological manufacturing base? Societal instability and factionalism?) How specifically is it exploiting these?
- How should the United States respond to Chinese aggression toward Taiwan?
- What lessons are we learning from Russia’s war with Ukraine? What should be the next steps for the United States? What should be the desired end state from a U.S. perspective?
- What is the impact of irregular immigration on the security of the United States?
- What is the status of security force assistance brigades (SFAB)? What is the future for SFABs?
- What is the role now of the U.S. Armed Forces in Africa? Far East? Middle East?
- What logistical challenges will the U.S. military face in large-scale combat operations?
- What does the future hold for nanoweapons? Electromagnetic warfare? Artificial intelligence? Information warfare? How is the Army planning to mitigate effects?

2024 General William E. DePuy Special Topics Writing Competition

This year's theme is "The Russia-Ukraine War"

Russia and Ukraine have been at war since Russia invaded its neighbor on 24 February 2022. The intent of this year's DePuy competition is to encourage close examination of this war and what lessons it has provided for the Army. A list of suggested topics for examination is provided below. However, the list is not exclusive, and manuscripts identifying and analyzing other salient topics are encouraged.

- What lessons have we learned from the Russia-Ukraine war so far?
- How do lessons from this war affect/influence how we approach Field Manual 3-0, *Operations*, and large-scale combat operations?
- Based on lessons learned from this conflict, what needs to change in U.S. Army doctrine?
- What have we learned about the evolution and the future of maneuver warfare (armor, fires, unmanned aircraft, etc.)?
- Based on lessons learned from this conflict, what are the impacts of technology on modern warfare (e.g., cell phones, computers, artificial intelligence)?
- How do the Russian and Ukrainian approaches to information operations compare? Psychological operations? Civil-military operations? Who has been more effective? How have social and traditional media affected the war for each side?
- How does this conflict inform the Army of 2030–2040?
- How does this conflict influence U.S. adversaries? What are our adversaries learning?
- What are our allies learning from this conflict? How will it affect U.S. relationships with its allies? With NATO?
- How does this conflict affect/influence the U.S. approach in the Indo-Pacific?
- Based on what we have seen in this conflict, what is the role of the interagency at the operational level?

Competition opens 1 January 2024 and closes 19 July 2024

1st Place \$1,000 and publication in *Military Review*

2nd Place \$750 and consideration for publication in *Military Review*

3rd Place \$500 and consideration for publication in *Military Review*

For information on how to submit an entry, please visit <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/DePuy-Writing-Competition/>. Articles will be comparatively judged by a panel of senior Army leaders on how well authors have clearly identified discussion topics related to the Russia-Ukraine war relevant to the U.S. Army; how effectively detailed and feasible analysis of the issues identified is presented; and the level of expository skill the author demonstrates in developing a well-organized article using professional standards of grammar, usage, critical thinking, original insights, and evidence of thorough research in the sources provided.

8 **Winning before the War**

A Case for Consolidation of Gains

Brig. Gen. Matthew N. Metzler, U.S. Army
 Col. Jay Liddick, U.S. Army
 Col. Heiva Hugh Kelley, U.S. Army Reserve
 Lt. Col. (P) Robert T. Greiner, U.S. Army
 Travis Bolio

Field Manual (FM) 3-0, Operations, remains incomplete in articulating and analyzing one of the U.S. Army's fundamental contributions to the joint force—the consolidation of gains (CG). Expanding upon FM 3-0 will further define the meaning and subsequent value in CG and will demonstrate why the Army is the service best postured to lead CG efforts on behalf of the joint force.

22 **The Tank Is Dead ... Long Live the Tank**

The Persistent Value of Armored Combined Arms Teams in the 21st Century

Maj. Gen. Curtis A. Buzzard, U.S. Army
 Brig. Gen. Thomas M. Feltey, U.S. Army
 Lt. Col. John M. Nimmons, U.S. Army
 Maj. Austin T. Schwartz, U.S. Army
 Dr. Robert S. Cameron

It is imperative to not draw premature conclusions from recent conflicts on the efficacy of tanks and armored formations in future conflicts. Tanks will continue to enable national power projection, provide operational flexibility and tempo to joint commanders, and facilitate tactical combined arms maneuver.

35 **Task Organizing the Combined Arms Battalion for Success in Eastern Europe**

Lt. Col. Jay A. Ireland, U.S. Army
 Maj. Ryan C. Van Wie, U.S. Army

For a U.S. Army combined arms battalion to succeed in restrictive terrain like that found in eastern Europe, the formation needs to include additional dismounts equipped with better equipment to properly set the conditions for a successful armored attack.

45 **Counterpunching to Win**

A Mindset and Method to Defeat First Battle Fears

Lt. Col. Craig A. Broyles, U.S. Army

Employing the boxing strategy of counterpunching to warfighting will allow the U.S. Army to seize initiative, build momentum, dominate the fight, and break the enemy's will to resist.

59 **Convergence and Emission Control Tension and Reconciliation**

Maj. Matthew Tetreau, U.S. Army

Tension exists between two concepts identified in Field Manual 3-0, Operations, convergence and electromagnetic emission control, and commanders will be challenged to implement both. This article won the 2023 General William E. DePuy Special Topics Writing Competition.

67 **Concepts for Security Force Assistance Brigade Company Task Forces in Large-Scale Combat Operations**

Maj. Zachary L. Morris, U.S. Army

As the U.S. Army focuses on large-scale combat operations (LSCO), security force assistance brigades should continue identifying potential roles they might play in LSCO and develop the doctrine and concepts needed to perform those functions effectively.

82 **At the Point of Friction**

The Role of the Modern Command Sergeant Major in Today's Army

Lt. Col. Bernard R. Gardner, U.S. Army
 Maj. Andre C. Aleong, U.S. Army
 Command Sgt. Maj. William H. Black, U.S. Army

Command sergeants major possess the influence, power, and expertise to enhance the readiness of their organizations and demonstrate care to their soldiers—the U.S. Army's most vital resource. Yet, specific regulations and leadership development do not adequately address the formidable roles they play.

103 Chinese Operational Art The Primacy of the Human Dimension

Rob Hafen

There is an important difference between the Chinese and American approaches to solving strategic, operational, and tactical problems. Where the American military tends to focus on high-cost, technology-centric solutions, the Chinese prefer low-cost, human-centric solutions.

114 Selective Service Before the All-Volunteer Force

Dr. Barry M. Stentiford

The fiftieth anniversary of the all-volunteer force is a good time to reflect on the system of compulsory military service it replaced.

126 Mentorship Is a Mess

Maj. Benjamin F. Stork, DO, U.S. Army

The U.S. Army has a leader development problem and is missing a critical informal venue for leader development culture due to the demise of the officer and enlisted club systems.

132 Responses to Gender Bias and Discrimination among Women Officers

Col. Adrian "A.J." Sullivan, U.S. Army

Allison Abbe, PhD

The U.S. Army is showing increases in women's representation and shown progress toward gender equality in its ranks, but women officers currently serving have already experienced the impacts of previous, less inclusive policies in their careers, and many are leaving voluntarily for a variety of reasons.

147 Sleep and Performance Why the Army Must Change Its Sleepless Culture

Maj. David Nixon, U.S. Army

Maj. Porter Riley, U.S. Army

The U.S. Army continues to suffer from chronic sleep deficiency, but there are ways the Army can change its way of thinking related to sleep and alleviate the mental and physical risks associated with sleep deprivation.

REVIEW ESSAY

158 By All Means Available Memoirs of a Life in Intelligence, Special Operations, and Strategy

Lt. Col. Rick Baillergeon, U.S. Army, Retired

The author critiques the memoir of Michael G. Vickers, whose career included service with U.S. Army Special Forces, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the Department of Defense.

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Charles Ruzkowski (left), commander of Company D, 411th Civil Affairs Battalion, meets with local officials and nongovernmental organizations 8 December 2021 during Combined Resolve XVI at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center in Hohenfels, Germany. U.S. Army Reserve civil affairs soldiers supported 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, during the exercise designed to increase readiness and enhance interoperability with allies to enable U.S. Army Europe-Africa and U.S. European Command theater objectives. (Photo by Rick Scavetta, 353rd Civil Affairs Command)

Winning before the War

A Case for Consolidation of Gains

Brig. Gen. Matthew N. Metzger, U.S. Army Reserve

Col. Jay Liddick, U.S. Army

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Lt. Col. (P) Robert T. Greiner, U.S. Army

Travis Bolio

In October 2022, the Army released its newest operational doctrine at the Association of the United States Army's annual meeting. Field Manual (FM) 3-0, *Operations*, heralded the first holistic revision of the Army's warfighting methodology since AirLand Battle forty years prior. FM 3-0 is intended to be much more than an iterative outgrowth of legacy practices. Rather, it enshrines a new operational concept of warfighting and has initiated a top-to-bottom revision across the body of doctrine. The ambition long espoused by the Army's top officer, Gen. James McConville, is to inspire a "transformational change" rather than incrementally improving the Army.¹ To this end, FM 3-0 refocuses numerous familiar terms and constructs while proffering novel others to orchestrate the application of Army capabilities in support of the joint force.

The central tenet of FM 3-0 is a concept called multidomain operations, defined as "the combined arms employment of joint and Army capabilities to create and exploit relative advantages."² This definition certainly appears intuitive on its surface. After all, the concerted employment of modern combined arms has been a principle of near-axiomatic status since well before the muddy trenches of World War I. But this belies the complexity inherent in the concept's contemporary application and its potential impact in increasingly dynamic operating environments. Further, even though multidomain operations have been in the Army's doctrinal vernacular for several years, its importance in the new FM 3-0 is more than an attempt to pass off "old wine in a new bottle." It is not a variation of a legacy concept but rather reflects a maturation that codifies lessons acquired in tandem with the changing operational environment over the last four decades.

To be sure, this new doctrine is well designed and tempered by years of testing and evaluation. Yet despite its many strengths, FM 3-0 remains incomplete in articulating and analyzing one of the Army's fundamental contributions—the consolidation of gains (CG). In fact, "consolidation of gains" is a term used so frequently and in various contexts throughout FM 3-0 that it defies singular meaning or clarity of purpose. It is a strategic role, an outcome of multidomain



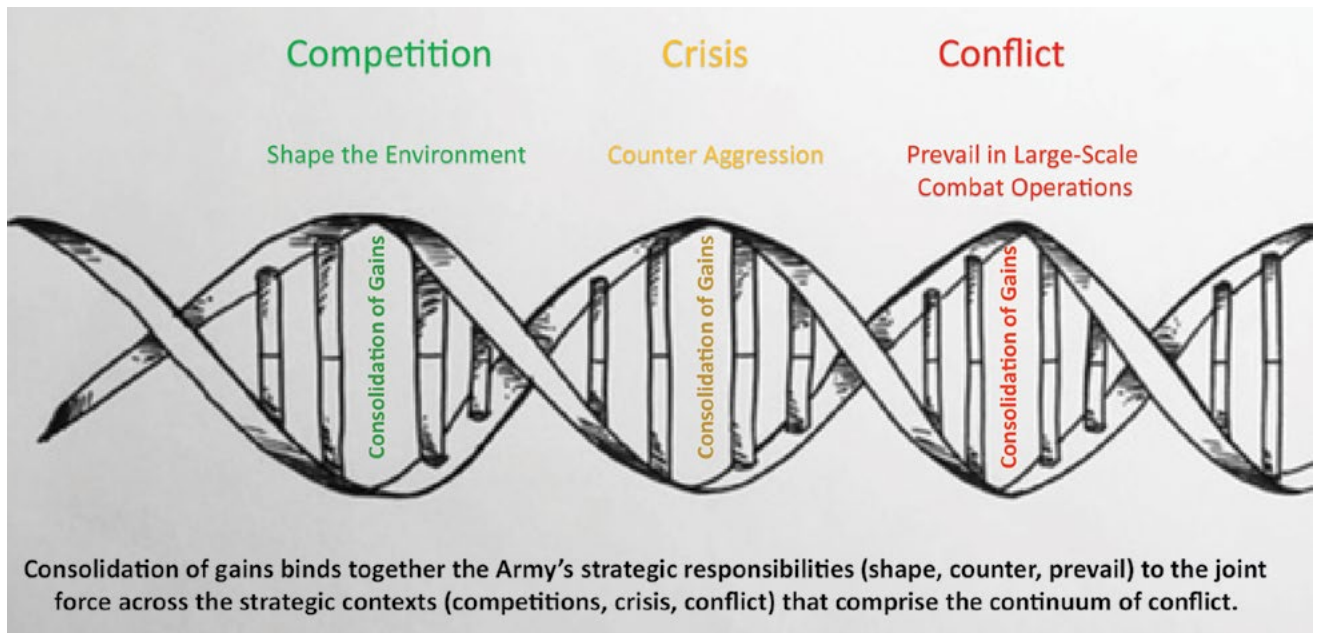
Participants from Combined Forces Command (CFC), U.S. Forces Korea, United Nations Command, and subordinate component commands under CFC begin the Ulchi Freedom Shield exercise on 22 August 2022 at Camp Humphreys, South Korea. (Photo courtesy of the South Korean Ministry of National Defense)

operations, an imperative, and a set of operational efforts.³ These inconsistencies undermine the crucial impact achieved through CG while obfuscating that this function is deeply ingrained in the Army's DNA and organic to its mission.

Expanding upon FM 3-0 will further define the meaning and subsequent value in CG. Doing so will demonstrate why the Army is the service best positioned to lead CG efforts on behalf of the joint force. To achieve these aims, the article will first define the purpose for consolidating gains before briefly describing the term's evolution and inherent prominence in the Army's mission. It will then apply examples from doctrine and recent experience to demonstrate the utility of consolidated gains in preparing for, deterring, and winning war as part of a whole-of-government strategy. The article will next discuss risk should gains be poorly consolidated and conclude by offering tools and approaches for planners to consider.

Consolidation of Gains: A Value Proposition

Unit-level commanders employ forces for specific tasks that provide physical or non-physical value. These might include possession of terrain, positional advantage, support of a population, moral standing, or the denial of any of these to an adversary. But battlefield



(Figure by Rachel E. Metzel-Beggs)

Figure 1. Consolidation of Gains Is in the Army's DNA

actions, if appropriately designed and integrated into the sweep of strategic art, are rarely intended to be isolated events. These independent tactical actions are undertaken as part of a complex choreography and, holistically, are interwoven to form the tapestry of a given conflict. Each activity is intended to present additive dilemmas to the enemy, thus providing a position of advantage over one's opponent to influence theater outcomes or end states. Therefore, CG is a value proposition for the joint force, as the sum of low-cost tactical investments are brought together under an operationally sound purpose to achieve a high-yield strategic effect.

Brig. Gen. Matthew N.

Metzel is an Army strategist serving as the deputy commanding general (operations) for the 200th Military Police Command. He is a Georgetown Fellow with three master's degrees in military history, organizational management, and theater operations.

Col. Jay Liddick is an Army civil affairs officer serving as the director of the U.S. Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania. He is a 2017 Army War College graduate.

In pursuit of national aims, civilian and military strategists must look for all such circumstances or opportunities favorable to attaining the desired end. These outcomes, whether achieved intentionally or otherwise, can be considered as "gains." While gains are often referred to by category, such as "security gains" or "political gains," all provide value even if isolated within their respective typology. "Consolidation" involves integrating these gains under a strategic purpose. The resulting synergy of consolidating these gains combine to present multiple dilemmas to the enemy. In short, we define CG as the deliberate recognition of outcomes that benefit desired ends, and the appreciation of these gains within a framework that accounts for their cumulative effects.

Understanding the value of consolidated gains requires that the Army unlearn several misnomers associated to the term's historical usage. Contrary to prior interpretations where gains would be consolidated on the objective as part of reorganization and preparation for the next operation, the contemporary application is not limited to matters of a tactical or kinetic nature. Rather, it now enables leaders at all levels to achieve better results by integrating the full array of relevant efforts and actors spanning military, civilian, allies, and partner activities. The advantages achieved in any one

of these can have a cumulative effect upon the others across the conflict continuum. CG—when done well—serves as a binding agent that transcends strategic contexts (competition, crisis, or conflict) to cohere disparate activities undertaken within the Army’s other strategic roles (see figure 1).

The Army increasingly recognizes the importance of CG as evinced by its burgeoning presence within doctrine. However, the institution seemingly continues to underappreciate the fullness of its contribution to the effort. As the premier landpower service, the Army is capable of leading discreet partners and priorities together across time and space to maximize their value to the joint force. Consolidating gains involves contributions from across the joint force to build upon the Army’s access, capabilities, and capacity. At the strategic level, consolidating gains involves carefully orchestrating diplomatic, informational, military, and economic (DIME) instruments of national power.

More than Postconflict Actions in the Assembly Area

Following the experiences of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom, CG activities have remained closely associated with stability operations at the tactical level, and primarily as a follow-on phase to combat operations. The new FM 3-0 does an admirable job reframing this narrative, but the connotation can still be found elsewhere in doctrine. For example, Joint Publication (JP) 3-31, *Joint Land Operations*, discusses CG exclusively under “Stability” and as a means to “capitalize on operational success and set conditions for a stable environment and eventual transition to legitimate authorities.”⁴ In fact, CG includes activities that permeate the tactical, operational, and strategic levels of war, and span across the competition, crisis, and conflict continuum. Figure 2 provides a broad depiction of the breadth of CG activities, leading to important insights about the concept.

The U.S. Army undertakes a leading role in the preponderance of CG activities at the tactical level, given its multidomain capabilities at scale, staying power in austere

conditions, and strong presence within the land domain where humans reside. Conversely, consolidating gains at the operational level, requires greater coordination, resources, and effects that demand contributions from across the joint force to build upon the Army’s access, capabilities, and capacity. At the strategic level, achieving gains depends upon the coordination and application of DIME instruments.

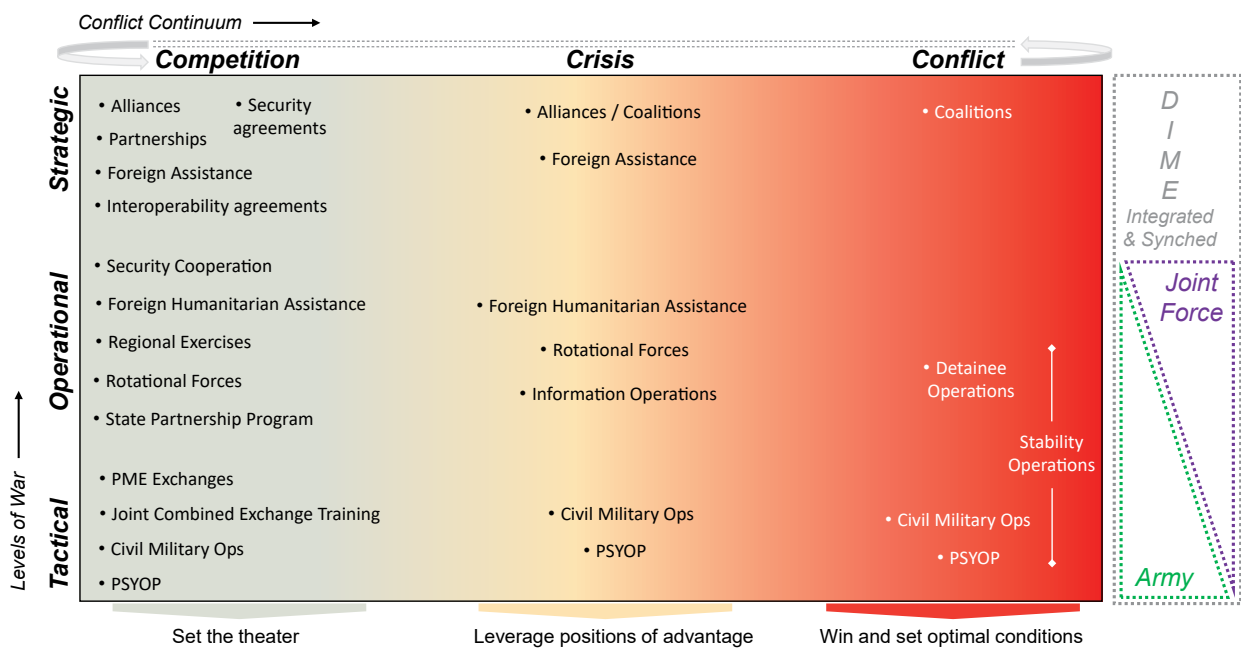
Optimal CG employment builds upon nested activities at each level of war to yield increasingly greater synergistic effects. For example, CG activities at the tactical level may involve an Army civil affairs team that works with a small village to understand and address a grievance. At the operational level, CG may combine to impact larger societal groups, such as a joint task force that brings together many foreign humanitarian assistance activities to reduce human suffering and help bring stability to a given nation or region. At the strategic level, CG may leverage the relationships that were built through the aforementioned activities to gain military access to critical ports and airfields within the host nation’s borders.

When CG efforts are organized along the conflict continuum, distinct purposes emerge for competition, crisis, and conflict activities. In competition, CG contributes to setting the theater and reducing “latent risk” through actions, such as

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Consolidation of gains activities permeate all levels of war across the conflict continuum

(Figure by Heiva Kelley)

Figure 2. Ubiquitous Influence of Consolidating Gains

improving living conditions and physical infrastructure that help to build goodwill and good governance with partner nations. In a crisis, CG activities aim to leverage relationships to gain access to critical airfields, ports, and staging areas that impose costs and deter potential adversaries. Finally, in a conflict, CG serves the joint force by helping to secure lines of communication, defeating enemy remnants behind forward lines, and setting the stage for transition to a focus on stabilization activities. Accordingly, the preponderance of CG investments should occur during competition to best posture the joint force during crisis and conflict. Envisioning CG activities in this way may assist the joint force in gaining a better appreciation for its potential impact across the conflict continuum and at all levels of war.

Winning before the War

Winning before the war requires much more than U.S. military forces conducting CG activities in a vacuum. At the grand strategic level, the Department of State (DOS) and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) drive diplomatic and

development efforts with other nations across the competition continuum. When combined with support from the Department of Defense (DOD), they collectively impact local populations, partner-nation governance, and civil society systems to win in competition and avoid escalation to crisis or conflict.

Within the DOD, the size and mission of the Army makes it uniquely capable of leading CG efforts within the joint force. As a service, the Army maintains a force structure that allows it to engage directly and integrate closely with local populations, international partners, allies, the interagency, and the joint force. This advantage helps establish lasting gains in ways that better position the joint force to respond if escalation to crisis or conflict occurs.

Security cooperation (SC) is a great example of CG prior to conflict. SC enables the joint force to leverage the capabilities of our partners and allies to meet strategic objectives by building combat power, maintaining freedom of action, increasing understanding of the operational environment, and increasing the commander's decision space. SC provides an example of a whole-of-government approach to strategic

leadership. The DOS leads the whole-of-government approach and provides oversight to SC; most activities are carried out and coordinated by, with, or through the theater Army. SC occurs under the broader umbrella of foreign assistance. The Office of Foreign Assistance is responsible for the supervision and overall strategic direction of foreign assistance programs administered by the DOS and the USAID. When all efforts are brought together in a coherent, deliberate manner the U.S. government efforts are more effective and impactful.⁵

Security force assistance (SFA) assists in the setting of conditions for future gains, helping to integrate and reinforce partnerships and shared understanding of the strategic competitive environment and realistic objectives. SFA enables the right capabilities, in the right place, at the right time, to support and shape joint and multinational security and diplomatic efforts; in short, SFA is foundational to later consolidating gains. SFA forces must be prepared to adjust and expand SFA activities to CG made in competition. SFA, when implemented and utilized correctly, will provide a critical step in consolidating gains at the regional level.

When trying to simplify and generalize CG, it must be recognized that, at minimum, there must be a safe and secure environment to achieve strategic goals. The complexity comes into CG as practitioners try to understand the interplay of factors that must be considered to consolidate all the actions that are required to realize this. To consolidate gains, practitioners must establish the security conditions necessary to support: civil security, civil control, essential services, governance, economic, and infrastructure development.⁶ Understanding these functions within the proper CG context is crucial to achieving strategic goals. For example, SC and SFA activities in modern-day Iraq may help the joint force deter in crisis,



A soldier questions a young Communist woman in a prisoner-of-war camp in Gurijae, South Korea, circa 1951. (Photo by Cpl. Paul E. Stout via the National Archives)

and if necessary, win in conflict during a future fight with a regional opponent.

A Case Study for Early Investment

The U.S. approach to CG and how it was (or was not) implemented to achieve overall success and strategic goals are examined by the fourth report from the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, *Stabilization: Lessons from the U.S. Experience in Afghanistan*. This report highlights the need for a cohesive, planned, tailored, and consolidated response to Afghanistan, thus underscoring the need for planners to have a thorough understanding of CG as part of a whole-of-government approach to achieve the political aim.⁷

Stabilization, in most cases, has been seen as just the reconstruction or calming down of factors exacerbated during the conflict. This, however, is only part of the problem when looking at regions with a longer, more pragmatic view. “Even under the best circumstances, stabilization takes time. Without the patience and political will for a planned and prolonged effort, large-scale stabilization missions are likely to fail.”⁸ A



Maj. Keith M. Shively, 11th Military Police Brigade, chairs a battle update brief with Lt. Gen. Dato Tengku Fauzi, commander of the Malaysian Army Western Field Command, and staff during Keris Strike 2023, 14 July–9 August 2023, in Malaysia. This was conducted each morning as part of the Malaysian brigade's battle rhythm during all phases of this exercise. Shively was fully integrated into the Malaysian brigade and worked closely with Sabri's team to refine the application of the Malaysian military appreciation process, their version of the U.S. Army's military decision-making process. His involvement ensured U.S. assets were used to their fullest potential and substantive corrections were made to the exercise plan in order to maximize the training value for all involved. One such example is the introduction of military police combat support operations, which were previously misunderstood but later integrated into the classroom training and practical exercise portions. (Photo courtesy of the 11th Military Police Brigade)

deliberate CG focus during competition may, at best, deter opponents from conflict, and at minimum, set advantageous conditions if crisis or conflict ensues. CG helps inform leaders to better understand the conditions, players, and dynamics within the operational environment. Military stabilization activities contribute to CG through the deliberate integration of efforts into a coherent, comprehensive approach to achieve and overall objectives of partners, allies and the interagency.

The military has long championed the requirement for physical security as amplified in the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction report, which calls “physical security ... the bedrock of stabilization.”⁹ Additionally, security and governance must be considered simultaneously from the tactical to strategic levels.¹⁰ These findings reinforce the idea that CG efforts cannot be relegated to post-conflict activities. Instead, CG should be a deliberately targeted set

of preconditions, actions, and effects to defeat security threats across the conflict continuum. The Army is structured and missioned to set and improve security as part of overall U.S. government efforts across the continuum, thus, enabling broader efforts to address challenges within all other sectors. In turn, it reinforces the need for constant collaborative planning across the conflict continuum to achieve results that advance and are informed by ally, partners, and interagency equities.

Empowering the Joint Force to Deter and Win

The *National Security Strategy* defines integrated deterrence as “the seamless combination of capabilities to convince potential adversaries that the costs of their hostile activities outweigh the benefits.”¹¹ Integrated deterrence imposes sustained effects on capable competitors across the DIME elements of national power. It

synchronizes joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational activities, while operating in all theaters and across all domains. The Army supports integrated deterrence through CG by providing the joint force with positional (multidomain capability, posture, presence), preparational (interoperability, theater-setting), and strategic advantage (influence), while presenting multiple dilemmas to potential adversaries.

Historically, the joint force has recognized the Army as the service lead for consolidating joint force gains and supporting positional integrated deterrence within the land domain.¹² Even so, some leaders underestimate many of the Army’s capabilities that operate in nontraditional air, maritime, cyber, and space domains.¹³ As the joint force looks for low-cost options that provide high-impact results, Army posture and presence provides both psychological and physical effects to help deter potential adversaries and, when necessary, to fight and prevail in large-scale combat operations.¹⁴ Furthermore, the service supports integration of joint, multidomain effects to seamlessly seize and secure key terrain across the conflict continuum.¹⁵ As political leaders face growing threats within the operational environment, the Army offers both large and small-footprint capabilities that present multiple dilemmas to potential adversaries and draw from a total Army inventory of more than one million Active Component, National Guard, and Reserve soldiers.¹⁶ Army posture and presence has and continues to support combatant command requirements across the globe by providing measurable deterrence effects on potential adversaries, while reassuring allies and partners of U.S. commitment in key regions of the globe.¹⁷

In addition, the Army provides the joint force with preparatory support to integrated deterrence. Preparation includes bilateral and multilateral training exercises at echelon to build readiness while improving human, procedural, and technical interoperability. The Army also provides critical theater-setting and sustainment capabilities to consolidate gains well before a crisis or conflict surfaces. Every day, the Army is helping to lay a firm architectural framework of sustainment that enables the joint force to fight and win during large-scale combat operations. Future Army sustainment efforts are under development that will include “webs” of protection, communication, and sustainment capabilities, thus providing joint force



Spcs. Kelly Klarissa and Jedidah Shaver of the 493rd Military Police Company teach a restraints course during the subject-matter expert exchange portion of Keris Strike 2023, 14 July–9 August 2023, in Malaysia. The Malaysian military police are currently not responsible for detainee operations of any kind, and this training was entirely novel to them. (Photo courtesy of the 11th Military Police Brigade)

commanders with a position of advantage over potential adversaries.¹⁸

Finally, the Army strengthens integrated deterrence by consolidating gains through the influence of leaders within the security apparatus of partner and allied nations. Many training activities and security engagements with partners and allies at the tactical level plant the seeds of trust, which produce a harvest of strategic commitment for years to come.¹⁹ As nation-states often rely on ground force commanders to provide advice concerning security agreements, Army leader relationships with host-nation counterparts can provide a decisive advantage. From longstanding U.S. Army presence in NATO-member nation-states, to remote security cooperation activities in lesser-known islands across the Pacific, the Army’s ability to consolidate gains through the influence of partners and allies plays a vital role in supporting integrated deterrence.



Dr. Colin H. Kahl, undersecretary of defense for policy, greets Prince Khalid bin Salman, Saudi Arabia's vice minister of defense, 6 July 2021 at the Pentagon, Washington, D.C. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Jack Sanders, U.S. Air Force)

Isolated Gains: Reducing the Risk of Poor Consolidation

The U.S. military must systematically employ CG activities in all operations, across the conflict continuum because: competitors are actively competing to secure gains now; if the United States does not consolidate gains, a competitor will; and, successfully implementing CG reduces risk to force and risk to mission in later phases of the conflict continuum.

Over 2,500 years ago, Sun Tzu remarked, "Subjugating the enemy's army without fighting is the true pinnacle of excellence."²⁰ More so than any other near-peer competitor, the People's Republic of China (PRC) leverages whole-of-nation CG to establish footholds across the globe without fighting. The PRC displays a pattern of behavior in international relations that has proven effective in creating conditions favorable for strategic advantage. Through diplomatic engagements, the PRC recognizes nations that (in many cases) initially seek minimal engagement while hedging against or altogether avoiding the great power politics at play. The PRC effectively converts economic investments into access and influence through the Belt and Road Initiative. Concurrently, private Chinese

companies normalize Chinese activities and further create leverage for follow-on national objectives. A final example lies in the PRC's use of the People's Liberation Army to expand China's borders through the military construction on disputed reefs and atolls throughout the South China Sea.²¹

While hard to quantitatively demonstrate causality between the contributions of CG and the achievement of strategic goals, it is clear the absence of deliberate integration of gains creates a geo-strategic vacuum. This, in turn, provides competitors and potential adversaries with the time and space necessary to shore up their own interests in the region. To compete and win in these environments, the United States must wisely engage other nations by providing a proposition of equal or greater value that includes traditional democratic values, personal freedoms, and a free market economy. In addition, the United States has benefited by offering Army-led CG initiatives on the ground that provide tangible improvements to the security and stability of participating partner nations.

The benefits achieved through Army-led CG activities undoubtedly help steward our Nation's finite resources for influence abroad. In addition, these

relatively low-cost investments reduce risk to force and risk to mission by imposing substantial costs to potential adversaries. If the United States leverages these additive advantages during periods of cooperation or normalized competition, it may provide leaders with a position of advantage needed to deter in crisis, and if necessary, win in conflict.

Approaches and Considerations for Effective Consolidation

Attempting to achieve CG will remain a difficult endeavor with many different facets that must be accounted for. As a starting point in contending with these inherent challenges, Army and joint force planners should understand the relevant doctrine and policy that provides guidance. Since 2017, doctrine has made great strides in codifying the value of Army-led CG activities in support of the joint force. Additional insights for CG are contained in the *U.S. Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability; the Stabilization Assistance Review (SAR)*; the Global Fragility Act (GFA); DOD Instruction 3000.05, *Stabilization*; and JP 3-07, *Joint Stabilization Activities*.²²

The SAR was jointly promulgated by the secretaries of defense and state and the USAID administrator to codify the responsibilities of the three agencies. Congress recently passed the GFA to enforce many of the SAR's principles and lessons learned through congressional and presidential endorsement. This act marks stabilization as an essential national security function and requires implementing a stabilization strategy in select countries. These strategies clearly articulate the plan for stabilization and, ultimately, CG in highly fragile locations. While the GFA is focused on specific countries not in the midst of armed conflict, it provides insight into how the effort to CG can and should work in competition. The SAR and GFA provide policy and strategic-level guidance for the design of country or regionally specific strategies. They provide principles that must be applied when developing country or theater-specific goals linked to interagency



Orphaned Korean children receive money, clothing, food, and toys contributed by thousands of Americans. (Photo from John Miller Jr., Owen J. Curroll, and Margaret E. Tackley, *Korea, 1951–1953* [1956; repr. Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1997])

processes, such as integrated country strategies, theater campaign plans, or country development cooperation strategies.

DOD Instruction 3000.05 and JP 3-07 are the DOD's policy and doctrine, on stabilization and are foundational for understanding, planning, and executing Army and joint force stabilization activities to consolidate gains and achieve overarching U.S. government objectives. JP 3-07 specifically provides key concepts and a coherent approach to stabilization harmonized with the policy governing how DOS and USAID approach and execute stabilization and seek to consolidate U.S. government gains.²³

The U.S. Army Peacekeeping Stability Operations Institute's *Defense Support to Stabilization (DSS): A Guide for Stabilization Practitioners* is a comprehensive reference guide on how DOD supports U.S.

government stabilization efforts, missions, and activities.²⁴ This tool consolidates law, policy, strategy, and information on relevant organizations and entities into one document. It will enable Army and joint force planners and practitioners to understand and access the resources required to ensure military operations lead to consolidated gains.

Conclusion

Doctrine is a product of theory and experience that affords a handrail to guide the collective efforts of complex organizations against adaptive threats. Therefore, it is never complete and rarely comprehensive enough to address all scenarios. So rather than deconstructing FM 3-0 to find fault or criticism, this article has sought to amplify the document's utility by clarifying a central but overshadowed aspect within its pages. Despite the often-unrecognized prominence of CG in everyday efforts as well as its latent potential as an operational and strategic multiplier, the military maintains a languid appreciation for CG and a turbid understanding of its value.

There is a certain irony that an institution transfixed on integrating kinetic effects in operations would leave so much on the table by not capitalizing on countless investments found elsewhere across the conflict continuum. Such a disaggregated approach—whether by design or disregard—fails to fully realize the potential that collective efforts might engender. This directly impacts the military's ability to create and sustain the competitive advantage necessary for decisive victory. Though less visceral and harder to quantify, such isolated efforts can also render associated costs in terms of lost opportunity or idle investments during competition and crisis.²⁵

The first step toward rectifying this shortfall is further elevating joint force appreciation for CG from its historic relegation as a post-operation tactical task list. Effective CG is fundamental throughout the competition continuum. Treating this function as simply the

fourth and last in a series of strategic roles or as a postscript to operational endeavors is not sufficient. Rather, CG is an integral and inseparable component that must manifest in very deliberate measures throughout activities occurring during competition, crisis, and conflict. Though this paradigm shift is slowly occurring in theory and doctrine, such as the improvements found within FM 3-0, the value of CG must become equally visible in practice.

The next step is to recognize the Army's prominent role in orchestrating this function and to leverage this relationship to its fullest. No other branch of service has the forces, footprint, or focus to undertake this responsibility so effectively on behalf of the joint force. Army capabilities are attuned and balanced to operate in the human dimension—not just to win wars but to positively engage other nations through security cooperation and partner-building. In addition, the Army has a global presence that is not beholden to platforms or restricted to domains removed from the societies we seek to influence. Lastly, the Army has a mission that explicitly accommodates a focus on CG by leveraging all relevant U.S. government efforts to engender influence and exploit advantage on land.

Consolidation of gains presents an opportunity to aggregate the common utility of disparate activities, while maximizing the value of whole-of-government efforts and interactions with allies and partners abroad. While such opportunities abound, however, inverse vulnerabilities born of indifference lurk just over the horizon. The void where advantages remain unpressed will be filled by other actors with interests perhaps inimical to our own. This does not need to be the case since the recourse already resides within the Army's DNA. The institution only needs to reframe how it understands its full contributions to the joint force and harness its existing means for CG. In doing so, the Army will continue to play a pivotal role in creating the conditions necessary to deter or defeat our Nation's enemies.²⁶ ■

Notes

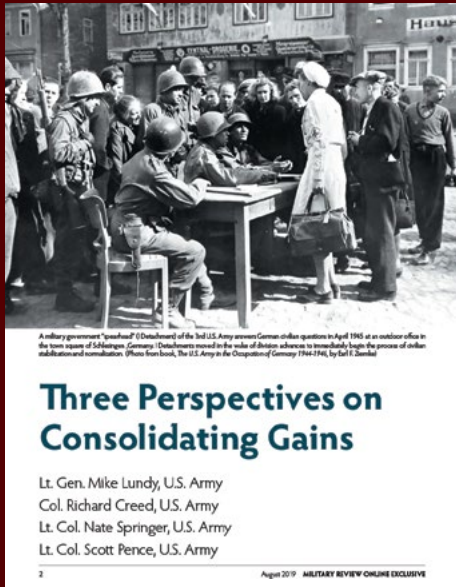
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Military Review Recommends



“Three Perspectives on Consolidating Gains”

Lt. Gen. Mike Lundy, U.S. Army; Col. Richard Creed, U.S. Army; Lt. Col. Nate Springer, U.S. Army; and Lt. Col. Scott Pence, U.S. Army

The commander of the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center and his fellow authors demonstrate how, by considering the perspective of each level of warfare—tactical, operational, and strategic—one may better understand how echelons and their subordinate formations consolidate gains in mutually supporting and interdependent ways.

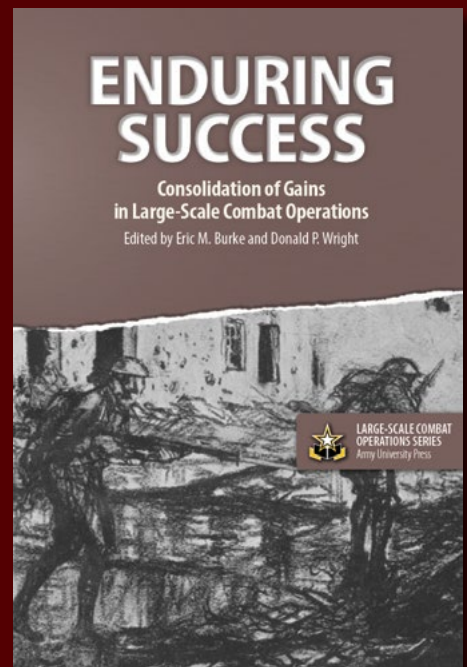
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Enduring Success: Consolidation of Gains in Large-Scale Combat Operations

Edited by Eric M. Burke and Donald P. Wright

The twelfth volume of the LSCO series, *Enduring Success*, offers a collection of historical case studies, ranging from 1898 to 2003, concerning the challenges of consolidating gains in the spatial or temporal wake of large-scale combat operations. Its contributors recount how senior military commanders historically confronted the problem of securing tactical and operational successes behind the front lines and linking those successes to higher-level objectives established by political leaders. As the case studies vividly illustrate, those who either ignore or fail in consolidation of gains efforts risk winning the battle but losing the war.

<https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/combats-studies-institute/csi-books/LSCO/Enduring-Success.pdf>

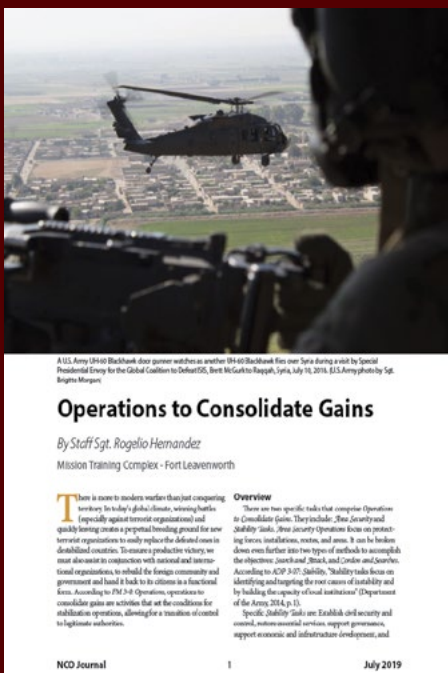
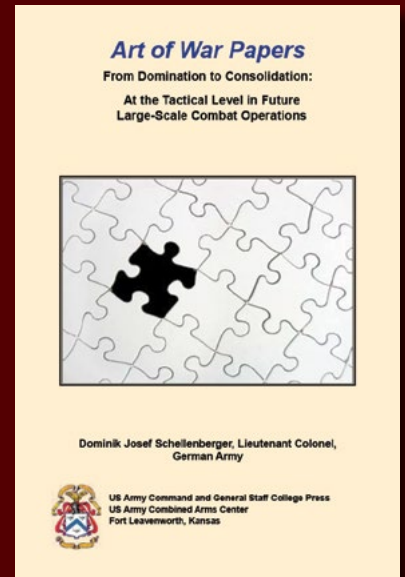


From Domination to Consolidation: At the Tactical Level in Future Large-Scale Combat Operations

Lt. Col. Dominik Josef Schellenberger, German Army

Field Manual 3-0, *Operations*, implements consolidation of gains and the related consolidation area for the first time into U.S. Army doctrine. The purpose of consolidation of gains is to make enduring any temporary operational success and set the conditions for a stable environment allowing for a transition of control to legitimate authorities. An analysis of the historical role the U.S. Army played at the end of World War II for the transition in occupied Germany as well as of current doctrine and future-oriented concepts leads to eighteen suggested doctrinal changes concerning consolidation of gains across U.S. Army operations, leadership, and mission command doctrine.

<https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/combats-studies-institute/csi-books/from-domination-to-consolidation-at-the-tactical-level-in-future-large-scale.pdf>



“Operations to Consolidate Gains”

Staff Sgt. Rogelio Hernandez, U.S. Army

There is more to modern warfare than just conquering territory. In today's global climate, winning battles (especially against terrorist organizations) and quickly leaving creates a perpetual war as new terrorist organizations easily replace the defeated ones in destabilized countries.

<https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/nco-journal/docs/2019/June/consolidate-gains-ssg-herandez.pdf>

The Tank Is Dead ... Long Live the Tank

The Persistent Value of Armored Combined Arms Teams in the 21st Century

Maj. Gen. Curtis A. Buzzard, U.S. Army

Brig. Gen. Thomas M. Feltey, U.S. Army

Lt. Col. John M. Nimmons, U.S. Army

Maj. Austin T. Schwartz, U.S. Army

Dr. Robert S. Cameron

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Tanks enable national power projection, provide operational flexibility and tempo to joint commanders, and facilitate tactical combined arms maneuver. The tank's true value is found at all levels of war, starting with combined arms teams at the tactical level that amplify the tank's capabilities and mitigate its vulnerabilities. Such teamwork ensures the continued relevancy of the tank despite the proliferation of unmanned aircraft systems, loitering munitions, precision artillery, antitank guided missiles, and electromagnetic spectrum considerations. However, the tank's inherent characteristics of lethality, survivability, and mobility as part of a combined arms team provide ground force commanders an operational option when considering how best to seize key objectives, sustain momentum, and apply constant pressure to enemy forces. Finally,

the ability to place armored forces with tanks anywhere in the world signifies the strategic value they possess in terms of deterrence and offensive capability. Given these factors, it is imperative to not draw premature conclusions from recent conflicts on the efficacy of tanks and armored formations in future conflicts.

The effectiveness of armored combined arms teams in the face of an array of aerial and ground antiarmor systems, however, requires integrated training, organizational flexibility, and the means to sustain combat power. In the Ukraine war, Russia employed an array of modern weapons and capabilities yet failed to achieve an early knockout blow or shape the course of subsequent events. This outcome stems from the Russian failure to synchronize tactical, operational, and strategic actions. Battalion tactical groups—considered the centerpiece of its ground forces before the war—operated in an independent rather than coordinated manner. A lack of combined arms enablers (particularly



A Ukrainian T-64 BV tank from the 59th Yakiv Handziuk Motorized Brigade maneuvers in September 2022. Originally designed in the Soviet Union during the 1960s, it benefited from upgrades over the years, including Ukrainian improvements to its thermal imaging, reactive armor, and radio. (Photo courtesy of the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine via Wikimedia Commons)

infantry), poor training, and the inability to execute mission command further minimized the battlefield impact of these units.¹ More generally, the Russians employed their armored vehicles with little support of any kind. Ukrainian defenders used antiarmor weapons to maximum effect without interference from enemy fires, aerial systems, or infantry. At Vuhledar, for example, tanks tried to drive through minefields in column formations, creating a shooting gallery for the Ukrainian defenders.² Nor did the Russians provide continuous supply and maintenance to combat vehicles, resulting in reduced operational readiness and increased breakdowns. The high loss and wastage of tanks led the Russians to rely upon much older models, including the T-62 and T-54, for replacements.³ Misuse minimized the tactical value of Russian armor and precluded the accrual of operational and strategic benefits.

Ironically, the widespread media coverage given Ukrainian destruction of Russian armored vehicles encourages a sense of the tank's obsolescence not shared by the Ukrainians. After a year of war with a world power,

they understand the tank's value as a symbol of national power and its potential value to end the war's strategic and operational deadlock. However, continuous combat operations have eroded the Ukrainian tank fleet. The T-64 was considered the nation's best tank at the war's start, but over half have since been destroyed.⁴ This loss, coupled with Russia's shift to massed artillery and infantry attacks in lieu of combined arms maneuver, contributed to the deadlocked nature of the war by early 2023. Ukraine seeks an influx of Western tanks to reequip its combined arms armored and mechanized brigades and provide the operational punch necessary to restore maneuver and tempo to a battlefield environment characterized by trenches and urban strongpoints.⁵

Symbol of National Power

The tank originated in World War I to enable maneuver in a tactical setting dominated by trenches, bunkers, artificial obstacles, and machine guns. By World War II, tanks organized into combined arms armored formations proved capable of projecting national power



Chinese Type 99 tanks and armored fighting vehicles participate in China's World War II victory parade 3 September 2015 in Beijing. (Screenshot from Voice of America)

with strategic consequences. In 1939, German panzer divisions played a central role in the destruction of Poland. The following year, these same formations forced France's surrender in just six weeks, leaving Germany as the dominant European land power. The subsequent exploits of American, British, and Soviet armored formations in the Mediterranean, European, and Pacific theaters of operations eclipsed these early war successes, ensuring the defeat of the Axis powers and a fundamental change to the global balance of power. In the immediate postwar era, emerging nations understood the value of tanks as national power symbols. Israel, India, Pakistan, North Korea, and the People's Republic of China all built armored forces that leveraged the collective wartime armored experience.

In the decades since World War II, the tank reflected military power and reinforced diplomatic initiatives. American tanks equipped the armies of several NATO members in the alliance's early years, and they became staple components in the national defense of Israel, Pakistan, and Taiwan. The success of the Abrams tank in the First Gulf War resulted in its sale to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, and the recent Polish purchase of the latest Abrams tank ensures that this ally, too, will have a significantly upgraded ground combat capability further hardened by the parallel buy of the South Korean K2 Black Panther tank.⁶ Similarly, the Soviet Union routinely sold tanks to satellite states to boost

their military capability, encourage dependency, and stimulate domestic economic activity. Consequently, Soviet tanks and armored vehicles equip many of today's armies. The current war in Ukraine pits Russian-built platforms against one another.

Today, China possesses the largest tank fleet in the Indo-Pacific region.⁷ Ongoing modernization initiatives include upgrades to older tank models and the development of new designs. China also uses its

tanks to bolster international relations. Trade deals in which China offers military aid for economic gain often include tanks, and it produces tanks specifically for export. Cambodia, North Korea, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam all include significant numbers of Chinese tanks in their armed forces. Moreover, tank sales include training and maintenance support to encourage stronger military ties and some level of interoperability.⁸

Popular reactions to the capture or destruction of a tank further highlight the tank's value as a national power symbol. Ukraine regularly releases footage of its soldiers destroying Russian tanks, but such imagery only serves to raise national spirits if the tank remains a powerful and desirable weapon. The Ukrainians themselves risk lives to capture or recover Russian tanks and employ them with friendly combat forces. Similarly, nonstate actors, including Islamic State and Hezbollah, routinely paraded captured tanks as trophies for propaganda value.

Tanks also constitute a powerful endorsement of peace initiatives. American combat assets deployed to Bosnia and Herzegovina as part of a NATO-led multinational peacekeeping force sent to Bosnia and Herzegovina to ensure adherence by the warring ethnic factions to the 1995 Dayton Peace Accords. This action included the deliberate selection of the U.S. 1st Armored Division to lead the military operation known as Operation Joint Endeavor. The formation's iconic crossing of the Sava River as it entered Bosnia underscored America's national commitment to the peace in a manner not possible by light infantry in HMMWVs. Tanks, not trucks, get people's attention.



An Abrams tank of the 1st Armored Division crosses the Sava River into Bosnia in December 1995 during Operation Joint Endeavor. (Photo courtesy of the U.S. Army)

the conquest of all but a small corner of the Korean peninsula within weeks. A mass influx of men and materiel—including armor—by the United States and its United Nations allies secured the survival of South Korea in a grueling three-year war. Nevertheless, the North Koreans came perilously close to unifying Korea under the banner of the Democratic People's Republic in large part because they possessed an armored capability that South Korea initially did not.

Today, the nations most threatened by China or North Korea maintain some of the largest tank fleets in the region. India maintains over 3,500 tanks with another 1,100 in storage. South Korea maintains more than 2,000 vehicles to equip armored brigades and provide an organic armored component for its mechanized divisions.¹² Taiwan clearly understands the potential deterrent value of tanks as it seeks to upgrade its armored force with Abrams

The Power of Deterrence

The tank emerged as a means of conflict deterrence during the Cold War. The cornerstone of NATO's ground defense of Central Europe lay in its armored formations. Their collective combat power represented national commitments to the region's defense and complicated potential Warsaw Pact invasion plans. The inherent combined arms capabilities of NATO armor provided a mix of lethality, survivability, and maneuver well suited to execute warfighting concepts that evolved from Active Defense to AirLand Battle.⁹ Even at the platform level, the strategic deterrence of armor became reflected in deliberate efforts to showcase the ever-increasing capabilities of NATO tanks. The Canadian Army Trophy, often referred to as the Olympics of tank gunnery, demonstrated the latest Western tank capabilities and the combat readiness of NATO tankers.¹⁰

Effective deterrence, however, requires a credible tank force. In June 1950, the Republic of Korea possessed neither tanks nor the means to defeat them. The absence of these capabilities contributed to North Korea's decision to invade.¹¹ North Korean tanks facilitated



A column of 3rd Armored Division M60A3 tanks move in a convoy near the Sembach Air Base exit ramp in the Federal Republic of Germany on 26 April 1982. (Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)



Japanese Type 97 Te-Ke tanks followed by their bicycle infantry during the Battle of Kampar in Perak, Malaysia, circa December 1941. (Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)

tanks in the face of escalating tensions with China.¹³ Japan, too, improved its armored capabilities in recent years with indigenous platforms. While Singapore and Australia are not directly threatened by China, the former maintains a small tank fleet of Leopard 2 tanks, and Australia purchased the latest version of the Abrams tank in 2022. These nations improved their armored forces as deterrents against aggression and to ensure capability options in the event of conflict.¹⁴

Shaping Campaigns

Tanks offer an unmatched degree of versatility for ground forces. Included in combined arms organizations, they possess the ability to seize key land objectives, rapidly react to enemy action, and penetrate and destroy enemy defenses. Armored formations provide theater commanders with the means to shape conflict, sustain a high tempo of operations, and eliminate opposition.

In World War II, the Japanese used tanks to support their December 1941 invasion of Malaya, specifically

employing them to exploit breaches in the defenses of British imperial forces and prevent the rapid reconstitution of new lines of resistance. In this manner, the small Japanese light tank force played a key role in the rapid conquest of Malaya despite jungle terrain, limited roads, and an enemy equipped with antitank weapons, motor vehicles, and engineering assets. This judicious and careful use of armor at a precise moment and location generated shock, manifest by the disruption of British plans, the rapid disintegration of morale, and the collapse of defensive positions. Tanks enabled the Japanese advance to move faster than expected, setting the stage for their capture of Britain's principal regional base in Singapore.¹⁵

The U.S. Army and Marine Corps employed tanks in both small units and large groupings in their island-hopping campaigns across the Central and Southwest Pacific. New Guinea, Tarawa, Saipan, the Philippines, Okinawa, and Iwo Jima are just some of the locations where tanks provided additional mobile firepower to overcome entrenched and fortified Japanese defenders and facilitate maneuver. The size of the tank force deployed was tailored to fit terrain and tactical conditions, ranging from a single platoon to four tank battalions in the Luzon invasion. The concentration of tanks for Luzon reflected the presence of a Japanese armored division.¹⁶ In all cases, however, the ability to provide tank support where needed accelerated the pace of operations and constrained Japanese activity. Such employment remains viable today, especially once the new medium assault platform, the M10 Booker, integrates with infantry brigade combat teams.

The 1967 Six-Day War showcased the employment of armored combined arms teams to penetrate, disrupt, and destroy hostile defensive measures. Israeli armor, working closely with reconnaissance, infantry, and artillery, breached Egyptian defenses along the Israeli-Sinai border. When the Egyptians began a general withdrawal, their columns became targets for Israeli aircraft and artillery, while Israeli armored units moved to block retreat paths to the Suez Canal. These actions accelerated the disintegration of Egyptian fighting forces and encouraged Egypt to agree to a cease-fire just three days after hostilities began.¹⁷

In March 2003, heavy armored formations spearheaded the invasion of Iraq. They executed a rapid thrust to Baghdad, the foundation of Saddam Hussein's power. Their combination of combat power and



mobility disrupted Iraqi defenses, created dilemmas for their national command structure, and generally dictated a pace of events beyond the Iraqi ability to respond. In twenty-one days, the U.S. Army's 3rd Infantry Division advanced from the Kuwait border into downtown Baghdad, supported by parallel actions by heavy forces in the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force and the United Kingdom's 1st Armoured Division. This rapid drive triggered the collapse of Saddam's regime.

Tanks Facilitate Combined Arms Maneuver

The presence of tanks amplifies combined arms effectiveness and generates shock. In October 1951, the 2nd Infantry Division conducted an assault on Heartbreak Ridge, dubbed Operation Touchdown. The attack included the employment of armored task forces to move through the valleys on either side of the ridge and threaten the defender's lines of supply and communications. When the attack began, the North Korean and Chinese defenders found themselves pinned to their front by large-scale American infantry assaults, while tanks operated on their flanks and rear areas.

Army M1A1 Abrams main battle tanks and personnel from A Company, 1st Battalion, 35th Armor Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, pose for a photo 13 November 2003 under the "Victory Arch" in Ceremony Square, Baghdad, during Operation Iraqi Freedom. (Photo by Tech. Sgt. John L. Houghton Jr., U.S. Air Force)

Command paralysis and a disintegration of coordinated opposition ensued, resulting in the capture of Heartbreak Ridge at high cost to the enemy.¹⁸

Such amplification also applies to urban environments. During the battle of Aachen in October 1944, the American 1st Infantry Division employed tanks in the city's streets to offset the limited infantry available. The close, integrated use of tanks, infantry, artillery, and reconnaissance succeeded in securing the fortified urban center with limited losses, and the battle became a model for postwar combined arms urban combat doctrine.¹⁹ Similarly, armor proved a deciding factor in the 1950 liberation of Seoul, sometimes referred to as the "Battle of the Barricades." Early infantry attacks upon North Korean fortified enclaves in the city met with high losses, triggering requests for tank support. Tanks provided both



precision and suppressive fires to permit infantry and engineers to close with enemy personnel, secure key buildings, and clear obstacles.²⁰

In 2004, U.S. Army combined arms teams in Fallujah used their armor to increase their rate of advance in a block-by-block battle. Their firepower and survivability permitted the rapid elimination of defenders and strong-points. However, their ability to penetrate urban defenses faster than adjacent, largely dismounted teams created coordination issues since the latter could not match the pace of the armored task forces.²¹

Conclusion

With the ever-changing face of warfare, many armchair strategists believe that the advantages the employment of tanks bring to land warfare are outweighed by vulnerabilities that new technologies can exploit against them. Such critics envision a battlefield dominated by unmanned aerial systems, loitering munitions, missiles, and electromagnetic capabilities that marginalize the tank's utility. Similarly, such views tend to depict tanks working in isolation. In the U.S. Army, the tank is not a solo performer. It constitutes part of an ensemble of capabilities organic to the armored brigade combat team that both supplement the tank's inherent qualities and mitigate its vulnerabilities.

The first U.S. tank to enter Aachen, Germany, during the attack upon the city in October 1944. Tanks played a key role in the capture of the city, providing necessary firepower for the limited infantry forces available for the operation. (Photo courtesy of the National Archives)

The value of the tank lies in the application of combat power at optimal times and locations to create a shock effect that paralyzes and destroys resistance. Employed in a combined arms context, the resultant capability set of mobility, lethality, and survivability offers tactical advantages that unlock operational and strategic opportunities. Once committed, these capabilities generate a momentum of their own that dictates the tempo of events and constrains enemy action. These qualities underscore the role of armored forces as the "Combat Arm of Decision."²² Recent technological developments do not stifle these traits. Instead, UAS, loitering munitions, and the ability to detect force concentrations via their electromagnetic signature and attack them with precision munitions necessitate adaptation rather than outright removal from the battlefield. Such adjustment includes understanding how friendly forces look from an enemy perspective, enhancing masking and camouflage, greater dispersal, and faster dissemination of orders and the related convergence of combat power at decisive points in time and space. These actions, combined with a judicious application of new technologies into armored organizations ensure their

continued effectiveness. Moreover, as Stephen Biddle in his article “Back in the Trenches: Why New Technology Hasn’t Revolutionized Warfare in Ukraine” highlights, the current war in Eastern Europe does not necessitate fundamental transformation of military organizations. Instead, it reflects a mix of old and new, underscoring the importance of “incremental adaptations, not tectonic shifts” in force modernization. Continuing to improve armored organizations makes sense. Abandoning them altogether does not.²³

In their absence, commanders are left to rely upon lighter infantry organizations that lack the

combination of firepower and mobility to achieve early battlefield dominance and immediately exploit success. Moreover, the simple presence of the armored combined arms team demands attention, forcing enemy combatants to prepare defensive measures that divert resources from their preferred main effort. The cost of organizing, equipping, training, and sustaining armored units remains high, but in the words of Army Chief of Staff Gen. James McConville, “You don’t need armor if you don’t want to win.”²⁴ Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelensky clearly understands this simple maxim. ■

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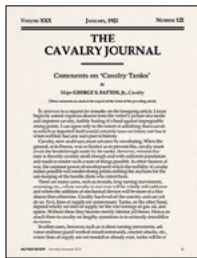
Invites You to Read About the Evolution of Armor as Reflected in Articles Over the Years



"A Tank Discussion" (November 1920, pp. 453–58)

In his article published originally in *Infantry Journal*, then Capt. Dwight D. Eisenhower espouses development of the tank and combined arms warfare.

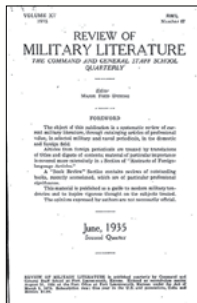
<http://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p4013coll7/id/799>



"Comments on 'Cavalry Tanks'" (January 1921, pp. 43–44)

In this commentary from *The Cavalry Journal*, republished in *Military Review* in 2015, then Maj. George S. Patton Jr. discusses the merits and shortfalls of tanks and the need for a tank corps.

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"Tactical and Strategic Effects of the Development of the Fast Tank" (June 1935, pp. 5–20)

A discussion on the potential tactical and strategic effects of "fast tanks," defined as able to travel "cross-country [at a] speed of ten miles per hour or more."

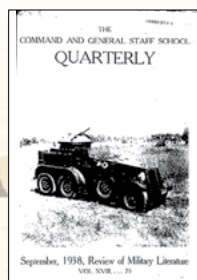
<https://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p124201coll1/id/1069/rec/3>



"Tank Tactics" (June 1937, pp. 15–31)

A translation and summary of "Panzertaktik" by Austrian General of the Artillery Ludwig von Eimannsberger that discusses the employment of tanks and antitank defense.

<https://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p124201coll1/id/1034/rec/3>



"Mechanization" (September 1938, pp. 5–15)

A hypothetical situation is used as a vehicle to discuss the mechanized forces of that time in France, Italy, Germany, Russia, and Great Britain.

<https://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p124201coll1/id/1066/rec/3>

(Photo courtesy of the U.S. Army)



“Motor and Horse” (June 1940, pp. 50–51)

A translation and summary of “*Motor und Pferd*” by German General Heinz Guderian that discusses the merits of motorized vehicles versus horses at a time when both were used by the German army.

<https://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p124201coll1/id/989/rec/2>



“Deliberations on Armor” (April 1951, pp. 15–24)

A discussion on the use of tanks during the Korean War.

<https://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p124201coll1/id/869/rec/11>



“Wanted: An Infantry Fighting Vehicle” (February 1963, pp. 26–35)

A discourse on the development of armored infantry fighting vehicles written when the M113 Armored Personnel Carrier was new to the Army.

<https://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p124201coll1/id/667/rec/7>



“The Evolving Battle Tank” (February 1966, pp. 94–99)

An examination of the state of tank design and its role during the Cold War.

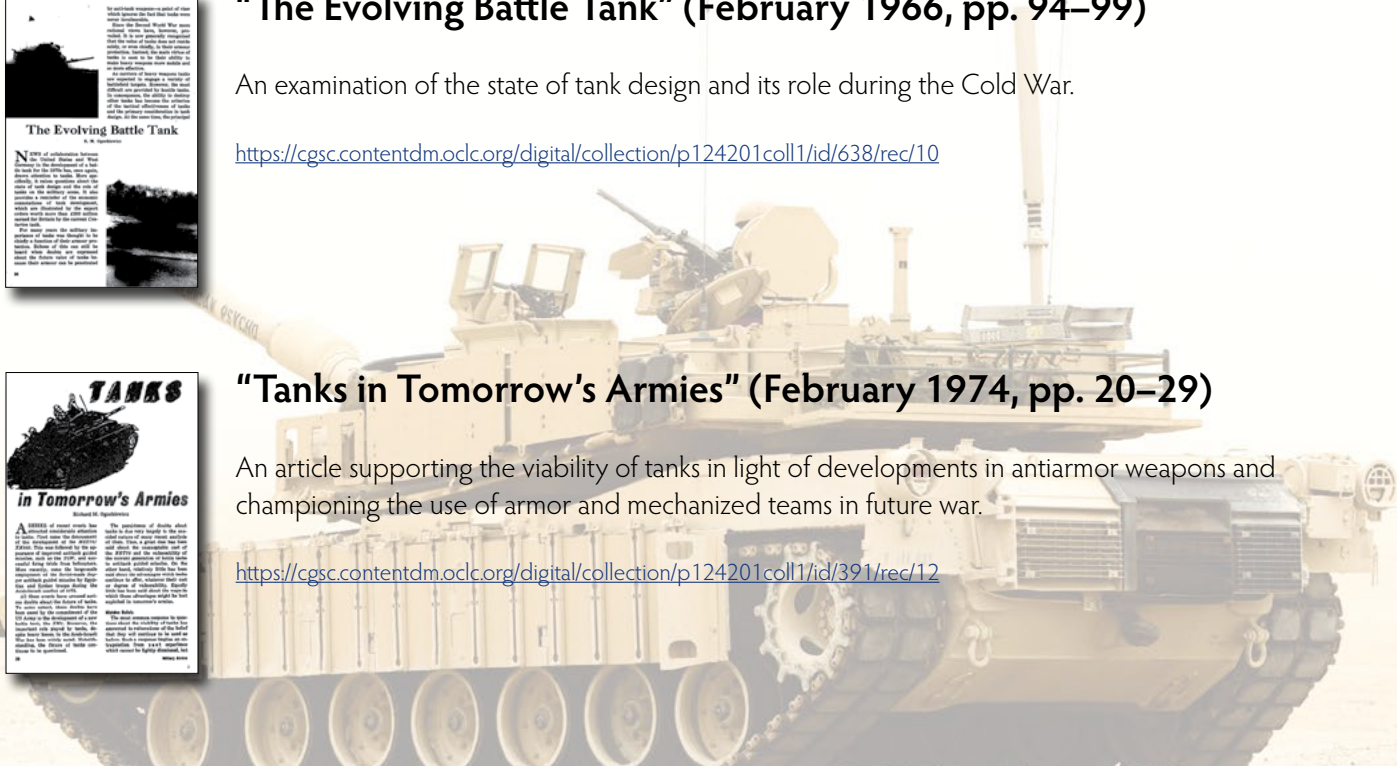
<https://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p124201coll1/id/638/rec/10>



“Tanks in Tomorrow’s Armies” (February 1974, pp. 20–29)

An article supporting the viability of tanks in light of developments in antiarmor weapons and championing the use of armor and mechanized teams in future war.

<https://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p124201coll1/id/391/rec/12>





“Mechanized Infantry” (August 1974, pp. 67–73)

A critique of mechanized infantry vehicles with a recommendation for their replacement with wheeled armored troop transporters and troop-carrying helicopters.

<https://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p124201coll1/id/397/rec/2>



“Armor in Urban Terrain: The Critical Enabler” (September-October 2008, pp. 47–52)

An article by Maj. Gen. Peter W. Chiarelli, Maj. Patrick R. Michaelis, and Maj. Geoffrey A. Norman in an edition of *Armor* magazine dedicated to the use of armor in counterinsurgency.

https://www.moore.army.mil/Armor/eARMOR/content/issues/2008/SEP_OCT/ArmorSeptemberOctober2008web.pdf



“The Future Combat System Program” (March-April 2009, pp. 120–27)

A short essay supporting the Future Combat System Program as a replacement for legacy equipment.

<https://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p124201coll1/id/246/rec/10>



“The M1 Abrams: Today and Tomorrow” (November-December 2014, pp. 11–20)

There is still a requirement in the U.S. Army for a lethal, mobile, and survivable armored vehicle.

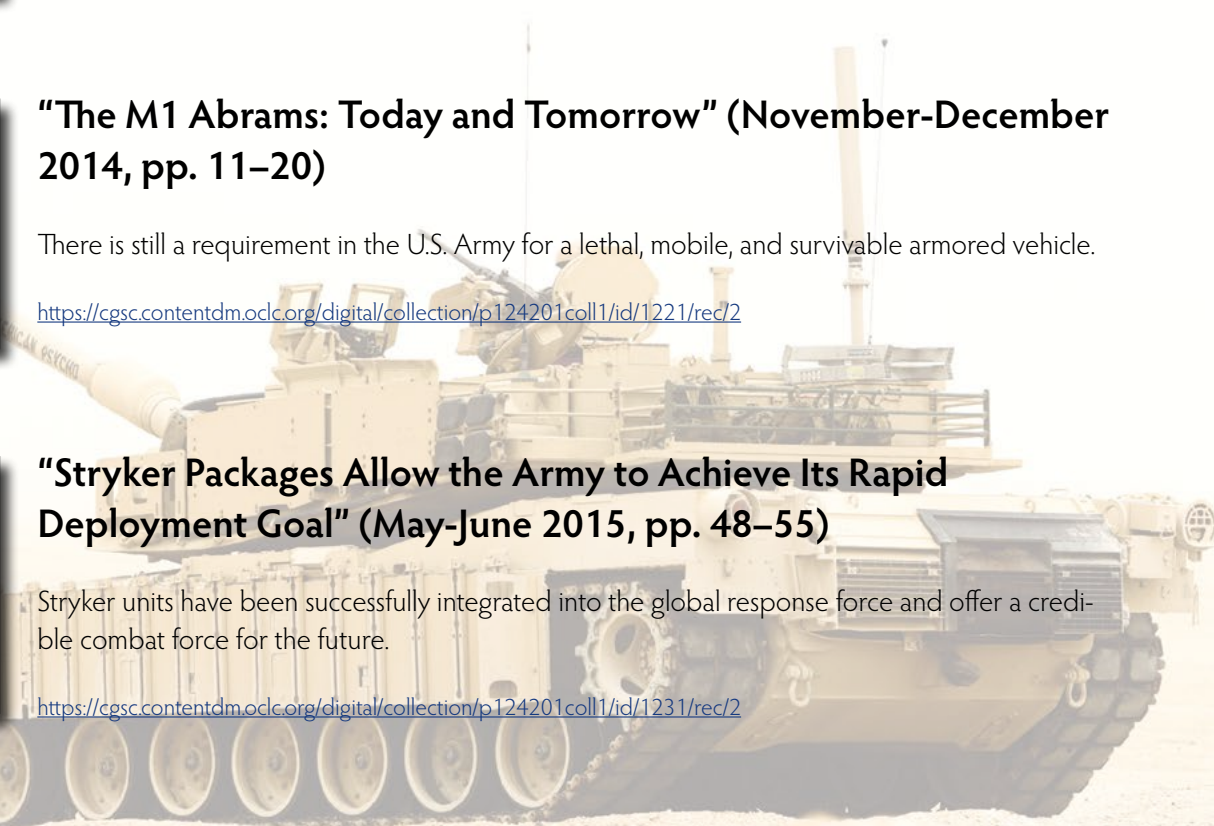
<https://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p124201coll1/id/1221/rec/2>



“Stryker Packages Allow the Army to Achieve Its Rapid Deployment Goal” (May-June 2015, pp. 48–55)

Stryker units have been successfully integrated into the global response force and offer a credible combat force for the future.

<https://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p124201coll1/id/1231/rec/2>





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Heavily camouflaged M1A2 SEPv3 Abrams tanks from 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, move through a minefield on a cleared breach lane 27 May 2023 after being brought forward by dismounted scouts, infantry, and sappers in Vekaranjarvi, Finland, during Operation Lock. (Photo by 1st Lt. Raven Parker, 1-8 Cavalry Battalion Public Affairs Office)

Task Organizing the Combined Arms Battalion for Success in Eastern Europe

Lt. Col. Jay A. Ireland, U.S. Army

Maj. Ryan C. Van Wie, U.S. Army

A column of tightly packed, destroyed Russian T-72 and BMP hulls line a Ukrainian road running through dense, forested terrain. Images from the scene confirm that scores of Russian infantry died inside the BMPs, killed by Ukrainian antitank guided missile (ATGM) ambushes and artillery before they could dismount. This is a familiar scene from Russia's ongoing invasion of Ukraine and indicative of Russia's systematic issues with mounted/dismounted integration, a critical aspect of combined arms maneuver. Analysts studying this war have noted that Russian battalion tactical groups (BTGs) uniformly lacked their authorized number of dismounts, leaving these units anchored to their vehicles.¹ Throughout the invasion's first year, Russian commanders did not adjust their task organization and routinely failed to clear restrictive terrain with dismounts, often leaving their armored vehicles vulnerable to concealed ambush positions.² While there is evidence that Russian ground forces are adapting, Oryx open-source reporting has independently verified 1,278 Russian tanks and 571 infantry fighting vehicles (IFVs) were destroyed in Ukraine as of 17 June 2023.³

Given these conventional trends with a near-peer competitor, would U.S. Army armored brigade combat teams (ABCT) be prepared to win in a large-scale combat operation (LSCO) in similarly restrictive terrain? This question is critical for the U.S. Army, considering

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the European Command (EUCOM) theater is the most likely location where ABCTs would be employed in a LSCO contingency.⁴ When analyzing NATO's northeastern flank, Finland, the Baltics, and Poland are collectively covered by 47 percent forest or densely wooded areas, with a multitude of rivers, streams, and lakes.⁵ Europe's profuse natural obstacles and canalizing avenues of approach become more dangerous for armored vehicles with the proliferation of dismounted ATGMs and precision indirect-fire munitions. Given these constraints, armor cannot safely maneuver in restrictive terrain without dismounted scouts, infantry, and sappers clearing forward. However, ABCTs organically lack the required dismounts needed to successfully conduct those clearance operations, hindering the ABCT's ability to maneuver in restrictive terrain.

The armor community has rebuilt its core competencies as the U.S. Army's striking force with the shift to LSCO.⁶ Despite these advances, the ABCT's dismounts would struggle to achieve effective mounted/dismounted integration that is critical for combined arms maneuver in eastern Europe's restrictive terrain. To address these shortcomings, the U.S. Army should consider increasing the ABCT's authorized dismounts, more deliberately pursue creative task organization solutions, and increase the lethality of its dismounted elements. These changes will ensure the U.S. Army combined arms battalions (CABs) in EUCOM can operate as a combat credible force that can deter adversaries in competition, or decisively win in combat.

ABCT and CAB Force Structure: Where Are the Dismounts?

Based on the 2015-2016 modified table of organization and equipment (MTOE) adjustments, the U.S. Army's eleven active-duty ABCTs each contain three CABs—two tank-heavy CABs and one infantry-heavy CAB.⁷ The ABCT's two tank-heavy CABs each possess two tank companies with fourteen Abrams tanks each and one mechanized infantry company with fourteen Bradley IFVs and nine squads containing a total of eighty-one dismounted infantry soldiers. The ABCT's sole infantry CAB has two mechanized infantry companies and one tank company. Both CAB variants have a battalion scout platoon with six IFVs and eighteen dismounted scouts, a battalion mortar platoon with four M1064 mortar carriers, and a battalion sniper

**Table 1. U.S. Army Infantry and Armor Combined Arms Battalion/
Russian Battalion Tactical Group Comparison**

Units	Tanks	IFVs	Dismounts	Dismount to Armor Ratio (# dismounts/armored vehicle)
U.S. Mechanized Infantry Combined Arms Battalion (CAB)	15	43	211	3.64
U.S. Armor CAB	29	29	130	2.24
Russian Mechanized Infantry Battalion Tactical Group	10	30	108	2.70

(Table by authors)

section with ten snipers. Beyond Abrams, Bradleys, and infantry, engineers are another critical element of the combined arms team, required for mobility and countermobility missions. The ABCT's brigade engineer battalion possesses three sapper platoons, designed for each of the ABCT's three CABs to receive one sapper platoon as an attachment.⁸ Table 1 summarizes infantry and armor CABs' mounted and dismounted capabilities along with the aggregated totals for an entire ABCT.⁹ Across the entire armored brigade, there are an average of 2.7 dismounts (infantry, snipers, scouts, or sappers) for every M1 Abrams tank and M2 Bradley IFV.

Based on current trends in Ukraine, it appears that the ABCT's current force structure does not provide the optimal number of dismounts to protect the brigade's armored vehicles. Recent analyses based on captured Russian order of battle documents in Ukraine suggest that Russian BTGs in Ukraine had a similar ratio of 2.7 dismounts per armored vehicle, the same as a U.S. Army ABCT.¹⁰ Given multiple reports highlighting Russian BTGs' inability to use dismounted forces to clear restricted terrain and pull armor forward, the similarity between Russian BTG and U.S. ABCT dismount-to-armored-vehicle ratios is alarming.¹¹

Doctrinal U.S. Armored Force Employment: Missing Mounted/Dismounted Integration?

Beyond the ABCT's dismounted force structure shortcomings, current Army doctrine minimally provides how ABCTs and CABs must operate in Europe's restrictive terrain. U.S. Army doctrine recommends CABs close with and destroy enemy forces using fire, maneuver, and shock effect to overwhelm the enemy with audacity.¹² This

approach best maximizes the ABCT's armored platforms, which uniquely deliver a combination of firepower, protection, and mobility, also known as the "iron trinity." The U.S. armor community's primary testing ground, the National Training Center (NTC) at Fort Irwin, California, allows armored commanders large maneuver space to rapidly mass firepower in an open desert, further reinforcing this cultural preference for fast tempo and boldness. However, this mentality and the practices developed at NTC do not align with the time and patience required for methodical, dismounted clearance of restrictive terrain that is required to safely pull in armor.

Army Techniques Publication (ATP) 3-90.5, *Combined Arms Battalion*, and ATP 3-90.1, *Armor and Mechanized Infantry Company Team*, provide the U.S. Army's doctrinal foundation for armor tactics.¹³ However, neither publication provides guidance on tactical employment in rough terrain. Looking at other foundational U.S. Army doctrinal publications, mounted/dismounted integration and armor maneuver in restrictive terrain is omitted or insufficiently covered.¹⁴ Addressing this gap is important, because massing a combined arms team's assets at the decisive point is different in eastern European forests than in NTC's open desert. A skeptic of this analysis might suggest that senior commanders should simply not employ armored formations in restrictive terrain, instead limiting their use to terrain that is more favorable. However, this is not practical, given the realities of the fight in Ukraine and the potential for ABCT employment in Korea or eastern Europe.¹⁵

Given this doctrinal gap, ABCT mounted/dismounted integration is increasingly under analysis in professional writing. Heavily influenced by rotational experience at the NTC, maneuver professionals are

experimenting with creative task organization solutions that increase mounted/dismounted integration.¹⁶ Several case studies examining infantry and Stryker integration with tanks during NTC rotations find dismounts are critical to deliberately clearing restrictive terrain and seizing high ground, setting conditions for subsequent tank attacks.¹⁷ Recent analyses on Russian tactics in Ukraine confirm these findings in combat, and the essential role that dismounts have in enabling effective combined arms maneuver.¹⁸

We build on this existing research and address the doctrinal gap by considering unique task organization requirements imposed by Europe's canalizing terrain. Beyond the need for more dismounted scouts and infantry, the CAB's requirement for additional dismounted sappers is even more apparent when considering Europe's abundant natural obstacles, limited bypass options, and increased requirements for combined arms breaches. We proceed by reviewing the tactical experiences of the 1-8th Cavalry Battalion's tactical experiences during a recent EUCOM rotation and highlighting task-organization adjustments needed to make the CAB more prepared to fight and win in EUCOM.

Mounted/Dismounted Maneuver in EUCOM: TF Mustang in Finland and Lithuania

TF Mustang learned the importance of mounted/dismounted integration in restrictive terrain during a recent EUCOM rotation. TF Mustang, 1-8th Cavalry Battalion, 2nd ABCT, 1st Cavalry Division deployed in support of Operation European, Assure, Deter, and Reinforce in January 2023 and initially conducted section-, platoon-, and company-level collective training at Camp Herkus in Pabrade, Lithuania. A tank-heavy CAB reinforced with an engineer company, TF Mustang was ordered to participate in the Finnish Army's Operations Arrow 23 and Lock 23, providing the Mustangs an opportunity to conduct combined arms maneuver in Finland's restrictive terrain from mid-April to mid-June 2023. Keeping one tank company and an engineer support platoon in Lithuania, TF Mustang deployed most of its force to Finland, to include four hundred U.S. personnel, with one tank company, one mechanized infantry company, one headquarters company (including mortars, medical,

and scout platoons), one forward support company, and one sapper platoon.

Operations Arrow 23 and Lock 23 both included instrumented, battalion-level force-on-force training, providing multiple repetitions at attacking, defending, and conducting movement to contact in Finland's restrictive terrain under LSCO conditions.¹⁹ In Operation Arrow 23, TF Mustang maneuver companies were attached to opposing Finnish battlegroups during five days of force-on-force operations. U.S. task organization did not occur below the company-level, meaning that the U.S. tank company lacked dismounts and primarily fought with its organic M1A2 SepV3 Abrams tanks in the dense forests of Niinisalo, Finland. The lack of dismounts proved devastating to the tank company. Without dismounted elements to clear restrictive terrain and obstacles, U.S. tanks sustained significant losses during all eight force-on-force battle periods. Enemy ATGM ambushes, local obstacle belts, and mounted enemy battle positions with keyhole shots gradually attrited the tanks during their attacks. Conversely, the U.S. mechanized infantry company fared much better on the offense, using their dismounts to clear forward, then pull forward a partnered Finnish Leopard company for the final assault.

Two weeks later, Operation Lock 23 provided an opportunity to apply lessons learned from Arrow 23 and enhance mounted/dismounted integration. The Mustangs retained all U.S. forces and formed a multinational battlegroup, receiving four hundred Finnish attachments from the Finnish Army's Karelian Brigade. Finnish attachments included a mechanized infantry company (equipped with Combat Vehicle-90s), one mortar company (120 mm Advanced Mortar System), an engineer platoon (Assault Breacher Vehicles, Joint Assault Bridges, and sappers) and a combat support platoon. Table 2 depicts the joint U.S. and Finnish Mustang battlegroup's capabilities with a ratio of 5.6 dismounts for every armored vehicle, more than double the 1-8th Cavalry Battalion's organic dismount capabilities (depicted in table 1). The additional 120 dismounted infantry from the attached Finnish forces proved decisive in Operation Lock 23.

This stood in contrast to the opposing force, which consisted of a mechanized Finnish battlegroup with a Leopard tank company, a BMP-2 mechanized infantry

Table 2. TF Mustang Task Organization during Operation Lock 23

Units	Tanks	IFVs	Dismounts	Dismount to Armor Ratio (# Dismounts/armored vehicle)
1-8th Cavalry Battalion (-)*	15	37	250	4.81
Karelian Jaeger attachments	4	10	120	8.57
TF Mustangs (+)	19	47	370	5.61

*TF Mustangs kept one tank company in Lithuania during Operation Lock 23, leading to a higher proportion of dismounts than its full MTOE (listed in table 1).

(Table by authors)

company, an antitank company, a mortar company, a combat engineer company, and a support company. With only one mechanized infantry company, the opposing force battlegroup had approximately three dismounts for every armored vehicle, a ratio close to U.S. tank-heavy CAB.

The key takeaway from Operation Arrow 23 was that you needed to initially “go slow with infantry to go fast with tanks.” Using older Army doctrine, the Mustangs hastily adopted standard operating procedures for Lock 23 to deliberately lead with a dismounted force, conducting defile drills to clear restrictive terrain before committing tanks to the attack.²⁰ Field Manual (FM) 71-1, *Tank and Mechanized Company Team*, last published in 1998, provided a useful foundation for mechanized maneuver in restrictive terrain.²¹ 1-8th Cavalry Battalion used variations of the defile drill depicted in the figure to great effect throughout the Operation Lock 23.²²

Dismounts were critical in this terrain during each phase of the operation. Starting with the reconnaissance fight, the U.S. scout platoon’s limited number of organic dismounts proved insufficient for accomplishing their reconnaissance tasks. In several instances, the U.S. scout platoon parked some or all their Bradleys in a lager site to conduct expanded dismounted infiltration through restrictive terrain behind enemy lines. With only a few roads supporting tracked vehicles, reconnaissance had to be dismounted to avoid detection. This came at the expense of time and tempo, and the scouts began their reconnaissance mission much earlier than normal to allow time for slow dismounted movement. However, in each battle period, dismounted reconnaissance efforts succeeded in identifying enemy

battle positions and obstacle belts and disrupting or destroying enemy positions with indirect fire.

With dismounted reconnaissance efforts setting conditions for the main body attack, infantry followed next. U.S. and Finnish mechanized infantry companies moved to the probable line of contact, conducted a battle handover with scouts, and initiated a long, slow, dismounted clearance of restrictive terrain around avenues of approach. Infantry platoons would use bounding overwatch on both sides of roads to destroy or displace enemy observation posts and ATGM ambushes postured to kill U.S. armored vehicles forced to attack on the road. When key terrain existed, dismounted infantry was tasked to seize it to prevent subsequent enemy infiltration. Maneuver company commanders ensured that infantry dismounts were supported by sappers with mechanical and explosive breach capabilities. When dismounted elements identified road obstacles, they would conduct platoon-level suppress, obscure, secure, reduce, and assault breaching fundamentals to open, proof, and mark the lanes.

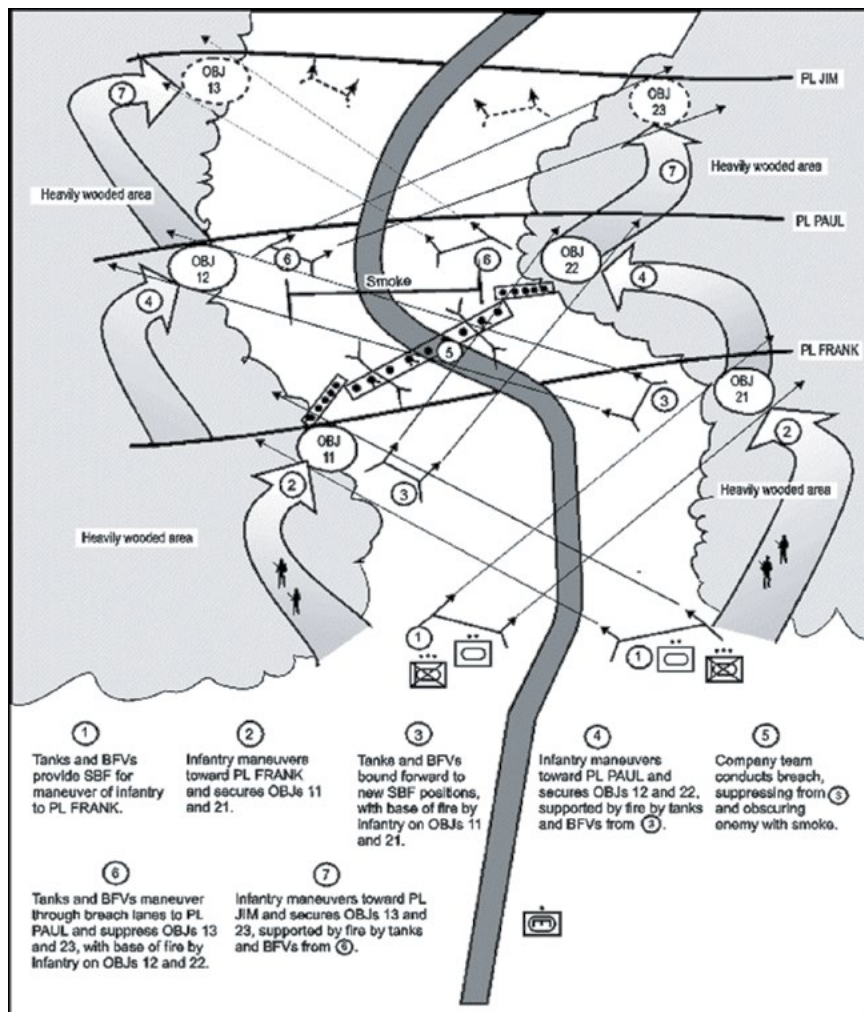
Ultimately, the dismounted clearances continued until platoons cleared restrictive terrain or encountered significant enemy armor, typically platoon-sized or greater. On every attack mission, U.S. and Finnish infantry platoons with attached sappers conducted multiple dismounted breaches and used ATGMs to kill enemy armor with keyhole shots looking to exploit overly aggressive U.S. tank maneuver. The concentrated presence of U.S. and Finnish dismounts, firing ATGMs and supported by accurate and timely indirect fire, created multiple problems for enemy defending from battle positions. As the enemy attempted to reposition,

these terrain and enemy-based triggers set conditions for a rapid and powerful armored assault. The U.S. commander then moved the tanks up to the U.S. dismounts, conducted a battle handover, and assaulted directly into an enemy that was in disarray. Assaults that attempted to attack well-positioned enemy armor without infantry shaping efforts invariably ended in failure.

To enable this mounted/dismounted integration, company teams were essential. Providing the tank company with at least one infantry platoon was key to ensure they were able to locally secure restrictive terrain and clear ahead of intervisibility lines. Even in static assembly areas, an organic tank company lacks the organic dismounts needed to emplace listening posts and observation posts.

Beyond tank and infantry pairing, engineering capabilities were critical to opening mobility corridors. Given the opposing force's prolific use of obstacles on roads, TF Mustang quickly learned that every maneuver company needed to be task organized to internally conduct an in-stride combined arms breach. Tank units without sappers or dismounted infantry were stopped dead by a handful of mines thrown by a withdrawing enemy traveling down a single road.

During two months in Finland, the unit found infantry leading tanks to be a prerequisite to mission success in Finland's restrictive terrain. Unfortunately, mission success was primarily enabled by an additional Finnish infantry company. Without the addition of 120 extra Finnish dismounts, TF Mustang would have suffered from the same dismount shortages plaguing its opposing force battlegroup, and Russian mechanized units in Ukraine. During after action reviews after each battle period, the opposing forces battlegroup



(Figure from Field Manual 71-1, *Tank and Mechanized Company Team* [1998])

Figure. Defile Drill

commander routinely noted that his relatively limited infantry hindered him from defeating the Mustang battlegroup's aggressive reconnaissance efforts and deliberate dismounted clearance. Given the Russian armor pacing threat in Europe and the need to have infantry to succeed as described above, recommendations to address these shortcomings follow.

Recommendations: Possibilities for Addressing the ABCT's Dismount Gap

The CAB's main challenge operating in EUCOM today is an insufficient dismount-to-armored-vehicle ratio to successfully operate in restrictive terrain. To alleviate this problem, the authors provide one



A TF Mustang sapper from Company A, 8th Brigade Engineer Battalion, 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, uses a grapple hook to breach a wire obstacle 29 April 2023 in Finland. Dismounted breaches of profuse obstacles were common during force-on-force maneuver during Operations Arrow and Lock. (Photo by 1st Lt. Raven Parker, 1-8 Cavalry Battalion Public Affairs Office)

LSCO conditions. As the U.S. Army considers its future force structure for 2030 and beyond, we argue that these adjustments will ensure the CAB remains a versatile force that can independently deter, fight, and win in Europe's key terrain.²³

The long-term solution to the CAB's force structure problem is to task organize all CABs with two mechanized infantry companies and two tank companies. This reform would ensure that sufficient dismounts are present in every company element when task-organizing tank and infantry platoons in company teams. The current imbalance inherent in CABs does not allow these formations to properly defeat an armored threat operating in severely restrictive terrain. The tank-heavy CABs lack the dismounted infantry to clear canalizing terrain, thus forcing overly slow-paced operations if the commander uses his limited infantry to clear across a narrower front. At the same time, the infantry heavy CAB lacks

the armor to exploit opportunities created by dismounted operations. The current CAB force structure works ideally in more permissible terrain with great standoff distance, thus negating the enemy's AT assets. In dense forests with canalizing lakes and rivers, tanks operating without dismounts will most assuredly result in unacceptable losses of heavy armor.

Given end-strength constraints, we acknowledge force structure and MTOE adjustments will take years to implement, if they are approved at all.²⁴ For a near-term solution, the U.S. Army can increase opportunities for Stryker and infantry BCT battalions and companies to temporarily task organize in ABCTs during CTC rotations and large-scale collective training. Recent successful examples of this practice include pairing a Stryker

long-term and one short-term recommendation. In the long term, the U.S. Army can supplement the CAB's force structure to ensure each battalion includes two mechanized infantry companies, increasing the CAB's organic dismounts available to internally clear restrictive terrain. In the short term, the U.S. Army can experiment with creative, temporary task organization experiments during combat training center (CTC) rotations and multinational collective training exercises to provide CAB commanders the tools needed to practice mounted/dismounted integration. Beyond the broad force structure adjustments, U.S. Army armor doctrine does not sufficiently address operations in restrictive terrain, and the CAB's existing dismount equipment is insufficient for



TF Mustang infantrymen remount an M2A3 Bradley Fighting Vehicle 3 May 2023 following a dismounted clearance of restrictive terrain in Niinisalo, Finland, during Operation Arrow. (Photo by 1st Lt. Raven Parker, 1-8 Cavalry Battalion Public Affairs Office)

infantry battalion with an ABCT at NTC.²⁵ Additionally, the same effect could be achieved by adding NATO partner mechanized infantry companies to the CABs as well, much like what we did while in Finland.

In addition to increasing the number of dismounts, those same dismounts require better equipment to increase their lethality in restrictive terrain. A key lesson we learned from our attached Finnish infantry was the difference in lethality and capability with our U.S. infantry. The Finnish mechanized infantry possesses an array of AT assets to include the Next-Generation Light Antitank Weapon for longer distance tank targets but also shorter range AT options similar to the U.S. AT4, LAW, and Carl Gustav. Our dismounted infantry lacked intermediate AT options, which greatly inhibited the U.S. dismounts' ability to destroy tanks in densely wooded terrain without the necessary overhead clearance for the Javelin to fire.

In addition to light AT weapons, our dismounts were underequipped with modern dismounted radios and unmanned aircraft systems. The current MTOE

does not permit sufficient dismounted radios for infantry, scout, and sapper squads, impeding their ability to synchronize operations with armor in the heavily wooded terrain. Organic unmanned aircraft systems are similarly lacking, and the CAB's two Ravens were unreliable in Finland's weather and dense vegetation. To win the dismounted fight in dense vegetation, the CAB's dismounts need to be lethal enough to force the enemy commander to abandon his defensive positions. That armored assault will not be successful unless the dismounts have the necessary lethality required to both attrit enemy forces and cause him to decide about how to defend against our attack formation.

Beyond force structure, our final recommendation is to update both the doctrine and training associated with operating in severely restricted terrain. As we previously highlighted, ATP 3-90.5 and ATP 3-90.1 should at least include an appendix focused on fighting in restrictive terrain with forests, swamps, lakes, ponds, etc. The earlier FM 71-1 provides a helpful starting point, outlining how infantry can methodically pull tanks into the fight, as well

as the need for tactical patience to set conditions using dismounted clearance. Once updated, the manuals can assist CTC observer coach/trainer teams in evaluating mounted/dismounted training outcomes.

The argument that CTCs are meant to be a way to understand how to fight more generally as opposed to providing specific ways to fight specific scenarios is valid, but the tactical scenario we faced in Finland resulted in significant losses that would not be tenable in an actual conflict. It is imperative that this type of training occur before any unit goes to EUROM to provide a ready, combat-credible force. We acknowledge the size and resource constraints associated with the Joint Readiness Training Center, but there is value in using tank formations in the more wooded terrain of Fort Johnson in addition to the desert of the National Training Center of Fort Irwin. Ideally, the training would occur in a location that replicates the problem sets offered by the dense vegetation and swampy terrain of eastern Europe. If another training location is not feasible, it would be beneficial to have a training package to include instructional videos or tactical decision games that would push commanders to think outside of their comfort zones.

Conclusion

The Mustangs' experience in Finland highlighted shortcomings in our understanding of how to operate in eastern Europe but, more importantly, provided challenges to the CAB's current force structure, doctrine, and training. Operating and winning in densely wooded terrain requires consistent and methodical usage of dismounted infantry to set the conditions for an armored assault. Using one without the other will most assuredly result in a disastrous outcome; a U.S. dismounted infantry attack into an enemy tank formation will eventually lead to a catastrophic counter-attack, and a U.S. tank assault without supporting U.S. infantry will lead to death by a thousand cuts from concealed dismounted AT ambushes, interspersed with mounted battle positions. For a U.S. Army CAB to succeed in restrictive terrain, the formation needs to include additional dismounts equipped with better equipment to properly set the conditions for an armored attack. With these reforms, the U.S. armor community can ensure it delivers CABs that are prepared to deter, and if necessary, fight and win a LSCO contingency in EUROM. ■

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Boxers from West Point and the Air Force Academy compete 4 November 2022 at Globe Life Stadium in Dallas. (Photo by Cadet Hannah Lamb, U.S. Army)

Counterpunching to Win

A Mindset and Method to Defeat First Battle Fears

Lt. Col. Craig A. Broyles, U.S. Army

We cannot know when or where the U.S. Army will again be ordered into battle, but we must assume the enemy we face will possess weapons generally as effective as our own. And we must calculate that he will have them in greater

numbers than we will be able to deploy, at least in the opening stages of a conflict. ... Therefore, the first battle of our next war could well be its last battle.

—Field Manual 100-5, Operations (April 1977)

The U.S. Army's focus is to win the first battle when the next war comes. This means seizing the initiative and launching expeditionary offensive multidomain operations to "break the enemy's will to resist."¹ However, the United States is a member of several defensive alliances like NATO. Those alliances are strictly defensive. They are not built to invade, and they will not act until the enemy throws the first blow. The situation is much like a chess match in which the U.S. Army is playing the black pieces and bound to wait and react to white's opening move.

This situation is not new. During the Cold War, U.S. Army forces were defensively arrayed, facing a numerically superior opponent, and restrained by its membership in defense alliances. However, its capstone doctrine, AirLand Battle, was defensive in nature.

The U.S. Army faces similar circumstances today except its current doctrine, Multidomain Operations, is offensively focused. The U.S. Army might prefer to strike first, but it cannot unless it wants to fight alone. This is not just theoretical; the U.S. military is now defensively postured around the globe in forward locations like Poland, Lithuania, Japan, and Korea. These forces are on a type of leash. They will likely have to absorb the first blow before the leash is taken off. The U.S. Army must come to grips with the fact that it will likely fight the first battle having already yielded the initiative to the enemy. This poses the question, how can the U.S. Army fight offensively from a defensive posture? The answer is by counterpunching.

Counterpunching is a method boxers use to fight offensively from a defensive

position. It is quickly turning a defense into an offense. The idea is that when two expert boxers face each other, their defensive prowess makes it difficult to land blows. However, when a fighter throws a punch, it exposes a brief opening for the opponent to land a counterpunch. If repeated, the instigator becomes reluctant to throw punches due to the painful counterpunches.

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This response allows the counterpuncher to go over to the offensive, seize the initiative, build momentum, and dominate the fight. Counterpunching is the optimal way the U.S. Army can win against an attacking enemy who has the initiative at the opening of hostilities.

To understand the argument, this article first explains counterpunch theory and translates it into practical warfighting principles. These principles are the gift system, guard/move/hit, and the liver punch principle. Next, the article uses the historical example of the Battle of Tannenberg to better explain these counterpunching principles.

The article concludes that counterpunching is a dynamic and emergent method that exploits the inherent vulnerabilities in the enemy's first strikes. Rather than fearing the first battle, counterpunch theory asserts that the attacker reveals his Achilles' heel the moment he crosses the forward line of troops. This offers windows of opportunities to deliver a series of liver punches that over time blunts the adversary's attacks, stalls its momentum, and forces it to turn over the initiative. This allows the U.S. Army to seize the initiative, build momentum, dominate the fight, and break the enemy's will to resist.

Counterpunching

Counterpunching is a method to respond to any attack that offers a solution for the U.S. Army to fight offensively from a defensive posture.² The overall concept is that when an opponent throws a punch, that action opens a hole in his defense and affords a brief opportunity to punch back into a vulnerable area. Counterpunching is quickly turning a defense into an offense.

Counterpunching is a "gift system," meaning you take what your opponent gives you.³ There is no need to create vulnerabilities because your opponent gives them to you every time he punches. The counterpuncher concentrates his efforts on exploiting the vulnerabilities, or holes in their defense, created by an opponent's actions.⁴ It is then a matter of filling those holes with punches. This method increases the fighter's striking power because unexpected punches hurt more. Unexpected punches produce knockouts.

Counterpunching slows down a fast opponent. Repeated, well-timed, accurate punches into unexpected vulnerable areas upset the aggressor's momentum. Frustration, pain, and fatigue begin to take its toll. This allows the counterpuncher to take the

initiative, create momentum, and then dominate the fight.

Counterpunching does have its drawbacks. By allowing the opponent to punch first, the counterpuncher cannot always block or evade. He inevitably gets hit. Yet, that is the sport. Seasoned boxers remind novices that trying to box without getting hit is like trying to swim without getting wet. Another drawback is that counterpunching takes significant practice to be able to block or evade a punch, see the opening, and strike back before that moment of opportunity vanishes. The only way to get the timing right is to practice with a sparring partner. It is hard to train counterpunching alone.⁵

Application of Boxing Principles to Warfare

Applying boxing principles to warfare is problematic as boxing has rules, referees, and occurs in a controlled ring. Warfare has none of those things. However, boxing is like war as it is “nothing but a duel,” and both are an art and science with the object of imposing one’s will upon the opponent.⁶ Acknowledging the limitations of comparing boxing to war, there are principles in counterpunching that the U.S. Army can utilize in waging multidomain operations. These principles are the gift system principle, the guard/move/hit principle, and the liver punch principle.

Gift system principle. The gift system principle states that when enemies attack, they gift to their opponent mistakes, open gaps, create holes, and expose vulnerabilities for the defender. There are immediate and unforeseen advantageous circumstances created by the fog, fear, friction, and fatigue of war.⁷ In other words, when the enemy moves and hits, he exposes his Achilles’ heel. Actions uncover weaknesses. It is up to the counterpuncher to find them.

To do this, counterpunchers must learn to fight inside the context the opponents provide.⁸ This means understanding that every war is unique. As warfare mutates over time, the opening of armed conflict is a vulnerable time for both sides. It is the one who recognizes how warfare has changed, adapts to that change, and then leverages those changes in the shortest amount of time that gains the advantage.⁹ Or, as maneuver warfare theorist John Boyd asserted, “Whoever can handle the quickest rate of change is the one that survives.”¹⁰ Fortunately for the counterpuncher, attackers tend to rush into the first battle determined to win before they are truly prepared. The French army did exactly that

at the cost of 260,000 casualties after only the first two weeks of World War I.¹¹

Invasion planners almost always gift invalid assumptions they do not discover were wrong until after the war is underway. Often, they concoct opening schemes based on having learned the wrong lessons from the previous war.¹² Both sides habitually start the war having not fully leveraged emerging technology. Invaders always have tendencies and expectations for how they want the fight to go. All these factors present the defender with plenty of holes for counterpunches. However, just identifying holes is not enough. The counterpuncher must guard, move, and hit, which is the second principle in counterpunch theory.¹³

Guard, move, and hit principle. This principle is all about sequence and timing. Counterpunching is rapidly transitioning from defense to offense and back to defense. It is a back-and-forth sequence to repeatedly guard, move, and hit the enemy to blunt his attack, stall his momentum, and create the counterpunch effect. This is when the aggressor becomes reluctant to take any more offensive actions over the fear of the counterpunches and hands the initiative over to the defender. Rather than delaying operations that trade space for time, counterpunching trades punches for time. Both have the same goal but different methods.

The first part of the sequence is the guard, which implies defensive actions to block, parry, and protect against enemy attacks. Guards are also security missions to destroy, defeat, or cause the withdrawal of the enemy’s vanguard.¹⁴ Guards blind, impede, and fix the enemy while securing the friendly force’s freedom of maneuver. B. H. Liddell Hart clarifies this concept with his example of a man fighting another in the dark. He describes the fighter stretching out his lead hand, reaching to find his opponent while keeping it ready to guard himself against surprise. Touching his opponent, the fighter feels his way to a vulnerable spot (throat) and seizes it. The fighter fixes his opponent’s whole attention by squeezing his throat. This sets up the fighter to deliver the decisive knockout blow with his rear hand from an unexpected direction.¹⁵ Guards prevent “leading with your chin,” and they find, blind, impede, and fix the opponent, allowing all others to move and hit.

Moving means evading, redirecting, and blocking attacking strikes while positioning assets to deliver the counterpunch. Modern detection sensors linked with long-range precision-guided munitions are so effective that current battlefields resemble submarine warfare, and



Spc. Dustin Lara (*left*), a member of the World Class Athlete Program, body punches Pfc. Christian Reyes during their light welterweight bout 9 April 2010 at Barnes Field House, Fort Huachuca, Arizona. Counterpunching to the body, specifically to the liver area, can incapacitate an opponent. (Photo by Master Sgt. Doug Sample, U.S. Army)

the actual destruction of the opponent is almost certain and anticlimactic.¹⁶ “The real battle is about detection.”¹⁷ A boxing truism is the safest way to avoid getting hit is by not being there.¹⁸ The safest way for the U.S. military to not get hit is by moving and dispersing their forces.¹⁹ While moving includes defensive actions to evade, redirect, and block enemy attacks, moving also means positioning forces and assets to hit back.

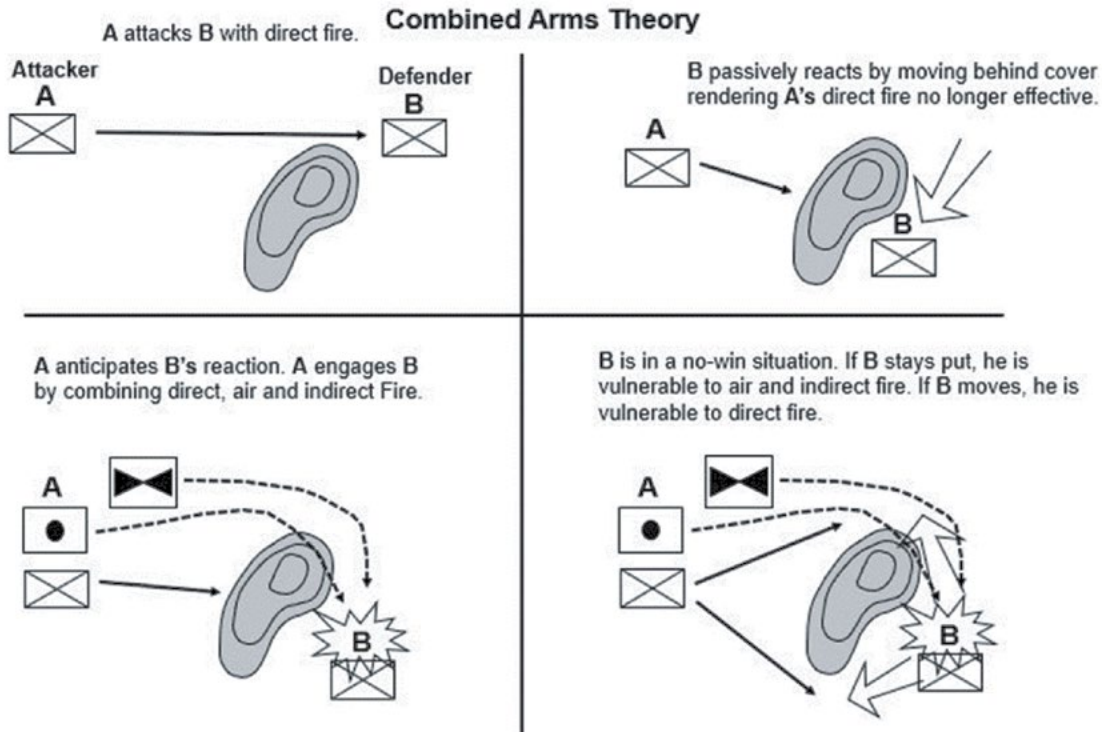
Moving is important because counterpunching requires timing. The defender’s hitting capabilities must be ready and in range when the opponent’s holes present themselves. Once the guard is in place, the defender moves assets into positions for the counterpunch. Realistically, because of timing, the defender may be out of position and unable to take advantage of every opportunity presented. That is okay. The defender is still learning while identifying holes, guarding, and moving for when the timing is right. As Sugar Ray Robinson pointed out, “Knockouts aren’t about power; they’re about timing.”²⁰

The hitting portion of the sequence means filling holes with strikes. It is the moment when defense transitions to

offense. The defender spotted a vulnerability, had the attacker in his guard, moved assets in position, and delivered an accurate strike. Counterpunching requires a bias for action because everything depends on timing. Windows of opportunity are short, and counterpunchers cannot hesitate. Therefore, when the moment arrives to counterpunch, it has got to hurt. This gives us our final principle, called the liver punch principle.

Liver punch principle. The liver punch principle derives its name from a punch delivered in boxing that is so painful it can incapacitate the opponent. Applying this concept to warfare requires understanding and applying combined arms theory. Combined arms theory is about creating a dilemma; the goal is to put the enemy in a no-win situation by combining arms in a complementary manner to create exploitable opportunities.²¹ It combines fires, maneuver, and supporting arms so that “any action the enemy takes to avoid one threat makes him more vulnerable to another.”²²

Combined arms theory is about battlefield reactions: “A weapon system’s most important effect on the battlefield is



(Figure by author)

Figure 1. Combined Arms Theory

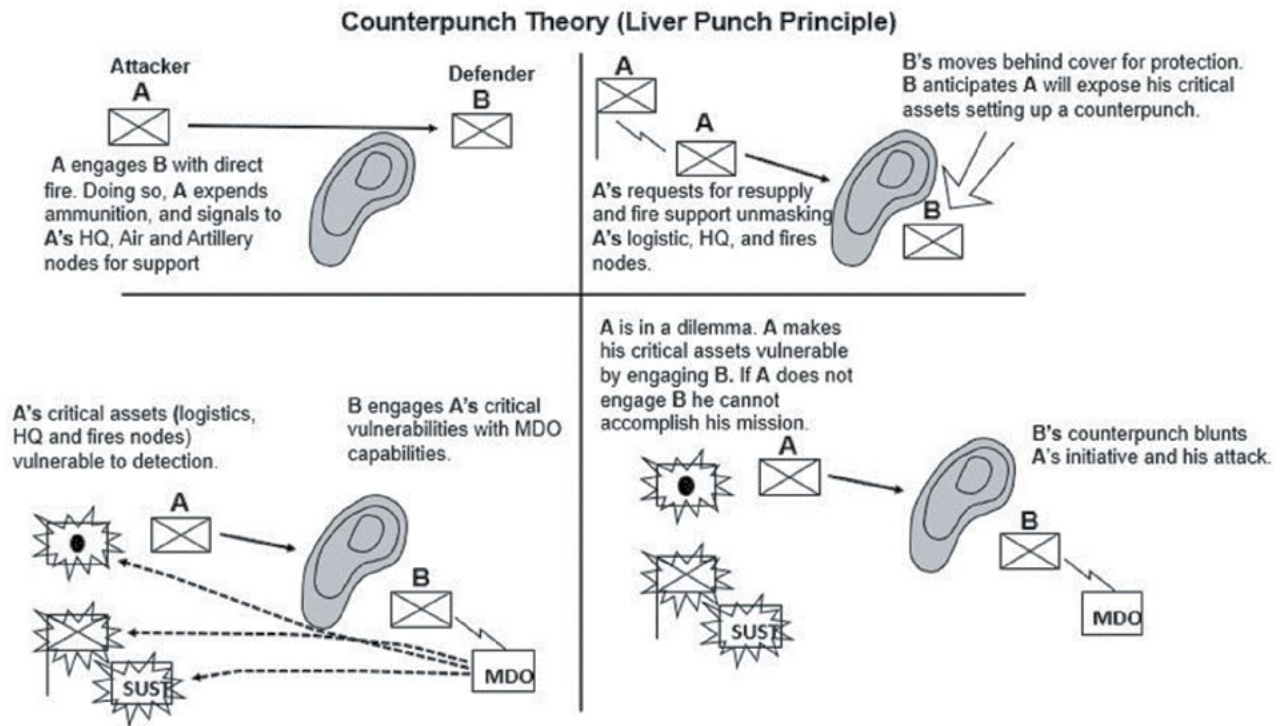
not how much it kills, but rather what reactions it causes.²³ A simple example of combined arms theory is when A attacks B with direct fire. B reacts by returning fire and moving behind cover so as not to die. B's move renders A's direct fire no longer effective. However, A anticipates this and combines arms in a complementary manner by engaging B with air and artillery fire. Now B is in a no-win situation. If B stays put, he is vulnerable to A's air and artillery fire.²⁴ Warfare practitioners who understand this theory can anticipate reactions (see figure 1).

Counterpunch theory builds upon combined arms to establish the liver punch principle. It employs the defeat mechanism of dislocation to render the enemy's dispositions irrelevant.²⁵ The liver punch principle asserts that when an attacker punches, he simultaneously uncovers and exposes a critical vulnerability for a counterblow. A right-handed boxer's strongest punch is usually his right hook or cross. Yet, if he chooses to throw it, he simultaneously uncovers his right-side ribs. The boxer is now vulnerable for his opponent to deliver a painful counterpunch to his liver. A liver punch hurts so badly that, at best, it drops the boxer to the mat or, at worst, it makes the

boxer hesitant to throw more right crosses. The liver punch principle aims to strike the attacker's critical vulnerabilities exposed by his actions. At best, it could defeat the attacker, or at worst, blunt his attack.

A simple example of counterpunch theory is A attacks B with direct fire. A's attack necessitates logistical and fire support coordinated by A's headquarters. These signals for support as well as movements unmask these critical assets. Again, B moves behind cover for protection, but this time, B fights irregularly. B anticipates that A's attack will uncover A's critical vulnerabilities. B locates and engages A's logistical, headquarters and fire nodes using multi-domain capabilities such as space, cyber, and joint fires. A is now in a dilemma. If A keeps attacking, he may lose his critical assets needed for further offensive operations. If A does not attack, he does not accomplish the mission. B's counterpunches were so hurtful, A is reluctant to continue attacking (see figure 2).

The historical example of the Battle of Tannenberg offers counterpunching principles and demonstrates how the U.S. Army can fight offensively from a defensive posture. The Battle of Tannenberg was fought in 1914 in modern-day eastern Poland. This is useful given the current



(Figure by author)

Figure 2. Counterpunch Theory (Liver Punch Principle)

context with Russia and NATO. The Battle of Tannenberg involved several hundreds of thousands of soldiers and covered hundreds of kilometers. Weapons technology was revolutionary, and armies struggled massively to cope with the changes. At the opening of hostilities in World War I, Russia held the initiative and attacked the outnumbered German army. What is most valuable is that Germany did not trade space for time. There are stark differences between that fight in 1914 and the situation in Eastern Europe today. However, the growing U.S. defensive posture in that region and increased Russian aggression make the Battle of Tannenberg relevant to counterpunching theory.

The Battle of Tannenberg

[Churchill] especially admired François as a man who knew how to win battles the wrong way while his superiors were losing them the right way.

—Dennis Showalter²⁶

The German strategy to win at the start of World War I was to attack France with all its armies except one. That one German army would defend its eastern front in Prussia against the Russian invasion long enough to force

France to capitulate. Once France surrendered, Germany would then turn all its forces against Russia. For Germany, everything depended upon whether one German army could hold off the entire Russian military long enough until France's downfall.²⁷ Both France and Russia expected this was Germany's intention, so both raced to counter it as the war began in early August 1914. Could the Russians threaten or seize Berlin before Paris fell? Doing so would require the Russians to destroy that one German army. For Germany, could its one army beat the attacking Russians who held the initiative at the start of the war?

That one German army in eastern Prussia, upon which this all depended, was the Eighth Army commanded by Col. Gen. Maximilian von Prittwitz. His superior, Col. Gen. Helmuth von Moltke the Younger, gave contradicting guidance on how Prittwitz was to defend its eastern frontier. According to Moltke, Prittwitz was to protect German territory and preserve the Eighth Army for future operations. Prittwitz must expect the Russians will outnumber him two to one. However, under no circumstances could Prittwitz let the Russians destroy Eighth Army nor trap it into a siege situation. Prittwitz could retreat west of the Vistula River if necessary and trade space for time

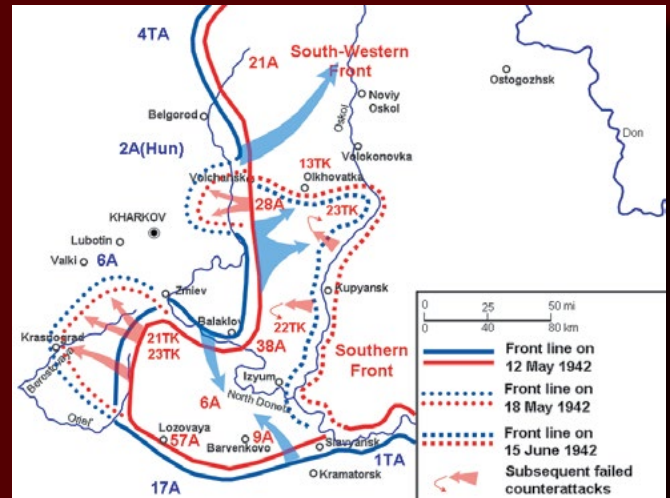
until further German reinforcements arrived. Still, Moltke warned the consequences of doing so would be disastrous.²⁸

Conversely, the Russians intended to mobilize and attack east Prussia as fast as possible, destroy Eighth Army, and threaten Berlin. Doing so would upset the entire German strategy. The Russians would attack east Prussia with their First and Second Armies. The Russian First Army, commanded by Gen. Paul von Rennenkampf, would invade east Prussia first by advancing west, north of the Masurian lakes near Gumbinnen (modern-day Gusev, Kaliningrad). Its aim was to engage the German Eighth Army and pin it down, allowing the Russian Second Army to deliver the decisive blow. Gen. Alexander Samsonov, commander of the Russian Second Army, had this task. Samsonov advanced west into Prussia but south of the Masurian lakes near Ortelsburg (modern-day Szczytno, Poland). Once past the lakes, he was to turn north and enveloped the German Eighth Army from the rear.²⁹ The Russian Empire's pre-World War I boundaries with Germany made that an enticing strategy.

Opposing the Russian invasion was the German Eighth Army. It consisted of six active divisions of the I, XVII, and XX Corps and was reinforced by three reserve divisions.³⁰ Prittwitz directed his corps commanders to wait and concentrate only after intelligence and reconnaissance discovered the Russian intentions.³¹ Prittwitz moved Eighth Army east along the Angerapp line some twenty miles west of the German/Russian border. Prittwitz believed this position afforded him the flexibility to respond to the Russian First or Second Armies.³² Prittwitz anticipated correctly the Russian First Army advance west along the Vilna to Königsberg railroad. This made sense as the Russians needed the railroad for logistical support. Prittwitz's I Corps commander, General of the Infantry Herman von François, considered defending so far west of the border intolerable and took matters into his own hands.³³

On 17 August, the Russian First Army invaded, moving east into Prussia with two hundred thousand men. The Russian First Army's initial objective was to seize the Insterburg railroad hub thirty-seven miles west of the border.³⁴ Insterburg was the ideal location to tie down the German Eighth Army for the Russian Second Army's envelopment. To counter Rennenkampf, Prittwitz cautiously moved the Eighth Army toward Gumbinnen, a town twelve miles east of the Insterburg Gap. However, to his surprise and despite his orders, his I Corps commander had

The Second Battle of Kharkov, 1942: Counterpunch Theory in Practice



(Map by Grafikm via Wikimedia Commons)

On 12 May 1942, Soviet forces launched an offensive (the “punch”) against the German 6th Army in an effort to drive it away from threatening Soviet staging areas. Though achieving some initial success, massive German airstrikes halted the offensive, leaving the Soviets in a highly vulnerable salient. The Soviet leadership had inaccurately estimated the 6th Army's potential for responding to an attack.

German forces responded with Operation Fredericus, a counteroffensive (the “counterpunch”) conducted 12–28 May 1942. The German pincer attack on 17 May cut off and surrounded three Soviet field armies. Confined to a narrow pocket without hope of relief, by 30 May approximately 280,000 Soviet soldiers were killed or wounded by attacks from all sides as well as intensive bombing from the air.

Following the successful counteroffensive, the German-led Army Group South exploited the chaos in Soviet ranks resulting from the disaster, moving successfully to encircle the Soviet 28th Army by 13 June and driving back the 38th and 9th Armies by June 22.

already moved past Gumbinnen and hit the Russians just after they had crossed the border.³⁵

The Russian First Army collided with François's I Corps in the small town of Stallupönen (modern-day Nesterov, Russia). Rennenkampf's forces were not prepared for the Germans to attack them so close to the border. Strategic necessity pressured Rennenkampf to rush into east Prussia. Thus, his forces had become strung out and fell upon François's I Corps at Stallupönen in piecemeal.³⁶ Upon learning his I Corps was decisively engaged at Stallupönen against his orders, Prittwitz demanded François break contact and return to Gumbinnen. François replied, "Tell General von Prittwitz that General von François will break off the engagement when the Russians are defeated."³⁷

As the Battle at Stallupönen developed, one of François's division commanders, Maj. Gen. Adalbert von Falk, was also not waiting on orders. Adhering to the German army's bias toward action, he marched toward the sound of cannon fire. Falk's initiative paid off, and his division slammed unexpectedly into the Russian First Army's southern flank. Falk's action created havoc along the Russian line and stopped First Army's advance.³⁸ At Stallupönen, the massively outnumbered German I Corps had blunted Rennenkampf's attack and dealt him a stunning counterpunch from which the Russian First Army never fully recovered.

The next day, François reluctantly complied with Prittwitz's orders and withdrew west to join the rest of the Eighth Army at Gumbinnen. Upon learning of I Corps' retreat, Rennenkampf tried again to advance toward Insterburg. However, the Russian First Army had used up much of its ammunition at Stallupönen, and his supply system was a mess.³⁹ To sort out the disorder, the Russians sent radio messages in the clear rather than encrypted. The Germans intercepted these radio communications, giving them a marked advantage throughout the rest of Tannenberg



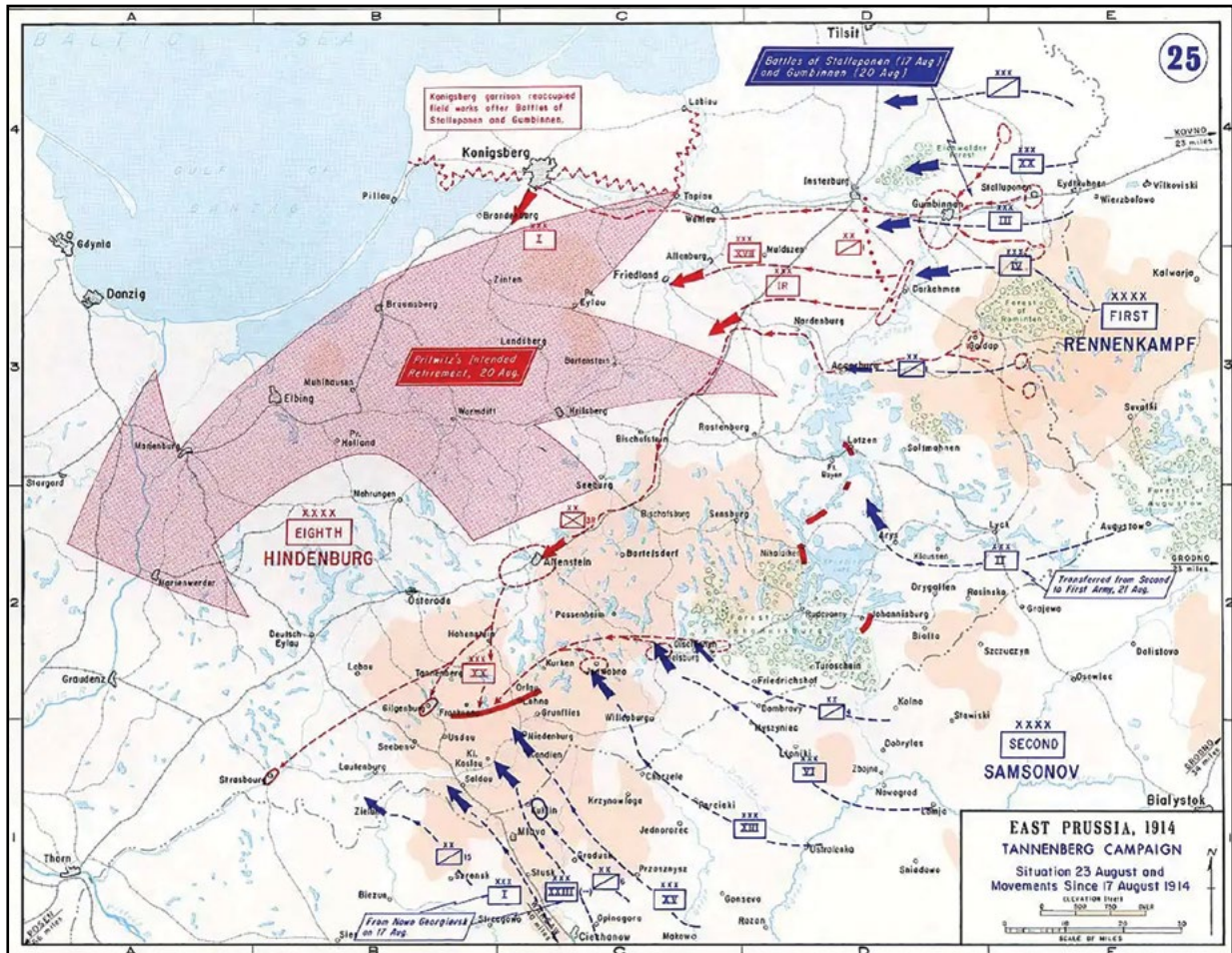
(Map courtesy of West Point Digital History Center)

Start of World War I Eastern Front

Campaign. From these stolen radio transmissions, Prittwitz learned that Rennenkampf halted his advance toward Insterburg on 20 August.⁴⁰

Armed with this intelligence, fueled by his subordinate's success at Stallupönen and hearing reports that the Russian Second Army had crossed the border to his southwest, Prittwitz perceived an opportunity to strike.⁴¹ However, unlike at Stallupönen, the Russians were ready at Gumbinnen. The Germans attacked the Russians in prepared defensive positions. In their haste to advance, the Germans assaulted without waiting for their artillery to prepare the way.⁴² The consequences were catastrophic. Prittwitz, believing his army was close to being destroyed or surrounded, ordered the Eighth Army to retreat west behind the Vistula River, giving east Prussia to the Russians.⁴³

To Moltke, the decision to abandon east Prussia was unacceptable. Moltke fired Prittwitz and replaced him



(Map courtesy of West Point Digital History Center)

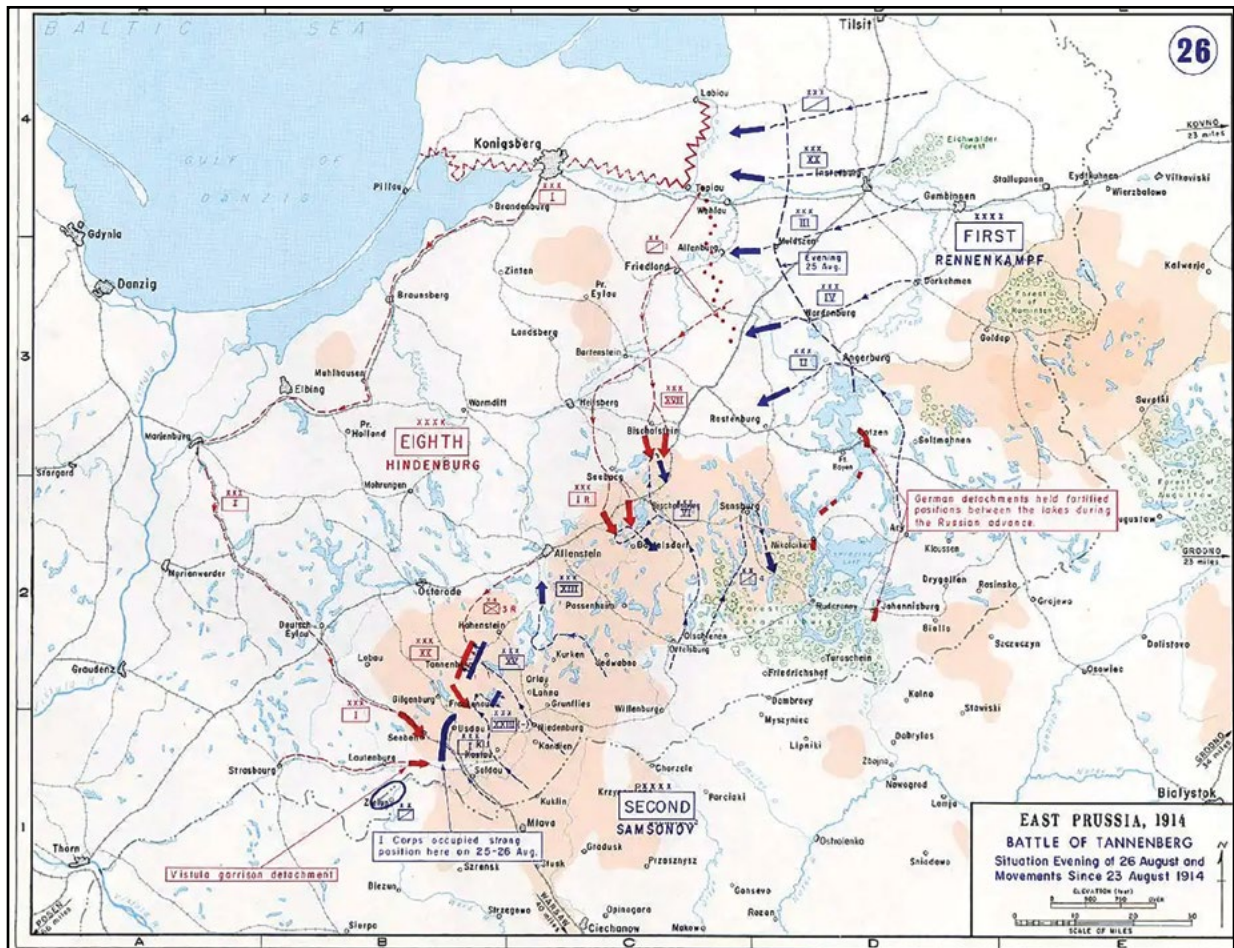
Battles of Stallupönen and Gumbinnen

with Gen. Paul von Hindenburg and a new chief of staff, Gen. Erich Ludendorff. As both men traveled east to assume command of the Eighth Army, its deputy chief of staff, Maj. Gen. Adolf Hoffmann, recognized a great opportunity if the Russian First Army would stay put. The Eighth Army could use its railroads to disengage François's I Corps, load it on trains, and transport it southwest all the way to strike at the Russian Second Army's left wing.⁴⁴ The rest of the Eighth Army would merely do an about face on the Russian First Army and attack southwest against the Russian Second Army. All this depended on if Rennenkampf would stay put and stay put he did.⁴⁵

Rennenkampf did not pursue the German Eighth Army after Gumbinnen because his food and ammunition were almost gone. The change of rail gauge at the German border hindered his railroad resupplies from the east. Plus, his First Army had taken significant casualties after Stallupönen and Gumbinnen. Yet, to Rennenkampf's

surprise, the Germans retreated. Rennenkampf interpreted this to mean he had soundly beaten the Germans.⁴⁶ Rennenkampf feared that should he pursue Eighth Army too vigorously, it would flee west faster than Samsonov's Second Army could envelop it.⁴⁷ Rennenkampf never shook off these beliefs until well after Second Army's destruction by the German Eighth Army.

On 21 August, the Russian Second Army crossed the border, advancing northwest toward Ortelsburg and Neidenburg.⁴⁸ By 23 August, the Russian Second Army had seized Neidenburg and continued northwest until Lt. Gen. Friedrich von Scholtz from the German Eighth Army's XX Corps stopped him.⁴⁹ Ludendorff ordered Scholtz to fight until the last man to buy time for François's I Corps' arrival on the Russian left wing.⁵⁰ Starting on 21 August, François had to load, move, and unload his entire corps by rail from Insterburg to Deutsch Eylau (modern-day Lława, Poland) and be ready to attack the Russian



(Map courtesy of West Point Digital History Center)

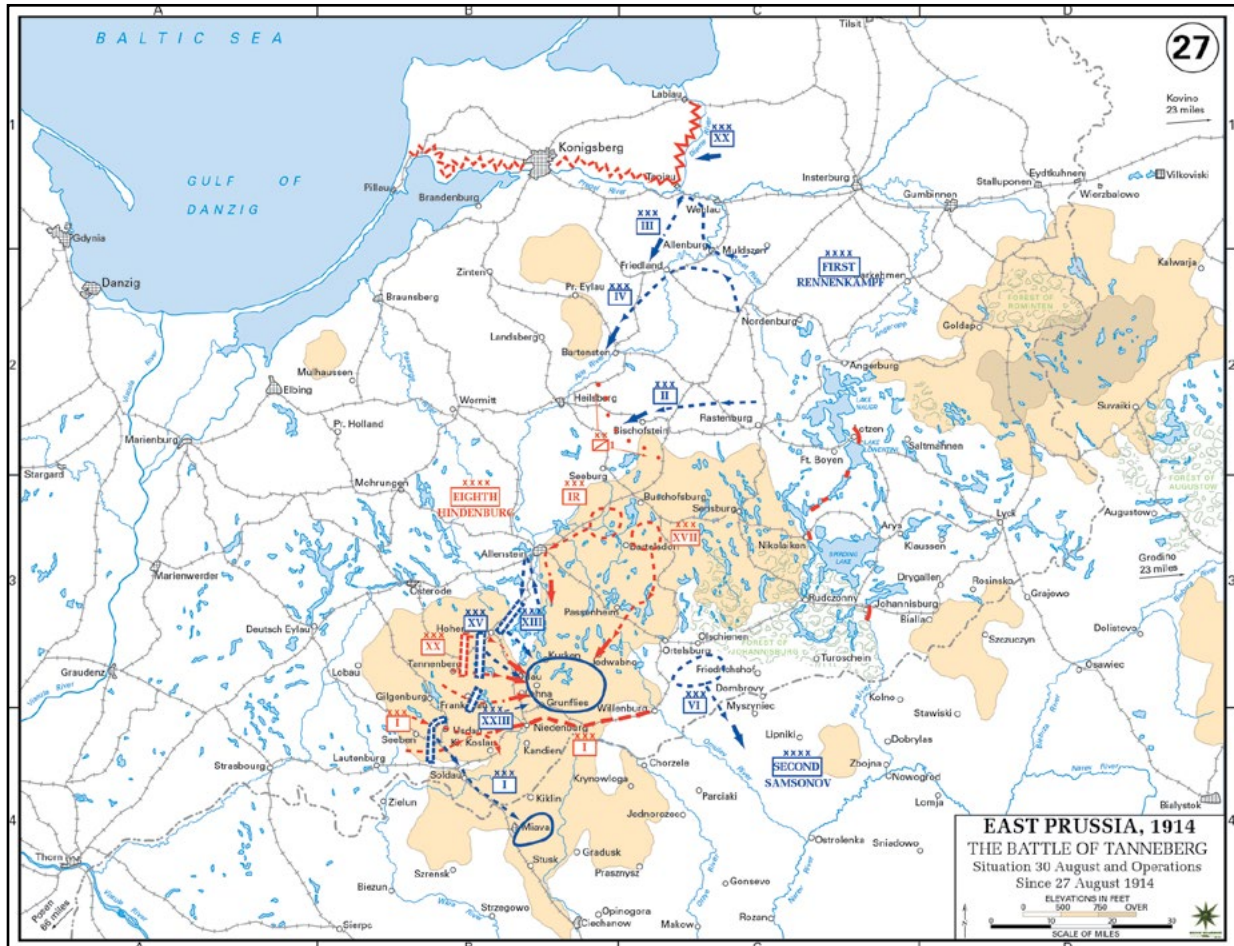
Repositioning of German First Corps

left wing by 25 August.⁵¹ During this time, the situation for the Eighth Army was critical. Its forces were fighting off Second Army's attack, trying to move a corps by railroad, and threatened now by Rennenkampf's First Army, which could move against Eighth Army's rear. Salvation came from an intercepted Russian radio transmission sent in the clear between Samsonov and Rennenkampf. It revealed that both commanders misunderstood the situation.⁵² Both believed the German Eighth Army was trying to retreat west toward the Vistula rather than setting a trap for Samsonov.

Empowered with this rare understanding of the enemy's intent, Ludendorff could be bold. He ordered Eighth Army to execute a double envelopment on the Russian Second Army. The operation would start on 26 August. Two of the Eighth Army's Corps would envelop the Russian right wing, XX Corps would hold the center, and François's I Corps would envelop the Russian left wing.⁵³

After detraining, François advanced east toward Neidenburg. He brushed off Ludendorff's incessant orders to attack immediately, regardless of unavailable artillery support. François had learned from his experiences at Stallupönen and Gumbinnen that attacking without artillery's preparatory fires was the surest way to fail.⁵⁴

As the German XX Corps continued to blunt the Russian Second Army's main advance, they withdrew further northwest further drawing the Russians deeper into the pocket. However, the Russians were close to overrunning XX Corps. As François's I Corps advanced east, he met little resistance. Ludendorff feared XX Corps was on the verge of collapse. Therefore, Ludendorff ordered François to divert half his forces to drive north to reinforce XX Corps rather than continue eastward and attack the Russian rear area.⁵⁵ Again, François rejected Ludendorff's orders. François believed the best way to assist XX Corps was to continue east to seize Neidenburg. Once seized, I



(Map courtesy of West Point Digital History Center)

German First Corps Liver Punch

Corps would sever the Russian supply lines and effectively trap the Russian Second Army. Furthermore, François believed Samsonov would be too concerned that the Germans cut them off to continue to press against XX Corps.⁵⁶ François disobeyed Ludendorff again and continued east toward Neidenburg.

By 28 August, the Battle of Tannenberg was on its third day, with three hundred thousand men battering one another.⁵⁷ Ludendorff learned by midday that XX Corps had repelled the Russian attack into the Eighth Army center, and François's instincts were right. Ludendorff rescinded his previous order to François and instructed him to continue to attack the Russian Second Army's rear by seizing Neidenburg.⁵⁸ By then, François was already there.

By 29 August, the German Eighth Army had trapped Samsonov. With two German corps enveloping his right wing, his center pinned by XX Corps, François's I Corps behind him, and

Rennenkampf nowhere near to assist, Samsonov ordered a general retreat.

The following two days were an utter disaster for the Russian Second Army as they fled, trying to escape the German net.⁵⁹ The battle results were ninety-two thousand Russian prisoners, fifty thousand dead and wounded, and two Russian Corps destroyed with two more severely depleted.⁶⁰ The Russian Second Army ceased to exist, and rather than face the czar, Samsonov committed suicide while trying to evade back to Russia.

With Second Army gone, the German Eighth Army now turned toward Rennenkampf. He was still reeling from Stallupönen and Gumbinnen. Hearing of Second Army's demise, Rennenkampf did not put up much of a fight and withdrew back from whence he came. The Russians turned over the initiative to the Germans. However, Austria's invasion into the Polish salient had been a disaster. The Russians routed the Austrians, and

Hindenburg's diversion of resources to rescue his ally prevented the Germans from exploiting Tannenberg's success. The Germans lost the opportunity to launch a counteroffensive into Russia. However, the German Eighth Army did win against an attacking enemy who held the initiative at the opening of hostilities. The Battle of Tannenberg became legendary, inspiring the German nation for the rest of World War I and World War II.

Applying Counterpunch Theory

The Battle of Tannenberg informs counterpunch theory by demonstrating its dynamic and emergent nature. It also highlights the inherent vulnerabilities in an attacker's first strike. *Rennenkampf* did not expose the flaws in his supply system until after he invaded. When First Army collided with François's I Corps, the friction in *Rennenkampf*'s supply and communication lines appeared. His insufficient ammunition stockage, difficulty transitioning the rail gauges, and other flawed assumptions did not arise until the campaign commenced.

To overcome this friction, Russian leaders communicated in the clear, opening holes the Germans filled with punches time and time again. These vulnerabilities and opportunities did not present themselves until after the Russians invaded. The Battle of Tannenberg shows how attackers expose their weakness when they strike. To counterpunch, the defender must recognize and exploit those moments.

The Battle of Tannenberg demonstrates how a well-timed counterpunch can stun, stall, and even turn the initiative over to the defender. François's unexpected and hard-hitting counterpunch at Stallupönen totally upset *Rennenkampf*'s timing and strategy. *Rennenkampf* never truly understood the situation again after the battle of Stallupönen and Gumbinnen. He never recovered from François's punch in the mouth immediately after the bell sounded. Had he defeated the German Eighth Army? Why did it retreat? Did it withdraw behind the Vistula River, or had it gone to defend Königsberg? With uncertainty mounting, ammunition and manpower depleted, and fearing another Stallupönen, *Rennenkampf* was hesitant to throw any more punches, which is the counterpunch effect.

The Battle of Tannenberg also illustrates the counterpunch theory's liver punch principle. Instead of complying with Ludendorff's orders to reinforce XX Corps and hit directly back at the Russian Second Army, François

chose to strike Samsonov's line of communication hub at Neidenburg. While the rest of the Eighth Army fended off Second Army's blows, François moved and hit Samsonov where it hurt most. Seizing Neidenburg psychologically dislocated Samsonov with the sense of entrapment.⁶¹ The opportunity presented at Neidenburg occurred through an aggregate of repetitive, tactical actions to guard-move-hit that uncovered that momentary vulnerability. This set up François's knockout liver punch.

Furthermore, the Battle of Tannenberg reinforces that counterpunching theory hinges on having a bias for action. Defenders often cannot foresee the attacker's vulnerabilities that emerge from dynamic situational variables. Leaders with a bias for caution fear reprisals and miss opportunities to counterpunch. The German army's culture of initiative allowed it to recognize the holes and fill them with punches. Without it, the battle over the eastern German front and possibly World War I might have turned out much differently.

Tannenberg informs counterpunch theory by demonstrating that defenders can snatch the initiative from the attacker without compelling them to culminate. The German strategic situation at the start of World War I made waging a counteroffensive strategy to trade space for time in east Prussia impossible. Given the circumstances, even Moltke was unsure how to fight in the east. Everything that occurred when *Rennenkampf*'s troops stepped across the German border was dynamic and emergent. Counterpunching does not just account for such factors, it depends upon them. This makes counterpunching ideal when counteroffensive strategies are not.

Finally, the Russian tactical defeat at Tannenberg had a strategic counterpunch effect. Following the battle, Russia hesitated to throw more punches at the Germans, fearing another painful blow. Even though the Russians possessed a two-to-one advantage, and its soldiers were all active units compared to the German half reserve-half active composition, this made it even more crushing to Russian confidence. The Russian war minister Alexander Guchkov admitted in 1917 that after Tannenberg, he had decided the Russians had lost the war.⁶²

Conclusion

Everyone has a plan until they get punched in the mouth.

—Mike Tyson⁶³

The optimal way to fight offensively from a defensive posture is by counterpunching. Counterpunching takes advantage of war's dynamic and emergent qualities. In a back-and-forth sequence, defenders guard, move, and hit enemy vulnerabilities the attacker created and exposed by each of his offensive actions. Counterpunching does not fear the enemy's first strikes, because an attacker reveals its Achilles' heel the moment it crosses the forward line of troops. This offers opportunities to deliver a series of liver punches that, over time, block the enemy's attacks, stall its momentum, and force it to turnover the initiative.

The Battle of Tannenberg informs counterpunch theory, highlighting that there are inherent vulnerabilities in the attacker's first strike. Exploiting these vulnerabilities required the defenders having a culture of initiative and superb leadership. The German Eighth Army had commanders with the five characteristics the U.S. Military Academy in 1983 identified as held by successful combat leaders: "terrain sense, single-minded tenacity, ferocious audacity, physical confidence, and practical practiced judgment."⁶⁴ Their examples repeatedly inspired their soldiers' will to fight, overcame initial setbacks, overcame numerical inferiority, overcame severe exhaustion, and struck back at the right moments. Without the intangibles of initiative, leadership, and the will to fight, culture will eat counterpunching theory for breakfast.⁶⁵

This leads to several warnings for defenders at the opening of hostilities. Invaders often win; when they do lose, it is usually by a counteroffensive strategy. The Battle of Tannenberg was a close-run thing, and small actions made significant differences that could have easily tipped the scale for either side. Success ultimately comes through the timely arrival of reinforcements. Therefore, counterpunching is not an exclusive method but a complementary one.

As the U.S. Army moves further in the twenty-first century, it acknowledges that uncertainty, degraded communications, and fleeting windows of opportunity will characterize combat operations.⁶⁶ Improving the probability of success necessitates agility. Agility means moving, adjusting, and acting faster than the enemy. Field Manual 3-0, *Operations*, explains that "the time available to create and exploit opportunities against adaptive threats is usually limited. Agile units rapidly recognize an opportunity and take action

to exploit it. Speed of recognition, decision making, movement, and battle drills enable agility."⁶⁷ Agility means counterpunching, and it best serves the U.S. Army's global defensive posture and its predilection toward offensive warfare.

The U.S. Army wrestles with countering an adversary's antiaccess strategy, and counterpunching theory offers a solution to this problem. Opponents of the United States aim to deny it access to their regions in the event of armed conflict.⁶⁸ The U.S. Army envisions using multidomain operations by employing space, cyber, and joint fire capabilities to create windows of opportunity that will allow the joint force to penetrate the enemy's antiaccess efforts and get into the fight. The moment the adversary launches its antiaccess efforts, it will expose those windows of opportunity that were protected before. U.S. forces only need to react in time. Knockouts are not about power; they are about timing.⁶⁹

The U.S. Army envisions seizing the initiative by imposing dilemmas upon the enemy.⁷⁰ This is counterpunching theory's fundamental aim. If the enemy strikes, it quickly suffers painful consequences. If the enemy does not strike, it cannot achieve its goal. Either way, it loses. This imposition of dilemmas by counterpunching applies at the strategic level of war. The current Russian/Ukrainian conflict exemplifies this concept. Russia's war aim is to rebuild its lost empire and counter NATO's expansion. Its invasion revealed an unforeseen critical vulnerability that NATO reacted to with a political counterpunch. Perceiving they could be next, Finland and Sweden ceased their neutrality and petitioned to join NATO. That hit Russia where it hurt most and imposed a dilemma for other despots to notice.

Counterpunching is a way tacticians, operational artists, and strategists can win, given the U.S. military's global defensive posture and its preference for offensive warfare. Counterpunching does not take counsel from the "first battle" fears but instills confidence in combat leaders at every echelon to look for and find the opportunities presented in every enemy action. It gives combat leaders a mindset and method to overcome opposition by hitting "undefended or ill-defended targets of vital importance to the enemy."⁷¹ U.S. forces can beat an attacking enemy at the start of the war, but success depends on having a culture of initiative and a bias for action. ■

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Bradley track commander Sgt. Michael Trask of 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division, radios grid coordinates of opposing forces during Project Convergence on 2 November 2022 at Fort Irwin, California. The opposing forces were spotted using the Raven, a small, fixed-winged unmanned aircraft. (Photo by Sgt. Brayton Daniel, U.S. Army)

Convergence and Emission Control Tension and Reconciliation



Maj. Matthew Tetreau, U.S. Army

Continuous communication allows enemy forces to detect and target commanders, subordinates, and command posts. It should be avoided whenever possible.

—Field Manual 3-0, *Operations*

In October 2022, the U.S. Army published updated doctrine describing their new operational concept, Multidomain Operations. Field Manual (FM) 3-0, *Operations*, articulates the Army's



contributions to the joint force in a security environment characterized by the threat of great power competition with peer competitors. The new doctrine represents a major step toward optimizing Army warfighting for twenty-first-century conditions and addressing contemporary and emerging threats. Perhaps most crucially, the doctrine explicitly recognizes China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) as the pacing threat and speaks directly to how the U.S. Army approaches anticipated challenges posed by that adversary. Despite all the progress represented by the new FM 3-0, commanders and staffs will face a major challenge in implementation due to the discordant nature of two of the publication's key concepts.

One of the Army's most critical contributions to the joint force, and a driving force behind development of the new operating concept, is to defeat components of enemy antiaccess/area denial (A2/AD) systems. The concept for defeating A2/AD systems specifies a "multidomain" approach facilitated by *convergence*. Convergence, one of the four "tenets of operations," is the integration and

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Communication between ground units and satellite, aircraft, and other sensor systems increases access to information, but the corresponding increase in electromagnetic emissions increases the potential for discovery by signals intelligence platforms. (Illustration courtesy of Lockheed-Martin)

synchronization of capabilities from various domains and echelons at predetermined points in space and time to achieve decisive effects.¹ Implicit in this definition is the necessity of a commander and staff to bring these disparate capabilities to bear at the proper place and time through rigorous planning and coordination. Facilitating this centralized planning, distribution of mission orders, and coordination will require a robust communication architecture and, unless properly managed, a high volume of communication leading up to and at the point of convergence.

A second welcome addition to the new field manual is the necessity of electromagnetic emission control (EMCON). Long neglected in Army operations doctrine, EMCON recognizes the threat posed by unmanaged electromagnetic signatures and seeks to minimize or mitigate them.² Given the growing ubiquity and sophistication of signals intelligence (SIGINT) platforms and the increasing efficiency of kill chains of sensors and shooters, the service is right



(Illustration courtesy of the U.S. Army)

to address the threat. FM 3-0 describes the problem set and offers several measures to manage electromagnetic signatures. Some of these, such as operating radios at the lowest practicable power setting, are no doubt familiar to contemporary leaders. Others, such as using landlines or other means of communication with no electromagnetic signature, are practically unknown to a generation of warfighters who cut their teeth in a largely uncontested electromagnetic environment. The most effective means of evading SIGINT detection, simply not emitting during periods of acute threat, will require a fundamental reorientation of command as currently practiced.

Though convergence and EMCON are much-needed improvements to Army operations doctrine, a definite tension exists between them. How is a corps headquarters to communicate mission orders to several subordinate commands, liaise with adjacent and supporting units, coordinate space and cyber support from distant functional commands, and battle track a highly complex operation while minimizing electromagnetic signatures? As currently written and understood, convergence is untenable due to the vulnerability of the coordinating headquarters. Leaders may overcome the vulnerability inherent in achieving convergence against

a peer threat, however, by judiciously setting conditions for convergence, deliberately managing all emissions, and obfuscating electromagnetic signatures to deceive and complicate the enemy's targeting efforts.

The State of the Electromagnetic Environment

James Bruce's seminal 2006 article advocating an adaptation strategy for the U.S. intelligence community adroitly describes the nature of intelligence contests between adversaries. Bruce popularized the concept of an ongoing "cyclical struggle between the 'hidiers' and 'finders,'" and the constant state of adaptation necessary to remain hidden in the face of ever-evolving finders.³ The United States lost its "revolution in military affairs" monopoly as adversaries invested in the now-mature technologies that appeared novel when displayed to the world during the First Gulf War. As of 2021, China operated over two hundred intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance satellites, many outfitted with SIGINT sensors.⁴ Further, the PLA possess a fleet of ground, air, and sea surface SIGINT sensors capable of saturating areas of likely conflict, particularly in the South China Sea.⁵ The family of SIGINT assets



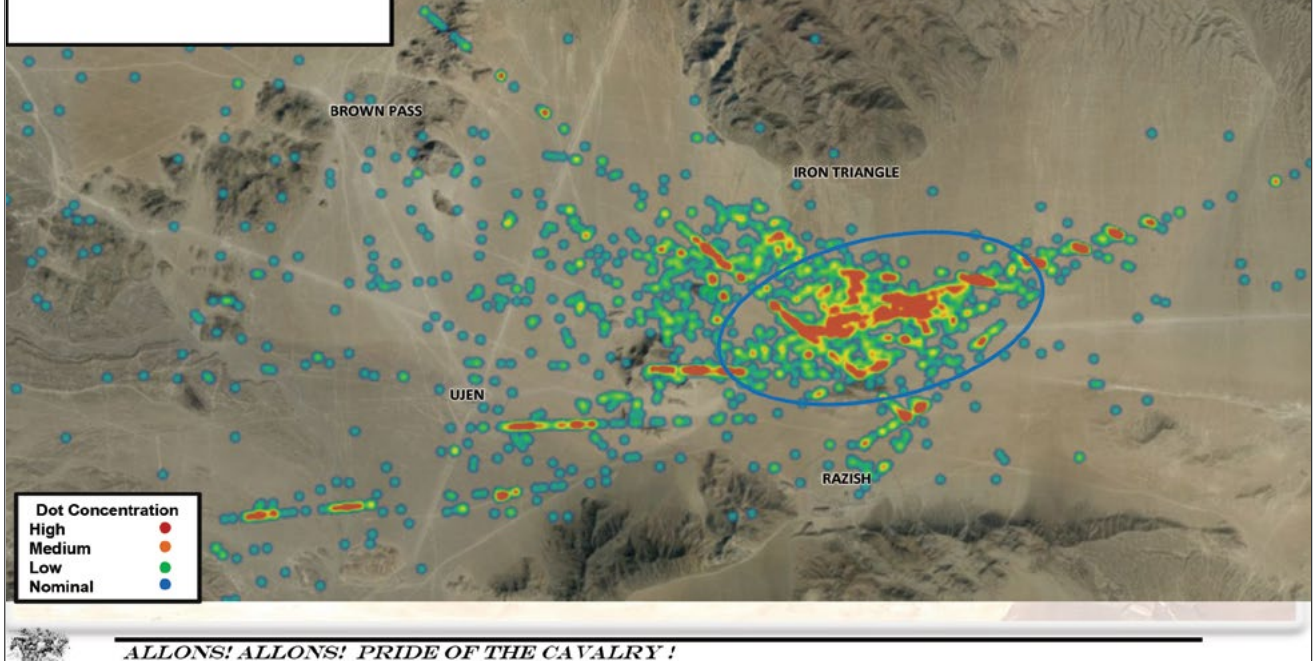
NESTS Common Operating Picture



TIME STAMP: D+5 1800 – D+6 0600
TOTAL TRACKS: 3582

Overall Assessment: NESTS IVO Y54 continued to collect on 3CR and enabler signatures in Hill 780 and through Pizza hut terrain targeting FM/JBCP.

Fire Missions: None



described above is a crucial component of the Chinese A2/AD system, potentially for targeting intervening forces but more often to find, fix, and/or track those forces and tip or cue other intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance or weapons platforms. Radio, satellite communication, and active radar emissions are potential catalysts for the enemy's kill chain, initiating systems and processes that could destroy the transmitter. In this environment, every electromagnetic emission by a hider is a signature available for detection and exploitation by a finder.

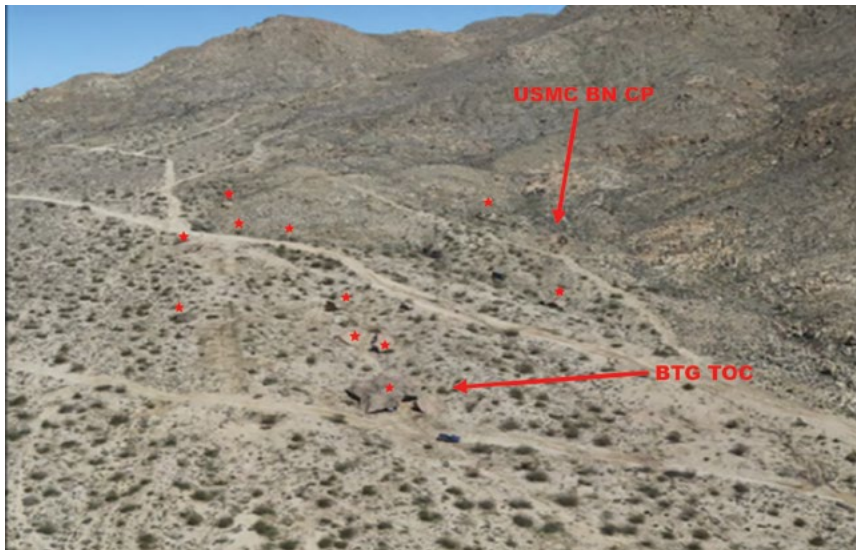
Those who have trained at the National Training Center are no doubt familiar with the electromagnetic signature heat maps of the rotational unit reviewed during the end of rotation after action review. Invariably, these maps indicate the location of brigade and battalion command posts as epicenters of electromagnetic emissions with such clarity that they require no sophisticated intelligence analysis to discern. The image above of the electromagnetic

A heatmap of Joint Battle Command Platform and FM transmissions observed from 3rd Cavalry Regiment during rotation 23-09 in August 2023. Data was collected from the Networked Electronic Support Threat Sensors system at the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, California. (Photo courtesy of Col. Timothy Ferguson, U.S. Army)

signature of a headquarters element at the National Training Center illustrates the conspicuousness of unmitigated emissions.⁶ Operating communications systems on high power, transmitting frequently and at length, and aggregating the headquarters in a static position all contribute to this condition. While communications are detectable even at the level of individual tactical radios, they are particularly problematic in command posts, which present large, dense, and static signatures. Tactical elements such as platoons or even individual vehicles present smaller electromagnetic signatures, tend to be highly mobile, and offer a lower payoff for adversaries seeking to maximize the effects of finite resources.



Experimenting with dispersion at the NTC. The photo above demonstrates the effectiveness of visual obfuscation by dispersed command-and-control (C2) elements under camouflage nets at the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, California, circa 2019. An opposing force brigade tactical group with an attached U.S. Marine Corps regimental tactical operational center and other C2 elements are identified in red in the same photo below. (Photos courtesy of the National Training Center)



Sister Services

The Army should study the practices of the sister services to inform the optimization of multidomain operations in a contested electromagnetic environment. The maritime services have a robust tradition of managing electromagnetic signatures to evade detection. Against the blank backdrop of the open ocean, even relatively limited signatures are conspicuous, requiring careful management of all emissions. Couple that with the longstanding SIGINT cat-and-mouse

game between the U.S. and Soviet navies during the Cold War, and the U.S. Navy possessing an impressive body of knowledge when it comes to operating dispersed formations at EMCON postures.⁷ EMCON, “the selective and controlled use of ... emitters to optimize command and control capabilities while minimizing ... detection by enemy sensors,” is central to survivability for all of the services when facing a contemporary peer adversary.⁸ Predictably, the Navy allowed this knowledge to atrophy during the post-Cold War conflicts in which enemies presented no significant SIGINT threat. With the adoption of their new operating concept, Distributed Maritime Operations, the Navy is returning to a tradition of electromagnetic signature management to adapt to the threats posed by the PLA and others.

The 2020 *Tri-Service Maritime Strategy* (formally known as *Advantage at Sea: Prevailing with Integrated All-Domain Naval Power*) defines distributed maritime operations as “leverage[ing] the principles of distribution, integration, and maneuver to mass overwhelming combat power and effects at the time and place of our choosing.”⁹ The document describes how the concept relies on “low probability of intercept and detection networks” for the purpose of “complicating the ene-

my’s own scouting efforts.”¹⁰ Managing electromagnetic signatures and evading detection are at the heart of the Navy’s operating concept and enable maneuver, surprise, and massing effects and combat power from all domains. Further, the Navy’s tradition of incorporating EMCON into their doctrine, plans, and operations provides a common lexicon and intellectual foundation for operationalizing the concepts.

Wayne Hughes’s 1986 book *Fleet Tactics: Theory and Practice* is a classic of naval literature and is still

widely read by naval officers and sea power enthusiasts. The work features a vignette that succinctly illustrates the degree to which the maritime services have analyzed the challenge of evading SIGINT detection and incorporated the findings into standard procedures.¹¹ The anecdote describes how a surface action group approaching a land-based target with powerful radars manages their electromagnetic signatures to approach undetected and strike the target. Much like an Army headquarters achieving convergence, the group commander must bring capabilities from multiple domains, both internal and external to their formation, to bear at the appropriate time and place to achieve the desired effect. By calculating the range of weapons and targeting systems, the detection range of the radars, and the time required for the adversary to mount a strike against the group, the author illustrates the optimal conditions for the group to transition from a state of minimum emissions (EMCON A) to full use of all sensors and communications (EMCON C).

If we make allowances for fundamental differences between naval and ground combat, we can glean several applicable lessons from this vignette. First, the naval formation set conditions before emitting freely. By degrading enemy fires beyond the range of over-the-horizon radars, the force altered the balance of risk to enable maneuver. Second, the blue force deliberately managed all emissions in support of its scheme of maneuver. By closing the distance with the enemy at EMCON A, the force fired just within the outer effective range of enemy reconnaissance aircraft, then turned to EMCON C to take full advantage of defensive sensors and communications to coordinate the close fight, in this case with its carrier-based aircraft. Finally, the blue force used “radiating deception units,” or decoys, to obfuscate its signatures. Understanding that reconnaissance and fires capabilities are finite, any effort that complicates the finders’ targeting process and consumes time and resources is a benefit to the hider.

Recommendations

Solutions for achieving convergence in a contested and lethal electromagnetic environment fall into three categories: setting conditions, deliberate emissions management, and obfuscation. Just as they set conditions for a combined-arms breach through

suppression and obscuration, commanders must set conditions for achieving convergence to mitigate the risk to mission. In the case of convergence, conditions should be preestablished to trigger headquarters to operate at less restrictive EMCON levels to enable effective command and control. Units must tailor enemy-based conditions to individual operations but should include conditions related to the degradation of the adversary’s kill chain. These efforts should include some combination of suppression or neutralization of fires assets, jamming, destruction or deception of sensors, and/or disruption of fires networks through kinetic, electronic warfare, or cyber means.

Prudent management of the balance between command and control on the one hand and risk of detection on the other requires that all emissions are deliberate. In other words, commands minimize electromagnetic signatures until the need to emit surpasses the risk of detection, or they manage emissions to limit the risk of detection or attack. This degree of emissions discipline is largely unknown to the force but must become ingrained to survive the sensor-rich environments of contemporary battlefields. First, the Army should publish a dedicated, classified EMCON doctrine with guidance for the employment of individual systems based on the threat level. Further, they should publish unclassified guidance for subordinate commanders and staffs to develop unit-level EMCON standard operating procedures—a practice that the Marine Corps Intelligence Schools undertook years ago.¹² These first two measures will provide the force with the common lexicon necessary to ingrain EMCON into the operational culture. Next, units from battalion to corps should develop EMCON standard operating procedures based on their assigned equipment and mission set and incorporate those procedures into all collective training. Transitioning from one EMCON posture to another must become a battle drill such that the element can fluidly transition from all emitters “on” to “off” and vice versa. The use of communications windows, brevity codes, EMCON-informed communication (primary, alternate, contingency, and emergency, or PACE) plans, and similar practices must likewise become routine. Finally, low probability of intercept and low probability of detection communications must become the norm for transmissions between

echelons in a high SIGINT risk environment. Achieving more consistent low probability of intercept and low probability of detection communications requires investing in hardware and training to build capacity at tactical echelons. The service can enhance these efforts by restoring the capacity (both in hardware and expertise) to use wired communications, such as field telephones, to communicate securely over short distances.

Finally, the force must focus on making headquarters harder to detect and engage through obfuscation. As Lt. Gen. Milford Beagle, Brig. Gen. Jason Slider, and Lt. Col. Matthew Arrol explain in “The Graveyard of Command Posts,” dispersing a large command post across a series of mobile nodes creates multiple challenges for even sophisticated adversary kill chains.¹³ Importantly, even if detected, a small, mobile command node may be indistinguishable from other tactical formations. The concept ensures redundancy, so if the enemy targets and destroys a command node, surviving nodes can continue command and control of the fight. To further confuse enemy targeting efforts, formations of all sizes should take advantage of the electromagnetic “noise” afforded by the infrastructure in the area of operations. The heat map referenced above presents a less clear picture if superimposed on population centers, with all their attendant emissions, as opposed to a desert. The service should invest in ground-based decoys to complicate the target landscape and draw sensors and munitions away from manned systems. The new Terrestrial Layer System, currently in the Army’s acquisition pipeline, reportedly includes decoy capabilities as one feature of a sophisticated electronic warfare suite.¹⁴ The service should take these efforts a step further, investing in research and development for families of expendable emitting decoys to replicate the electromagnetic signatures of various systems and formations. Doctrine and training must likewise reflect the need to leverage electromagnetic

deception. Even if the adversary eventually identifies the decoy as such, it will likely cost them valuable manpower and resources to confirm.

Conclusion

The most effective way to avoid SIGINT detection is to minimize or eliminate electromagnetic emissions. The paragraphs above offer some general recommendations about how to improve emissions management practices and achieve convergence prudently. More important than material, doctrinal, or training solutions, the service must fully embrace the mission command approach to command and control. Two facts work against this optimization of the concept. First, commanders possess the technical means of practicing detailed command over subordinate elements. Second, the environment they have operated in for the entirety of their careers has not punished detailed command, and the bureaucracy has, in many cases, rewarded it. Habitual detailed command is as much a threat as enemy SIGINT sensors.

The Army’s operations and mission command doctrine has long supported the command approach necessary to survive and thrive given the threats envisioned in this article. As Army Doctrine Publication 6-0, *Mission Command: Command and Control of Army Forces*, states, “Mission orders and application of the mission command approach to command and control mitigates the need for continuous communication.”¹⁵ This article’s epigraph stresses the need to limit continuous communications specifically to avoid targeting. These statements are no longer aspirational but imperative. Achieving convergence and practicing prudent emissions management are not mutually exclusive but will challenge the force to adapt doctrinally, materially, and philosophically. Our success in adapting to the new reality of persistent SIGINT reconnaissance will prove critical to achieving convergence and optimizing the multidomain operations concept. ■

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Concepts for Security Force Assistance Brigade Company Task Forces in Large-Scale Combat Operations

Maj. Zachary L. Morris, U.S. Army

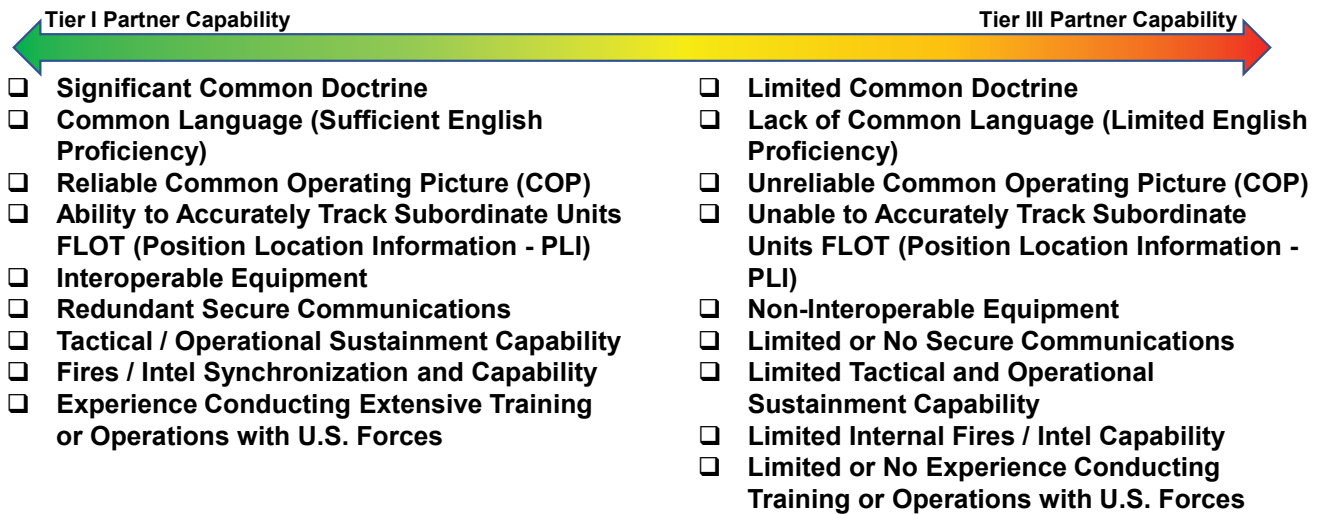
During every significant conflict in U.S. history, the military has employed advisors in some capacity. Advisors have played a critical role for the U.S. Army in conflicts from Baron Friedrich von Steuben advising the U.S. Army at Valley Forge and Gen. Joe Stillwell in China during World War II to the Military Assistance Advisory Group in Vietnam and current security force assistance brigades (SFAB) in Afghanistan. As large-scale combat operations (LSCO) loom again, SFABs should continue identifying potential roles in LSCO and develop the doctrine and concepts needed to perform those functions effectively. While there are many potential roles an SFAB could fill during a LSCO conflict, this article focuses on an SFAB company task force (TF) fighting on the front line to enable and support a partner force (PF) battalion.

The recommendations and analysis in this article are based on experiences gained in training before and during National Training Center rotation 23-04 (10–18 February). During this rotation, 1st Battalion, 2nd SFAB, conducted LSCO while partnered with portions of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment (ACR). This was the first rotation where an SFAB battalion TF served under a U.S. division headquarters and

partnered with a force other than a conventional U.S. brigade combat team. During the rotation, Company A, 1st Battalion, partnered with an Atropanian mechanized infantry battalion from the 11th ACR, which would probably represent a Tier II partner as defined in this article. In training before the rotation, including multiple field training exercises and command post exercises, and during the rotation, Company A tested multiple methods and concepts to identify better ways to operate in LSCO.

Based on Company A's training, an SFAB Company TF should utilize the second concept for LSCO when working with a Tier II or Tier III partner because of the improved sustainment and endurance, command and control (C2), and ability to conduct U.S. functions in combat. However, SFABs should train on both concepts that follow to maximize flexibility for the TF and higher headquarters.

The first section of this article defines partner capabilities and critical functions that drive how an SFAB employs its capabilities in LSCO. The second section explains the two concepts for operating with a Tier II or Tier III PF battalion. The first concept follows a more conventional and traditional SFAB alignment



(Figure by author)

Figure 1. Partner Capabilities for Tier I and Tier III Partners

with each team partnered with a specific unit. The second concept is more dynamic and focuses on operating as an SFAB company TF, emphasizing sustainment and U.S. C2 to support and enable the PF battalion. The

final section analyzes the strengths and weaknesses of each concept. Before discussing the different concepts though, leaders must develop a common understanding of Tier I through Tier III partners and the required functions of an SFAB TF in LSCO.

Partner Force Capabilities and SFAB Task Force Functions in LSCO

The critical requirement that drives how an SFAB TF would operate in LSCO is its partner-unit capability. Defining partner

capability into general categories could allow an SFAB to determine the required task organization rapidly. In one option, doctrine could define partner capabilities in terms of Tier I through Tier III using the capabilities listed in figure 1. These capabilities focus on doctrine, language, common operating picture, C2, equipment, tactical and operational sustainment, fires and intelligence capability, and experience conducting training or operations with U.S. forces. Tier I partners possess significant capability across all those areas and are largely interoperable with and trained in a similar manner as the U.S. Army. Essentially, the more self-sufficiency a PF has, the more toward the Tier I side of the spectrum it is. Potentially the most critical Tier I partner capabilities are the ability to maintain an accurate common operating picture and possessing redundant secure communications with forward units. Units with these capabilities require a smaller SFAB TF organization that would focus more on the headquarters level to provide liaison functions and some support from the associated U.S. Army headquarters. Potential examples of Tier I PFs are most ground forces from countries like the United Kingdom, Germany, France, and South Korea.¹

Tier III partners lack many of the capabilities that distinguish Tier I partners. The more a partner lacks self-sufficiency in the critical areas (as in figure 1), the more toward the Tier III side of the spectrum the

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Capt. Geoffrey Ranowsky, a security force assistance brigade advisor, works with an Atropian company commander February 2023 during National Training Center rotation 23-04 at Fort Irwin, California. (Photo courtesy of the National Training Center Operations Group)



Lt. Col. Eric Alexander (wearing black hat with headlamp) stands by to advise the Atropian brigade commander and his tactical operations center personnel February 2023 during National Training Center rotation 23-04 at Fort Irwin, California. (Photo courtesy of the National Training Center Operations Group)

partner is. Critically, Tier III partners likely require SFAB advisors directly on the front line working with their forward units to enable success through the application of U.S. joint firepower, sustainment, intelligence, and C2 capabilities. Tier III partners require closer support from a U.S. SFAB TF following guidance more associated with “accompany and enable” rather than supporting from the PF headquarters in a Tier I partner formation. These differences in guidance are captured in doctrine currently (as depicted in figure 2). Some extreme examples of Tier III partners are potentially forces from nations like Afghanistan or Iraq.²

Tier II partners fall between Tier I and Tier III in terms of capability. Tier II partners likely have some self-sufficiency but may not have all the required capabilities to fight effectively independent of U.S.

support. Organizations that lack its own internal fire support capability, sustainment, or secure redundant communications might fall under the Tier II umbrella. Because Tier II partners are missing some critical capabilities, the SFAB company TF supporting its battalions should operate and function closer to the way an SFAB company TF would function for a Tier III partner. However, until we better define a Tier II partner capability, each PF would require individual analysis and planning to create the appropriate TF for support.

In addition to supporting and enabling the PF, each SFAB TF must conduct numerous other functions to support itself and continue operations. Many of the critical functions related to both U.S. requirements and the PF are depicted in figure 3. Some portion of every SFAB TF must focus on internal C2 functions along



Security force assistance brigade advisors prepare to launch a Raven small unmanned aircraft in support of Atropian partner forces February 2023 during National Training Center rotation 23-04 at Fort Irwin, California. (Photo courtesy of the National Training Center Operations Group)

with liaison activities with the higher U.S. headquarters and adjacent units. The SFAB TF should also advise the higher U.S. headquarters on the SFAB TF employment and partner unit capabilities and utilization. The SFAB TF must also maintain some form of sustainment structure because our partners are often unable to sustain additional forces, and many partners do not have reliable logistical capabilities.

For the PF, the SFAB TF must have significant capability to help ensure success and integration with a U.S. Army organization. These capabilities include supporting and enabling through the application of U.S. joint firepower, intelligence, sustainment, and other enablers for lethal and nonlethal effects. Each SFAB TF itself should provide internal equipment capabilities, along with knowledge about planning, command

center operations, and conducting complex operations like a forward passage of lines. SFAB TFs should also provide liaison functions to the higher headquarters, especially U.S. headquarters, and adjacent units. Finally, SFAB TFs should provide coaching to the commanders and staffs in the PF unit when needed. Given these definitions of partner capabilities and required functions, we will now examine two potential concepts for an SFAB company TF supporting a Tier II or Tier III PF battalion in LSCO.

SFAB Company Task Force Concepts for LSCO

The first concept to support and enable a Tier II or Tier III PF battalion is the simplest. In this concept, an SFAB company TF partners with the PF battalion (as

Advising Guidance	
<p>Separate: The advising team does not place themselves within the foreign security force's formation. In this capacity, they often monitor the mission from their counterpart's command post.</p>	<p>Enable: The advising team plans, coordinates, and provides external capabilities to their counterparts. These resources are generally beyond the capability or capacity of the foreign security force.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Accompany and Refrain</p> <p>Often used when working with a trained and equipped counterpart with sufficient capabilities to accomplish the mission without external support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advising team does not maneuver within their counterpart's formation. Often located at their counterpart's command post. Advising team does not actively provide external resources to the foreign security force. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Accompany and Enable</p> <p>Typically used in a more hostile environment alongside a less competent or confident foreign security force that lacks the capabilities to accomplish the mission on their own.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advising team maneuvers within the foreign security force's tactical formation. Advising team directs external resources and capabilities in direct support of the mission.
<p style="text-align: center;">Separate and Refrain</p> <p>Often used when working with a trained and equipped counterpart with sufficient capabilities to accomplish the mission without external support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advising team does not maneuver within their counterpart's formation. Often located at their counterpart's command post. Advising team does not actively provide external resources to the foreign security force. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Separate and Enable</p> <p>Used when the foreign counterparts maneuver well but lack the supporting capabilities of the associated risks preclude advisors in the tactical formation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advising team does not maneuver within their counterpart's formation. Often located at their counterpart's command post. Advising team provides external resources within their capabilities in direct support of the mission.
<p>Refrain: The advising team does not actively provide external resources to the foreign security force. This allows the counterparts to gain confidence in their own processes, procedures, and equipment.</p>	<p>Accompany: The advising team maneuvers alongside the foreign security force within their tactical formation. Advisors provide confidence and immediate guidance to their counterparts while maintaining greater situational awareness for assessments and intelligence reports.</p>

(Figure from Army Techniques Publication 3-96.1, *Security Force Assistance Brigade* [2020])

Figure 2. Advising Guidance and Definitions

depicted in figure 4). The maneuver company advisor team (MCAT) partners with the battalion headquarters, providing support and enabling its functions from the partner unit headquarters. Each of the three maneuver advisor teams (MATs) partner with an individual maneuver company to enable its success and facilitate resources.

In the first concept, the MATs report vertically to the MCAT, which is collocated with the PF battalion headquarters and the partner commander. In addition to supporting and enabling the PF battalion from the headquarters, the MCAT could send an element forward with the partner commander if it deploys a tactical action center. The MCAT would also have to assume most of the duties required for U.S. support including any required sustainment functions, planning, targeting, reporting, and supporting the subordinate

MATs that are forward. The forward MATs would also have to help complete any of the required U.S. functions like sustainment, casualty treatment and evacuation, vehicle recovery, maintenance, and reporting. For the partner unit, the MATs could provide updated location information, redundant reporting capability to the MCAT and battalion headquarters, asset control, and additional support or enabler requests as needed.

On the battlefield, an SFAB company TF using this concept might array itself (as depicted in figure 5). The MCAT is located with the PF battalion headquarters and might have a small element with the partner tactical action center. Each MAT remains consolidated with its partner company on or near the front line and provides situational awareness to the MCAT and battalion headquarters or controls assets as required. From this simpler concept, we will now transition to

U.S. Required Functions

- Command and Control**
 - TOC Functions
 - Blue and Green Common Operating Picture (COP)
 - Current Operations (CUOPS)
 - Report
 - Future Operations (FUOPS)
 - Targeting
 - Planning
 - Requesting Resources (72-96 hours)
- Provide Assets (To SFAB TF)**
- Coordinate / Liaise with Next Higher U.S. Headquarters**
- Coordinate / Liaise with Adjacent Units**
- Advise Higher U.S. Headquarters**
 - SFAB Use / Status
 - Partner Force Use / Status
- Assess**
 - Partner Force
 - SFAB Task Force
- Sustainment**
 - Class 1 – 9 of Supply
 - Medical Support
 - MEDEVAC / CASEVAC
 - Maintenance / Vehicle Recovery
 - Request Replacements and Move Forward
- Security**

Partner Force Required Functions

- Support and Enable**
 - Fires
 - Close Air Support (CAS)
 - Army Attack Aviation (AAA)
 - Intelligence (Up and Down from U.S.)
 - Engineer Support
 - Sustainment (To and From U.S. Forces)
 - Enablers
 - Nonlethal Effects
- Provide Capabilities**
 - Optics / Long Range Observation
 - Small Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (SUAS)
 - Deconfliction (Air / Ground)
 - Digital Fires Capability
 - Communications Capability
 - Planning Knowledge / Experience
 - TOC Operations Experience
- Operations Knowledge**
 - U.S. Capabilities
 - Reverse Passage of Lines (RPOL)
 - Forward Passage of Lines (FPOL)
 - Cover / Guard
 - Defend / Delay
 - Sustainment
 - Enablers
- Liaise**
 - Higher
 - Adjacent Units / Rear Area Security
- Advise**
 - Coach Staff
 - Coach Commanders

(Figure by author)

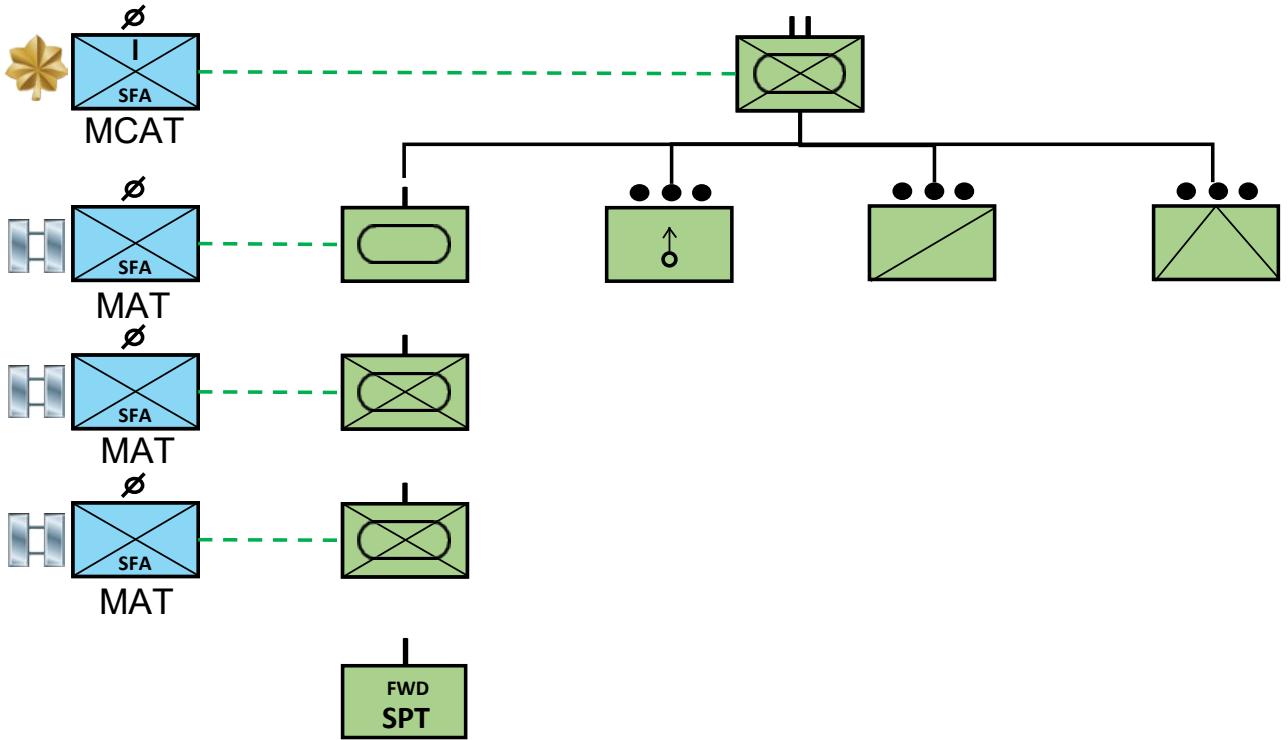
Figure 3. SFAB Required Functions for U.S. Element and Partner Force Support

the second more complex concept for an SFAB company TF.

The second concept to support and enable a Tier II or Tier III PF battalion focuses on providing additional C2 and sustainment support while still enabling the partner. The SFAB company TF aligns responsibilities (as depicted in figure 6). The MCAT remains detached from a partner unit or headquarters to better provide U.S. C2, and complete the functions required for a U.S. unit in combat. Separation allows the MCAT to focus on C2, planning, reporting, targeting, providing assets, and controlling or coordinating assets when needed. Staying separated from the partner headquarters also gives the MCAT more freedom of maneuver to position itself in the best location for communications to the higher U.S. headquarters and

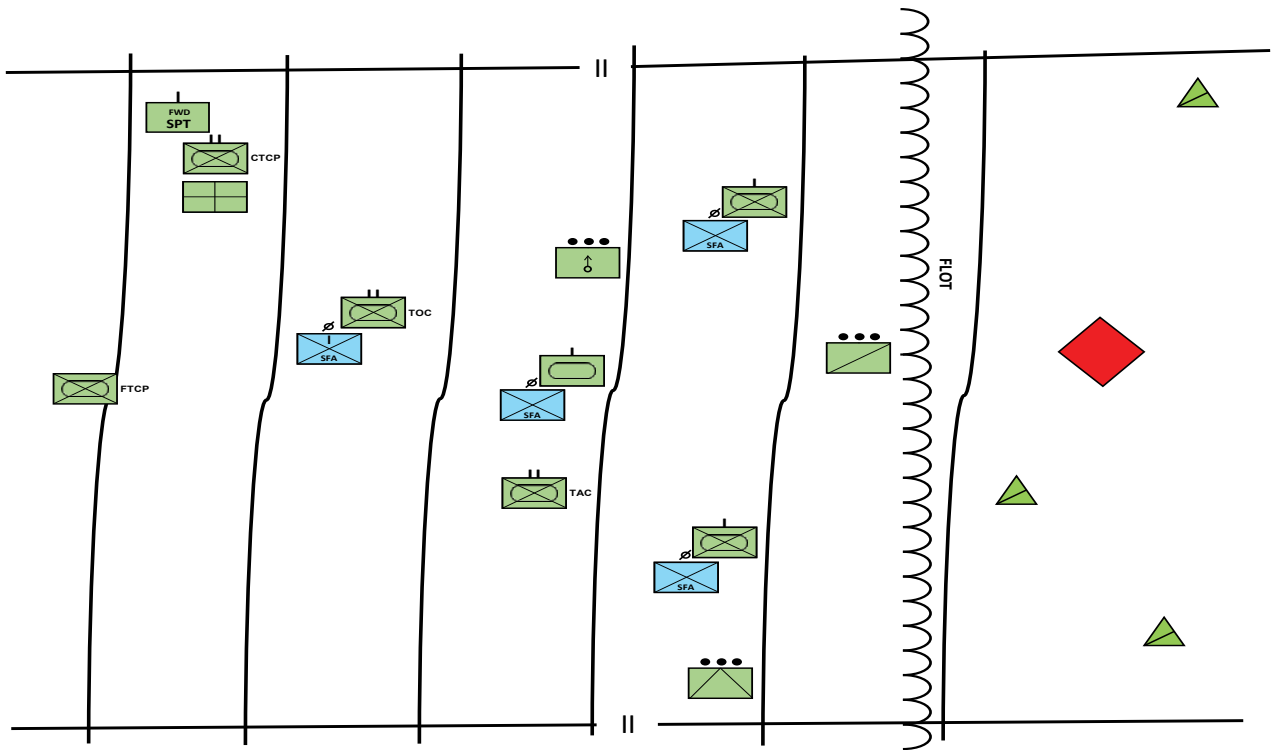
reduces the targetable signature of both the MCAT and the PF battalion headquarters.

The first MAT operates with all three partner maneuver companies to support and enable them. The team operates in three-to-four-person elements using one or two vehicles each per partner company. The MAT maintains a presence with each company and maintains situational awareness of the front line and ongoing operations. This MAT serves as a critical link to the MCAT by providing situational awareness across the front line and potentially controlling assets and enablers as required. The team leader for the first MAT may also separate himself and establish a small C2 node to create a synthesized picture of the entire maneuver company fight and front line. This command node can also serve as an



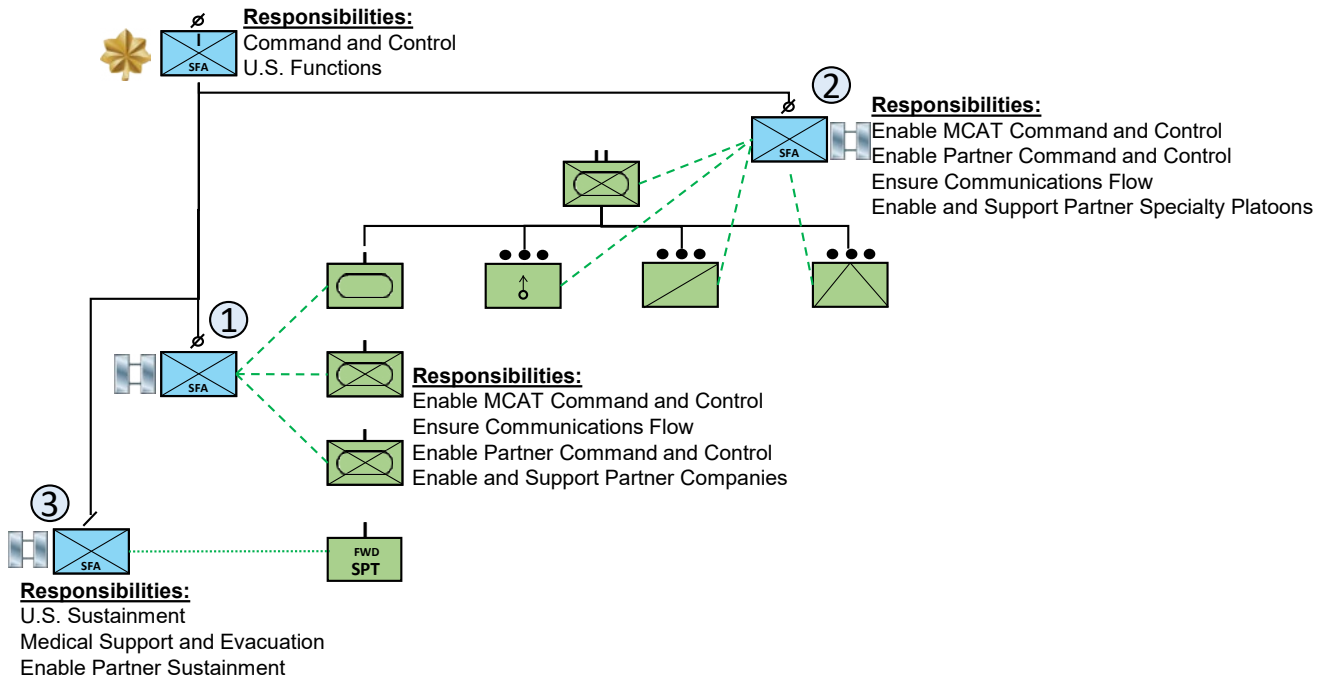
(Figure by author)

Figure 4. SFAB Maneuver Company Task Force Concept 1 Organization



(Figure by author)

Figure 5. SFAB Company Task Force Concept 1 Battlefield Array



(Figure by author)

Figure 6. SFAB Maneuver Company Task Force Concept 2 Organization

alternate headquarters if the MCAT must displace or receives contact or casualties.

The second MAT focuses on the PF battalion headquarters and C2 nodes. This MAT also operates in three- or four-person elements using one or two vehicles each. The second MAT maintains a presence in both the battalion tactical operations center and tactical action center and may dispatch elements to partner with the mortar platoon, scout platoon, or other enabler elements as required. This MAT's primary function centers on providing situational awareness and a clear common operating picture to the MCAT C2 node. The MAT's second critical function is to ensure clear communication and understanding between the elements at the front with the first MAT and the PF battalion headquarters.

The third MAT focuses on U.S. sustainment for the SFAB company TF but may also assist in coordinating the PF sustainment and casualty care and evacuation. The third MAT maintains all the extra equipment for the SFAB company TF and conducts resupply missions from the rear area to deliver needed supplies

to the forward MATs or the MCAT. This MAT also maintains a casualty evacuation capability to support the TF and can assist with vehicle recovery operations. The third MAT should also maintain an alternate C2 function if the MCAT repositions or gets destroyed or damaged.

If needed, the SFAB company TF can task organize within teams to provide the best capabilities for each element. One option could include consolidating the support personnel and some medical capability in the third MAT focused on sustainment. Additional mechanics in a consolidated location off the front line would significantly extend the SFAB company TF's endurance and ability to maintain its vehicles. Consolidating a few medics would also potentially give the SFAB company TF a capability to create a small medical support area where it could treat and package casualties before evacuating them. The SFAB company TF could also consolidate some of the maneuver and fires personnel in the first MAT to provide better forward observer capabilities near the front line. Finally, the second MAT and MCAT could use additional



Staff Sgt. Bryant D. Pasko, the MAT 2112 medical advisor, treats Staff Sgt. Chaquetta Small, a wounded security force assistance brigade advisor, and prepares her for evacuation February 2023 during National Training Center rotation 23-04 at Fort Irwin, California. (Photo courtesy of the National Training Center Operations Group)

intelligence and communications personnel to perform more robust C2 functions at the partner headquarters and the U.S. C2 node. While not required, task-organizing personnel for the mission could increase the capabilities of each team focused on its specific mission during LSCO. The risk of task-organizing personnel is breaking teams apart that have trained together and established standard operating procedures and should only occur on a case-by-case basis.

On the battlefield, an SFAB company TF using the second concept might array themselves as depicted in figure 7. Many of the teams and advisors will move around the battlefield in small elements, often three personnel in one vehicle. Their security and survivability depend on their dispersion and situational awareness, and on the partner's security posture. This organization provides significantly more U.S. C2 and headquarters capability, along with sustainment and medical support

that helps give the SFAB company TF more endurance. The distributed elements can also greatly increase situational awareness by maintaining U.S. presence in many different locations simultaneously. Based on these concepts, we will now examine the strengths and weaknesses of each potential course of action.

Concept Analysis and Comparison

Overall, based on Company A's experience at the National Training Center, I recommend an SFAB company TF employ the second concept for LSCO in most situations because of the improved sustainment and endurance, significantly higher C2 capability, and the ability to complete U.S. required functions. However, SFAB company TFs should train both concepts so they are flexible enough to operate in either manner depending on the operation or situation. To analyze the two concepts, sustainment provides the first significant difference between them.

the medical support plan focused on utilizing the PF medical evacuation and treatment capabilities. Relying on PF capabilities worked when the partner system functioned. However, in LSCO, the PF often receives heavy casualties or other factors degrade the medical system, and during training, teams rapidly transitioned to self-treatment and evacuation. Often, the assistant team leader, if available, moved the casualties to the SFAB company TF first sergeant who would either evacuate the casualties to the partner medical treatment facility or back to the next higher level of U.S. medical care. This system became extremely difficult and cumbersome, especially when elements were already executing logistical movements to resupply teams.

In the second concept the support team should maintain a casualty evacuation capability that can retrieve casualties or establish a casualty exchange point if needed. The support team can then either evacuate casualties to the SFAB company TF consolidated medical support area to conduct prolonged field care, move casualties to the PF medical treatment facility, or evacuate the casualties to the next higher level of U.S. care. During major combat operations with potentially significant casualties, this method is much more effective and reliable in most situations and increases the chances of U.S. soldiers surviving injury.

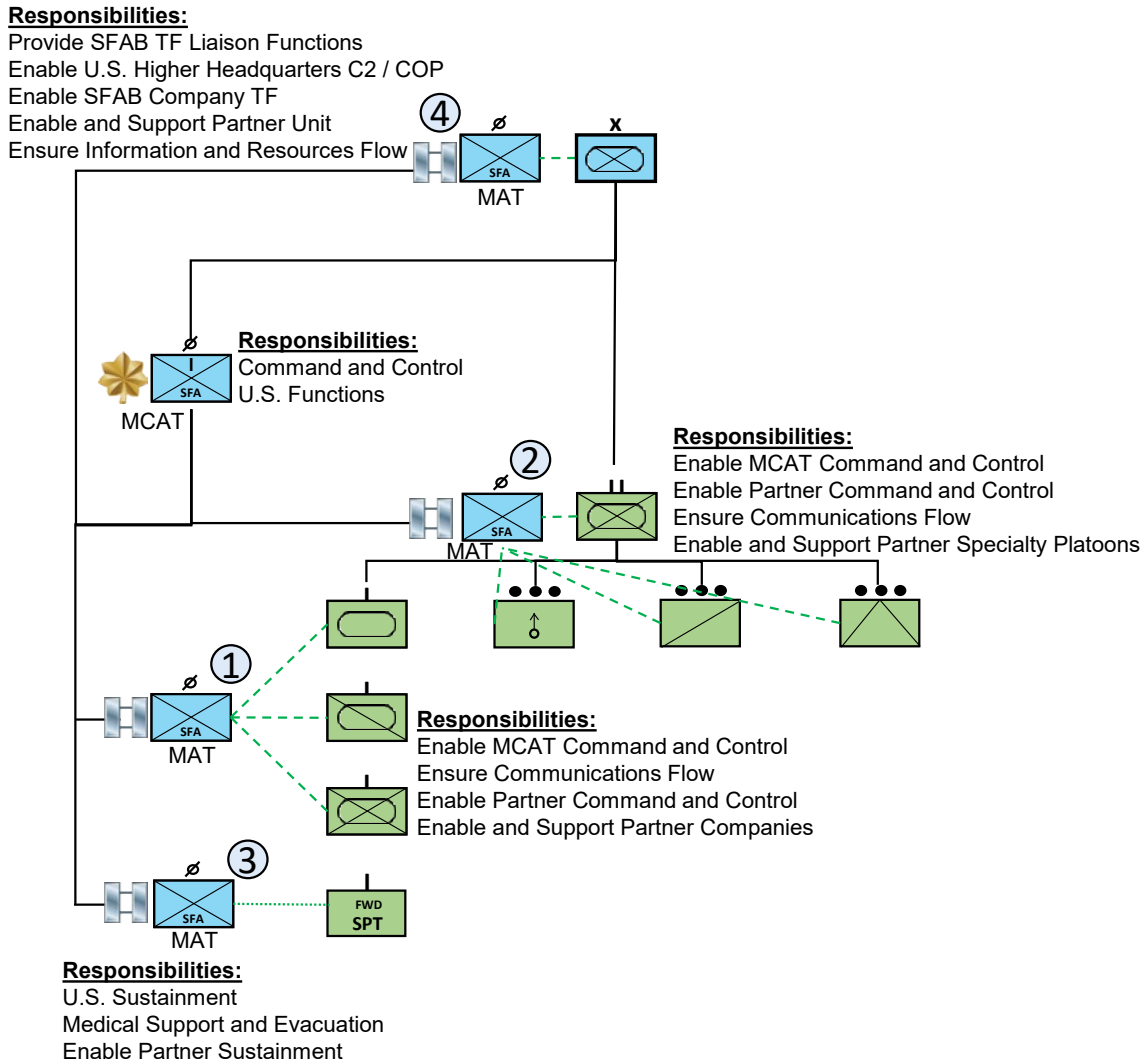
Whichever concept an SFAB company TF uses for sustainment, the Army should develop a doctrinal concept of support that is reliable and functional for an SFAB TF in LSCO, especially when the PF sustainment system either does not exist or gets degraded. A functional doctrinal concept of support is especially important for Tier II and Tier III partners that will likely either lack effective sustainment systems or will get degraded during operations. Finally, even with Tier I partners, many U.S. systems do not effectively have common parts or logistics that a PF can provide. SFAB members will often need external water support, fuel, batteries, maintenance, and other supplies based on U.S. sustainment. The SFAB TF dependence on U.S. sustainment leads to the next area of comparison, C2, which must also link the SFAB TF to the next higher U.S. headquarters.

Command and control. For an SFAB company TF, the first concept is much weaker in terms of C2 during LSCO. In the first concept, teams will have to complete all the required U.S. functions on its own while

simultaneously working with its partner unit (see figure 3). Most teams struggle conducting planning, organizing for seventy-two-to-ninety-six hours in the future, reporting, targeting, and maintaining tactical operations center functions while working with partner units during active combat operations. Our current doctrine recognizes that teams can conduct C2 or tactical operations center operations, but these efforts will come at the expense of partnering simultaneously with another unit.³ During operations, MATs working with companies are often moving or are unable to establish a proper C2 node with significant over-the-horizon communications capabilities. Further, many Tier II and Tier III partner battalion headquarters are much smaller and more mobile than U.S. headquarters. These smaller headquarters often rely on basic voice communications systems and do not account for controlling significant enablers such as fires, close air support, Army attack aviation, or deconflicting ground and air assets. The lack of experience controlling these systems often mean they do not place themselves in an optimal location for an MCAT to establish significant U.S. communications systems or maintain a footprint effectively to control assets or enable an operation during LSCO.

The second concept allows the MCAT maximum flexibility to establish a C2 node that effectively conducts all the required U.S. functions during LSCO. Because the MCAT is not tied to the partner battalion headquarters, the MCAT and SFAB company TF commander can choose locations that best enable U.S. communications systems and focus on providing C2 and controlling assets for the subordinate teams. Further, the support team that is further away from the front line can also maintain a second C2 node for redundancy. This allows the elements working with the partner to remain highly mobile and focus on supporting the partner units.

The second concept also enables the survivability of the SFAB company TF by reducing the visual and electronic signature the enemy can target. In the second concept, the MCAT can operate farther away from the front line and can choose terrain more flexibly while operating a small C2 node. The MCAT also has more flexibility for when and where they reposition for survivability. The other teams are often more survivable because they can remain highly mobile using vehicle-mounted communications systems or dismounted



(Figure by author)

Figure 8. SFAB Company Task Force Partnered with Tier II or Tier III Battalion Under U.S. Brigade Combat Team

systems. Further, while teams are operating in smaller elements, the visual presence of U.S. forces remains limited, which could reduce the likelihood of targeting by the enemy. While the dispersed nature of the second concept increases survivability, the last area of analysis—focused on local security, team integrity, simplicity, and partnership—favors the first concept.

Local security, team integrity, simplicity, and partnership. The areas where the first concept significantly surpasses the second concept are local security, advisor team integrity, simplicity, and potential partnership consistency. In the first concept, theoretically, each team remains together or in

proximity as a complete team. This means that rather than three or four personnel as the unit size in most areas, there are nine to twelve advisors in proximity with potentially multiple vehicles. Proximity and increased element size ensures that each SFAB team can provide greater local security if the situation warrants. However, while using the second concept during training, we often consolidated teams when executing a rest cycle or during reduced operations, which allowed the SFAB company TF to maintain a reasonable level of security.

The second area that the first concept excels in is team integrity. The second concept involves many

small elements on the battlefield operating relatively independently. Small units and independent operations can put soldiers at risk if they are inexperienced or poorly trained. The first concept maintains teams as an integral unit and ensures increased leadership presence with teams moving around the battlefield.

Simplicity and ease of training also favors the first concept. Because teams operate as a complete team, each element will generally have more leaders, more people, and more diverse capabilities than if the team utilized the second concept. The second concept requires significant training where each small element of three-to-four advisors can maintain their communications, move tactically, enable the partner, and make good decisions on their own. These independent small elements would require significantly more training to ensure their effective capability as part of the SFAB company TF. Thus, the first concept remains much simpler and easier to execute at the MAT level.

The first concept is also generally stronger when it comes to partner consistency. While the second concept could have consistent partnerships, this requires maintaining the same element of three-to-four advisors with each partner element. In the first concept, an entire team partners with each unit and provides more robust relationships and capabilities.

Each concept has internal strengths and weaknesses along with optimal situations to employ them. SFAB company TFs should operate using the first concept when its training level is low, the partner retains significant capabilities in sustainment and C2, there are limited assets or enabling forces to control, the operation remains relatively static or there is a temporal space between operations, and the operation is shorter in duration. An SFAB company TF should employ the second concept for longer duration operations, or when there are significant amounts of assets and resources to control, the operation is dynamic and mobile, and when the PF lacks significant capabilities in sustainment, fires, C2, or other critical areas.

Conclusion

An SFAB company TF should utilize the second concept for LSCO when partnering with a Tier II or Tier III partner in most situations because of the improved sustainment and endurance, C2, and ability to conduct U.S. functions in combat. However, SFABs should train on both concepts to maximize flexibility for the TF and higher headquarters.

While there are numerous variations of each of these two concepts, these two concepts cover the broadest range of options for an SFAB company TF. The most significant conceptual alternations include either a smaller or larger SFAB company TF. If an SFAB TF partners with a Tier II or Tier III unit in LSCO with a smaller element, commanders should clearly define which functions the TF will not perform because of diminished capabilities.

Neither concept in this article addressed the need for an SFAB team at the next higher U.S. headquarters. However, a team at the next higher U.S. headquarters is critical for the success of each SFAB TF in LSCO. The team at the higher U.S. headquarters must enable communications, provide employment advice on the SFAB TF and partner unit, provide situational awareness, and support the flow of resources to and from the SFAB TF and partner unit for effective operations. For example, using the second concept to advise a Tier II or Tier III partner, an SFAB company TF working directly under a U.S. brigade combat team should include a fourth MAT to provide C2 and liaison duties at the brigade headquarters (see figure 8). In general, the minimum size SFAB TF employed during LSCO should include three teams. One team should work with the PF, usually the headquarters (e.g., with a Tier I partner unit). The second team provides support and sustainment or fills gaps for the team working with the PF. The third team should collocate with the next higher U.S. headquarters to ensure smooth communications and support to the SFAB TF and partner unit. This minimum structure ensures the basic capability of the TF in LSCO and could provide a sound doctrinal basis to build future SFAB TFs as required.

Visualizing the future battlefield and how units will operate in those environments is one of the Army's sacred duties.⁴ SFAB leaders should continue developing and testing concepts for an SFAB TF operating in LSCO so that we can better train, man, and equip those elements before a conflict begins. Further, developing doctrinal models will enable units training to a standard that will facilitate SFAB interoperability and ensure our readiness to fight together in LSCO if required. Finally, SFABs should work to develop a doctrinal concept of support that functions effectively in LSCO when a PF sustainment system fails or becomes ineffective. Without developing and testing these concepts, SFABs will find themselves limited during LSCO and will constrain future options for employment. ■

Notes

1. Reliable position location information using systems like the Joint Battle Command Platform or the Android Team Awareness Kit are critical capabilities on modern battlefields to quickly develop situational awareness of friendly forces locations. Partners without these or similar capabilities should almost automatically become Tier II or Tier III partners due to the increased difficulty managing a rapidly changing common operating picture. Without clear friendly situational awareness, enabling a partner battalion with fires, close air support, or Army attack aviation becomes extraordinarily difficult and creates one the primary reasons that U.S.

elements need to be on or close to the front line for the security force assistance brigade task force.

2. Army Techniques Publication 3-96.1, *Security Force Assistance Brigade* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Publishing Office, 2020), 4-39.

3. *Ibid.*, 1-6.

4. U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Pamphlet 525-3-1, *The U.S. Army Operating Concept: Win in a Complex World, 2020–2040* (Fort Eustis, VA: TRADOC, 31 October 2014), iii.

REMEMBERING VETERANS ON VETERANS DAY—11 NOVEMBER 2023

Casualty

Maj. Joseph T. Costello, U.S. Army Reserve

“I think I’m hurt,” I hear him say.
We move forward through the cloud of dust,
Following his voice to find our way,
Moving slowly as we must.

I kneel down beside him, as if to pray,
Blood turning his pants the color of rust.
I put on a tourniquet and hope it will stay,
Moving him slowly as we must.

Night is falling, the sun’s last ray,
Our dimming vision unable to trust,
Struggling to carry him all the way,
Moving slowly as we must.

We finally reach the FLA,
Loading him in with one last gust.
The truck starts moving and we’re away,
Moving swiftly as we must.

For Spc. Bert Perkins



Command Sgt. Maj. Jody Volz, Afghan adviser for Train Advise Assist Command-South, looks out as a U.S. Army UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter lifts off from Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan, 4 August 2015, to conduct an aerial battlefield familiarization flight. (Photo courtesy of the Department of Defense)

At the Point of Friction

The Role of the Modern Command Sergeant Major in Today's Army

Lt. Col. Bernard R. Gardner, U.S. Army

Maj. Andre C. Aleong, U.S. Army

Command Sgt. Maj. William H. Black, U.S. Army



August 31, 2005, initially opened as an uneventful day. However, most days opened like that, especially before the sting of battle in a conflict that would ultimately be called Operation Iraqi Freedom. Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division, did not take the relatively quiet morning for granted. In a matter of seconds, then Lt. Col. Michael Kurilla found himself and his soldiers in battle with a determined foe. Kurilla received wounds as he returned fire. As he fought for his life, his top enlisted advisor, Command Sergeant Major (CSM) Robert Prosser, rushed to his aid in concert with other leaders and led the charge to return the fight to the enemy. He achieved fire superiority with violence of action. Prosser signifies successive generations of senior noncommissioned officers (NCO) who served in the capacity of a CSM and intuitively recognized their place in a formation. He, like others before him, knew where he should assert influence on behalf of his commander. His actions demonstrated the personality, character, and prudence expected of the CSM position, but the intuition and resolve Prosser demonstrated are not established in doctrine. This article seeks to use the features of Prosser's action to clarify the role of the CSM to benefit direct and tactical leadership. A quick review of history and Army doctrine indicates several critical focal areas that either require further explanation or codification: roles and responsibilities within the core competencies, the role of the CSM as part of a command team, and the role of the CSM in garrison and combat.

The History of the Command Sergeant Major

The position of the CSM did not officially enter the U.S. Army's rank structure until July 1967 under the guidance of Gen. Harold K. Johnson, the Army chief of staff.¹ Johnson prompted the Army to develop the Command Sergeants Major Program that would "create a small body of select sergeants major for ready assignment to all major commands of the Army."² Prior to this period, leaders had a nebulous understanding of the sergeant major (SGM) role. The rank of sergeant major (pay grade E-9) existed, but leaders serving in this grade did not serve in the capacity as the senior enlisted advisor to their

commander. Instead, most commands would empower only one E-9 in any color-bearing unit to serve as the senior enlisted soldier, and each staff section would have an E-9 at echelon. Soldiers and commands were perplexed. Leaders would later submit that the role of the SGM had lost prestige.³

The Command Sergeants Major Program served to officially establish the title of command sergeant major and firmly entrench the CSM as the senior enlisted individual within a color-bearing command. From the onset, the role of CSM met opposition. Commanders proclaimed that such a position would create opportunities for enlisted soldiers to infringe on their command. Leaders were concerned that CSMs would "usurp the lines of authority in the chain of command."⁴ However, senior leadership remained committed to the program and saw the need for the Army to solidify a senior position for enlisted members. Leaders especially stressed the urgency of a CSM position as the United States began to increase its involvement in Vietnam. In 1967, the U.S. Army first codified the role of the CSM in doctrine through its publication of Army Regulation (AR) 600-20, *Army Command Policy and Procedures*. The published work listed the sergeant major of the Army as "the senior enlisted advisor and consultant to the Chief of Staff of the Army on problems affecting enlisted personnel and their solutions."⁵ In the wake of the Vietnam War, senior leaders once again revisited the role of the CSM. Gen. William Depuy used the newly established Training and Doctrine Command to launch a series of working groups with officers and NCOs to outline the role of the CSM. He reasoned that the role of the CSM should expand to beyond a position where an individual "floats around out there and observes what's going on with soldiers and tells the old man about that; that's a very limited view of what a Sergeant Major is supposed to do."⁶ His efforts led to the development of Field Manual (FM) 22-600-20, *The Army Noncommissioned Officer Guide*, in March 1980, which gave meaning to the NCO support channel and officially granted CSMs authority over NCOs within their ranks.⁷ Once published, FM 22-600-20 precipitated a series of publications that further explicated the role of a CSM such as Training Circular (TC) 22-6, also titled *The Army Noncommissioned Officer Guide*.⁸

The Role of the Command Sergeant Major in U.S. Army Doctrine Today and Required Areas of Emphasis

Many of the duties of today's CSMs currently reside in TC 7-22.7, *The Noncommissioned Officer Guide*. A cursory glance of the doctrine denotes six principal competencies required of CSMs/SGMs: readiness, leadership, training management, communications, operations, and program management.⁹ TC 7-22.7 expounded on all the lessons the U.S. Army had garnered

since the inception of the CSM rank.

However, doctrine still

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offers some ambiguity concerning the role of the CSM within the command team in combat and in garrison.

Readiness. TC 7-22.7 designated the CSM as having responsibility to establish standards for training and assess the efficacy of readiness across the formation. The CSM's role in training entails oversight of training reporting and certifications within events such as Unit Status Reporting, Expert Infantryman Badge testing, and Expert Soldier Badge testing.¹⁰ However, the doctrine has some shortfalls pertaining to how and when the CSM can extend influence with training a unit staff, identifying shortfalls in commander's combat readiness assessment, and validating training. Some critics would argue that the above areas fall under the purview of a commander. Yet, lessons learned from 1967 to present continue to demonstrate that a CSM should have influence within these realms. In the wake of Vietnam, the U.S. Army extended the influence of a CSM in doctrine. Senior leaders recognized that a CSM offers years of experience and intimately understands the intricacies associated with preparing enlisted members for combat. Moreover, due to the ambiguities

in TC 7-22.7, most CSMs have determined the extent of their responsibilities for readiness through dialogue with their commanders. What is needed is an expansion within doctrine that clearly delineates the scope of influence that a CSM has with readiness. Lastly, TC 7-22.7 briefly glosses over readiness tasks that a CSM performs in garrison, but it does not explicitly state what tasks a CSM owns in garrison. In particular, the CSM has responsibility and ensures that systems are codified and adopted to assist the organization and the command in ensuring individual medical readiness, individual training readiness, and administrative actions such as awards and evaluations.

Command Sgt. Maj.

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Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael A. Grinston presents Command Sgt. Maj. Vitalia Sanders, 101st Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion command sergeant major, with a coin after joining soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) for lunch at Mihail Kogalniceanu Air Base, Romania, 15 December 2022. Army leaders often take time to recognize superior performance of their soldiers. (Photo by Sgt. Khalan Moore, U.S. Army)

Leadership. TC 7-22.7 offers a decent narrative on the role of the CSM with leadership. Still, the passages could elaborate on the role that a CSM provides with mentoring officers. TC 7-22.7 almost exclusively limits the CSMs role with leadership to NCOs. A commander ultimately assesses and validates the proficiency of officers, but NCOs still play a crucial role in the development of officers. Nearly every entry-level officer professional military education (PME) course (e.g., Officer Candidate School, Basic Officer Leader Course, and West Point) has an NCO who trains junior officers as they learn their craft. Furthermore, NCOs have trained officers as early as the inception of the U.S. Military Academy in 1802. Leaders often forget that it was the NCO that taught officers orienteering, horseback riding, and marksmanship. As we continue to posture the Army for large-scale combat operations, we should consider what the role of the CSM is concerning the training of officers.

Training management. TC 7-22.7 provides a little more granularity regarding training management compared to other passages concerning the role of a CSM. Passages in TC 7-22.7 articulate that a CSM can conduct after action reviews (AAR) and verify that training is captured in systems of record.¹¹ However, one area lacks particular attention. TC 7-22.7 states that a CSM can enforce the eight-step training model, but to what degree can a CSM do that? Can a CSM personally prescribe retraining for a formation? In reality, the CSM's authority remains limited to individual soldier training, and commanders often take on the responsibility of certifying and validating collective training. Alternatively, TC 7-22.7 can extend the role of CSMs to empower them to enforce standards, ensure subordinate leaders competently utilize the eight-step training model, and provide recommendations on the execution of collective training based on their experience. Additionally, the CSM assists the commander by providing real-time assessments during

certifications at the platoon level or higher. Passages within FM 7-0, *Training*, provide broad guidance articulating that a commander is responsible for all aspects of training, and senior NCOs are responsible to ensure subordinate leaders are trained and prepared; training is conduct to standard, not time; and tasks are repeated until the standard is reached.¹² However, the regulation does not delineate or provide specific NCO responsibilities during the eight-step training model. TC 7-22.7 can expand to further explicate the responsibilities CSMs share with the commander during the eight-step training model. As the senior trainer at the battalion level, the CSM's role in the eight-step training model commences after the commander executes steps 1 through 4. Senior NCOs in the formation, with CSM oversight, execute the remaining steps of the eight-step training model. A few of these critical steps include retraining and providing critical observations and recommendations concerning the commander's conduct of unit AARs. Additionally, CSM doctrine and future publications could offer more explanation pertaining to how CSMs provide oversight of leaders time training and ensure the programs of instruction remain nested with commander's priorities and in accordance with the eight-step training model.

Communications. Doctrine codifies roles where a CSM enables a commander to execute the operations process by ensuring a common operating picture or PACE plan exists.¹³ Yet, most of these tasks overlap with roles that an operations SGM habitually shares. What is needed is further explication of the federation of responsibilities between the operations SGM and the CSM. Communications could be regarded as one of the most important core competencies of their role, however this is very ill-defined in current doctrine.

Operations. The narrative in TC 7-22.7 discusses operations, but it does not fully describe what role the CSM plays in the operations process. The publication mentions that a CSM must understand the operational environment and support the commander's priorities. The major question is how the CSM directly enables the operations process. FM 3-0, *Operations*, outlines the operations process in three components: plan, prepare, and execute, with assessment conducted during each phase. Within that realm, doctrine identifies commander's activities as understanding the operation environment, visualizing the end state, directing, leading,

and assessing.¹⁴ Staffs perform some of the functions that enable commander activities such as publishing written orders to allow the commander to direct and articulate his or her end state. A CSM can serve as a critical stakeholder that amalgamates NCOs within the staff to help achieve commander activities in the operations process. Moreover, in combat, a CSM can provide invaluable insight in the management of the common operating picture, which allows the commander to understand the operational environment.

Program management. When TC 7-22.7 mentions program management, it provides a few instances of where a CSM can perform operations in garrison. A CSM can support commander's programs (e.g., Unit Prevention Leader, Army Oil Analysis Program, Retention).¹⁵ Furthermore, a CSM can lead talent management programs. However, the role of the CSM in garrison necessitates more clarity within doctrine or PME. For example, a passage that clearly states that a CSM armed with his or her experience plays a vital role in managing critical programs such as commander-appointed positions (master gunner, unit sexual assault response coordinator, etc.) would greatly assist future CSMs as they assume responsibility.

What Is the Current Role of the Command Sergeant Major?

TC 7-22.7 has been a resounding success, but it lacks clarity in a few areas that invite parallels to the ambiguities of the 1960s. Once again, a lingering debate has ensued concerning the role of a CSM and what latitude a CSM should have. We would offer that two narratives persist across the Army regarding the vague role of the CSM. First, that the absence of clearly defined roles and responsibilities is intentionally left vague so that a commander can employ the CSM how he or she determines most appropriate without being bound by doctrine or regulatory guidance. Second, the role is purposely left ambiguous because the U.S. Army generally assumes battalion- and brigade-level leaders have enough training and experience to understand roles and responsibilities at their level. In other words, by the time officers reach field grade years and noncommissioned officers have completed the Sergeants Major Academy, their experiences, training, and education up to that point have provided all the necessary tools for a command team to clearly define their roles and responsibilities.

However, our current experience serving as a battalion command team demonstrates that both narratives are inaccurate. Professional experiences, training, and PME alone did not prepare us for immediately determining the role of the CSM. After almost a full year in squadron command, many instances continue to occur where we need to define the role of the CSM, both in garrison and in combat. Leaders recognize that a commander owns the lion's share of responsibilities within their formation. Yet, the preponderance of responsibilities delegated to a commander should not marginalize the importance that a CSM plays in a unit. History has demonstrated that a CSM can ultimately cause the success or failure of a commander's command. In the absence of clarity in doctrine, most CSMs have succeeded by innately understanding where to place themselves at the point of friction. Yet the term "point of friction" is an intangible concept. Doctrine can simplify that concept and provide standards for future CSMs. In short, doctrine can expand in tandem with PME to further explain the following roles a CSM should play in the future (the CSM as part of a command team and the CSM in combat).

What Is a Command Team?

Battalion- or brigade-level commanders and their CSM counterparts have a different command relationship than company commanders and their first sergeants. Both the CSM and commander are considered experts at their craft—successfully serving in branch-certifying positions in their respective NCO and officer key developmental positions within a battalion or brigade. The current chief of staff of the Army asserts that battalion commanders are arguably the most consequential leaders in the Army. Their experience, placement, and influence give them an outsized ability to shape the future service of the soldiers they lead. They train and develop young soldiers, noncommissioned officers, and officers and have more impact on their decisions to continue serving (or not) than any other leadership position.¹⁶ Together, the battalion command team determines whether their unit will succeed in battle while having the most profound effect on the entire Army.¹⁷ These illustrative assessments highlight the importance placed on the positions of the commander and the CSM, and by implication, their authority and influence must match the record. In

particular, the CSM does not hold formal command authority but, as the connotation of *team* suggests, the CSM operates in harmony with the commander and is empowered as an extension of the command. The commander can and should employ the CSM as an extension of command to areas where he or she has authority to enable the mission success. As the senior NCO in the battalion or brigade, the CSM enforces policy standards on performance, training, appearance, and the conduct of the organization. The CSM is the principal adviser to the commander, providing advice and recommendations pertaining to all aspects of the organization.¹⁸ CSMs also have a unique responsibility in that they share the responsibility for effectively using available resources for planning the employment, organization, direction, coordination, and control of military forces for assigned missions.

Additionally, the U.S. Army expects command teams to lead beyond the formal authority by serving as examples and role models.¹⁹ We argue that the CSM possesses the authority to contradict a battalion, brigade, or subordinate commander in the presence of an illegal, immoral, unethical, or unsafe order. Anything beyond this, then the CSM begins to usurp the authority of his or her commander or subordinate commanders. However, there exists a counterargument where the commander can give authority to the CSM in specific instances (e.g., controlling a casualty evacuation or personnel replacement operations) where the CSM has wide latitude and decision authority that impacts the entire organization. Furthermore, there becomes a gray area of authority when the CSM identifies a soldier or officer in violation of written policy or regulation. One could argue that the CSM is authorized to make the on-the-spot correction. However, what happens when, hypothetically, a subordinate commander gives orders in contradiction to an established policy? Does the CSM have the authority to tell the commander "No," he cannot continue going against the policy, or does he need to refer to the subordinate commander to the higher-ranking commander to adjudicate? This is perhaps where wisdom, experience, and self-awareness may play a role in how the CSM will handle the situation. Heavy coaching and mentoring would be perhaps a way to resolve the issue, but not all instances are alike.

Moreover, a commander may employ the CSM at various identified "friction" points during operations,



U.S. Army Reserve Command Sgt. Maj. Gregory G. Dirks, the command sergeant major of the 361st Theater Public Affairs Sustainment Element, climbs a rope on an obstacle course during Operation Strike Back at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey, 27 April 2023. During this second annual Operation Strike Back, held by the 99th Readiness Division, reserve soldiers participated in an obstacle course, electronic weapons qualification, rappelling, and other events. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Fred J. Brown, U.S. Army)

provided that delegated orders and intent are understood. All these points underpin the importance of properly defining clear roles and responsibilities and improving the command team dynamics. Chapter 9, “Leading at the Organizational and Strategic Levels,” in Army Doctrine Publication 6-22, *Army Leadership and the Profession*, is a great starting point to understanding and developing this command team dynamic.²⁰ Additionally, clear roles and responsibilities enable the command team to function more effectively. TC 7-22.7 and the commander’s vision and priorities serve as a useful guide for defining these roles. Taken one step further, initial counseling with key staff positions, such as the “top 5” (commander, CSM, operations officer, executive officer, and operations SGM) at the squadron and battalion level, assists the commander and CSM in identifying a holistic view or all activities in the organization.

According to the Dragoons Terms of Reference (see table), the CSM’s overall theme is “standards and discipline,” while the operations SGM’s focus is on “predictability.” Additional areas include the leader development focus, key interactions, and specific areas of responsibility. Although not all encompassing, this attempts to align tasks more in line with the strengths of both the CSM and the operations SGM. Clearly defined roles and responsibilities enable mission command and support decentralized execution of tasks in a much more efficient manner. As the command team gains experience, they build trust in each other. There needs to be a continual, candid dialogue between them that revisits their roles and where each needs to counterbalance each other’s strengths and weaknesses. This requires a degree of humility, self-awareness, candidness, and dialogue—often behind closed doors. This is particularly useful in a garrison environment where an organization may have myriad competing requirements that necessitate an effective and efficient division of responsibilities to ensure leader oversight. The CSM also has a vital role in the mentorship and development of the NCOs, officers, and staff within the organization. The CSM has an integral piece in managing and driving the NCO development process but equally has an integral piece in developing the young officers in the command. The commander ultimately owns young officer development, but it also pays dividends to have the platoon leaders—young officers—in the

room when the CSM provides counsel to the platoon sergeants and staff NCOs in charge; this enables young officers to understand roles and responsibilities while also teaching how to counsel NCOs.

We highlight the importance of a CSMs communication abilities to both internal and external audiences. As Lt. Gen. James Dubik and Col. David Hodne point out, the CSM and commander have a vital role in translating strategic and operational messages down to the tactical level.²¹ At the same time, articulating and translating tactical issues, problems, concerns, recommendations, or even successes to the operational and strategic levels is vitally important. Likewise, communication skills and interpersonal skills developed over a career assist the CSM in communicating resources, army support services, and billeting challenges with stakeholders, which in turn facilitates action and improvement in the organization. Furthermore, the CSM plays a vital role supporting the recruitment and retention challenges at the tactical level and strategic levels. Given the Army’s current recruiting shortfalls, the retention efforts at the battalion and company levels have become an ever-increasing priority. Although AR 601-280, *Army Retention Program*, defines retention as a commander’s program, the regulation provides narrow guidance pertaining to the role of the commander and CSM in promoting a successful program.²² Also underpinning the importance of the mission, the battalion retention NCO is directly supervised by the CSM. As a command team, the commander and the CSM both have an equal share in promoting the retention mission, instilling a healthy unit culture, and emphasizing leader involvement in retaining the Army’s talent. CSMs also have a crucial role in talent management of the soldiers and NCO corps. A CSM directly influences talent management by balancing Army requirements against unit requirements and facilitating the best talent to both meet unit requirements and goals of the Army. CSMs require a strategic insight in this balancing aspect and must be astute enough to effectively communicate strategic manning goals to the tactical level. CSMs also recognize that in some cases, retention and talent management decisions may incur a personnel cost on the unit in order to meet goals of the Army and/or the individual. Finally, CSMs must also support and reinforce Army retention bonuses and/or recruiting initiatives such as the most recent Army initiative in the Soldier Referral Program.²³

Table. Dragons Terms of Reference

<p>Squadron Commander</p>	<p>Focus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture of dignity, respect, warfighting, lethality • Maintenance of open, positive command climate • Primary trainer of the squadron • Leader development program • Lead the operations process (guidance, intent, priority information requirements) • Prioritize efforts, requirements, resources • Maintain long-term vision, focus, and planning • Retention and talent management-congressional inquiries • Group physical training (PT) program • Squadron situation report • Soldier Family Readiness Program 	<p>Leader Development Focus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Platoon leaders: Standards and leadership • Company commanders: Up and out, bigger picture • Majors: Organizational leadership <p>Primary Theme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision and branding <p>Key Interactions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Division commander • Brigade commander, CSM, XO, S-3, legal/paralegal, adjutant, chaplain, surgeon/physician assistant, unit public affairs representative, unit victim advocate • Battalion commanders • Troop commanders
<p>Command Sergeant Major (CSM)</p>	<p>Focus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual soldier readiness • Enforcement of discipline/standards • NCO leadership presence • NCO development program • History and traditions • Individual counseling program • Boards and promotions • PT (execution and participation) • Retention program • In-processing policy • Sponsorship program • Prompt completion of personnel actions • Barracks program oversight • Transition/Soldier for Life-Transition Assistance Program oversight • NCO inductions • Fosters esprit de corps • Unit manning roster management • Rehabilitation PT • Awards program • Rear-detachment manager • Rehearsal & ceremony validation 	<p>Leader Development Focus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Platoon sergeants (PSG): engaged leadership • First sergeants (1SG): grooming potential <p>Primary Theme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards and discipline <p>Key Interactions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brigade CSM, commander, operations sergeant major (OPS SGM), adjutant/S-1 NCO • Squadron adjutant/S-1 NCO, medical PSG, chaplain, physician assistant, paralegal, retention NCO, equal opportunity, sexual assault response coordinator, career counselor • 1SGs

Table. Dragons Terms of Reference (continued)

<p>Executive Officer (XO)</p>	<p>Focus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second in command • Materiel and maintenance readiness • Chief of staff Lead battalion command and control warfighting function • Train staff on military decision-making and rapid decision-making processes • Process focused Manage battle rhythm and battalion standard operating procedures (SOP) • Control staff duty officer program • Synchronize sustainment warfighting function • Manage maintenance, property accountability • Manage unit status report and command inspections • With CSM, command and staff meeting • Manage legal activities • Logistics synchronization • Main command post officer in charge • Officer manning tracker • Financial liability investigation of property loss/investigation quality control • Squadron regulatory programs/social events • Budget management • Safety program oversight • Manager of commander’s critical information requirements • Top-5 huddle • Hails & Farewells, Stable Calls • Government purchasing card management 	<p>Leader Development Focus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Squadron staff officers, staff NCOs • Troop XO <p>Primary Theme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systems, processes, and reporting <p>Key Interaction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brigade XO, staff • Adjacent units • Squadron CSM, staff, unit public affairs representative, adjutant, maintenance technician, property book officer, staff judge advocate, paralegal • Company XO • Headquarters & headquarters company commander/1SG (support to unit)
<p>Operations Officer (S-3)</p>	<p>Focus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training readiness • Staff content in command and control warfighting function • Calendar synchronization • Squadron training meeting • Training resource meeting • Training management review • Training guidance (quarterly, annually) • Short-range and long-range training calendars • Daily task order and Flash fragmentary orders • Task tracker 	<p>Leader Development Focus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Squadron OPS SGM, staff officers, staff NCOs • Troop commanders: unit training management, 8-Step Training Model <p>Primary Theme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning

Table. Dragons Terms of Reference (continued)

<p>Operations Officer (S-3)</p>	<p>Focus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training in military decision-making and rapid decision-making processes for operations personnel • Unit training management systems • Supervise current training and operations • Troop quarterly training briefing reviews and scheduling • Manage ammunition, training land, Digital Training Management System • Manage Army Regulation 350-1 requirements, master resiliency training • Government travel charge card/ Defense Travel System • SOP development • Deliberate risk assessments • Leader professional development schedule • Squadron situation report 	<p>Key Interactions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brigade S-3, OPS SGM, staff • Adjacent units • Squadron fire support officer, chemical officer, master gunner, intelligence officer • Troop commanders • Assistant S-3s
<p>Operations/Staff Sergeant Major (OPS SGM)</p>	<p>Focus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current operations officer in charge/general staff manager • Tasking order review • Task tracker • Troops-to-task, borrowed military manpower • Staff duty program/SOPs/charge of quarter SOPs • Backside support for collective training (opposing force, Virtual Contracting Enterprise, etc.) • Schools (CO, NCO professional development system, Army Training Requirements and Resource System, troop schools) • Driver's training program • Gunnery oversight • Expert Soldier Badge, Expert Infantryman Badge, Expert Field Medic Badge • Official travel (Defense Travel System) • Ceremony setup • Coordination with adjutant for ceremonies/social functions • Tactical command post readiness/manning with S-3 platoon • Ammo and training aids, devices, simulators, and simulations resources and accounts • Squadron duty and alert roster upkeep 	<p>Leader Development Focus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Squadron staff NCOs: military decision-making process, efficiencies in systems <p>Primary Theme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Predictability <p>Key Interactions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brigade CSM, OPS SGM, staff NCOs • Adjacent Units SGM/CSM • Squadron assistant S-3s, fire support officer, communications & information systems officer, master gunner • Troop 1SGs, operations NCOs

Table. Dragons Terms of Reference (continued)

<p>Operations/Staff Sergeant Major (OPS SGM)</p>	<p>Focus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical establishment/internal systems of main command post • Command and control proficiency (XO) • NCO/soldier of the month boards • Operational tempo referee • Army Battle Command System and command-and-control crew training (Joint Battle Command Platform, Advanced Field Artillery Targeting and Direction System, etc.) • Lead manager of tactical rehearsal setup 	
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(Table by authors)

Consequently, their selection to serve as a CSM is not a random occurrence; it requires a leader with the competence and presence of mind to retain talent and meet Army retention goals.

CSMs also have the role of enforcing the good order and discipline in the organization. At one level, they enforce the standard of conduct, wear of uniforms, and standard operating procedures that most are familiar with. Yet, on another level, they assist in enforcing policies and ensuring fair and equitable treatment of administrative action across the organization. Based on experience, CSMs hold a unique view in all matters pertaining to soldiers and advise the commanders on distinct circumstances related to soldier and administrative/legal actions. The CSM advises the commander on precedents established with legal actions in the squadron and advises the commander on decisions that would demonstrate unfair treatment or otherwise message favoritism. When a commander encounters cases where he or she needs to enforce personnel actions, the CSM can assist the command in ensuring a speedy process by enforcing adherence and efficiency within the personnel and legal systems. CSMs also are critical in linking in the staff judge advocate and unit legal specialists across the subordinate commands and advising the commander to seeking legal advice prior to any administrative action.

Brigade- and battalion-level command teams possess a high degree of positional and personal power. Position within a command team give positional power,

while the personal power comes from subordinates' trust, respect, and admiration for the leader as well as from the leader's charisma.²⁴ Both the commander and the CSM must command with a degree of humility and self-awareness to understand this power. Additionally, they must also observe each other as well as subordinate command teams to ensure all are using their power effectively and for positive influence. This comes through leading by example, treating others as you would want to be treated, self-awareness, and humility. With great power comes a responsibility to manage it accordingly. Conversely, power for personal gain undermines positional and personal influence and is a threat to good order and discipline or worse yet, a compromise of the command team's authority. Some common examples include inappropriate relationships (or the perception thereof) and misuse of government resources (e.g., finances, personnel, vehicles). CSMs at the battalion and brigade levels are not authorized personal assistants and should not have subordinates conducting favors such as personal taskings or paying for gifts, food, or gas. Moreover, the positional power could become intoxicating to the point a leader may become so self-absorbed that they believe the rules simply do not apply to them.

One much less extreme but more common example is when a CSM unintentionally usurps the commander's authority by creating a separate "NCO tasking channel" that is separate from the operation process without the commander's knowledge. This challenges

the commander's authority and priorities, and decreases the organization's shared understanding. CSM Wayne Wahlenmeier illustrates this point: "A CSM can pick up the phone or send an email that can change the focus, efforts, and lives of all of my Paratroopers and their families. But, a battalion has a certain momentum and inertia that is very difficult to shift on a dime. Every time a short notice or no-notice change is made, it increases the chance of missing tasks, making mistakes, and can cause your staff and commanders to operate in crisis management mode."²⁵ Furthermore, as CSM Christopher Carey notes, "A CSM is like a Tyrannosaurus rex—when walking around the unit area, CSMs encounter soldiers and NCOs, and they will immediately respond to guidance or corrections, often at the expense of whatever task they are doing. A T-Rex, however, also has a giant clumsy tail that can often destroy everything behind it."²⁶ This is attributable to the power of the CSM, as their decisions often carry significant weight. If they do not watch out for the tail, they may not realize the effects they have, often at the expense of already established commander's priorities or guidance.

As an extension of the command, there are some areas where abuse of power, rank, or position can arise. The CSM can demonstrate unlawful command influence (UCI) and should be aware of the risk in doing so. In general, "UCI is the improper use, or perception of use, of a superior authority to interfere with the court-martial process," nonjudicial punishments, or adverse actions.²⁷ For example, using threats of nonjudicial punishment to force compliance and/or change behaviors; the commander alone can impose nonjudicial punishment, and it should not be used as threat or coercion to bring about compliance or behavioral change of an individual or the organization. As an extension of the command team, CSMs need to clearly understand the roles and responsibilities when making recommendations to the commander or during coaching or mentoring regarding legal or adverse actions. CSMs play a vital role in the coaching and mentorship of both the commander and subordinate command teams. Still, mentorship and coaching needs to be in accordance with staff judge advocate counsel. A CSM can recommend disposition to their commander but needs to ensure that the commander has the ultimate disposition authority and that decision is consistent and fair.

Command Sergeants Major on the Battlefield

One final point on the command team dynamic is the where the commander and CSM place themselves on the battlefield, in training, or amidst the organization during garrison daily activities. The command team needs to be cohesive and present an image to the organization of a unified team, exemplifying the values, discipline, standards, goals, and vision for the formation. However, this does not necessarily mean that the command team needs to be together observing training, operations, or garrison activities. Based on their "expert" authority and wealth of experience relative to the rest of the organization, the commander and CSM should have the trust and confidence in each other to be able to operate independently when observing the soldiers of their organization. Common narratives against this concept suggest that the commander and the CSM could appear as not unified when there is trouble between them, or, worse yet, when they espouse different standards. Our experience suggests the opposite. By operating independently, the command team can provide more observation of the organization to identify issues, solve problems, and highlight areas of performance, both good and bad. This may apply to physical training, motor pool operations, or when there are several high-risk or high-visibility events in which command team influence may be warranted. The same concept applies in combat, where the commander may need to place himself or herself at the decisive points while the CSM may need to operate geographically separated at another area of friction. Combat should not be the first time the command team operates separately; this should be practiced and learned in the garrison environment. Finally, operating decentralized and independently requires a degree of deliberate synchronization and deliberate planning to ensure there are touchpoints/daily synchs to reconcile feedback, trends, and issues and enable the command team to properly formulate assessments, AARs, and remedies based on observations. We recommend additional instruction on these themes.

The CSM in combat. Command teams should broaden their analysis and think in terms beyond the temporal when determining where to place the CSM in combat. Army doctrine and training states that the commander should place himself or herself at the decisive point on the battlefield to make timely decision for converging effects at a specific place, key event, critical factor to attain a marked advantage.²⁸ This does not necessarily mean or imply that

the CSM also needs to be at the same location. In addition to the decisive point, there will always be other areas of friction or risk in warfare, and CSMs can apply their experience, leadership, and judgment at those other points. Commanders should assign roles and responsibilities for CSMs by outlining how they support their battalion/brigade by operation. FM 3-0 clearly characterizes the conduct of warfare in three operations: offense, defense, and stability.²⁹ Command teams can determine where a CSM fights in combat by examining his or her role through the lens of these operations. As an example, we will focus on some recommendations for the offense and defense.

The CSM in the offense. At the tactical level, the CSM, guided by his or her expertise, can directly affect the tempo of the battlefield. Tempo exists as a principal characteristic of the offense, and it involves “the rhythm of operations with respect to the enemy.”³⁰ This necessitates that a commander empowers a CSM to exercise authority at critical junctures on the battlefield. In short, the CSM can operate on disciplined initiative and influence the tempo of an offense to prevent early culmination or expand the number of dilemmas that a commander can exert on an enemy. For example, CSMs directly interface with logistical trains to ensure forces or capabilities arrive at the decisive point at the prescribed time. CSMs can also drive the reconstitution process when employed at critical nodes such as the personnel holding area, unit maintenance collection point, or combat trains. Additionally, the CSM can serve the commander and unit well during periods of transition and during reorganization and consolidation. The CSM should maintain relationships across the logistics community to reduce friction and make processes more efficient. Lastly, a commander has several tools at his or her disposal to clearly delineate where the battalion/brigade should devote its efforts toward achieving a desired tempo. First, the commander can outline their views of tempo within the commander’s intent. Second, the commander can outline where momentum/tempo is impacted through the decision support matrix. The commander can determine where he or she is needed on the battle, often in high friction areas or the decisive point. However, the commander should choose to employ the CSM in other areas of friction identified in the decision support matrix or areas where tempo is at risk of reducing. In some instances, this may encompass areas of enemy contact where

the CSMs experience and judgement may prove vital in assisting subordinate commanders or junior leaders during isolated fights across the battlefield.

The CSM in the defense. The role of the CSM in the defense shares parallels with options mentioned in the previous paragraph. First, commander’s intent and a decision support tool provide a commander with context to articulate where the CSM should operate in the defense. Second, a CSM can operate from a position of advantage and influence the timely arrival of combat power at the decisive point. However, the role of the CSM in the defense has several key distinctions. Flexibility and security underpin the essential characteristics that a CSM can affect in the defense. A CSM provides flexibility by operating with logistics nodes in the defense to ensure a unit can maintain operational reach and can affect the enemy. Additionally, a CSM can apportion combat power short of the forward line of troops to enable security for critical combat assets (e.g., fires, logistics, medical assets). Lastly, a CSM reduces risk to forces by conducting combat inspections along the forward line of own troops to ensure subordinate units have established control measures and markings to prevent fratricide or early detection from the enemy. Furthermore, the CSM can inspect areas in the battlefield commonly neglected such as retransmission sites, mortar firing points, observations posts, and the position of the reserve. The recommendations listed for the CSM’s role in combat are not exclusive and may not have adequately addressed all friction areas.

Recommendations

This article illustrates that there is a bonified need to update U.S. Army regulations and doctrine, and perhaps some leadership training. Regarding doctrine, TC 7-22.7 needs updating. It should expound on the readiness, leadership, training management, communications, operations, and program management topics addressed in this article. Doctrine should further outline a clear division of roles and responsibilities between the CSM and the operations SGM, as this is vague and unclear in TC 7-22.7. The terms of reference in the figure highlights some additional roles and responsibilities that could perhaps serve as a best practice or become codified in doctrine. Furthermore, AR 600-20 requires updates to focus on the importance of the command team, including defining the command team, explaining its importance, defining roles and responsibilities within the command team, establishing imperatives for

counseling and communication, and articulating the importance of understanding positional and personal power.

Regarding leadership, the Army needs to update curriculum or programs of instruction (POI) to include a more deliberate foundation of the battalion- and brigade-level command teams. The School for Command Preparation in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, conducts the battalion- and brigade-level precommand courses. However, this course does not allocate enough time in the POI to address why the command team is the most consequential leadership team in our Army. The prescribed readings do not include TC 7-22.7 but should include them as mandatory. The POI should be expanded to cover the importance of the command team, with discussion centered on roles and responsibilities; the importance of commander teams; understanding power dynamics (personal and positional power); and the abuse of power and associated pitfalls to include recent trend analysis of battalion- and brigade-level CSM and commanders who have been removed from position. The course could also benefit by introducing a staff judge advocate to offer a more holistic and deeper instruction on UCI, abuse of power, misappropriation of government resources, etc., particularly in at the small-group level. Finally, the output for the “building cohesive teams” block of instruction should provide each member

with deliberate “terms of reference” with clear roles and responsibilities for command teams based on the level of command. Our command experience to this point demonstrates that we were not as prepared as we could have been. Perhaps these recommendations will assist future command teams in understanding clear roles and responsibilities moving forward.

Conclusion

The importance of CSMs and their role within the battalions and brigades across the Army cannot be overstated. CSMs possess the influence, power, and expertise to enhance the readiness of their respective organizations and demonstrate care to our soldiers—the U.S. Army’s most vital resource. Yet, specific regulations and leadership development do not adequately address the formidable roles CSMs play. Although the argument and prescriptions set forward in this article are not the only way to address the problem, they do offer a road map forward to educate our leaders on the significance of the position. Clear identification of roles and responsibilities and understanding of the elements of a command team will assist future leaders in improving organizational effectiveness and educate those who could otherwise succumb to the pitfalls inherent to their position. ■

Notes

1. Daniel K. Elder, *The History of the Sergeant Major, from Then to Now* (Fort Bliss, TX: U.S. Army Museum of the Noncommissioned Officer, 1998), 5, accessed 28 June 2023, <https://ncohistory.com/files/SGMhistory.pdf>.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Ibid.*, 7.

4. *Ibid.*, 8.

5. Army Regulation (AR) 600-20, *Army Command Policy and Procedures* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 30 June 1969 [obsolete]), 9.

6. Elder, *The History of the Sergeant Major*, 7.

7. *Ibid.*, 8; Field Manual (FM) 22-600-20, *The Army Noncommissioned Officer Guide* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, March 1980 [obsolete]).

8. Elder, *The History of the Sergeant Major*, 9; Training Circular (TC) 22-6, *The Army Noncommissioned Officer Guide* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, November 1990 [obsolete]).

9. TC 7-22.7, *The Noncommissioned Officer Guide* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Publishing Office [GPO], 2020), 2-5–2-7.

10. *Ibid.*, 2-5.

11. *Ibid.*, 2-6.

12. FM 7-0, *Training* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 2021), 4-21.

13. *Ibid.*, 2-6. The acronym PACE applies to a communication order of precedence and stands for primary, alternate, contingency, and emergency.

14. FM 3-0, *Operations* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 2022), fig. 8-1.

15. *Ibid.*, 2-7.

16. James C. McConville and J. P. McGee, “Battalion Commanders Are the Seed Corn of the Army,” *War on the Rocks*, 23 December 2019, accessed 27 June 2023, <https://warontherocks.com/2019/12/battalion-commanders-are-the-seed-corn-of-the-army/>.

17. James Dubik and David M. Hodne, “The Battalion Commander and Command Sergeant Major: The Most Important Senior Leaders in the Army,” *Army Magazine*, February 2013, accessed 27 June 2023, https://www.ansa.org/sites/default/files/FC_Dubik_0213.pdf.

18. TC 7-22.7, *The Noncommissioned Officer Guide*, 2-4.

19. *Ibid.*, 3-13.

20. Army Doctrine Publication 6-22, *Army Leadership and the Profession* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, July 2019), chap. 9.

21. Dubik and Hodne, “The Battalion Commander and Command Sergeant Major.”

22. AR 601-280, *Army Retention Program* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 2021), 5.

23. "Submit a Referral," GoArmy, accessed 27 June 2023, <https://www.goarmy.com/refer.html>.

24. TC 7-22.7, *The Noncommissioned Officer Guide*, 3-5, 3-6.

25. Wayne Wahlenmeier, "A Letter to My First Sergeants," LinkedIn, 23 January 2023, accessed 27 June 2023, <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/letter-my-first-sergeants-wayne-wahlenmeier>.

26. Christopher Carey (command sergeant major, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored

Division, Fort Bliss, Texas), interview by Lt. Col. Bernard Gardner, 22 March 2023.

27. Miscellaneous Publication 27-8, *Commander's Legal Handbook 2019* (Charlottesville, VA: The Judge Advocate General's Legal Center and School, 2019), 17.

28. FM 3-0, *Operations*, 3-18–3-19.

29. *Ibid.*, 1-9.

30. *Ibid.*, 3-3.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

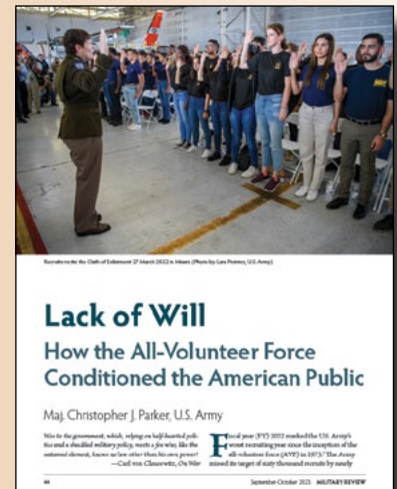
The scope of Maj. Christopher J. Parker's well-researched and well-written article, "Lack of Will" (September-October 2023 *Military Review*) does not include the leadership challenges presented by conscripts.

Gen. William Westmoreland testified before the Commission on an All-Volunteer Army that he did not want to command an army of mercenaries. Milton Friedman then asked him, "General, would you rather command an army of slaves?" Anyone who is forced, under penalty of law, to perform an act against his will for a prescribed period is a prisoner or slave, which was Friedman's point. A prisoner will take minimum risk and will cooperate only as much as is necessary to avoid punishment. As a junior officer while the Army still had draftees, I discovered that I was not leading these reluctant soldiers; instead, I was preventing their escape. Soldiering was not their priority. Threats were more persuasive than incentives. Standards like physical fitness could not be enforced because expulsion was a reward rather than a threat. Compulsory military service did not grow their patriotism any more than incarceration builds solid citizenship.

I met families of WWII draftees who had a lifelong resentment against the government that kidnapped their spouses, siblings, and sons. Conscription is never perceived to be fairly levied throughout the eligible population. Thousands of Americans went to Canada to avoid the draft for Vietnam, and thousands of Ukrainians and Russians are currently fleeing conscription that interrupts their planned lives. Although armies need bulk to successfully fight a prolonged war, the draftees consider themselves to be mere bullet catchers.

Officers who are accustomed to leading volunteers would not recognize their Army if it depended on conscripts.

Michael W. Symanski
Maj. Gen. U.S. Army, Ret.



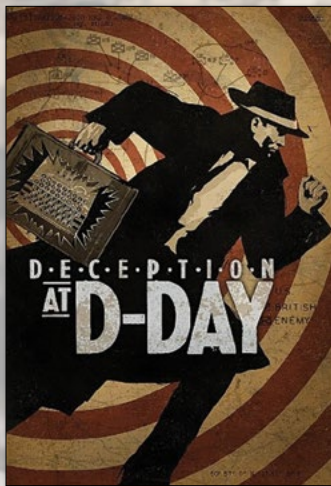
"Lack of Will" by Maj. Christopher Parker, published in *Military Review* September-October 2023, can be viewed online at <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/Military-Review/English-Edition-Archives/September-October-2023/Lack-of-Will>.

Army University Press Products of Relevance to EUCOM

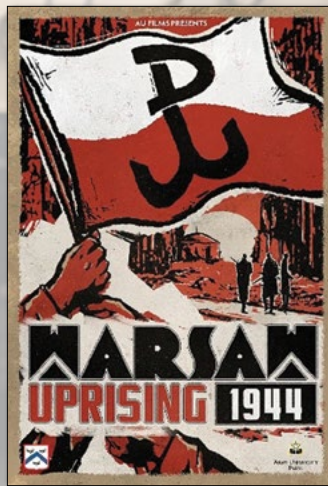
The emergence of a new twenty-first-century coalition of anti-Western/anti-U.S. states comprised mainly of Russia, its defacto satellite states, China, Iran, and North Korea, has produced a global situation in which the sudden outbreak of a conflict in any region with forces from the United States or its allied regional partners could produce a confrontation that rapidly expands into a global conflagration involving large-scale combat forces across many continents and their surrounding waters. Not surprisingly, geography, old ethnic divides, and unfortunate historical precedents make Europe among the most likely theaters for being swept up in such a global conflict against Russia and its Eastern European/Central Asian allies. In an effort to provide readers some relevant and useful historical background from previous conflicts in Europe, the Army University Press invites readers to examine online the repository of resources it has that may provide valuable lessons learned and insights from previous European conflicts. The repository includes books, films, staff rides, and journal articles.

Army University Press Films

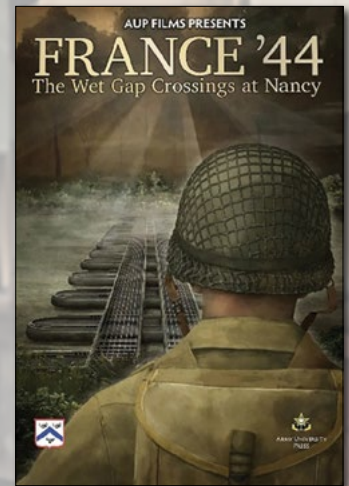
The AUP Films Team produces documentary films designed to teach current U.S. Army doctrine using historical case studies. It works in conjunction with the Combined Arms Center, the Combined Arms Doctrine Directorate, researchers and faculty from the Army University, subject-matter experts from the Army centers of excellence, and with colleagues from other military education programs to select relevant doctrinal and historical topics as the basis for its documentary films.



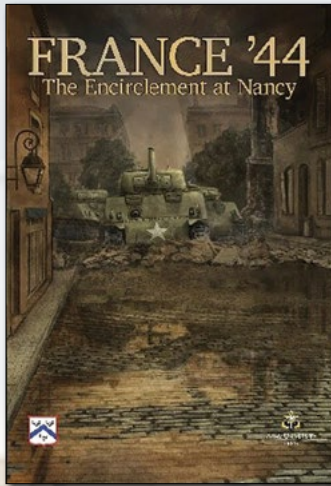
Deception at D-Day



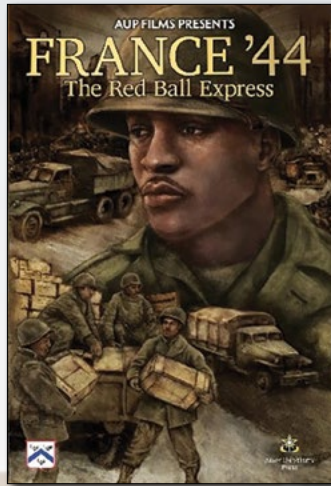
Warsaw Uprising 1944



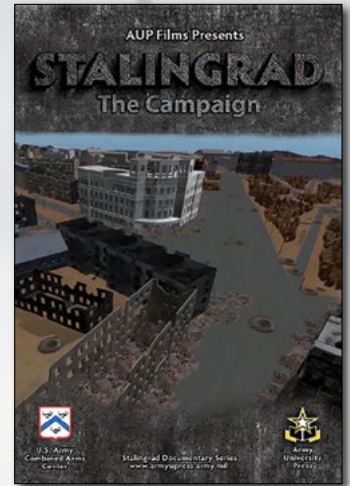
France '44: The Wet Gap Crossings at Nancy



France '44: The Encirclement at Nancy



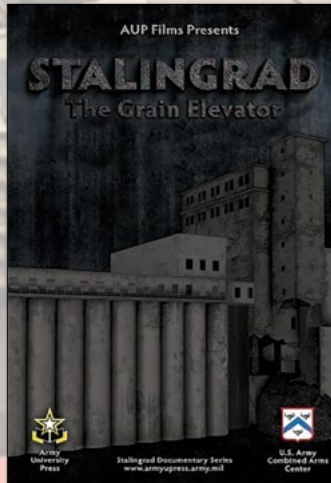
France '44: The Red Ball Express



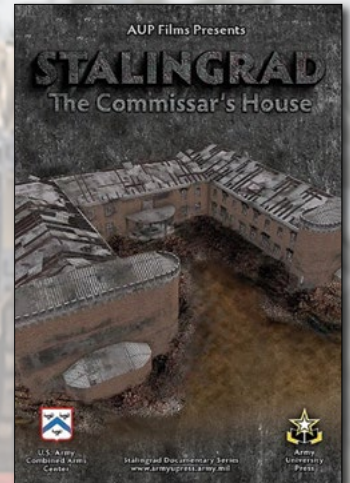
Stalingrad: The Campaign



Stalingrad: The Battle for the Martenovskii Shop



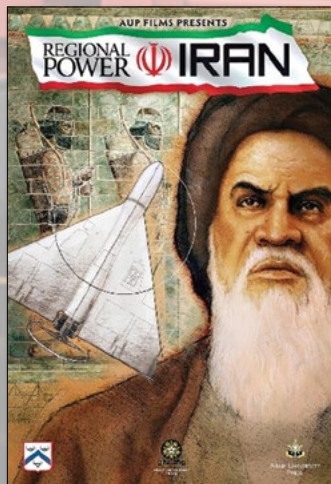
Stalingrad: The Grain Elevator



Stalingrad: The Commissar's House



Near Peer: Russia



Regional Power: Iran



Understanding Combined Arms Warfare

The Big Picture—European Topics

111.TV.220 Invasion of Southern France



In this episode of *The Big Picture*, audiences learn about the U.S. 7th Army's August 1944 invasion of Southern France, a feat that "broke the back" of the Axis powers. The episode opens by providing context on Operation Dragoon. It then depicts the formation of a marshaling area at the Bay of Naples, from which men and materiel traveled toward Southern France. A brief summary of the preliminary landings at Levant and Port Cros follows, as well as footage of Allied air support and the descent of the 509th Parachute

Infantry Battalion into the French countryside. Next, the episode features large-scale amphibious landings along the coast and the Allies subsequent push inland. Scenes include the capture of German prisoners, the roundup of suspected Axis spies, and the capture of important locales such as Marseilles and Montelimar. Civilians and soldiers alike are shown celebrating the Allied victory. The program concludes with an interview of war correspondents Doug Larson and Sgt. Francis Porter discussing the positive impact of press coverage on combat units in the Korean Conflict.

111.TV.238 Soldier in Europe



This episode of *The Big Picture* takes audiences to Europe to discuss the important and complex role U.S. soldiers served in the defense of Western nations during the Cold War. After World War II, U.S. soldiers occupied abroad to aid in the reconstruction of countries torn apart by the destruction of the war. Remaining in Europe, units continued their training as "guardians of our perimeter of peace" to protect against the perceived worldwide threat of communism. This episode shows the lives of the deployed soldiers

and how they stayed ready and alert during peacetime.

111.TV.267 NATO: Partners in Peace



"NATO: Partners in Peace" follows the creation and impact of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Created in April 1949 with twelve founding members, this organization's goal was to protect the inherent rights of individual states through collective defense. In this episode from *The Big Picture* series, Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower offers a speech before he deploys to Europe to become the first supreme allied commander Europe. This is followed with footage of the buildup and training of European forces. Once Eisenhower leaves NATO to campaign for the presidency, Gen. Matthew

Ridgway replaces him as NATO commander. One significant problem NATO forces faced was the fact that each nation had its own weapon systems and ammunition, an issue the U.S. wanted to address with the standardization of the 7.62 mm cartridge. Perhaps as a deterrent to the Soviet Union, "NATO: Partners in Peace" depicts new weapons that could be used against a large enemy force such as remote-controlled missiles, napalm bombs, and the massive atomic cannon.

For more information and access to entire inventory of films and documentaries, see <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Educational-Services/Documentaries/>.

Staff Rides

The Combat Studies Institute Staff Ride Team develops and conducts two types of staff rides as educational tools for the U.S. Army: live and virtual. Both focus on the timeless and universal aspects of warfighting that provide important insights into the factors affecting military operations including terrain analysis and concepts of leadership. Presentations employ vignettes and open discussion among participants. The live staff ride takes place at the site of actual battlefields. The virtual staff ride (VSR) consists of simulated terrain built in a 3D virtual environment produced largely from satellite imagery, digital terrain elevation data, photographs, video, and firsthand accounts. The team has developed multiple VSRs to replicate terrain that Army organizations cannot readily access from the continental United States. Additionally, the CSI Staff Ride Team publishes handbooks for units that wish to conduct their own staff rides.

Example of a Virtual Staff Ride

The encirclement of Nancy VSR examines the operations of the U.S. XII Corps during the Lorraine Campaign in 1944. The first part of the study focuses on the 80th and 35th Infantry Divisions' operations to cross the Moselle River and their ensuing efforts to secure the bridgeheads. It continues with a study of the 4th Armored Division's breakout and attack into the German rear area to encircle the city of Nancy.

The study culminates with the German counterattacks that make up the Battle of Arracourt. The VSR can be conducted as one large staff ride or as focused studies on wet-gap crossings or the attack of the 4th Armored Division and the Battle of Arracourt.

This virtual staff ride is fully exportable to any organization that has access to the Army-authorized gaming software Virtual Battlespace 3. The exportable package includes full instructor support materials, participant readings, and instructions on how to use each part of the compilation.



All virtual staff rides can be requested at <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Staff-Rides/Virtual-Staff-Ride/>. For more information on staff rides overall, see the Combat Studies Institute Staff Ride website at <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Educational-Services/Staff-Ride-Team-Offerings/>.

Staff Rides: Other VSR Specifically Relevant to EUCOM

- Battle of the Bzura, Poland (1939)
- U.S. Invasion of Normandy (1944)—coming soon
- Battle of the Bulge: Losheim Gap and the Defense of Saint Vith (1944)—coming soon

Books

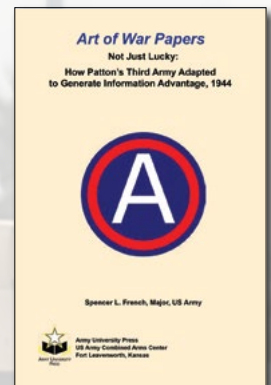
The AUP Books section at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, publishes original, interpretive research on topics pertinent to current topics of immediate and enduring interest to the U.S. Army and sister services. To that purpose, AUP offers a variety of documents in monograph and article format that may be of use to those vested in defense planning within the European Command region. All AUP publications are released in digital format onto the Press's website. Examples of such materials are noted below.

Combat Studies Institute Press

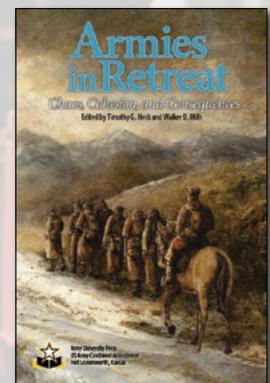
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- *The 101st Airborne Division's Defense of Bastogne* by Col. Ralph M. Mitchell (1987), <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/combats-studies-institute/csi-books/mitchell.pdf>
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- *Operation Joint Endeavor V Corps in Bosnia-Herzegovina 1995–1996: An Oral History* by Dr. Harold E. Raugh Jr., command historian, V Corps editor (2010), <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/combats-studies-institute/csi-books/OperationJointEndeavor.pdf>
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- *When Failure Thrives: Institutions and the Evolution of Postwar Airborne Forces* by Marc R. Devore (2015), <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/combats-studies-institute/csi-books/WhenFailureThrives.pdf>
- *Making the Difficult Routine: U.S. Army Task Organization at the Army and Corps Level in Europe, 1944* by Lt. Col. Brian C. North (2016), <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/combats-studies-institute/csi-books/making-the-difficult-routine.pdf>

Leavenworth Papers

- Leavenworth Paper #11, *Rangers: Selected Combat Operations in World War II* by Dr. Michael J. King (1985), <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/combats-studies-institute/csi-books/king-rangers.pdf>
- Leavenworth Paper #12, *Seek, Strike, and Destroy: U.S. Army Tank Destroyer Doctrine in World War II*, by Dr. Christopher R. Gabel (1985), <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/combats-studies-institute/csi-books/gabel2.pdf>



Not Just Lucky: How Patton's Third Army Adapted to Generate Information Advantage, 1944 by Maj. Spencer L. French (2023)



Armies in Retreat: Chaos, Cohesion, and Consequences, edited by Timothy G. Heck and Walker D. Mills (2023)

For more information, contact BOOKS at <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Books/Books-and-Manuscript-Guide/>.



Chinese soldiers march past the six-centuries-old Tian'anmen Rostrum during a military parade on 3 September 2015 in Beijing to commemorate the seventieth anniversary of China's victory against Japanese aggression. Although the modern Chinese military is considered to be a pacing threat by the United States, Chinese doctrine draws from over 2,500 years of military history and theory. (Photo by Imaginichina, Alamy Stock Photo)

Chinese Operational Art

The Primacy of the Human Dimension

Rob Hafen

American military colleges like the U.S. Army War College and Command and General Staff School spend a great deal of time studying the Western, or American, way of war. Although U.S. national security documents

identify China as our pacing challenge and with over 2,500 years of Chinese military history and theory to draw from, the American military spends very little time learning about the Chinese way of war. At the Command and General Staff School,



Depiction of Lao Tzu in E. T. C. Werner's *Myths and Legends of China* (Project Gutenberg, February 1922). (Image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)

there is only one elective course on the Chinese way of war with a U.S. Indo-Pacific Command training scenario put in place for academic year 2024.

Most American military officers are told to read Sun Tzu's *Art of War* at their precommissioning source. This classical work is one of the world's most influential books on military strategy and is highly

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instructive on Chinese strategic, operational, and tactical art. It was compiled toward the end of China's preunification spring and autumn period (772–476 BCE) and the beginning of the warring states period (475–221 BCE).¹ However, it only scratches the surface of Chinese military thought. Other theorists such as Confucius, Lao Tzu, Mao Zedong, and many others contribute

to a diverse and complex array of Chinese strategic theory.

Is there a difference between the American way of war and the Chinese way of war in the current strategic environment? Scholars have argued the intricacies of the East-West cultural and philosophical divide for centuries. Clearly, there are some major cultural and philosophical differences. In the current environment, however, both the United States and China are great power actors in the international system drawing from similar theoretical, doctrinal, materiel, and organizational means of national power. For example, the founder of the modern People's Republic of China (PRC), Mao Zedong, drew just as much if not more from Prussian theorist Carl von Clausewitz's *On War* as he did from Sun Tzu's *Art of War*.² During the last twenty-five years, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) invested deeply in modern information and weapons technology, training, education, and organization, attempting to bring its land, air, maritime, cyber, and space capabilities to parity with the United States. China's heavy investment in antiaccess/area denial (A2/AD) capabilities is causing the American military to look at new materiel and organizational solutions for a potential conflict over Taiwan.³ However, there is an important difference between the Chinese and American approaches to solving strategic, operational, and tactical problems. Where the American military tends to focus on high-cost, technology-centric solutions, over 2,500 years of Chinese military history and theory reveals a preference for low-cost, human-centric solutions.

Looking at the U.S. Army's technology-focused multidomain operations concept as outlined in U.S. Army Field Manual (FM) 3-0, *Operations*, will illustrate the difference in each country's approach. This article will analyze key concepts from China's feudal and dynastic periods using Sun Tzu's *Art of War* and a distillation of China's thirty-six stratagems. Finally, this article will look at modern Chinese operational art as demonstrated by Mao during the Chinese Civil War (1946–1949) and as outlined in Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui's *Unrestricted Warfare*, published in 1999. Generally, when operational art is referenced in this article, strategic and tactical art are implied as well.

The U.S. Army's Technology-Focused, Multidomain Operations Concept

The introductory chapter of the U.S. Army's recently published capstone doctrinal manual, FM 3-0, highlights the importance of the land domain to decisive strategic outcomes. However, it also recognizes that the land domain requires combined arms employment in the air, maritime, cyber, and space domains to achieve success. This convergence of effects from all domains is known as multidomain operations (MDO).⁴ MDO recognizes the immense challenge for U.S. forces needing to win outnumbered, while isolated, by creating and exploiting positions of relative advantages. Chinese operational art espouses isolation of adversaries, and they are already working toward achieving that capability with their A2/AD umbrella. The MDO concept was developed primarily as a way for joint forces to defeat China's A2/AD systems.⁵

The MDO concept also introduces three dimensions: physical, information, and human. The physical dimension includes "the material characteristics and capabilities, both natural and manufactured, within an operational environment."⁶ The information dimension is defined as "the content, data, and processes that individuals, groups, and information systems use to communicate."⁷ The human dimension is defined as "encompassing people and the interaction between

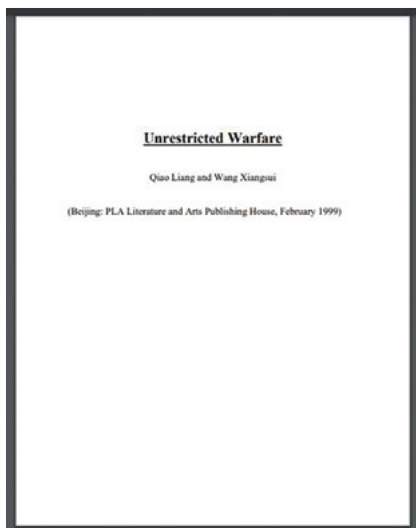


Confucius circa 1770 (Image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)

individuals and groups, how they understand information and events, make decisions, generate will, and act within an operational environment."⁸ All three dimensions are interrelated, interdependent, and impact all domains. However, most of FM 3-0 is dedicated to acting in the physical dimension. The MDO concept relies heavily on innovative, technology-focused solutions leveraging space, cyber, artificial intelligence, robotics, unmanned systems, and extended range firepower.

Although FM 3-0 addresses the human and information dimensions, there is very little development of how the U.S. Army plans to create relative advantage to exploit these dimensions and how they relate to the practice of operational art, deception, psychological operations, and information operations. In the introductory chapter, FM 3-0 recognizes the complex current environment that demands leaders who understand both the science and art of operations:

There is no way to eliminate uncertainty, and leaders must exercise operational art to make decisions and assume risk. Intangible factors, such as the impact of leadership



Read *Unrestricted Warfare* by Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui (Beijing: PLA Literature and Arts Publishing House, February 1999) online at <https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/doc/10.1.1.169.7179>.

on morale, using shock effect to defeat enemy forces, and supportive populations are fundamentally human factors that can overcome physical disadvantages and often decide the outcomes of an operation.⁹

If operational art and human factors are so decisive, why is there so little mention of them in the 2022 version of FM 3-0?

In the previous 2017 version of FM 3-0, the idea of operational art was addressed with a few pages in the introduction.¹⁰ Information operations, military deception, and military information support operations were also covered in chapter two.¹¹ In the 2022 version, explanations of these concepts and capabilities are removed. The 2022 version of FM 3-0 outlines a Clausewitzian view of the nature of war in the introduction by highlighting war's political purpose, its inherent chaos and uncertainty, and that it is a human endeavor.¹² It also adds *informational considerations* to mission variables, defined as “aspects of the human, information, and physical dimensions that affect how humans and automated systems derive meaning from, use, act upon, and are impacted by information.”¹³ However, the only significant application of operational art and the human domain in the 2022 version of FM 3-0 is in a two-page section on defeat and stability mechanisms.¹⁴ This lack of focus on operational art, human, and informational factors in warfare is consistent with the American military's preference for high-tech, high-cost, materiel solutions to solve strategic, operational, and tactical problems.

Sun Tzu's Art of War

The global influence of Sun Tzu's *Art of War* on strategists, operational artists, and tacticians cannot be overstated. A Jesuit missionary, Father Joseph-Marie Amiot, brought Sun Tzu's work to the West with his 1782 translation into French.¹⁵ It was first translated into English by Lionel Giles in 1910 and then by Samuel B. Griffith in 1963. However, it has guided military thought in East Asia for millennia. Edward O'Dowd and Arthur Waldron stated that “the strategic patterns based on Sun Tzu's writing are deeply embedded in the thinking of Sinicized Asian nations.”¹⁶ Many Western military professionals have a cursory and superficial understanding of Sun Tzu's work. Military scholars must delve deep into the historical, cultural, and



Carl Philipp Gottfried von Clausewitz, 1 June 1780 (Image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)

philosophical context of fourth century BCE China to understand the unique characteristics of Chinese operational art espoused in *Art of War*. Understanding the diverse and sometimes conflicting Chinese philosophies of Taoism, Confucianism, and legalism sheds light on Sun Tzu's sometimes cryptic maxims.

To decode the *Art of War*, the four key concepts of *tao* (often translated as “the Way”), *shih, cheng*, and *ch'i* should be appreciated. The first paragraphs of *Art of War* state, “Warfare is the greatest affair of the state, the basis of life and death, the tao to survival or extinction.”¹⁷ Sun Tzu lists the tao as the first of the five factors a general officer needs to evaluate before embarking on a campaign. He goes on to elaborate that the tao causes soldiers to be fully in accord with their leader, not fearing danger, and willing to die with him.¹⁸ This would imply that the tao consists of the intangible moral force or spirit that binds a nation or army together. In Western military thought this is known as *esprit de corps*, morale, or fighting spirit. Recognizing the tao of war is directly related to understanding the human dimension of warfare. In another paragraph, Sun Tzu states, “Warfare is the tao of deception. When capable, display incapability. When committed to



Qing-era representation of Sun Tzu (Image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)

employing your forces, feign inactivity.”¹⁹ The art of deception resides fully in the human dimension and psychology. Deception and defeat both take place in the mind of the national leader, commander, or military forces. This tao of warfare in Sun Tzu’s operational art places priority on intangible effects and ways to exploit the human dimension.

Shih is the next concept that is key to understanding *Art of War*. In Ralph D. Sawyer’s translation, shih is translated as strategic power. “After estimating the advantages in accord with what you have heard, put it into effect with strategic power (shih).”²⁰ Timothy L. Thomas translates it as strategic advantage.²¹ This concept is often compared to the sudden onrush of water coming down from mountains after a rainstorm or water bursting from a break in a large dam. It creates an immense reservoir of potential energy. When released at the right time and turned into kinetic energy, it creates an irresistible flow, allowing a general or political leader to prevail over his enemies. Using the well-known axiom from *Art of War* of knowing yourself, your enemy, and the terrain, a leader can find or create advantages to exploit.²² Shih is comparable to the current focus in the U.S. Army’s MDO concept of creating and exploiting relative advantages.²³ However, for Sun Tzu, this is not done just by

looking for materiel, firepower, or terrain advantages. It is equally important to create strategic, operational, and tactical advantages to exploit in the human dimension using your own troops, people, and political leaders as well as those of allies and adversaries.

The concepts of cheng and ch’i are also crucial for understanding Sun Tzu’s operational art. These concepts are similar to the dualistic Taoist ideas of yin and yang. Cheng refers to orthodox, regular, conventional, substantial, or usual ways and means of solving military problems. Ch’i denotes unorthodox, irregular, unconventional, or unusual ways and means.²⁴ Like two sides of the same coin, cheng and ch’i need to be used together to gain victory. This passage from *Art of War* shows how they interact.

In battle one engages with the cheng and gains victory through the ch’i. Thus, one who excels at sending forth the ch’i is as inexhaustible as Heaven, as unlimited as the Yangtze and Yellow rivers ... The notes do not exceed five, but the changes of the five notes can never be fully heard. The colors do not exceed five, but the changes of the five colors can never be completely seen. The flavors do not exceed five, but the changes of the five flavors can never be completely tasted. In warfare the strategic configurations of power do not exceed the cheng and ch’i, but the changes of the ch’i and cheng can never be completely exhausted. The ch’i and cheng mutually produce each other, just like an endless cycle.

Who can exhaust them?²⁵

Comparable to the science and art of war, the physical and human dimensions, or tangible and intangible forces, the skillful use of mutually supporting cheng and ch’i is essential for Sun Tzu’s concept of operational art.

One often-quoted maxim from *Art of War* is “subjugating the enemy’s army without fighting is the true pinnacle of excellence.”²⁶ When thinking operationally or tactically, this approach seems very difficult and unreasonable. If forces have already been committed to battle, how can operational or tactical commanders win without fighting? However, from a strategic perspective, Sun Tzu’s proverb makes a great deal of sense. Sun Tzu emphasizes that it is most preferred to attack the enemy’s plans, then their allies, then their army, and lastly their fortified cities.²⁷ The first two, plans and allies, are strategic level objectives that attack an enemy’s

moral center of gravity. O’Dowd and Waldron identify this as attacking the political harmony of an adversary. They argue the Chinese way of winning without fighting was to use psychological warfare to sow chaos in the enemy’s society, economy, domestic politics, alliances, and military readiness. If an adversary’s state was in chaos, the legitimacy of the political leadership would be called into question, making them vulnerable to internal rebellion or invasion.²⁸ The Chinese Communist Party’s (CCP) current strategy seems to be very focused on the psychological human and information dimensions at the strategic level.²⁹ The American strategy of deterrence through strength, alliances, and forward-deployed forces is another example of a psychological strategy designed to prevent an adversary from deciding to use force in the first place.

In summary, most military professionals read Sun Tzu’s *Art of War* to glean the universal strategic, operational, and tactical concepts that still apply to warfare today. However, to truly comprehend how the work informs Chinese thought, we need to appreciate the fundamental philosophical context and concepts developed in China 2,500 years ago.³⁰ This contextual knowledge is further illustrated by China’s thirty-six stratagems.

China’s Thirty-Six Stratagems

The following selections from China’s thirty-six stratagems will show the Chinese preference for exploiting the human dimension by using espionage, deception, manipulation, psychological warfare, and information warfare. The thirty-six stratagems are a collection of expressions on political and military strategy dating back to predynastic China, passed down through written and oral histories. They were not compiled into a single volume until sometime in the seventeenth century CE when an anonymous scholar published them in a book called *Secret Art of War: Thirty-Six Strategies*.³¹ Sun Haichen’s *The Wiles of War* and Harro Von Senger’s *The Book of Stratagems* deliver two comprehensive English versions with various historical vignettes and analysis to help us understand these distinctly Chinese proverbs. The following list shows some of the most relevant stratagems illustrating the current CCP strategic approach and possibilities for PLA operational art.

Strategic Stratagems Using Elements of National Power

Borrow a corpse for the soul’s return. This implies taking an institution, technology, method, historical narrative, or ideology that has been forgotten or discarded and revive it to boost the morale and fervor of the population and the troops.³² A prime example of this is the powerful “century of humiliation” historical narrative that blames Western colonialism for the deterioration of dynastic China and the civil chaos that followed. The CCP and PLA continue to use this narrative to inspire nationalistic achievement and competition with the West as well as justify their Taiwan reunification policy.

Observe the fire on the opposite shore. Here the strategist recommends a delay in entering a conflict until the other parties become exhausted by fighting amongst each other. Then go in at full strength to finish them off or gain the dominant position.³³ Xi Jinping’s relationship with Vladimir Putin is an example of this. Xi is giving Putin tacit support but watching patiently while Russia and NATO exhaust themselves in Ukraine.

Kill with a borrowed knife. The idea here is to cause damage to the enemy via a third party.³⁴ Possible use of this stratagem would be the CCP using Russia, North Korea, Iran, or potentially a terrorist group to distract the United States or dilute any response to a Taiwan invasion.

Hide your dagger behind a smile. This stratagem is the charm offensive. Ingratiate yourself with your adversary. When their trust is gained, move against them in secret.³⁵ This is clearly demonstrated by China’s neo-colonialist economic policy and Belt and Road projects that have tied into the global economy and influenced Western business to invest under Chinese rules. The current American crisis with cyber security, Chinese data mining, and semiconductor manufacturing is a result of trusting the PRC did not have malevolent intentions until it was too late.

The cicada sloughs its skin. This implies either leaving one’s distinctive traits behind and becoming inconspicuous or masquerading as something or someone else.³⁶ It is demonstrated by the PRCs transition from a communist command economy to state capitalism with a market export economy in the 1980s. Most Western scholars expected China’s political system to liberalize



Photo of Mao Zedong sitting, originally published in *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-Tung* circa 1955. (Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)

along with its economic policy, however that clearly did not happen.

Loot a burning house. When a country is plagued by internal problems such as disease, famine, corruption, and crime, it is ill-equipped to deal with an outside threat. If one uses the “hide your dagger behind a smile” stratagem to start the fire or add fuel to it, so much the better.³⁷ This stratagem is a key component of the PRC’s information and cyber warfare efforts. As the world struggles with the COVID-19 pandemic, governance crises, cyber security, misinformation, inflation, debt, and economic crises, China continues to leverage data collection and use information and cyber warfare to inflame the West’s woes. Chinese technology companies, pervasive in foreign markets, are increasingly integrating with the PRCs data storage, processing, control, and security systems. This exposes huge swaths of the world’s population to a broad spectrum of Chinese data accumulation, espionage, and manipulation.³⁸ According to Matt Pottinger, the primary aim of China’s strategy of information dominance is “dismantling American influence around the globe.”³⁹ By using a combination of these stratagems, the CCP is doing everything it can to strengthen the courage, will, and morale of its own people and troops, while weakening that of its adversaries.

Operational and Tactical Stratagems

Besiege Wei to rescue Zhao. When the enemy is too strong in one place, attack so they will be forced to defend one another. Avoid the enemy’s strength; instead, strike at their weakness elsewhere and prepare to ambush them. This will exhaust your enemy and will give you a much higher chance of success.⁴⁰ A possible use of this stratagem would be to facilitate a crisis in another part of the world or Pacific region like the Korean peninsula to tie up American forces before China makes its move to seize Taiwan.

Clamor in the east, attack in the west. Even when face-to-face with an enemy, surprise can still be employed by attacking where they least expect it. Create an expectation in the enemy’s mind using a feint or demonstration. Manipulate the enemy to focus their resources elsewhere before attacking an inadequately defended area.⁴¹ This tactical stratagem is very similar to the more operational besiege Wei to rescue Zhao stratagem.

Lure the tiger down from the mountain. Never directly attack an opponent whose advantage is derived from their position. Instead, lure them away from their position to separate them from their source of strength.⁴² In any conflict with China, American forces would start at a disadvantage due to extended sea and ground lines of communication.

Climb up the roof and remove the ladder. With baits and deceptions, lure the enemy into complex terrain and cut off their lines of communication and escape routes. To save themselves, they must fight both their own forces and the elements of nature.⁴³ A good example of this is from the Korean War where PLA forces attacked during the winter and enveloped the United Nations forces after they reached the limits of their operational reach in northern Korea.⁴⁴

Seize the opportunity to lead the sheep away. While carrying out operations, be flexible enough to take advantage of any opportunity that presents itself, however small, to create a relative advantage.⁴⁵ Similar to “loot a burning house,” this stratagem refers to seizing every opportunity that presents itself like luring allies away from your enemy.

Bolt the door to seize the thief. When planning to deliver the final blow to the enemy, plan carefully for success; do not rush into action. First, cut off the enemy’s escape routes and any routes for external aid.⁴⁶ During the Chinese civil war and the Korean War, the PLA showed

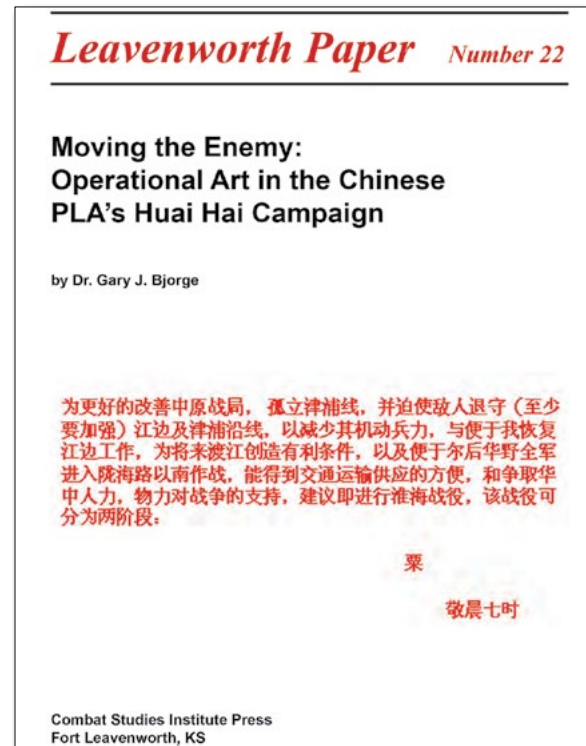
clever use of these six operational and tactical stratagems. Avoiding enemy strengths, using maneuver to surround enemy forces, finding, creating, and exploiting relative advantages, and the use of feints and demonstrations are all critical components of Chinese operational art.

Chinese Operational Art

In his work, *Moving the Enemy*, Gary Bjorge argues that operational art is not about technology; rather, it is about human thought. The practice of operational art requires the intangible factors of experience, instinct, and intuition. “The ability to visualize, anticipate, create, and seize opportunities does not reside in a computer data base.”⁴⁷ He goes on to show how the PLA under Mao Zedong practiced this human-dimension-focused operational art throughout the decisive Huai Hai Campaign (1948–1949) during the Chinese civil war. This large campaign involved over a million military forces. When the campaign was over, the PLA had defeated five nationalist armies and was directly threatening the nationalist capital of Nanjing. Later, in 1949, Chiang Kai-shek and his nationalists were forced to flee to the island of Formosa (Taiwan).⁴⁸ Although the American-supported nationalists had a larger military force, greater air power, and better equipment, the communists had many human dimension advantages they exploited very effectively.

One critical advantage the communists had was political and military cohesion. They effectively used the Japanese invasion and communist ideology to politically unify areas they controlled and their military forces. The Huai Hai campaign was led by Chen Yi, Liu Bocheng, Su Yu, Tan Zhenlin, and Deng Xiaoping. Since these leaders fought together for decades, they developed a high level of trust and confidence in each other. Mao trusted these operational commanders and allowed them to plan and execute the campaign with little interference.⁴⁹ On the other hand, the nationalists were plagued by factionalism, communist infiltration, and corruption. Chiang Kai-shek was a micromanager who held most decisions at his level. He also did not appoint an operational command to oversee all land, maritime, and air forces involved in the campaign.⁵⁰ This human dimension difference allowed the communists to make decisions and maneuver to positions of advantage much more rapidly than the deliberate and inflexible nationalist forces.

A second advantage for the communists was better information and intelligence that allowed them to maneuver



Read *Moving the Enemy: Operational Art in the Chinese PLA's Huai Hai Campaign* by Dr. Gary J. Bjorge (Leavenworth Paper #22) online at https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/combats-studies-institute/csi-books/bjorge_huai.pdf.

their forces at a higher tempo than the nationalists. Due to communist collaborators within the nationalist headquarters and Army commands, the PLA knew where the nationalist armies were, where they were moving to, and how they would react. They used this knowledge, combined with speed, timing, and a flexible logistics system to gain a numerical superiority at decisive points during their offensives around Xuzhou. Communist logistics were not tied to rail and major road networks like the nationalists. Since Xuzhou was a major north-south and east-west railroad junction, it was critical for the nationalists to maintain control of it. When the communist forces had the nationalist Seventh Army surrounded east of Xuzhou, Chiang Kai-shek sent two more armies to relieve the Seventh. The communist commanders anticipated this and prepared a plan to surround and defeat the two other nationalist armies sent north. Bjorge relates this back to Sun Tzu and the concept of shih or strategic advantage outlined earlier. The communists were able to recognize the potential energy (shih) in the situation and maneuver their forces to surround and annihilate three nationalist armies instead of just one.⁵¹

The PLA leaders during the Huai Hai campaign were well versed in modern military theory as well as Sun Tzu's *Art of War*. As Bjorge reasons, they understood human psychology and how to motivate and manipulate others. They knew how to use the right combinations of cheng (fixing/holding) and ch'i (maneuver/surprise) forces to proactively move the enemy, instead of moved by him.⁵² This demonstrates a high level of operational art that is focused on exploiting the human dimension.

In the current global environment, the PRC continues to apply its legacy of operational art handed down from Sun Tzu. Qiao and Wang's 1999 book, *Unrestricted Warfare*, put the world on notice that a resurgent China was ready to challenge the American led world order using all means at their disposal. However, this willingness to exploit the internet, financial institutions, media, trade policy, the United Nations, and other global organizations is not anything new.⁵³ It is just a modern extension of Chinese strategic and operational art that looks creatively at all domains, dimensions, and elements of national power to achieve its strategic goals.

Conclusion

The modern American military can afford to focus on high-cost technology-centric solutions, but that may

not always be the case. As demonstrated recently in Ukraine, the Army with the greatest amount of high-tech weaponry does not always win. Morale, cohesion, training, leadership, intelligence, information, deception, and many other intangible and uncertain human factors are at play when the instrument of war is unleashed. There is much we can learn from Chinese military history and theory when it comes to the human dimension and practicing the art of deception. China's preference for low-cost human-centric solutions comes from thousands of years of practicing warfare. Now they have the resources to invest in high-tech weaponry as well. If they are successful at combining the latest weapons technology with their human-centric operational art, China will be a formidable foe on the battlefield.

Rather than just a cursory reading of Sun Tzu's *Art of War*, Western military professionals must do more to learn from China's immense experience so we can know our adversary. U.S. Army doctrine should expand on the ways Army forces and commanders can exploit the human dimension during competition, crisis, and conflict. Finally, the U.S. Army needs to reincorporate operational art into its capstone doctrine with a focus on the human and information dimensions, operational and tactical deception, and defeat and stability mechanisms. ■

Notes

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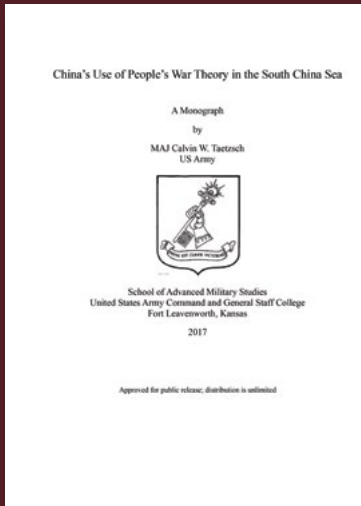
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Military Review Recommends



China's Use of People's War Theory in the South China Sea

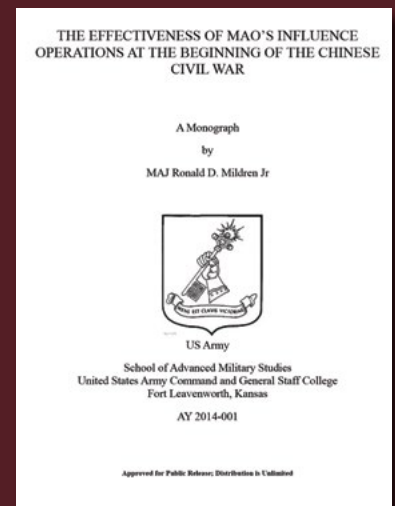
Maj. Calvin W. Taetzsch, U.S. Army

On 3 August 2016, in response to the Permanent Court of Arbitration ruling against China's South China Sea claims, China warned the international community of its preparations for a "people's war at sea." Such recent statements underscore the significance of this study, and emphasize the importance of a thorough examination of China's employment of People's War Theory. This monograph uses a structured focused approach to a case study of the 2012 Scarborough Shoal standoff to answer six research questions. The first is, what does a "peoples war at sea" look like? The second, what elements of people's war theory are present within China's Military Strategy? The third, what is the relationship between China's military limitations and its pursuit of people's war theory in the South China Sea? The fourth, how does people's war theory achieve military effects in the South China Sea? The fifth, what is the relationship between international condemnation and China's use of people's war theory in the South China Sea? The sixth, what social, political, or economic triggers drive China's use of people's war theory? To read online, visit <https://cdm16040.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p4013coll3/id/3660>.

The Effectiveness of Mao's Influence Operations at the Beginning of the Chinese Civil War

Maj. Ronald D. Mildren Jr., U.S. Army

As U.S. political leaders look to end the longest war in its history, there will be much reflection on how U.S. military organizations executed counterinsurgency operations. Many of these lessons learned will be captured and codified in future counterinsurgency doctrine. However, the two most fundamental lessons of the many lessons learned by the U.S. Army while combating insurgencies in Iraq and Afghanistan are that no two insurgencies are the same and that the support of the population is necessary for success. To read online, visit <https://cdm16040.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p4013coll3/id/3158>.





Dr. Yussuff examines draftees 21 January 1919 at Camp Devens, Massachusetts. (Photo courtesy of the National Archives)

Selective Service Before the All-Volunteer Force

Dr. Barry M. Stentiford

Chief Warrant Officer 5 Ralph E. Rigby was drafted in 1972 and served continuously on active duty until 2014.¹ With his retirement, the final link between conscription and the Army ended. No soldier currently in the U.S. Army or any military branch has served with or led conscripts. Conversely, when conscription ended in 1973, few soldiers had experience with a completely voluntary force. The

U.S. military adopted the all-volunteer force (AVF) as an alternative to the peacetime use of conscription to make up for recruiting shortfalls. The fiftieth anniversary of the AVF is a good time to reflect on the system of compulsory military service it replaced.

The United States employed conscription—mandatory military service—four times during the twentieth century for a total of thirty-five years. Relying on

individual volunteers rather than using selective service to fill the lower enlisted ranks of the U.S. military in 1973 did not introduce something new in American military history. Mandatory military service at the federal level has been more of an aberration than the norm.² For most of its existence, the Regular Army existed as a peacetime repository of military knowledge around which an expanded wartime army would form. During most of the nineteenth century, wartime expansion came primarily with militia or state-raised volunteer regiments.³ Congress authorized the establishment of temporary federal volunteer regiments during the war with Spain in 1898 and the subsequent Philippine wars. The Nation's sole experiment with conscription before 1917, from 1863 to 1865 during the American Civil War, created as many problems as it attempted to solve. The rise of the National Guard in the decades after the Civil War, codified through the Militia Act of 1903 and the National Defense Act of 1916, changed the paradigm.⁴ Still, the authors of those pieces of legislation never envisioned the National Guard to be sufficient to meet the anticipated manpower demands of a major war.

The Nation developed a successful conscription program during World War I. The Selective Service System provided the basic model of conscription for World War II and the early Cold War. In late 1940, the Nation began peacetime conscription as part of a so-called "Protective Mobilization Plan." This plan was superseded by wartime conscription—for "the duration plus six months"—following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941.⁵ The World War II-era draft lasted until 1947. In 1948, the United States resumed a peacetime draft after it became clear that voluntary enlistments would not generate enough recruits. Initially authorized for two years, Congress intended this post-World War II draft to be a stop-gap measure in anticipation of passing legislation for universal military training (UMT). That legislation stalled, and Congress restarted selective service, initially for two years, but renewable. That conscription from 1948 served not only during peacetime but also during the Korean War (1950–1953) and the Vietnam War (1964–1973).

Americans' first experience with federal conscription occurred during the U.S. Civil War (1861–1865) and was generally considered a failure. Both belligerents employed some form of draft to fill the ranks of their armies. The Confederate government began

conscription in 1862; the U.S. government began conscription the following year with the passage of the Enrollment Act.⁶ All able-bodied white men between the ages of twenty and forty-five were required to register. In the states remaining loyal to the Union, the federal conscription law empowered the Provost Marshal General's Office to use soldiers to compel service by eligible males in the regiments from any state that did not meet its quota of volunteers.⁷ Fewer than 5 percent of soldiers in the U.S. Army entered through conscription. The act authorized a man to pay a substitute \$300 to go in his place, allowing wealthier men to avoid military service and fostering a market for men willing to serve for the right price. The use of soldiers to compel service ran counter to American ideals. Conscription itself was seen as disgraceful; volunteers tended to look down on the drafted soldier, viewing them as "slackers who were not to be trusted under fire" and likely to desert.⁸ Opposition to conscription fueled a deadly riot in New York City that lasted four days in July 1863 and took federal troops to suppress. While generally judged a failure, the Civil War conscription did motivate the states to redouble their efforts to raise their assigned quotas of soldiers through voluntary measures. This was done largely by increasing the incentives for volunteers in the form of cash payouts and bonuses, and even land grants upon completion of service.

With the entrance of the United States into World War I in April 1917, the Nation

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again needed a massive and rapid expansion of the Army to have an impact on the course of the war. After studying the failure of the Civil War conscription, the administration of President Woodrow Wilson crafted a new system to avoid previous errors.⁹ Although the United States declared war against Germany on 6 April 1917, it was not until 19 May that Wilson signed the Selective Service Act of 1917, which was quite different from earlier draft laws.¹⁰ Constitutional authority for conscription came from the language that allowed Congress “to raise and support armies.”¹¹ Anarchist and socialist groups such as the International Workers of the World urged men to avoid registration, arguing that conscription was unconstitutional in that it violated the Thirteenth Amendment’s protection against “involuntary servitude,” but the Supreme Court ruled in 1918 that the Constitution placed no limit on how Congress could raise armies.¹² This ruling provided the constitutional underpinning of mandatory military service for the rest of the century.

Conscription during World War I reflected Progressive-era ideals.¹³ The Progressive movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries sought to use scientific inquiry and technology to make a more rational and orderly society and to correct the ills of modern life. Additionally, many proponents believed conscription would mold men into better citizens. Had the Army relied only on voluntary enlistments, the burden would have fallen more heavily on the patriotic “better classes” while allowing the selfish and the unpatriotic to escape their civic obligations. Many of those volunteers held important roles in the civilian society and economy, and their absence for military service caused inefficiencies. Selective service reflected a bipartisan desire for an orderly and rational society, which meant applying scientific methods to deciding who would fight and who would not. Men would serve where the government needed them, whether on the farm, in industry, or in uniform. Under the 1917 act, boards composed of each registrant’s “friends and neighbors,” not military officers, would decide who would be compelled to serve in the military. In each county or town in the country, a Selective Service Board, informally known as a draft board, was created. Members appointed to boards were, in

REGISTRATION CARD—(Men born on or after April 28, 1897 and on or before February 16, 1897)

SERIAL NUMBER 1. NAME (Print) ORDER NUMBER
 U. 2214 HUDDIE LEDBETTER

2. PLACE OF RESIDENCE (Print)
 604 E 9th ST. N.Y. N.Y. N.Y.
 (Number and street) (Town, township, village, or city) (County) (State)

(THE PLACE OF RESIDENCE GIVEN ON THE LINE ABOVE WILL DETERMINE LOCAL BOARD JURISDICTION; LINE 1 OF REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE WILL BE IDENTICAL)

3. MAILING ADDRESS
 SAME
 (Mailing address if other than place indicated on line 2. If same insert word same)

4. TELEPHONE NONE 5. AGE IN YEARS 53 6. PLACE OF BIRTH FREEPORT
 (Exchange) (Number) (Date of Birth) (Town or county) (State or country)
 1 23 1889 LOUISIANA

7. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PERSON WHO WILL ALERT A NEW YORK ADDRESS
 MARTHA LEDBETTER 604 E 9th ST. N.Y.C.

8. EMPLOYER'S NAME AND ADDRESS
 UNEMPLOYED

9. PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS

(Number and street or R. F. D. number) (Town) (County) (State)

I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE FURNISHED ABOVE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE.
 Huddie Ledbetter

D. No. 16-23409-1 (Revised 8-1-42) (OVER) 16-23409-2 (Register not a signature)

Huddie Ledbetter’s World War II draft card is shown here. The American folk and blues singer-songwriter was better known as “Lead Belly.” (Photo courtesy of the Department of Defense)

theory, local civilians who were respected in their communities, men and women who could evaluate each registrant. Most members served without pay. In North Carolina, to use one example, the state’s Council on Defense ensured the “right men” served on draft boards—white men from the middle and upper classes who supported the prevailing power structure in the state.¹⁴ Normally, Selective Service Board members included local politicians, law enforcement officials, prominent veterans, school officials, medical personnel, business owners, and others who were known in their communities and who, in turn, knew the people well.

Registration with Selective Service for all men between the ages of twenty-one and thirty began on 5 June 1917. In September 1918, the range of ages liable was expanded to eighteen and forty-five. Eventually, twenty-four million men registered. Around three and a half million men failed to register during World War I, which made them subject to trial and punishment under military law rather than civil law. The obligation to register applied not only to citizens but also to resident aliens. Members of the Selective Service Boards were to consider the physical and mental health, intelligence, police record, and education of the young men within their district. Board members were also to consider dependency. Was the man an only child, and did he have parents who would increasingly depend upon him in their old age? Did he have a wife? Did he have children? Were there others depending on him for their

support? At root was whether people would be impoverished or become dependent on the community while the young man was away in the military or, worse, were to die in service.

Another factor that weighed heavily on the decision of who served and who did not was each man's role in the economy. Certain skills and professions were deemed so important to the economy and to the war effort that the act exempted workers who performed these tasks. Farmers and railroad workers, for example, were largely excluded from military service. Other men who worked in trades or professions deemed essential to the war effort, such as machinists or plumbers, were likewise excluded for their skills would be needed to supply the tools of war. Around one hundred thousand men were exempted from conscription during World War I because they worked in shipbuilding, something that caused resentment when it became public.¹⁵ Registrants could apply for recognition as a conscientious objector, but to do so required that the applicant demonstrate that he belonged to a recognized religious denomination with an acknowledged pacifist creed such as the Society of Friends (Quakers) or one of several Amish sects. Such men were not automatically excluded, though, and some were inducted but ideally assigned to positions that did not involve carrying arms. Members of some denominations, such as the Hutterites, received no such recognition and were severely persecuted. One of the most famous American soldiers from the war, Sgt. Alvin York, originally applied for conscientious objector status based on his Christian beliefs. The problem was that his church did not have a tradition of pacifism. He reported for induction while his case was under review, but after discussions with his company commander, he withdrew his application and became an infantryman.¹⁶ The system for accounting for sincere and demonstrated pacifism became more accommodating during World War II and the Vietnam War.

Based on the total military-age male population of a town or county, the Selective Service Board was to select those most suitable to serve to meet its quota. Those men judged most eligible to serve were given a rating of A1 and assigned a number. Men who volunteered for military service—voluntary enlistment was still allowed until the summer of 1918—counted against the quota. On 20 July 1917, the first of a series of lottery-style

drawings was held. Men holding the numbers selected were to report to one of the newly established mobilization camps in early September. Initially, some 180,000 men were selected to serve, but more calls would be coming. About one man in nine of those who registered was eventually conscripted.¹⁷ Men inducted into the Army through Selective Service were termed *selectees* rather than conscripts or draftees.¹⁸ Selectees were not in the Regular Army, in the National Guard, or some sort of reserve. Instead, they were assigned to the Army of the United States and not to any component. Selectees were assigned to all divisions in the Army, accounting for at least 25 percent of the soldiers in the divisions that came from the National Guard by 1918.¹⁹ Most, however, would be assigned to the new National Army divisions. Selectees assigned to the Navy or Marine Corps were designated as Reservists.

The Army based its initial calls for selectees on its ability to provide adequate training facilities and leadership for the new soldiers. New mobilization camps had to be built across the Nation to receive the selectees, such as Camp Devens in Massachusetts and Camp Knox in Kentucky. Perhaps more important than the physical building of camps, Regular Army officers, some National Guard officers, and a smattering of Reserve officers had to be assigned to the camps and the initial group of temporary National Army officers had to be selected and trained. These officers, along with essential noncommissioned officers, had to arrive at the new mobilization camps prior to the arrival of the selectees. Once cadre and selectees were assembled, the process of turning civilians into soldiers could begin. Selectees were expected to serve on active duty until no longer needed by the government, which usually meant discharge for wounds or disease, or at most within six months of the end of the war. Calls from the American public and their elected representatives for discharge shortly after the Armistice was signed on 11 November 1918 meant that very few of the selectees served for more than two years during World War I.

The government and the Army understood that if selective service was to succeed, the conscripted soldier needed to be treated differently than he had been in the past. The use of the term *selectee* rather than *conscript* or *draftee* was, in part, to emphasize that the soldier had been selected to serve rather than forced. The government used newspapers and other media to make the



President Franklin D. Roosevelt signs the Selective Training and Service Act into law on 16 September 1940. (Photo courtesy of the Department of Defense)

public and the selectees themselves take pride in being chosen to serve.²⁰ With Selective Service, involuntary military service became seen as something honorable. Coverage of the selectees in particular and the enlarged wartime Army in general stressed the essentially democratic nature of wartime conscription.²¹ Traditionally in wartime armies raised by the United States, class and ethnicity were often cornerstones on which temporary wartime regiments formed. Selective service would in theory eliminate class and ethnic distinctions that were often apparent in Regular Army, National Guard, and earlier volunteer regiments. In practice, selective service did take a higher percentage of men from the lower strata of society; however, men with high school and even college degrees and whose ancestors had been in this country before the revolution served alongside men with perhaps an eighth-grade education, or who had themselves arrived in this country as immigrants. Although some of the narrative on the essentially democratic nature of conscription was hyperbole, the reality was that men from very different parts of American culture served together. The exception was African American men, who while subject to conscription, were trained at segregated camps and served in segregated units.²²

The Armistice on 11 November 1918 led to the suspension of conscription. Most of the selectees were released back into civilian life within months. In all, the government counted 2,819,296 men who had

been inducted through selective service.²³ Shortly after the war ended, Congress largely dismantled selective service. However, Congress wanted to preserve something of the wartime Army, with the idea that in a future large war, selective service would again be used to fill its ranks. In the National Defense Act of 1920, Congress created the Organized Reserves to preserve the structure of the National Army in a cadre form. The Organized Reserves consisted of units down to battalions that contained most of their officers with reserve commissions but very

few, if any, enlisted men. These units existed to provide partially trained units that in an emergency could rapidly expand to war strength using selective service and complete their training.²⁴ The use of selective service to expand the military during World War I had been successful and remained the model for the next war. With some modifications, especially regarding the length of service a selectee had to serve, the selective service model created when the United States entered World War I would serve the country again when it returned to conscription as the means of manning the military. The model would last until 1973 and remains the model for future conscription.

On 31 July 1940, following Nazi Germany's conquests of Denmark, Norway, the Low Countries, and France, President Franklin D. Roosevelt implemented the Protective Mobilization Plan.²⁵ Under it, Congress granted the president the authority to order the National Guard and Organized Reserves onto active federal service for a year of training. At the same time, the Reserves of the Navy and Marine Corps were also activated. The executive order was issued on 31 August. The first units entered active duty on 16 September 1940, with the last entering at the end of February 1941.²⁶ Concurrent with the mobilization of the National Guard and Reserves, Congress authorized the resumption of selective service—the Nation's first peacetime draft.²⁷ This was done through the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940. This act created a more robust structure than in World War I, creating the Selective Service System—a new federal agency. While a civilian agency, the head of the Selective Service System was a serving Army officer. Initially, all men from



Men line up to register for the draft circa 1918–1920. (Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress)

twenty-one to thirty-five years of age were required to register, with obligatory active service of twelve months for those selected. In a change from conscription in World War I, civilian courts and not military courts would deal with those who failed to register.

The Selective Service System during World War II operated similarly to that of World War I, though the criteria for selection was more specific.²⁸ Selective Service was implemented to induct selectees onto active service to bring Regular Army, National Guard, and especially the battalions of the Organized Reserves to wartime strength. The Organized Reserves divisions went to the mobilization camps, some of which were new while others were refurbished from World War I, and began taking in selectees for training. Selectees were also assigned to the Navy and, eventually, the Marine Corps. The selectees, as well as the guardsmen and reservists, were brought on active service to train intensively, not to enable the Roosevelt administration

to take a more aggressive posture toward the Axis. Under the mobilization, guardsmen, reservists, and selectees were not to deploy outside of the Americas, except to United States possessions such as Hawai'i, the Philippines, and Guam. In a correction to a problem from World War I, federal law guaranteed that selectees could return to their former employment without loss of benefits.²⁹

Selectees soon comprised most of the manpower in the divisions that had been part of the Organized Reserves; the divisions numbered seventy-five and higher. Because the wartime strength of companies in the U.S. Army at the time was about two hundred men, which was almost three times the peacetime strength, selectees soon accounted for most of the manpower in the lower ranks of Regular Army and National Guard divisions as well. As in World War I, throughout the years of conscription, selectees were assigned "without component," meaning that whatever the origins of the

division to which they were assigned, they served in the Army of the United States, and not in the Regular Army, National Guard, or Reserves. The same did not hold for the Navy or Marine Corps as Congress did not create an institution like the Army of the United States for the Navy, and thus, selectees in those branches were again designated as “reservists.” Selectees assigned to the Regular Army and National Guard divisions initially complained that they were treated poorly by soldiers who had volunteered to serve, but by the autumn of 1941, selectees were a plurality of all Regular and National Guard divisions and even a majority in some divisions.³⁰ The numerical dominance of selectees became more pronounced over the years of the war.

In July 1941, when the year of military training mandated by the Selective Service and Training Act of 1940 was halfway through, the Service Extension Act extended for six months the time reservists, guardsmen, and selectees were to spend on active duty, meaning they would have to serve for eighteen months rather than one year.³¹ The measure passed Congress by a single vote. Before the entrance of the United States into the war, almost 922,000 men had been conscripted. The 7 December 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor and subsequent declarations of war by the United States meant that all soldiers, sailors, and marines, no matter how they entered military service, were to serve for the duration of the war plus six months, unless released sooner.³² At the same time, geographic restrictions on the employment of selectees were dropped. Conscription also encouraged more men to volunteer, which gave a man more control over where he served, and thus the Army Air Forces, Navy, and Marines, as

well as the Army Service Forces, tended to get more volunteers. The practice of allowing voluntary enlistments to continue was seen as inefficient, and military leaders urged its discontinuance, and such enlistments were ended in December 1942. In all, almost twelve million men entered the military through selective service during World War II, with about eight million of them serving in the Army. Authority to involuntarily induct men into the armed forces continued after Germany and Japan surrendered in 1945, with 183,383 men conscripted in 1946.³³

Members of Selective Service Boards were like those from World War I. Fifty-four state, district, and territorial boards oversaw the system, while the bulk of the 184,000 or so board members served on one of 6,442 local boards and seventy-two appeals boards. Again, most served without pay. Boards served a county or town, with an additional board for every 30,000 residents. State and territory adjutants general played an important role in making sure the system functioned in their respective state or territory. Maj. Gen. Lewis

B. Hershey, who had been involved in prewar mobilization planning, was confirmed as director on 31 July 1941.³⁴ His name became synonymous with Selective Service, since he would oversee the system until he was reassigned in 1970.

Following the end of the war, Selective Service operated in reduced form, pending decisions on the size of the postwar military establishment. President Harry S. Truman and military leaders such as Gen. George C. Marshall expected Congress to pass legislation for UMT, which would require almost all eighteen-year-old men to spend a year with the Army.³⁵ After their year



A World War II recruiting poster, attempting to appeal to patriotism, encourages men to enlist rather than be drafted. (Photo courtesy of the Department of Defense)



A soldier of the 12th Armored Division stands guard over a group of Nazi prisoners circa April 1945. President Harry S. Truman issued Executive Order 9981 in July 1948 banning racial discrimination in the armed forces to help pave the way for the ill-fated universal military training. (Photo courtesy of the National Archives)

on active service, most would be assigned to the general reserve, unless they opted to join the Regular Army, Navy, Marine Corps, National Guard, or Organized Reserves. Men in the general reserve would be liable for recall to active service in the event of war for six years.³⁶ However, political opposition to UMT due to its cost, utility, purpose, and the issue of racial segregation meant that the likelihood of it passing in 1947 or 1948 was poor.³⁷ The potential for African American leaders to oppose any form of mandatory military service in a segregated military was part of the reason Truman issued Executive Order 9981 in July 1948 banning racial discrimination in the armed forces.³⁸

Authority for conscription was ended by Congress on 31 March 1947.³⁹ However, voluntary recruiting failed to bring the military to its authorized strength. As a stop-gap measure, Congress passed the Selective Service Act of 1948, which was initially to last for two

years.⁴⁰ Under the new act, peacetime selectees were to serve for twenty-one months on active duty, with an option either to serve an additional twelve months on active duty, or thirty-six months in a reserve status. Conversely, a man liable for conscription could voluntarily enlist in the Regular Army, Navy, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard for four years, or in a reserve component for six, and not be drafted. The secretary of the Army spelled out his vision of the peacetime Army and the Selective Service's role in an article published in the October 1948 edition of *Military Review*. He believed that, based on voluntary recruiting, the numbers of selectees would be about thirty thousand a month.⁴¹ Truman and others continued to hope UMT would be adopted, and selective service ended. However, the political difficulties with UMT could not be surmounted, and instead, Congress continually extended selective service until 1973. The initial annual draft calls were



Enlistees for the Florida Army National Guard, among other branches, are sworn into the military by Cmdr. John Fay, executive officer for the U.S. Navy Blue Angels, on the football field at Florida State University's Doak Campbell Stadium in Tallahassee prior to kickoff 22 November 2022. (Photo by Sgt. Spencer Rhodes, U.S. Army)

small because voluntary enlistments were allowed, with selective service only to fill recruiting shortfalls. Around twenty thousand men were drafted in 1948 and half that in 1949, a far cry from the million or more called each year during World War II. Almost all selectees went into the Army.

The peacetime Army after World War II broke from previous American tradition in that it was to be large. As in World War II, selectees were assigned without component and technically served in the Army of the United States. The peacetime standing army consisted of Regular Army formations augmented with selectees. The presence of selectees in the Regular Army divisions meant that the number of officers on active duty had to be expanded beyond the authorized number of officers holding Regular Army commissions, which was based on the number of enlisted men in the Regular Army. As a result, many officers on active duty from World War II until 1980 served under either a Reserve or Army the United States commission. The National Guard and the

newly fleshed-out U.S. Army Reserve, which replaced the Organized Reserves, were envisioned as a strategic reserve to be mobilized only during a major war. Voluntary enlistment in the Regular Army was for three or four years, whereas drafted soldiers served initially for twenty-one months, later extended to two years. In the two world wars, selectees were required to serve as long as the government required them but not longer than six months after the end of the war. In the post-World War II conscription, the two-year obligation for service for selectees remained unchanged even during the Korean and Vietnam Wars.

The draft calls for fiscal year 1949 numbered fewer than ten thousand because the military, while larger than previous peacetime establishments, had greatly shrunk since the end of the war, and voluntary enlistments filled most positions. Truman's decision to defend South Korea against the North Korean invasion that began on 25 June 1950 led to greatly enlarged draft calls, with over half a million men conscripted

in 1951.⁴² Many mobilized National Guard units were far below authorized strength. To bring the Army up to the strength needed to fight the war and deter the Soviets from any aggression in Europe, a million and a half men were drafted from 1950 through 1953.⁴³ The Army wanted to use selectees to fill the understrength Regular Army and National Guard units and to prevent the war in Korea from absorbing all of America's reserve forces. Leaders feared the war was a feint before a main Communist thrust into Western Europe, and so six of the National Guard divisions mobilized served in the United States as a strategic backfill or in Europe. The two National Guard divisions sent to Korea entered combat near the end of 1951, after the war had settled into a stalemate.⁴⁴ Throughout 1952, guardsmen were rotated out of those divisions and replaced with selectees.⁴⁵

A pattern soon set in. During peacetime, voluntary enlistments were high enough that annual draft calls were low. In the early 1960s, talk of ending conscription became more common as the population of military-age men continued to grow. In 1954, shortly after the end of fighting in the Korean War, 54 percent of men inducted were selectees. By 1961, just 22 percent were. In 1964, right before the United States became heavily involved in Vietnam, only 11 percent of soldiers on active duty came in through conscription. Because the draft quotas were so low, Selective Service Boards were given a host of reasons to allow potential selectees to defer or avoid conscription, such as marriage, the pursuit of a college education, other service, and careers seen as economically important. The result was that conscription fell ever more heavily on poor whites and, later, blacks and other minorities. Communities used the draft to rid themselves of idlers and minor delinquents in the belief that military discipline might reform them, and if not, at least they would no longer be the community's problem. For these and other reasons, some military and civilian leaders began to question if conscription was necessary. If intelligence standards were lowered, and pay for the lower enlisted ranks increased, the argument went, then conscription could be done away with entirely in peacetime. While this argument had some merit, it avoided the issue of the added financial cost of raising the pay for first-term enlistees across the force, the impact on combat effectiveness of lowered

standards for enlistment, and the influence conscription played in motivating voluntary enlistments.⁴⁶

Unlike wartime conscription, voluntary enlistments continued throughout the post-World War II draft, and in most years, the bulk of men came in voluntarily. Conscription spurred voluntary enlistment in the Regular Army, as selectees had less say in the type of duties they would be assigned, whereas voluntary enlistees had some control. Conscription also inspired many men to enlist in the National Guard or reserve of any branch. However, the reserve components found recruiting former selectees into their ranks difficult, as most men who had completed their mandatory service had little desire or incentive to continue service in a reserve component. At the same time, when draft calls fell, as in the late 1950s, fewer men sought to join the Guard or reserves to avoid the draft.⁴⁷ Women were not liable for conscription. They could, however, voluntarily join the Women's Army Corps or the Army Nurse Corps if qualified. When the war in Vietnam involved the military ever more deeply, the annual draft calls increased, peaking in 1966 with 382,010 inducted. As selectees had less say over where they served, a greater percentage ended up in the infantry, in Vietnam, and in combat. As a result, conscripts were overrepresented among casualties. In 1965, 28 percent of combat deaths in Vietnam were among conscripts; the percentage rose to 34 percent in 1966 and 57 percent in 1967.⁴⁸ The two-year commitment of conscripted soldiers created inefficiencies for the Army during war. After completing his basic and follow-on training, a drafted soldier was usually sent to Vietnam for one calendar year. Upon his return from Vietnam, he usually had around eight months of further mandatory service, an insufficient period for him to be of much use to his gaining unit.

The movement to end conscription had a long gestation. The Army had been planning for its end for more than a decade, although the war in Vietnam delayed implementing a return to total dependence on voluntary enlistments. President Richard M. Nixon saw the unfairness of the system that largely allowed middle-class men to avoid service, and so in 1969, replaced many of the deferments of the Johnson years with a return to a lottery, where in theory the burden of military service would fall equally on all able-bodied men. Some deferments remained, for hardship, certain occupations, conscientious objectors, clergy, and high

school and college students. A student deferment was only temporary, and Nixon argued for ending student deferments. One result was a large increase of opposition to the war, and not coincidentally conscription, on college campuses, as men in college now had a greater chance of receiving the call. Antidraft demonstrations became common while growing opposition to the war ended the national consensus on conscription. An estimated 210,000 American men resisted the draft during the Vietnam War—a number not out of line with earlier wars—with some thirty thousand emigrating, usually to Canada or Sweden, to avoid conscription.⁴⁹ With the winding down of American involvement in the Vietnam War, the impetus to end the draft was plausible, at least during peacetime. The Gates Committee created by Nixon to study the issue reported that with increased pay and other reforms, voluntary recruits could be enticed in numbers sufficient for the peacetime Army.⁵⁰

In 1971, Nixon signed legislation establishing the AVF. That September, Congress extended the government's authority to conscript into 1973, but the end was in sight. The AVF concept was originally envisioned as a peacetime manning process only, with selective service retained in structure to provide men during war. The draft call in 1973 was the lowest ever, 646 selectees, and authority for conscription ended that June when Congress did not extend it. The Selective Service System remained in existence, though in truncated form.⁵¹ With the ending of the draft, all military service became voluntary, and all service was in a particular component—Regular Army, Army National Guard, or Army Reserve. The era of conscription had ended, at least for the peacetime Army. In 1980, Congress passed legislation requiring all men between the ages of eighteen and twenty-six to register with Selective Service. Whether conscription will return remains an open question. ■

Notes

1. Reshema Sherlock, "Last Continuously Serving Draftee Retires after 42 Years of Service," Army.mil, 29 October 2014, accessed 17 July 2023, https://www.army.mil/article/137112/last_continuously_serving_draftee_retires_after_42_years_of_service#:~:text=Begin!,1972%2C%20during%20the%20Vietnam%20era.

2. Compulsory service in the militia for almost all free English men was the norm in most colonies, although as these societies became larger and more complex, the militia acted more as a pool from which men could be compelled either through enticements or force to serve. For more on this phenomenon, see Jack S. Radabaugh, "The Militia of Colonial Massachusetts," *Military Affairs* 18, no. 1 (1954): 1–18, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1982703>; Michael D. Doubler, *I Am the Guard: A History of the Army National Guard, 1636–2000* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office [GPO], 2001), 14–21; John K. Mahon, *History of the Militia and National Guard* (New York: Macmillan, 1983), 14–26; and Harold E. Selesky's *War and Society in Colonial Connecticut* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), 3–47. For the federal concept of the militia, especially for its federal role, see the "Militia of the United States: An Act More Effectually to Provide for the National Defence by Establishing an [sic] Uniform Militia throughout the United States," in U.S. Congress, *U.S. Statutes at Large, Volume 1 (1789–1799), 1st through 5th Congress* (Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1845), 271–74, accessed 26 June 2023, <https://www.loc.gov/item/lsl-v1/>.

3. See the current author's *Army Expansions: Augmenting the Regular Army during War* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2022), 21–55.

4. "An Act to Promote the Efficiency of the Militia, and for Other Purposes," *Statutes at Large of the United States of America*, 32, no. 1 (1904): 774–80; "An Act for Making Further and More

Effectual Provisions for the National Defense, and for Other Purposes," *Statutes at Large of the United States of America* 39, no. 1 (1917): 166–217.

5. Selective Training and Service Act of 1940, 50a U.S.C. §§ 302-315 (amended 13 December 1941).

6. "An Act for Enrolling and Calling Out the National Forces, and for Other Purposes," Cong. Globe, 37th Cong. 3rd Sess., Ch. 74, 75 (3 March 1863). For more on the Civil War draft, see Marvin A. Kreidberg and Merton G. Henry, *History of Military Mobilization in the United States Army, 1775–1945*, Department of the Army Pamphlet 20-212 (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, November 1955), 104–13, accessed 26 June 2023, https://history.army.mil/html/books/104/104-10/CMH_Pub_104-10.pdf.

7. James Geary, *We Need Men: The Union Draft in the Civil War* (Ithaca, NY: Northern Illinois University Press, 1991), 65–66.

8. *Ibid.*, 74.

9. See Lewis B. Hershey, *Outline of Historical Background of Selective Service* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 1960), 6–7. Much of the understanding of the errors of the Civil War draft were compiled in a report by Brig. Gen. James Oakes in 1866 and then forgotten until World War I, when it was rediscovered. Among Oakes's recommendations were no substitutes, no bounties for volunteers, and especially that the entire process be managed and run by civilians at the local level.

10. Selective Draft Act of 1917, Pub. L. No. 65-12, 40 Stat. 76 (1917).

11. Separate constitutional support for conscription comes from the idea of the federalized militia, in effect arguing that the conscripted soldier is a federalized militiaman. However, federal conscription since the Civil War was not implemented through the state militia structure. Also, federalized militia can only

"execute the Laws of the Union, suppress Insurrections and repel Invasions." U.S. Const. art. I, § 8, cl. 12. While arguably a declaration of war is an act of law, and thus sending conscripted soldiers abroad is to "execute the Laws of the Union," such an argument would not work in an undeclared war, as in Korea and Vietnam. U.S. Const. art. I, § 8, cl. 15.

12. *Arver v. United States* [Selective Draft Law Cases], 245 U.S. 366 (1918). The ruling was based on the history of compulsory military service in the colonial and national periods, as well as the meaning of the United States as a sovereign nation, as much as on the wording in the Constitution. For an opposing view, see Leon Friedman, "Conscription and the Constitution: The Original Understanding," *Michigan Law Review* 67, no. 8 (1969): 1493–1552. Friedman argued that the Supreme Court erred and that the Founders never intended to empower the federal government to conscript men into the military.

13. The standard work on conscription during the First World War is Christopher Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

14. Nathan K. Finney, "All War Arrangements Are but Schools in Patience: The North Carolina Council of Defense and the Associational State, 1917–1919" (PhD diss., Duke University, 2022), 72–121, accessed 26 June 2023, <https://hdl.handle.net/10161/25249>.

15. Hershey, *Outline of Historical Background of Selective Service*, 8.

16. Douglas V. Mastriano, *Alvin York: A New Biography of the Hero of the Argonne* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2014), 21–42. Chapter 3, "At War with the Army," covers the issue of whether York believed serving as a combat soldier aligned with his Christian faith.

17. John S. D. Eisenhower and Joanne T. Eisenhower, *Yanks: The Epic Story of the American Army in World War I* (New York: Free Press, 2001), 25.

18. Russell Weigley, *History of the United States Army* (New York: Macmillan, 1967), 372.

19. Les Andrii Melnyk, "A True National Guard: The Development of the National Guard and Its Influence on Defense Legislation, 1915–1933" (PhD diss., City University of New York, 2004).

20. John A. Boyd, "America's Army of Democracy: The National Army, 1917–1919," *Army History*, no. 109 (Fall 2018): 11–12.

21. *Ibid.*

22. For more on the experience of African Americans with Selective Service and in the Army, see Chad L. Williams, *Torchbearers of Democracy: African American Soldiers in the World War I Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 52–60, 105–144.

23. "Induction Statistics," Selective Service System, accessed 3 April 2023, <https://www.sss.gov/history-and-records/induction-statistics/>.

24. Forrest L. Marion and Jon T. Hoffman, *Forging a Total Force: The Evolution of the Guard and Reserve* (Washington, DC: Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2018), 23.

25. Mark Skinner Watson, *Chief of Staff: Prewar Plan and Preparation* (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1991), 26–30.

26. Exec. Order No. 8530, 5 Fed. Reg. 3501 (4 September 1940).

27. The standard work on conscription since World War II is George Q. Flynn, *The Draft, 1940–1973* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1993), 88–258.

28. Selective Training and Service Act of 1940 (aka Burke-Wadsworth Act), Public Law No. 76-783, 54 Stat. 885 (1940).

29. Hershey, *Outline of Historical Background of Selective Service*, 10.

30. Memorandum for the Assistant Secretary of War, 24 October 1941, at the Ike Skelton Combined Arms Research Library. The memorandum was in response to a letter from a New York attorney, Jacob Rubinoff, which listed a host of factors that Rubinoff believed was depressing morale among men in the National Guard divisions. The negative attitude of selectees toward Regular Army officers was a common theme in postwar literature and memoirs, such as 1962's *The Thin Red Line* by James Jones, who served in the 25th Infantry Division in the Pacific theater.

31. Service Extension Act of 1941, 50a U.S.C. § 352, 55 Stat. 626 (1941).

32. Public Resolution No. 96, 76th Cong., 54 Stat. 858 (1940).

33. "Induction Statistics."

34. Hershey, *Outline of Historical Background of Selective Service*, 12–13.

35. *Ibid.*, 165–66.

36. *Ibid.*, 39, 99.

37. William A. Taylor, *Every Citizen a Soldier: The Campaign for Universal Military Training after World War II* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2014), 1–12.

38. "Executive Order Establishing the President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunities in the Armed Services," 26 July 1948; Executive Orders, 1862–2016; General Records of the United States Government, Records Group 11; National Archives at Washington, D.C., accessed 2 August 2023, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/300009>.

39. Pub. L. No. 80-26, 61 Stat. 31 (1947).

40. Hershey, *Outline of Historical Background of Selective Service*, 17.

41. Kenneth C. Royal, "Selective Service 1948," *Military Review* 28, no. 7 (October 1948): 3–11, reprinted in *Military Review* 77, no. 1 (January-February 1997): 7–10.

42. "Induction Statistics."

43. Brian McAllister Linn, *Elvis's Army: Cold War GIs and the Atomic Battlefield* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), 168.

44. The 40th and 45th Infantry Divisions served in Korea, while the 28th and 43rd served in Germany. The 31st, 37th, 44th, and 47th remained on active duty in the continental United States.

45. William M. Donnelly, *Under Army Orders: The Army National Guard during the Korean War* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2001), 89–122.

46. Robert K. Griffith Jr., *The U.S. Army's Transition to the All-Volunteer Force, 1968–1975* (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1997), 9–10.

47. *Annual Report of the Chief, National Guard Bureau, Fiscal Year Ending 30 June 1959* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1959), 33.

48. Griffith, *The U.S. Army's Transition to the All-Volunteer Force*, 11.

49. Lawrence M. Baskir and William A. Strauss, *Chance and Circumstance: The Draft, the War, and the Vietnam Generation* (New York: Random House, 1978), 169.

50. *Ibid.*, 35–36.

51. *Ibid.*, 29–33.



Army military police officers socialize in a Department of Energy club 11 October 1946 in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. (Photo by Ed Westcott, U.S. Department of Energy via Wikimedia Commons)

Mentorship Is a Mess



Maj. Benjamin F. Stork, DO, U.S. Army

The U.S. Army is missing a critical informal venue for leader development culture due to the demise of the officer and enlisted club systems. From a height of over one hundred clubs in the 1970s, Army service clubs have diminished to fewer than five

across the entirety of the force.¹ These clubs offered an essential element of prestige and exclusivity to officers and enlisted soldiers who were often underpaid compared to the civilian population. More than that however, they created a space where service traditions

and history were preserved, relationships built, and mentorship conducted. This space, away from the flagpole yet steeped in military tradition, provided a key conduit for leader development that is now absent in our military culture. This brief discussion will review the Army's mentorship deficit, the history of the club system, and its flaws and benefits, and then propose how a new system based on the British regimental mess might help revive the service club as a venue for informal mentorship, leader development, and unit culture.

The Army has a leader development problem. The 2016 *Center for Army Leadership Annual Survey of Army Leadership (CASAL)*, the latest publicly available, identified that only 57 percent of active-duty soldiers are receiving mentorship, a number that has been in a slow but steady decline since first assessed by CASAL.² Similarly, the "Leads Others" and "Develops Others" competencies of the Army leadership requirements model are below the desired threshold of 75 percent, presenting a medium chance of mission failure in their own right. In particular, "Develops Others" continues to be the absolute lowest-rated competency at 61 percent.³ The same report finds that only one-half of Army leaders take time to discuss how to improve performance or prepare for future assignments, and just one-third of respondents felt their unit placed a high priority on leader development. The report attributes this variously to lack of emphasis, time, or agreement on the nature of leader development. While not publicly available, the reader with access is encouraged to access the most recent CASAL findings to add another data point to the picture. Given this decline, it might seem that the Army should place more formal emphasis on the process than it does, but that is not the best way to build a culture of mentorship.

The Army does not doctrinally mandate any formal mentorship processes.⁴ Instead, Army Regulation 600-100, *Army Profession and Leadership Policy*, and Army Doctrine Publication 6-22, *Army Leadership and the Profession*, characterize the voluntary nature of mentoring relationships and give guidance on cultivating them.⁵ The voluntary nature of how Army doctrine treats mentorship reflects an understanding that mentorship is most effectively developed organically rather than mandated. A 2015 Naval War College study, for instance, found that participants judged formal

compulsory mentorship programs to be largely ineffective. Of the study participants, enlisted sailors rated the programs with a mean of 2.33 out of 5, while officers fared slightly better at 2.8, hardly a resounding success.⁶ This does not mean that the Army does not support mentorship; it actively encourages soldiers to seek out mentors and mentees among those with whom they have a strong relationship.⁷ The relationship aspect is key. Soldiers cannot be expected to capably seek or provide mentorship without a relationship of mutual respect and affinity. While those foundational qualities may begin to develop in formal work settings, it is the informal setting of the service club or mess where hierarchy can be flattened and affinity cemented into a close mentor-mentee relationship.

Before expounding further on the benefits of informal space for mentorship, however, it is worth touching briefly on the history of the service club, which begins in the U.S. Army at the outbreak of World War II. The Army had previously added morale programs such as the post exchange (PX) system, recreation centers, and gyms in 1903; these were centralized under the Army Morale Division in 1918. These were further consolidated with the Army Motion Picture Service and the Library Service in 1941 to create the "Special

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U.S. service members and civilians attend the annual JBLM Brewfest at the Club at McChord Field 20 February 2015 on Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington. (Photo courtesy of the U.S. Army)

Services,” and the Special Services had responsibility for all Army morale functions by 1943.⁸ The budget of the Special Services grew with equal alacrity from \$38,459 in 1939 to over \$42 million by 1945.⁹ With the entry of the United States into World War II in December 1941, the Special Service mobilized with the soldiers and became expeditionary. By 1945, anywhere large concentrations of soldiers were gathered, there were service clubs, even in far-flung locations as Manila and Burma.¹⁰ By war’s end, with the transition toward an army of occupation, many soldiers and consequently many clubs remained spread around the world and run by Special Services as officer and enlisted clubs.

These clubs were not profit-making endeavors, and their programs were subsidized by other functions of the Special Services such as the PX system.¹¹ Eventually these two components would be separated, creating the Army and Air Force Exchange System to run the for-profit PX system and incorporating service clubs into the Army Morale Welfare and Recreation (MWR) Command. The clubs thrived

through the ’50s, ’60s, and ’70s, providing benefits and prestige to soldiers. They provided informal social spaces where soldiers could mingle and build close relationships across rank or unit lines. The very informality of the setting, tempered by a sense of place that remained historically and distinctly military, created an environment in which soldiers could develop relationships without any sense of favoritism or impropriety. A leader attended club functions, related to their subordinates as people, and in turn were socially ratified as legitimate beyond mere fiat. This collective social process of constructing leadership identity through contact with followers in informal settings is similarly a product of the regimental mess system in Commonwealth armies, as we shall explore shortly.¹² Unfortunately, as funding became an increasingly salient issue and soldier preferences waivered, the club system was on its way to obsolescence.

As the 1980s progressed, fewer soldiers were paying dues at the club. Simultaneously, the clubs became increasingly dependent on profitability as congressionally appropriated funds for their operation



Members of the United Kingdom's 250th Gurkha Signal Squadron hold a dinner night for their corporals 21 February 2020 in the Gurkha Room. The guest of honor was the regimental second in command who spoke about his leadership journey. (Photo courtesy of the 30th Signal Regiment, Queen's Gurkha Signals via X [formally known as Twitter])

dwindled.¹³ Competition with off-post establishments, base realignments and closings, and a general demographic shift toward family services over clubs also had contributing effects. By the time MWR Command was deactivated in 2011, and MWR fell under Installation Management Command, only seven clubs remained across the Army.¹⁴ Today, the officer and enlisted club system is absent from military life and the memory of most soldiers under the age of forty. Other nations, however, have maintained longstanding traditions of mess and club systems, which have existed in unbroken operation for centuries.

An example worth considering, both for its longevity and cultural similarity, is the British regimental mess system, which also operates in other Commonwealth nations sharing heritage with Britain. Historically, the British mess system began as a means for feeding officers during communal living in colonial and garrison settings, but it subsequently developed into the center of social life among officers of a given regiment.¹⁵ Officers, most of whom independently

wealthy, sought to lighten the burden of colonial duty by creating a social epicenter where they could commune.¹⁶ To realize this goal, mess dues were compulsorily collected from all officers.¹⁷ In return, meals, wine, and entertainment were provided. Once regimental depots were instituted from 1881 onward, regimental mess halls presented an ideal opportunity to develop a sense of place, serving as a repository for a regiment's history and artifacts.¹⁸ The mess found an expanded role in wartime as well, as those will secondary duties in the mess were expected to continue, using mess funds in theater to procure morale-boosting delicacies where able.¹⁹ The British mess system, however, was hierarchical internally and initially excluded enlisted ranks entirely except as personal servants. There were often complex and bewildering rules and hierarchies to the mess that hardly made it informal. There were, however, relaxations in dress, such as removing the belt and sword, to demonstrate that officers were off duty and to ease relations among soldiers of different ranks.²⁰ Overall, the greatest

strength of early incarnations of the British regimental system were creating a cultural repository for each regiment and beginning the move toward a more relaxed and informal off-duty social space.

The current mess system in Britain retains some hierarchy with messes for officers, enlisted personnel, and warrant officers held separately. However, other nations such as Australia have more egalitarian practices.²¹ The purpose of these egalitarian messes are more than social clubs, as one Australian officer writes:

Military messes contribute to fighting power by acting as a nexus point that enhances unit esprit de corps, cultivates leadership attributes, and fosters a binding military ethos. By performing this role, a mess contributes to the development and strengthening of the moral component of fighting power, which embodies those individual and organizational characteristics that are fundamental to success—morale, integrity, values, and legitimacy.²²

Clearly, the mess serves as a key developmental venue for Commonwealth soldiers, one that the U.S. Army lacks since the demise of the club system. The mess as an institution has staying power beyond what the service club system had in the U.S. Army because it is grass roots organization at its core. The regimental mess is funded in part by dues from the unit, preserves the history and traditions of the unit, and serves as a center for social life in the unit. This differs considerably from the now defunct service club system in the U.S. Army, which was built to support a world war, survived due to governmental largess, and met its demise when required to turn a profit. Any attempted revival of the Army club system would be wise to take this to heart and root itself at the brigade level to leverage unit identity for support and funding. Despite these differences, the two systems provide an essentially similar function. They create an informal place in which history, materiality, and leadership intersect. As part of this function, they are central to “generating, transmitting, legitimizing, and undoing meanings associated with leadership.”²³ It is in this milieu, in an informal egalitarian setting, that leader development through mentorship thrives.

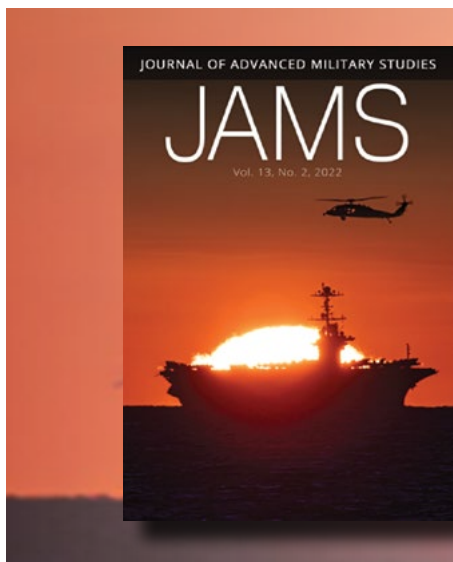
Returning to the CASAL, it cannot be overstated that “Develops Others,” at 61 percent and trending downward, is not enough.²⁴ We owe our soldiers better. Simultaneously, we face more tasks with comparatively

fewer time and resources than ever before. There are only so many hours in the day, and the CASAL shows that in the face of workplace requirements, mentorship is consistently deprioritized. A robust and lively mess system that ensures discussion of day-to-day work is taboo, while easing socialization up and down rank hierarchy is therefore the order of the day. Indeed, this is true outside the confines of the unit as well. Brig. Gen. R. J. Kentish, the inspiring and often comedic first commandant of the British Officer’s School at Aldershot during World War I, wrote about the value of the mess in building relationships further up the rank structure. He encouraged officers to “live well yourself, enjoy your food, and make all your young officers do likewise, and above all else see that you invite your General not once, but frequently.”²⁵ Such an environment is ideal for the type of informal mentorship seen as most effective by soldiers.²⁶ It fosters the underlying relationships necessary for leader development by linking it with socialization and intentionally isolating it from day-to-day discussions of specific work tasks. In this way, the mess system enjoyably creates fenced time for mentorship and presents opportunities for senior leader interaction without imposing added requirements.

In closing, the U.S. Army should implement a return of a service club system fashioned along the lines of the British regimental mess system. The U.S. Army today maintains thirty-one brigade combat teams, far fewer than the hundred or more officer clubs operated in the 1970s.²⁷ A brigade-based mess system would be far less costly than the club system to operate. Should that prove infeasible, any division- or installation-level mess system must create space within itself for individual units to invest. This system should place ownership in the hands of the unit in all particulars with no reliance on garrison or Installation Management Command. A brigade mess offers an opportunity to propagate unit culture and engage soldiers in the life of their cohort in an enjoyable way. Such a system offers the optimal combination of in-group culture, hierarchical flattening, and fenced time to enable genuine and lasting mentorship. Leader development through mentorship in informal and off-duty settings will result in more satisfied soldiers and more credible leaders, and it will build the next generation of Army leadership in an authentic, organic, and self-sustaining way. ■

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Left to right: Norah O'Donnell, CBS Evening News anchor and moderator; U.S. Coast Guard Adm. Linda Fagan, Coast Guard commandant; U.S. Air Force Gen. Jacqueline Van Ovost, U.S. Transportation Command commander; U.S. Army Gen. Laura Richardson, U.S. Southern Command commander; and U.S. Navy Adm. Lisa Franchetti, vice chief of naval operations, hold a Women's History Month panel discussion at the Military Women's Memorial in Arlington National Cemetery, Virginia, 6 March 2023. (Photo by Staff Sgt. John Wright, U.S. Air Force)

Responses to Gender Bias and Discrimination among Women Officers

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Allison Abbe, PhD

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Four female four-star general officers gathered this year to commemorate Women's History Month, representing women's achievements in the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard.¹ The event was titled "Beyond Firsts" to highlight continuing progress with including women in the all-volunteer force. Lifting the combat exclusion for women in 2015 was an important milestone, and since then, representation of women at entry levels has increased in both the enlisted and officer corps. Women are now 17.6 percent of the active-duty military force overall and comprise 23.2 percent of active-duty Army lieutenants.² These numbers reflect incremental progress toward Department of Defense (DOD) goals for the *Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security*, aiming to exemplify "a diverse organization that allows for women's meaningful participation across the development, management, and employment of the Joint Force."³

Women's integration into ground combat roles has been accompanied by policy changes to accommodate greater gender diversity and changing family patterns. The Army and other services have implemented career intermission programs that enable career breaks for family, caregiving, or other personal goals that service members may find difficult to fit into active-duty service. More recently, the 2022 publication of Army Directive 2022-06, *Parenthood, Pregnancy, and Postpartum*, represents an important step in supporting parenthood without requiring breaks in service.⁴ In other gender-inclusive steps, the Army's updated grooming standards are more responsive to feedback from women soldiers and officers.⁵

Nonetheless, women officers currently serving have already experienced the impacts of previous, less inclusive policies in their careers. Current field-grade officers entered service prior to lifting the combat exclusion, and many started families before the 2019 National Defense Authorization Act relaxed some of the constraints on officer career timelines—for example, authorizing officers to take a career intermission of up to three years.⁶ As a result, the strains of balancing family with deployments and other work demands have taken a toll. Retaining these officers is essential to provide junior women officers mentorship and leadership models

and shift organizational cultures to be more welcoming to women. Previously recognizing the importance of women leaders, the Army implemented a "leader first" policy toward gender integration into combat specialties.⁷ Other occupational specialties are no different; the advancement and recognition of women leaders serve as necessary signals of a path to success in the organization to more junior women.

After years of stalled progress, the Army is again showing increases in women's representation. From fiscal years (FY) 2004 to 2012, women's representation in the active-duty Army declined from 15.3 percent to 13.6 percent, until resuming an upward trend and reaching 15.3 percent again in FY 2019.⁸ Maintaining those gains, women were 15.5 percent of the active-duty Army in FYs 2020 and 2021.⁹ The officer corps has shown more steady but small increases in women's representation, from 16.7 percent of active-duty Army officers in FY 2004 to 19.3 percent in FY 2019.¹⁰

Because women's educational achievement has outpaced men's in recent years, women will continue to be an important source of manpower for the Army in meeting its end-strength requirements.¹¹

Unfortunately, women do not enter service at proportions approaching their representation in the U.S. population, let

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Allison Abbe is professor of organizational studies at the U.S. Army War College. Abbe previously served as a program manager and research psychologist in defense and intelligence organizations, and she holds a PhD in social and personality psychology from the University of California, Riverside. Her work has appeared in *Parameters*, *Military Review*, *Joint Force Quarterly*, and *Police Practice and Research*.



Lt. Col. Elizabeth Knox, commanding officer of the 6th Brigade Engineer Battalion, briefs paratroopers assigned to the 2nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 11th Airborne Division (2/11), in advance of an all-women jump at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, 7 March 2023. The airborne operation was held in recognition of Women's History Month, and marked the first all-female jump in division history. Every battalion in the 2/11 was represented in the jump, as well as members of division staff. (Photo by Sr. Airman Patrick Sullivan, U.S. Air Force)

alone their rates of high school graduation for enlisted or bachelor's degree achievement for officers. For example, as of 2021, of adults twenty-five years or older who held a bachelor's degree, 53.1 percent were women, while 46.9 percent were men.¹²

Nor do women stay as long. Past research by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) has shown that women service members are 28 percent more likely than their male counterparts to separate from service, though differences have narrowed in recent years.¹³ Similarly, the *2021 Workplace and Gender Relations Survey* found that women officers reported lower intentions to stay in the service than male officers, assuming they have the opportunity: 50 percent of women versus 58 percent of men among company-grade officers (O-1–O-3) and 67 percent of women versus 72 percent of men among field-grade officers (O-4–O-6) intended to stay.¹⁴

Although women are more likely to separate than men, promotion rates show mixed outcomes.¹⁵ Overall, GAO found that women officers were promoted at slightly higher rates than male officers from 2004 to 2018. However, controlling for time in service and other demographic factors, GAO's analysis found lower promotion rates for women field-grade officers in the Army. Thus, women officers' career progression in the military differs from men's. Their lower entry and higher attrition relative to male officers appear to reflect decisions to self-select away from the Army, at least at career stages prior to field grade.

Women officers are leaving voluntarily for a variety of reasons. GAO identified six reasons for the higher attrition among women service members, including the impact of work schedules on families, deployments, organizational culture, family planning, sexual assault, and dependent care. Three of

these contributors (work schedules, deployments, and dependent care) specifically related to balancing caregiving roles with work demands. In contrast to these persistent challenges, others are more punctuated through a career. Family planning considerations focused on the incompatibility of timing pregnancy around key career milestones, such as command, in-resident education, or training pipelines. Many of these concerns have since been addressed through the Army's *Parenthood, Pregnancy, and Postpartum* directive and other initiatives, though it will take time to identify the impact on women's career decisions.

Other contributors to attrition remain. Sexual assault was identified as contributing to attrition in at least two ways: first, the experience itself may be traumatic, and the second is the organizational and peer response to the sexual assault. Effective responses do not erase the trauma of an assault event but can be instrumental in a survivor's recovery, just as effective medical care is critical to a soldier or officer's recovery from physical injury. Ineffective responses can contribute to a persistent state of injury without recovery. Other research has provided quantitative evidence of the role of sexual assault and sexual harassment in increasing women service members' attrition. A 2021 RAND report estimated that for sexual assaults and harassment occurring in FY 2014 alone, the DOD lost ten thousand additional service members in the subsequent twenty-eight months than would be expected from other causes of attrition.¹⁶ Although this estimate includes both men and women, it disproportionately impacts women due to the higher percentage of women service members who experience sexual assault and sexual harassment. Both the experience of a sexual assault and the organization's response in the aftermath may signal to service members that the military is not a safe and supportive work environment. Service members expect to confront risk in operational settings but may be less willing to accept organizational indifference to or tolerance of threat and risk from other service members.

GAO also identified organizational culture as contributing to women's attrition through various means, including a lack of women role models and mentors, experiences of sexism and discrimination, and exclusion from professional networks. Organizational culture tends to be more stable and resistant to change

than other organizational features.¹⁷ Although the Army promotes a formal set of values, many cultural assumptions may be informal and less visible, sometimes operating beneath leaders' awareness. For example, the Army's history of low gender egalitarianism sustains a masculine organizational culture, and the impact on women can range from subtle exclusion to open hostility and discrimination.¹⁸ These behaviors occur as individual acts, but their prevalence may indicate a climate or culture of acceptance.

Today's Army may reflect a legacy culture of hegemonic masculinity, a set of assumptions accepting and promoting social dominance of men over women.¹⁹ Under hegemonic masculinity, women are valued in a subordinate status, and positioning women as equals or as leaders will elicit attempts by some men to reassert their dominant status via behaviors like hostility, harassment, or even sexual assault toward women.²⁰ More benign forms of this gender hierarchy are evident in recent survey results. The 2021 *Workplace and Gender Relations Survey* included an instrument to assess sexism, and Army officers (O-1–O-6) showed statistically significant gender differences on all items (e.g., "Women exaggerate problems they have at work"), except one item on beliefs about moral superiority of women over men.²¹ Though sexist beliefs were endorsed by a minority of respondents, male officers showed more agreement with sexist beliefs, including both hostile sexism and more "benevolent" sexism that promotes the protection of women. These beliefs certainly do not reflect Army values but rather are likely a byproduct of historical societal values, the Army's hierarchical structure, and a historically male-dominated population.

Over their careers, women officers currently serving have experienced the progression in more inclusive policies. Nevertheless, more inclusive policies may not be sufficient to remedy the effects of past gender-exclusive unit climates and cultures and persistent gender hierarchies. Retaining women officers is critical to achieving goals of the *Army People Strategy*, and it is therefore important to understand women officers' perspectives and experiences.²² Many previous studies have focused on women officer retention in the Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard.²³ However, few studies have examined the experiences of women officers in the Army. The present study gathered women officers' experiences

of gender, both positive and negative, to identify how women officers navigate minority status and gender stereotypes in a male-dominated profession.

Method of the Study

The present study recruited participants through sampling the first author's contacts and through women officers' mentorship groups on social media. Research participants were given the option to conduct a personal interview, phone call, Teams video chat, or receive the questions over email and answer them at their leisure, returning them within a few weeks. All except one participant were emailed the questions and opted to provide written answers to the questions, with one participant conducting a Microsoft Teams video chat with transcribed conversation.

Respondents had an average of 17.4 years of service, ranging from two to thirty years. Of forty-four respondents, forty-two were Active Component Army officers and two were from the Reserve Component. Eight respondents either had retired or were planning to retire within the year. Their ranks included three first lieutenants, four captains, thirteen majors, twenty lieutenant colonels, and four colonels. Occupational branches included twenty-four in logistics; five in adjutant general; four in military police; three in aviation; two each in medical services and civil affairs; and one each in military intelligence, chemical, signal, and acquisition.

Due to space constraints, findings reported in this article are a subset of the larger study; other results will be published in a subsequent article. This article focuses on three items from the broader interview protocol: respondents' reasons for joining the Army; whether and why they had considered separating from the Army; and lastly, if they could tell the top-ranking general in the Army one thing about how to address women officers' experiences, what would that be?

Reasons to Join

Many respondents indicated multiple reasons for joining the Army (as a result, the percentages below do not add to one hundred). Two respondents did not answer the question about why they had joined the Army. No differences emerged between company-grade and field-grade officers.

The most common reason for joining was to pay for college (40.5 percent). Appeal of the jobs or structure



A soldier assigned to 25th Infantry Division traverses the horizontal ladder on 1 April 2021 during completion of the Green Mile, a physical endurance course that concludes the Jungle Operations Training Course at the Lightning Academy near Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. (Photo by Sgt. Sarah D. Sangster, U.S. Army)

was another common reason for joining; twelve respondents (28.6 percent) indicated they were attracted by the job security, variety of jobs, travel, leadership opportunities, or the opportunity to avoid boredom. A few respondents mentioned that they preferred Army career paths over those of the Air Force or Navy.

Twelve respondents (28.6 percent) indicated family service motivated them to join. Most responses stated a parent's service was a model, but some indicated it was a sibling or a parent who served as a DOD teacher that inspired their service. One indicated she was motivated to make her family proud.

Purpose was the fourth most prevalent category of reasons. Over a quarter of respondents (26.2 percent) mentioned their patriotism drove them to serve or indicated a sense of purpose, service, or calling. Several mentioned a desire to be part of something bigger than

themselves. Two responses specified their aspiration to make a difference.

Less frequently, respondents mentioned opportunities to play sports at the U.S. Military Academy or a desire to make a better life. Only one respondent mentioned a reason for joining related to gender, which was that she had engaged with a female officer role model (other than a parent) as an adolescent.

Overall, women officers' reasons for joining the Army were similar to other reports on propensity to serve. In the 2022 *Joint Advertising, Market Research and Studies Futures Survey* on youth propensity to serve, young women reported a propensity to serve somewhat lower than young men (8 percent vs. 12 percent) but reasons were similar.²⁴ Reasons for youth propensity include to pay for education; to gain experience, skills, or travel; and to help others. One difference is that, in the present study, respondents frequently indicated purpose, whereas the *Futures Survey* specifies pay and benefits to a greater extent than our respondents indicated. Purpose emerged as a motivator as often as did family service among this sample. These findings are consistent with the 2021 *Department of the Army Career Engagement Survey (DACES)*, in which the opportunity to serve one's country and purpose were among the top five reasons to stay in the Army, selected as frequently as pay and benefits.²⁵

Although some differences may be due to the officer sample here versus the broader youth population of potential enlisted and officers, findings suggest perhaps recruiting should highlight purpose and calling to serve with greater prominence.

Reasons to Separate

In addressing whether they had considered getting out of the Army, most respondents provided more than one reason to consider separating. Only one officer responded "no," and one officer provided no response. No clear differences emerged in reasons given by company-grade officers versus field-grade officers, though field-grade officers provided more reasons overall than did company-grade officers. The most frequent responses were family considerations and negative experiences with leaders. Sixteen respondents (36.4 percent) indicated parenting, marital relationship, spouse employment, or other family caregiving as considerations for separating. Three of these responses

included specific comments about the challenges of balancing dual-military relationships. Two respondents indicated that they had declined command due to parenting demands.

- "I wanted to get out because of the struggle between being a good mother and a high performing officer. My children became latch key kids; I felt that I did not have the time to be involved in my children's lives."
- "I had concerns about raising a family while on Active duty ... I am dual military and did not think I'd be able to balance all of the demands."
- "I think about getting out when I get worried about the lack of stability I provide my children. I think about how they've never been in the same school for more than two years (most recently they have only been at a school for one year before having to relocate). So, I think about getting out when I consider that perhaps my sacrifices cost too much for my family."

These reasons were consistent with *DACES* findings that both male and female active-duty service members endorsed family reasons as the top reasons to leave the Army, including effects of deployments on relationships and the impact of Army life on their significant other or children.²⁶ However, on that survey, women endorsed these family reasons to a greater degree than male service members.

Sixteen respondents (36.4 percent) indicated their experiences with leadership were a consideration for separating, including working for toxic leaders, having a poor working relationship with a supervisor, and seeing homogenous leaders in top roles.

- "While serving in [a special operations organization] my supervisor was probably the worst officer I have ever worked with. He grew up in Special Mission Units and did not have much experience working with women, so I knew working for him would be a high adventure. Coupled with his narcissistic, egotistical, and selfish behavior, it was tough to work for him."
- "In 2010 I considered leaving the Army because of a combination of family issues and discrimination I was facing at work. The unit I was assigned to had widespread and well-known gender discrimination that started with the BN Commander and was an issue at all echelons."



A jumpmaster from the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School watches the final jumper exit a CASA C-212 Aviocar aircraft over Laurinburg-Maxton Airfield, Maxton, North Carolina, 28 March 2019. The soldiers completed an all-female pass to pay homage to the rich history of women in the U.S. Army. (Photo by K. Kassens, U.S. Army)

Females were regularly openly ridiculed, not placed in career enhancing positions, ignored in meetings, barred from attending outside meetings, rumors spread about them, and a variety of other things.”

- ♦ “The Pentagon is full of retired senior officers who continue to influence/advise senior leaders in an outdated theory of policy and priorities. That sounds extremely cynical, and I am not. The senior DACs in the pentagon were extremely valuable in mentorship, however the population was homogenous.”

Thirteen respondents (29.5 percent) specifically indicated experiences with gender discrimination or bias as reasons to separate. Some examples that respondents described overlapped with the leadership issues, noting impacts on mental health.

- ♦ “I dealt with so much from discrimination to harassment to toxic leadership that I was convinced

that even if I changed units, I’d inevitably run into one of those situations again. My mental health could not take any more feeling like I was worthless, a terrible officer/Soldier, and the depression and anxiety that came with it.”

- ♦ “Yes, several times. The first time was in Afghanistan when my company commander found out about a SGM sexually harassing me and did absolutely nothing about it except to tell me to ‘keep my head down.’”

Five respondents indicated that organizational culture or climates motivated them to consider separating, noting “hostile environments” and “toxic culture.” One respondent explained, “We are expected to serve unconditionally and not question anything. ... We are expected to do more with less.” According to another respondent, “They can make all the programs and resiliency training they want but nothing has changed because once that program falls to the wayside we revert to the ‘Good ol’ Boys Club.’”

Five respondents identified shortfalls in pregnancy or postpartum recovery accommodations as a consideration, and others indicated experiences with racism and sexual assault. Other reasons were not necessarily gender-related, such as six field-grade officers who indicated dissatisfaction with opportunities for advancement or with job opportunities as they moved up in the ranks. Three respondents mentioned other opportunities outside of the Army as a consideration for separating. Three officers specifically indicated the operational tempo or deployments.

These reasons are largely consistent with the findings of the GAO study, but one notable difference is that leadership featured more prominently in the present research. Future *DACES* and studies of officer retention should address this dimension in greater granularity, as it may provide one explanation for gender differences showing lower morale among women.²⁷

Although not specifically asked why they remained in service, some respondents explained without prompting. These responses identified positive aspects of the job as a key motivator, such as making positive change for soldiers, and one response was that “rewarding days always outweigh the hard days.” Other, less frequent responses included financial considerations, retirement benefits, and knowing when an assignment in a unit with discrimination or poor climate would end.

How Should Top Army Leaders Address Gender Bias?

All respondents provided recommendations in response to the question asking how the top general in the Army should address women’s gendered experiences in the Army. Officers’ recommendations not only identified gaps but also actions that had had a positive impact on their own careers. Responses indicated the seven themes as clear and concrete actions that Army senior leaders can implement.

1. Acknowledge and listen. Encouraging Army senior leaders to better understand the challenges that women officers face was by far the most prevalent theme, with 43.2 percent of respondents offering recommendations in this category.

- “First, recognize that this problem still exists. Benign and subtle sexism is just as bad as blatant or hostile sexism.”

- “Stop saying that discrimination doesn’t exist or give the younger generation the tools to deal with it and overcome. I came in believing we were equal, and the uniform made us all the same. Not anymore.”
- “Listen to and take seriously women’s concerns and input. I think that ‘Big Army’ is doing a lot to combat and eliminate gender discrimination. I think that it’s at the unit-level where culture needs to change.”
- “Women are not equals in this Army. This is a man’s Army that women participate in versus the U.S. Army that has both men and women.”

2. Increase women’s representation in leadership.

The second most prevalent theme was to increase women’s representation in leadership positions, though it was a distant second with 16 percent of respondents. Responses identified the benefits for women’s representation in improving unit climate, opportunities for female mentorship, visibility of role models for junior women, and broadening perspectives for problem-solving. In addition, some responses indicated women leaders might have a deterrent effect on sexist behavior.

- “Representation matters. When female senior leaders are present, juniors don’t feel emboldened to discriminate against junior officers, NCOs and enlisted.”
- “Place women in higher and more visible positions of authority in FORSCOM units would also help in creating a safer environment for all Soldiers.”
- “Having more women in positions of leadership makes a huge difference; I didn’t meet a female field grade in my branch until I was a company commander but have since then been the beneficiary of mentorship from several senior women. Having more women in positions of leadership normalizes it and socializes the force into treating women the same as their male counterparts.”

3. Increase accountability. A few respondents (11.4 percent) indicated that the Army should better hold leaders accountable for counterproductive behavior.

- “Do not allow any leaders to behave in a manner that is demeaning or discriminatory towards anyone; females, males, minority groups, etc. If a leader is producing results at whatever level of command but they are doing it in a toxic manner, then they must be removed. Yes, toxic leaders usually get results but at the cost of their Soldiers’ morale.”



Soldiers assigned to 25th Infantry Division carry water and ammunition cans on 1 April 2021 during completion of the Green Mile, a physical endurance course that concludes training for the Jungle Operations Training Course at Lightning Academy near Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. (Photo by Sgt. Sarah D. Sangster, U.S. Army)

- “If a leader is getting bad feedback or if you hear that a leader is no good—get them out of the Army, stop promoting them because they only get worse.”

4. Improve talent management. Responses related to talent management (11.4 percent) identified opportunities to select officers for developmental assignments and education more fairly and to make performance evaluations more objective. Two responses indicated that studies and analyses of trends would be beneficial to determine whether disparities exist.

- “I think HRC [Human Resources Command] has done a good job of diversifying traditional broadening opportunities (e.g., JCS [Joint Chiefs of Staff] internship, Congressional Fellowship, etc.). I think we can do better where the senior commander (a GO) is picking their team (e.g., executive officers, SIGs, other front office folks).”
- “We need to honestly review the difficult data. Disparities in leadership positions, opportunities,

wording throughout evaluations, retention, promotions, and recruitment.”

- “Weed out comments and adjectives about female leadership through command climate surveys or leadership assessments that have negative connotations for women but are perceived as notable or commendable for men. For example, a women described as ambitious is a criticism, but an ambitious male equates to driven with initiative.”

5. Strengthen male leadership and ownership.

Some respondents (11.4 percent) identified the importance of male leadership in modeling respectful and inclusive behavior. Most of these responses focused on positive and proactive behaviors; however; one respondent noted that male leaders might fear mentoring women due to the potential for gossip about their relationship. This issue also came up in some examples for considering separating from the Army, the harmful effects of unfounded rumors about romantic

relationships between women officers and other team members or leaders.

- “Respect starts at the top, so if higher leaders are always disregarding women, the problem will spread downward from there.”
- “I would encourage them to consider having men more involved in female integration programs. While this may seem counterintuitive, I think at times women can self-segregate into these female-led groups, which is fine but I also think it can be detrimental ... We should open these forums to men to educate them on how to break these generational stereotypes.”
- “Leadership is critical to treatment of women and building a team. My first group of leadership were very weak and very resistant to anyone who didn’t look like them, so it is no surprise that women were never fully accepted to the team. We were objects or tokens. The second group of leaders were better and my last group of leaders (BN/BCT CDR) were excellent and I did not face discrimination based on gender.”
- “I also think the culture needs to change that it is ok for males to speak to females without there being the stigma that they must be in a relationship.”

6. Improve and/or sustain policy and resourcing.

Four respondents (9 percent) indicated that the Army should improve or sustain programs and policies that support women and parents, including funding child development centers and sustaining parental leave policies.

- “I would tell the General to PLEASE continue to ENFORCE the training and engagement of tools like the EO program, SHARP, and Assessment programs like BCAP, CCAP, etc., it is working—they are effective and I am a living witness (testament).”
- “Even if it means cutting funding to other programs, the Army must be willing to dedicate additional funds to remedying childcare shortages if they care about taking care of families and retaining those servicemembers with families who want to continue to serve.”
- “More women are having families while serving, which is made possible in part to the Army’s caregiver leave and postpartum policies. Continuing to support these types of policies that integrate women across the force and create an environment in which they can flourish as leaders will

reduce discrimination, which ultimately increases readiness.”

7. Provide training to reduce gender discrimination and bias. Three respondents specified the need for training on discrimination and gender microaggressions, which are intentional or unintentional behaviors that exclude or denigrate individuals based on their gender.²⁸ These behaviors are forms of gender discrimination but may be more subtle or ambiguous, and they represent earlier, more common behaviors along a continuum of harm.²⁹

- “Top-down, thorough discrimination training. Specially to combat arms senior leaders. Senior leaders set the tone and culture for their organization. If senior leaders are lax or apathetic towards discrimination (in this case gender, but all types), their subordinates will feel more comfortable to display discriminatory behaviors. Microaggressions will escalate into more aggressive, obvious discrimination.”
- “We need to implement a lesson on Microaggressions in our EO training and make it required training in all PMEs.”

Respondents acknowledged gender bias is a societal and generational problem, and they did not expect it to disappear in their lifetimes.

Summary and Conclusions

The present study examined women officers’ experiences of gender in the Army and recommendations to build a more gender-inclusive culture. Their reasons to join were very similar to other findings on propensity to serve and were largely unrelated to gender. In this sample, women officers identified paying for college, job reasons, family history, and a sense of purpose as their primary motivations. Their reasons for considering separating were varied. Some reasons were consistent with findings from DACES, indicating that balancing family demands and personal relationships was challenging. These findings highlight the importance of policy and resources supporting parents and dual-military couples. Other reasons centered more on negative experiences with leaders, gender bias and discrimination, and organizational climates.

Respondents provided many constructive recommendations for Army senior leaders to continue progress in building a more gender-inclusive Army culture. Most prominently, women officers highlighted gaps in

leadership and climate. They identified opportunities for Army senior leaders to increase their understanding of issues impacting women by listening to, assessing, and acknowledging women's concerns beyond sexual assault alone. They described important roles for male leaders in holding others accountable for harmful behavior and greater engagement with women as peers and subordinates. Army senior leaders should continue emphasizing accountability in their priorities and objectives. By highlighting the importance of reducing these harmful behaviors, leaders at echelon will trust in their own decision-making skills to properly discipline violators and will know they are supported.

In talent management, women officers emphasized the importance of having more women in visible positions of leadership. They also called for increased transparency and fairness in talent management decisions such as developmental opportunities. For other organizational actions, they recommended increasing or sustaining policies and resources for families, and they saw the potential for training to reduce sexist behavior and promote positive climates.

True integration requires policy, organizational climate, and culture working in alignment. Policy alone will not reset organizational culture; it must be accompanied by intentional leader and organizational

actions to embed a gender-inclusive culture through leader selection, performance evaluation, and other shaping mechanisms. The challenge is that while gendered experiences are driving women to separate, the Army needs them to stay to help break down historical gender hierarchies. Implementing the recommendations here and monitoring implementation of the new pregnancy and parental leave policies for their impacts will be critical to success in shifting toward a more gender-inclusive Army.

On the fiftieth anniversary of the all-volunteer force, the Army may be confronting an inflection point in women's integration—will the Army build on positive policy changes and embed a more inclusive culture, or face stalled progress, leaving policy changes to do the heavy lifting in reshaping culture? In a competitive recruiting environment, the Army risks missing out on attracting and retaining women with the motivation to serve and the skills to lead. The Army of 2040 demands the Nation's top talent; educated, trained, and fit women officers are a key investment in that future. ■

The views expressed in this article are those of the authors and research participants and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Army, Department of Defense, or the U.S. government.

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Soldiers sleep on the floor of a C-17 Globemaster III in transport to an undisclosed location, 17 August 2019. Soldiers experience sleep deficiency at over twice the rate of civilians, often because of operational requirements. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Alex Manne, U.S. Army)

Sleep and Performance

Why the Army Must Change Its Sleepless Culture

Maj. David Nixon, U.S. Army

Maj. Porter Riley, U.S. Army

The Army hates sleep, even though the health benefits are well established. People who suffer from a chronic lack of sleep or low sleep efficiency are at greater risk of mental health problems, obesity, higher mortality rates, and decreased mental and physical capacity. The Army has tried to address this via incorporating sleep into the “Performance Triad” along with activity and nutrition, which briefs well. However, the Army continues to suffer from chronic sleep deficiency with 76 percent of service members sleeping fewer than seven hours a night compared to 37 percent of the U.S. population.¹ In our experience, the Army fosters a culture where sleep is viewed as a privilege rather than a right. Army physical readiness training routines, staff duty, and training events all minimize the rest soldiers need. This article aims to better explain the mental and physical risks and benefits of sleep and recommend ways the Army can change the force’s way of thinking related to sleep.

Why Sleep Is Important

Not all sleep is made equal, especially as it relates to holistic health. The body needs specifically Stage 3 (deep sleep) and rapid eye movement (REM) sleep to promote mental and physical recovery. During sleep, the body transitions through sleep stages (1, 2, 3, REM) in cycles, with each cycle taking approximately 90–120 minutes. Later in the night, more time is spent in the vital

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REM sleep stages. Adults should average four to six sleep cycles with around ninety minutes of Stage 3 and two hours of REM sleep a night.²

During Stage 3, the brain releases anabolic hormones to help repair muscles and bones and improve immune system function. Additionally, the brain evaluates, consolidates, and stores memories. This “downloading” of information allows the brain to clear itself of data in preparation for the following day. People who cannot get enough deep sleep often have lower cognitive function and trouble recalling memories. Furthermore, information that should be stored is forgotten due to brain oversaturation. Like a computer, there is only so much memory for storage. As that storage gets filled, the brain slows down until it is ultimately unable to store any additional data. Unless the brain is allowed to download memories, it will result in lower cognitive function.³

REM sleep is separate from deep sleep and has different functions. During REM, brain activity is similar to when a person is awake. Unlike other stages, heart rate varies and the eyes move rapidly (hence the name “rapid eye movement”). An important aspect of REM sleep is emotional processing to build emotional resiliency. The portion of the brain that regulates emotions is activated usually during dreams. Learning also occurs during REM. The important information sifted through during deep sleep is committed to memory during REM. Like a lack of deep sleep, a lack of REM sleep can result in difficulty processing one’s emotions and poor memory.⁴

Sleep and Mental Health

Sleep has a foundational connection with cognitive and emotional health as well as brain development. Throughout each day, the brain manages vital bodily processes, reacts to stimuli, and cognitively engages with tasks. This workload comes at a price—much like muscles need to recover after a workout, the brain needs recovery time to preserve memories, replenish energy, and simply rest. After a long day, it can be difficult to mentally engage with family, remember important information, and regulate emotions. This effect gets compounded the less sleep a person is getting.

Sleep deficit is a condition that occurs when a person fails to get the appropriate amount of sleep for several days in a row. As the sleep deficit increases, the health risks and the loss of cognitive function also increase.



A soldier demonstrates how sleep study suites are used at the Center for Military Psychiatry and Neuroscience of the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research (WRAIR), Silver Spring, Maryland, 26 October 2021. WRAIR conducts sleep restriction and deprivation studies and evaluates countermeasures to develop knowledge products and materiel solutions to enhance soldier alertness, decision-making, and performance. (Photo by Arlen Caplan, U.S. Army)

Since the Global War on Terrorism began, multiple medical studies have been conducted on veterans showing the causal link between sleep deficit and mental health problems. In a 2013 study by the Veterans Health Administration for over 1,600 recent combat veterans, over 49 percent slept fewer than five hours, 23 percent slept fewer than seven hours, and 72 percent reported poor sleep quality (inability to properly cycle through sleep stages or achieve enough deep and REM sleep).⁵ In this study, veterans sleeping fewer than five hours a night had three times increased odds of diagnosed posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and major depressive disorder.⁶ Of the 72 percent of participants who reported poor sleep quality, they had a dramatic risk for PTSD (five times higher rate), major depressive disorder (nine times higher rate), and suicidal ideation (six times higher rate).⁷ Finally, this study recognized that while service members may require less sleep during operations, there is no attention to “retraining these individuals to sleep once they have return, which may leave them susceptible to both medical and medical health issues.”⁸

A similar study conducted in 2015 of over 1,200 veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan compared the sleep and habits of service members with and without diagnosed mental health disorders.⁹ For those suffering with a mental health disorder, 92 percent used nicotine products and 37 percent abused alcohol.¹⁰ For those familiar with the Army’s culture, the fact that poor sleep quality is connected to substance use like alcohol and nicotine should come as no surprise. Humans find ways to cope with their circumstances, and many choose alcohol and nicotine as coping mechanisms. The study also found that even veterans without a diagnosed mental health disorder had significantly shorter sleep duration, poor sleep quality, insomnia, and distressing nightmares compared to the general population.¹¹

As stated earlier, REM sleep is linked to learning and building emotional processing and resiliency. Another study of over 1,100 Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom veterans attempted to link sleep quality with psychological distress. None of the participants met the criteria for a current mental

health disorder. The study found that 85 percent had poor sleep efficiency, with over 35 percent sleeping fewer than five hours a night. The findings found that worse sleep contributed to greater psychological distress. This psychological distress caused a reduction in the participant's resiliency to manage stress. "Low resiliency may leave Veterans vulnerable to the negative effects of stress, thereby exacerbating sleep problems and increasing risk of resulting psychological distress."¹²

The Army spends millions of dollars each year attempting to build a more mentally resilient force. Twice a year, soldiers are required to conduct resiliency training to address mental health issues plaguing the force. The literature is clear: you cannot train your way out of chronic sleep deficit. Sleep is not a part of resiliency training, but it has a proven connection to mental health.

In addition to mental health, soldier suicide remains a constant problem within the force. Death by suicide has exceeded combat losses for many years. Many different methods have been used to lower the suicide rate but without significant results. However, a 2011 study by the Veterans Health Administration of 423 veteran suicides found that veterans with documented sleep disturbances died sooner after their last visit with Veterans Affairs than those without a documented sleep disturbance.¹³ Compared with the last study showing a decrease in mental resilience and an increase in psychological distress due to poor sleep quality, the correlation between sleep disturbances and greater chance of suicide becomes even more profound.

There are many other studies that could be cited showing the causal link between mental health and sleep. However, the Army has already acknowledged this connection. The Army Medical Department published an article in September 2022 acknowledging that "from 2000 to 2009, the diagnosis of insomnia in active-duty Army personnel increased 19-fold. This is important because insomnia is associated with anxiety, depression, PTSD, chronic pain, alcohol abuse, and even with suicide."¹⁴ The article continues to show that soldiers who sleep fewer than seven hours per night perform like a "person who is legally drunk ... Put simply, accidents increase as the total amount of sleep you get each night decreases."¹⁵ Finally, the article attributes the lack of sleep to the Army's culture. "Purposely going without enough

sleep is sometimes considered a sign of strength (and needing sleep a sign of weakness)."¹⁶ Much like the negative stigma for seeking mental health support, the Army needs to combat the stigma against sleep if it wants to address the mental health and suicide epidemic within the force.

Sleep and Physical Performance

Many factors influence a soldier's physical performance, including activity, nutrition, sleep, and genetics. Adequate sleep is essential for optimal physical and mental function, and insufficient sleep can impair athletic performance and increase the risk of injuries.¹⁷ In contrast, sleep extension can substantially enhance physical performance.¹⁸ Additionally, unnecessary sleep debt and caffeine overuse can adversely affect a soldier's physical performance and general health.¹⁹

Numerous studies have shown that extending sleep can significantly improve a person's physical performance. In one study, college basketball players, who are the same age as the majority of the Army, increased their sleep from an average of 6.5 hours to nine hours per night for five to seven weeks and saw significant improvements in their sprint times, shooting accuracy, and overall athletic performance with no additional nutritional or training modifications.²⁰ Another study found that increasing sleep from 6.5 to eight hours per night for two weeks led to improved sprint times, reaction times, and shooting accuracy in male college soccer players, with no nutritional or training adjustments for the study participants.²¹ In 2020, the Army reported that 37 percent of soldiers sleep seven or more hours per duty night.²² These studies suggest that the Army could enhance the physical performance of the force without requiring nutritional or training modifications if they could reduce or eliminate chronic sleep deficiency.

Extended sleep can enhance muscle recovery and reduce the risk of injuries. In a study of young male soccer players, those who slept more than eight hours per night had a significantly lower risk of injuries than those who slept less than seven hours per night.²³ According to the Army Public Health Center, roughly 50 percent of soldiers experience one or more musculoskeletal injuries annually, resulting in 90–120 days of restricted work or lost duty time for affected soldiers.²⁴ A study of Swiss army trainees found that an extension of trainee sleep from 6.5 hours per night to eight hours



Army paratroopers assigned to the 54th Brigade Engineer Battalion, 173rd Airborne Brigade, perform a ruck march during a Ranger or Sapper candidate assessment course on Caserma Del Din, Italy, 13 January 2019. Early morning physical readiness training can lead to inadequate sleep time for soldiers. (Photo by Spc. Ryan Lucas, U.S. Army)

Military Review

We Recommend



A fatigued trainee rests during a break at the Buddy Movement Course, Fort Jackson, South Carolina, 9 August 2006. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Stacy L. Pernal, U.S. Air Force)

Sleep Banking Improving Fighter Management

Maj. Amy Thompson, U.S. Army
Capt. Brad Jones, U.S. Army
Capt. Jordan Thornburg, U.S. Army

The 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, was selected in 2015 to participate in the "Performance Triad" pilot program led by the Office of the Surgeon General (OTSG).¹ The Performance Triad program focuses on our basic biological health needs—sleep, activity, and nutrition—all of which are important for survival, health, performance, safety, and readiness.² The goal of the program is to improve the health of the force and optimize human performance. Health is the foundation of readiness, and readiness is the Army's number one priority.³ The focus of this article is sleep.

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In this January-February 2017 *Military Review* article, a unit demonstrates the positive impact adequate sleep has on individual and team performance, health, safety, and readiness during an experiment in "sleep banking." To read this article online, visit <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/Military-Review/English-Edition-Archives/January-February-2017/ART-014/>.

per night corresponded to a 14.3 percent reduction in trainee musculoskeletal injury.²⁵ According to the U.S. Army Recruiting Command, the Army sent 69,292 recruits through initial entry training in fiscal year 2021 at a cost of \$55,000–\$74,000 per recruit.²⁶ In fiscal year 2021, the Army reported an initial entry training attrition rate of ~15 percent with musculoskeletal injury being a significant causal factor; that attrition rate equates to 10,393 recruits at a cost of \$572,000 to \$769,000.²⁷ The results of the Milewski et al. and Wyss et al. studies indicate that the Army could reduce the recruiting burden and cost while also reducing existing soldier injury occurrence and improving unit readiness by focusing on sleep extension.²⁸

Excessive sleep debt, or the accumulation of a sleep deficit over time, can negatively impact a service member's physical performance. Chronic sleep deprivation is associated with decreased muscle strength, impaired coordination, and increased fatigue. In addition, sleep deprivation can impair cognitive function, leading to reduced concentration, impaired decision-making, and increased risk-taking behavior.²⁹ In 2016, Shattuck et al. assessed watchstanding schedules in the U.S. Navy. They found that psychomotor vigilance performance (defined as reaction times responding to visual or auditory alarms and primary task distraction of greater than ten seconds) was significantly impaired in the participants with excessive sleep debt compared to the performance of participants on circadian-aligned schedules.³⁰ Accumulating undue sleep debt can negatively impact cognitive and physical performance while increasing the risk of injuries.

While caffeine can temporarily boost energy and alertness, overreliance on caffeine can negatively impact health and physical performance. Caffeine is a stimulant that can interfere with sleep and lead to sleep disturbances, mainly if consumed late in the day. Chronic caffeine use can also lead to physical dependence and withdrawal symptoms such as fatigue, irritability, and difficulty concentrating, which can impair athletic performance.³¹

Adequate sleep is essential for optimal performance and overall health. Extending sleep can significantly improve athletic performance, while excessive sleep debt and overreliance on caffeine can have negative impacts. The Army should prioritize allowing soldiers sufficient time to get adequate daily sleep rather than forcing them



Spc. Victoria Parker, 571st Military Police Company, lifts weights during a dead lift competition 30 June 2007 at Forward Operating Base Warhorse near Baqubah, Iraq. Adequate sleep can substantially enhance physical performance. (Photo by Spc. Benjamin Fox, U.S. Army)

to regularly rely on caffeine to improve cognitive and physical performance.

Sleep's Connection with Weight

The relationship between sleep and weight is complex and multifaceted, but inadequate sleep duration is a significant risk factor for developing obesity.³² Adequate sleep is essential for maintaining a healthy weight as it is crucial in regulating appetite and metabolism.³³ According to the Army's last three *Health of the Force* reports (2018–2020), the obesity rate in the Army's Active Component (AC) has remained constant at 17 percent, while an additional 50 percent of the AC is classified overweight and 33 percent of the AC is classified normal weight. (The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC] defines obesity as a body mass index of 30 or greater, overweight as 25–30, and normal as 18.5–25.)³⁴ Over that same time, only one-third of soldiers report sleeping seven or more hours on a duty night, while over 80 percent are meeting CDC guidelines for weekly resistance training, and over 85 percent

meet the guidelines for weekly aerobic training per the *Health of the Force* reports. The *Health of the Force* reports data indicates that lack of adequate sleep may be a more significant contributor to the Army's obesity and overweight issues than lack of exercise.³⁵

Several studies have found that inadequate sleep is associated with an increased risk of obesity and other weight-related health problems.³⁶ According to the CDC, the Department of Defense (DOD) spends about \$1.5 billion annually in obesity-related healthcare costs while losing 650,000 days of work a year for active-duty troops because of obesity-related health issues. The DOD reported that active-duty service men and women had more than 3.6 million musculoskeletal injuries between 2008 and 2017. Obese soldiers are 33 percent more likely to develop musculoskeletal injuries than their overweight and normal-weight counterparts.³⁷

One of the primary mechanisms by which sleep affects weight is its influence on the hormones that regulate appetite. When we do not get enough sleep, our bodies produce higher levels of ghrelin, a hormone



Sgt. Daniel Ochoa, a wheeled vehicle mechanic assigned to 1916th Support Battalion, Fort Irwin, California, gets his height measured during a weigh-in for the U.S. Army Forces Command Best Squad Competition at Fort Hood, Texas, 13 August 2022. Adequate sleep is essential for maintaining a healthy weight as it is crucial in regulating appetite and metabolism. (Photo by Sgt. Raekwon Jenkins, U.S. Army)

that stimulates appetite, and lower levels of leptin, a hormone that suppresses appetite. This hormonal imbalance can lead to increased hunger and cravings for calorie-dense, high-carbohydrate foods, which can contribute to weight gain.³⁸ This effect could be worse for soldiers due to a culture that relies on sugar-filled energy drinks.

Conversely, sleep extension can reduce energy intake by more than 250 kcal per day in overweight individuals while having no significant impact on total daily energy expenditure, resulting in a net negative energy balance. Finally, these findings indicate that getting chronically sleep-deprived soldiers to sleep more than eight hours per night could result in weight loss of over eight pounds in a year.³⁹

In addition to its effects on appetite hormones, sleep also plays a role in metabolism. Sleep deprivation decreases the body's ability to metabolize glucose properly, which can lead to increased insulin resistance and weight gain.⁴⁰ Adequate sleep is also essential for

maintaining muscle mass; during sleep, the body produces human growth hormone, which is essential for muscle growth and repair.⁴¹

Furthermore, sleep and weight are related through their effects on physical activity. Poor sleep can lead to reduced energy and motivation, which can decrease a person's physical activity. Conversely, regular physical activity can improve sleep quality, making it a critical factor in the relationship between sleep and weight.⁴²

Adequate sleep can help regulate appetite, metabolism, and physical activity, which are essential for maintaining a healthy weight.⁴³ More research is needed to fully understand the complex relationship between sleep and weight, but getting enough quality sleep is a critical factor in maintaining a healthy weight.⁴⁴

Recommendations

Since the benefits of good sleep and the health risks of poor sleep are so well defined, why does the Army still foster a negative sleep culture? Part of the answer

is the Army's "train as you fight" and "mission first" mantras. Obviously, there are no time outs in combat to allow for a good night's sleep. Soldiers must be capable of performing their mission for extended periods of time with minimal rest. While it is necessary to create a realistic environment in training, this mindset has extended into daily activities while in garrison. As a result, sleep is sacrificed at the altars of morning physical training, staff duty, and late nights.

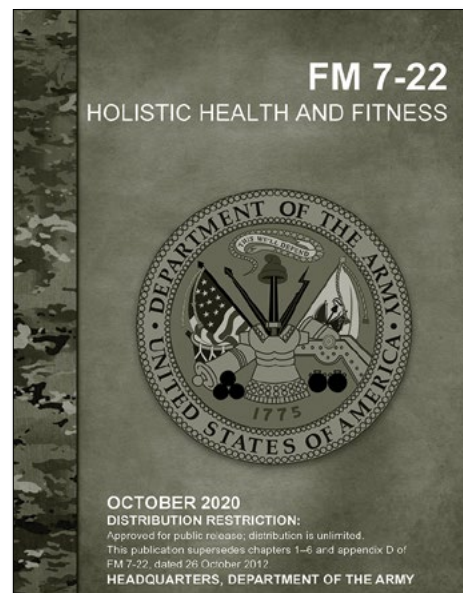
There is no doubt that the Army's sleep crisis is both well documented and widespread. According to the Army Medical Department's performance triad study in 2017 of nondeployed soldiers, less than 40 percent of soldiers get over seven hours of sleep during the work week, and less than 75 percent get over seven hours of sleep on the weekend. As shown in the above medical studies, this chronic sleep debt has dramatic implications on the mental health, obesity, musculoskeletal injuries, and suicide issues plaguing the Army today. While the Army cannot remove all the barriers to sleep for every service member, there are some variables that the Army can control to help improve sleep in the ranks.

The Army should question the sacred cow that is morning physical training. Physical training is essential and provides benefits for sleep, but those benefits come independent of when the exercise happens. The concept is already within doctrine. Field Manual 7-22, *Holistic Health and Fitness*, has an entire chapter dedicated to sleep. In that chapter, the Army acknowledges that "most Soldiers need 7 to 9 hours of sleep," the concept of "sleep debt," and how insufficient sleep negatively effects "cognitive performance" and "emotional and social functioning."⁴⁵ The doctrine also places importance on leadership's role in promoting good sleep practices. One such role is "moving physical readiness training from mornings to afternoons or starting the duty day later, both of which allow Soldiers to sleep later."⁴⁶ If the concept of abolishing early morning physical readiness training is already in doctrine, why has the Army not done so? We suspect that this is largely due to the Army's negative culture toward sleep. As recognized by one of the studies highlighted earlier, the Army's culture treats sleep as an optional benefit rather than a necessity.⁴⁷

In addition to removing early morning physical training, the Army should remove the requirement for

staff duty. In an era where cell phones are the norm, all soldiers can easily be contacted in the event of an alert. As a result, staff duty personnel can be on call rather than forced to stay awake for twenty-four hours. The fact that the Army acknowledges that drowsy driving is as dangerous as drunk driving but still forces soldiers to do this every day is shameful. Units on heightened alert status could conduct staff duty as needed but allow for soldiers to sleep during that time. Of all the recommendations, this is the easiest to implement.

Finally, the Army should start incorporating sleep training into its physical and mental health mandatory training and field training exercises. Soldiers should be educated on ways to improve their sleep like maintaining a more regular sleep and wake schedule; avoiding



Field Manual 7-22, *Holistic Health and Fitness* (2020)

electronics and bright lights before bed; and avoiding the effects of substances like alcohol, nicotine, and caffeine on sleep. During field training when sleep deficit can become pronounced, units should end training exercises during the day and allow their unit to get a full night's sleep before returning from the field. This will increase each driver's and truck commander's cognitive ability and reaction time as well as decrease the likelihood of vehicle accidents during redeployment.

Conclusion

Many senior leaders have remarked that the Army is at an inflection point. Missed recruiting goals,

misconduct, and soldier suicides litter the headlines. While the Army's antisleep culture may not be the sole culprit, it is undoubtedly a contributor to many of the issues plaguing soldiers. By inculcating a healthier view

of sleep, leaders at all echelons can build a routine that enables proper sleep hygiene. Sleep is a documented health necessity—the question is, will the Army recognize this or continue to sleepwalk into the future. ■

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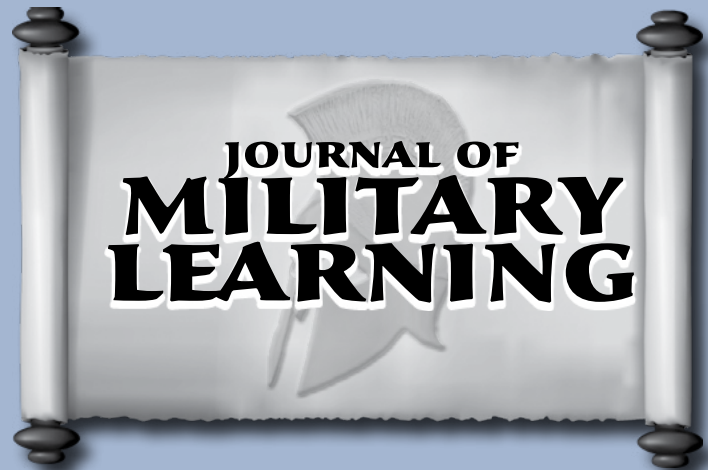
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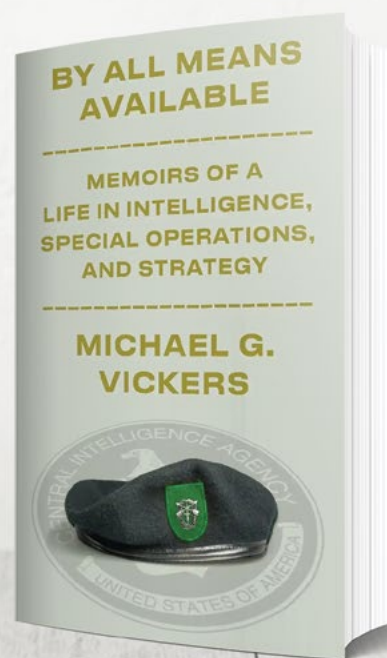
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By All Means Available

Memoirs of a Life in Intelligence, Special Operations, and Strategy

Michael G. Vickers, Alfred A. Knopf,
New York, 2023, 565 pages



Lt. Col. Rick Baillergeon, U.S. Army, Retired

American psychologist and author Barry Schwartz once stated, “The higher your expectations, the greater your disappointment.”¹ As I have gotten older (perhaps, a little wiser), I have heeded those words somewhat and learned to temper my expectations a bit. This is especially true when it comes to books. Over the years, I have clearly had my share of disappointments when books did not measure up to my high hopes. Consequently, I was extremely careful in not placing the bar too high when I began to read Michael Vickers’s memoir *By All Means Available: Memoirs of a Life in Intelligence, Special Operations, and Strategy*.

Why the high initial expectations? For me, and others (as I would surmise), it was the potential of Vickers to provide the “rest of the story” from events occurring in his long and storied career. It was a career highlighted by several high-profile positions within the Department of Defense. I would like to provide a summary of this career. I will focus on the three principal organizations he served with: U.S. Army Special Forces, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and the aforementioned Department of Defense.

Vickers enlisted in the Army under the Special Forces (SF) option in June 1973. Roughly a year later, he graduated from the Special Forces Qualification

Course. He rose through the enlisted ranks in the SF community and was selected to attend Officer Candidate School (OCS) in 1978. In December 1978, he graduated from OCS as an infantry officer. Because of his prior enlisted SF time, he received a direct assignment to an SF group in Panama. In 1980, he graduated from the SF Officers Course as the distinguished honor graduate. Following graduation, he commanded a classified counterterrorism unit and deployed to Latin America several times.²

In December 1982, Vickers decided to leave the Army and formally applied to the CIA’s Career Training Program. He was accepted some months later. Within his memoir, Vickers provides three reasons why serving in the CIA’s clandestine service enticed him. Firstly, he was attracted to the individual autonomy and responsibility the CIA provided its officers. Secondly, he believed that the CIA was the key element in fighting the Cold War. Lastly, he felt he would be afforded much more responsibility at an earlier age in the CIA versus the Army.³

Vickers’s tenure in the CIA was not long, but it was surely memorable. Upon graduation from the organization’s training program, he found himself as the CIA point man in the invasion of Grenada. Following this,

he was selected to serve on a Special Counterterrorism Task Force in response to the Beirut bombings. These two key assignments set the stage for Vickers's selection as the CIA's program officer and chief strategist for the Afghanistan Covert Action Program to force the Soviet army out of the country. It was a role that Vickers cherished, and his performance was lauded by senior officials. It was the CIA's largest and most successful covert action program, and his exploits were chronicled in both the film and *New York Times* bestseller *Charlie Wilson's War*.⁴

Despite his success in these three assignments, Vickers was told his career path would now move in a direction that did not appeal to him. Consequently, after three years in the CIA, Vickers decided to leave to pursue academic and outside interests. Vickers reflected on his CIA experience in his memoir:

I'd had the adventure of a lifetime for three years. I regularly interacted with the top levels of the CIA and the chiefs and other top officials of several foreign liaison services around the world. I loved what I had done, and I loved CIA, but, perversely, it seemed that I had risen too fast and, more to the point, too unconventionally. It was my first career setback, and it was an odd win: I was being penalized for too much success. I had joined CIA not to begin a new career but to accelerate an existing one. I had succeeded beyond my wildest dreams, but it was clear there were still limits.⁵

For essentially the next twenty years, his focus was on his academic pursuits and then his venture into the "outside" world. This venture included obtaining an MBA from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania and a PhD from Johns Hopkins University, and serving as the senior vice president for strategic studies at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments. It was in this role that Vickers cultivated relationships with senior governmental leaders and, at times, provided President George W. Bush and his cabinet with advice on the Iraq War. It was a position that undoubtedly set the conditions for his return to government service.

In 2007, Vickers, on the recommendation of Bush, became the first and only assistant secretary of defense for special operations, low-intensity conflict and

interdependent capabilities (ASD SO/LIC&IC).⁶ Vickers served in this role for four years (President Barack Obama asked him to stay in this position in his administration), and it presented him numerous opportunities to excel. He describes some of these opportunities in the following passage: "During my four years as an assistant secretary of defense, I spent most of my time on operations, mainly on the war with al-Qa'ida and the war in Afghanistan, but also on the war in Iraq, on counter-proliferation operations to prevent Iran from getting a nuclear weapon, on the counterinsurgency war in Colombia, and on counter-narcotics operations in Mexico."⁷

In 2010, Obama nominated him to serve as the under secretary of defense for intelligence, and he was confirmed in March 2011. In this role, he exercised authority, direction, and control over the defense intelligence enterprise for the secretary of defense, overseeing the National Security Agency; the Defense Intelligence Agency; the National Reconnaissance Office; the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency; and the intelligence components of the Air Force, Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and the combatant commands.⁸ During his four years as the under secretary, many key events appeared on his radar. These included the Bin Laden Operation, the continuing al-Qaida fight, the Edward Snowden leaks, renewed power competition with China and Russia, and the beginnings of Russia's covert and overt war in Ukraine.

It is obvious that Vickers has much to address and to offer in a memoir. Before I discuss how Vickers achieves this, I would like to provide you with his purpose in crafting his memoirs. Personally, I always find it interesting when an author offers this to his readers. Additionally, it is usually a good indication on the direction of the memoir.

Vickers lists three main reasons. First, he believes he had a *duty* to history. In particular, he feels that sharing his experience in events such as the "secret war" in defeating the Soviet army in Afghanistan and the war with al-Qaida (among many others) was important. Second, he considers writing his memoirs as

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a *duty* to the American people. He states, “As a former national security and intelligence official, I feel a great responsibility to tell my fellow Americans what I can about the critically important work our intelligence professionals, special operators, and defense and national security strategists have done and are doing today.”⁹ Finally, he believes it is his *duty* to future special operators, intelligence professionals, and national security strategists. Vickers affirms, “I feel an obligation to our country’s future operators and strategists to pass on what I have learned.”¹⁰

To accomplish the above and to effectively detail a career spanning over four decades, a sound organization is imperative. I believe Vickers has accomplished this by not getting “fancy” with his organization and sticking to the basics. He states,

The book is organized into five parts, following a chronological path for the first half, and a thematic one in the second. During the first decade of my career, I was an operator and operational strategist in the Special Forces and CIA. During the subsequent two and a half decades, I was a defense and national security strategist, a national security policy maker, and a senior intelligence official. The book follows this progression.¹¹

Within *By All Means Available*, Vickers utilizes the preponderance of the first four sections of the memoir to focus specifically on his service. It is a comprehensive look that encompasses his reporting to the Special Forces Qualification Course in December 1973 to his retirement from the Department of Defense over forty years later. Within this discussion, Vickers displays a knack for dedicating just the right amount of attention to the events in his career. Consequently, readers will find expanded discussion on the events that they will undoubtedly have the most interest in. I would like to address some of these below.

Vickers devotes most of the memoir’s attention to the Soviet invasion and occupation of Afghanistan. During Vickers’s three years in the CIA, he was incredibly engaged in the area. As addressed earlier, he was selected as the CIA’s program officer and chief strategist for the Afghanistan Covert Action Program to force the Soviet army out of the country. In this role, no one was more involved in these actions than Vickers.

Within the memoir, Vickers discusses how he was selected for the position and the decisions he then made to transform the program. He goes into significant detail (more than I anticipated) on the program. The most beneficial portion of his discussion is a subchapter titled, “What We Won, Why We Won, What We Missed.” He provides significant analysis and is frank on his thoughts on what went right and what could have been improved. He concludes this discussion with these thoughts: “What did we get wrong after the Soviets withdrew and the war finally ended? The most important thing was our error in believing that Afghanistan had lost its strategic significance after the Red Army had been forced to withdraw and the Soviet Empire had collapsed.”¹²

Although the above is outstanding, I believe the highlight of these four sections is Vickers’s treatment of Operation Neptune’s Spear (the operation to capture or kill Osama bin Laden). During this period, he served as the ASD SO/LIC&IC during much of the planning and as under secretary of defense for intelligence for much of the preparation and the execution. Vickers devotes two chapters to the operation and his significant role in it.

In these chapters, Vickers provides readers with exceptional detail on various aspects of the planning, preparation, and execution of the raid. This includes discussion on “finish” options, assessing the probabilities of bin Laden’s location, the ultimate decision to execute, and specifics on the numerous meetings conducted during all phases of the operation. Vickers’s discussion will add immensely to a reader’s understanding of the operation.

As Vickers indicated in his prologue, the memoir shifts from a chronological approach to a thematic approach in the book’s fourth section. In this section, he focuses on “themes” tied to his service. Consequently, readers will find subsections keyed to counterproliferation (e.g., Iran and North Korea), counter narco-insurgency (e.g., Colombia and Mexico), and the battle for the Middle East (e.g., Iran, Iraq, Syria, Yemen, and Libya). Additionally, he addresses topics such as the Snowden leaks and turmoil in the defense intelligence agencies. In each of these, he provides his perspective as a high-ranking government official who was clearly in the “room” for all these events.

The final chapter of section, “Winning the New Cold War,” initiates a shift in the memoir. It is a swing

that somewhat surprised me. Instead of focusing on the author's career and the past, Vickers addresses the present and the future and the challenges America faces and will face. He starts this discussion by addressing China and Russia and makes the following assertion: "The New Cold War has three main causes: a failure to fully integrate China and Russia into the American-led international order, significant changes in the balance of power, and China's and Russia's perception that America is in terminal decline."¹³

Within this chapter, Vickers provides readers with superb analysis. Unlike many who simply point out problems, Vickers offers solutions and courses of action. He organizes these into a grand strategy that he shares with readers. In his introduction to this grand strategy, he states,

America will need an effective grand strategy if it is to prevail in the New Cold War. We haven't had a truly successful one since the end of the first Cold War. In the pages that follow, I offer what I believe is just such a strategy. A successful grand strategy, in my mind, must contain five essential elements: rebuilding our national ambition, unity, and resilience; posturing ourselves to prevail in the race for economic and technological supremacy; winning the intelligence and covert action wars; strengthening regional and global deterrence and, if required, defeating aggression; and transforming our alliances and national security institutions for our new era of great power competition.¹⁴

Vickers utilizes his final section to key on his lessons learned and relearned in the practice of intelligence, special operations, and strategy. As is the case with the entire memoir, it is filled with superb analysis and numerous "takeaways." The highlight is his concluding subchapter on strategic leadership. In it, he offers his ten core principles focused on leadership and career development. Although some may not relate to everyone, as a group they are added value to all.

There are many strengths exhibited or utilized within the memoir that clearly enhance the experience for the reader. First, this is an incredibly readable volume. Vickers writes in a highly conversant style. You would expect this conversational tone in a memoir, but I have found that is many times not the case. This is one of

those select books in which you feel you are sitting with the author listening as he speaks to you.

Tied to the above is Vickers's candidness displayed throughout the memoir. He does not shy from critique (positive and negative) of others and himself. If he feels a poor decision was made, he lets it be known. Conversely, he is quick to praise when he believes it is warranted. Readers will find his openness refreshing, and it does not come with any sense of bias.

The final strength of the volume is the superb notes section Vickers has crafted for the memoir. He added nearly fifty pages of annotated notes, and they are a tremendous resource to the reader. These notes, at times, provide added detail, assist in understanding key points and concepts, or "tell the rest of the story." Future readers must ensure they refer to the notes section when prompted. Don't wait until you complete the book, as all of us have done in the past, to delve into the notes section.

Early in Vickers's memoir, he addresses the personal objectives he had in crafting his memoir. Among these, he states,

I hope the general reader will gain significant insight into the secret worlds of intelligence, special operations, and strategy, and come away with a better understanding of the importance of individuals in driving world-changing events and how the world of today came to be. I hope readers who are very familiar with or even participated in the events described in this book will learn something new about how these operations were actually conducted and what strengths and weaknesses of the various alternatives available to us were.¹⁵

There is no question Vickers has delivered on these and all his objectives in *By All Means Available*. This is memoir that will appeal and benefit a very diverse group of readers. This is much more than a traditional memoir. It is a volume that relives the past, analyses the present, and provides prudent strategy for the future. After reading *By All Means Available*, I am no longer lowering my expectations on books. Exit Charles Schwartz and enter Charles Kettering. As Kettering stated, "High achievement always takes place in the framework of high expectation."¹⁶ ■



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Notes

1. Barry Schwartz is a renowned psychologist who dedicates much of his work to addressing the link between psychology and economics. He possesses a significant body of publishing work which includes numerous articles, editorials, and books. His best-known volume is *The Paradox of Choice: Why More Is Less* (New York: Ecco, 2004).
2. "Distinguished Member of the Special Forces Regiment: Honorable Michael G. Vickers, Inducted 2010," U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, accessed 14 September 2023, https://www.swcs.mil/Portals/111/sf_vickers.pdf.
3. Michael G. Vickers, *By All Means Available: Memoirs of a Life in Intelligence, Special Operations, and Strategy* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2023), 52–53.
4. "Mike Vickers," National Security Institute, accessed 14 September 2023, <https://nationalecurity.gmu.edu/mike-vickers/>.
5. Vickers, *By All Means Available*, 191.
6. This position was originally created in 1987 by Congress as the assistant secretary of defense for special operations, low-intensity conflict (ASD SO/LIC). However, senior officials wanted to expand the position and added the interdependent capabilities (ASD SO/LIC&IC).
7. Vickers, *By All Means Available*, 225.
8. *Ibid.*, 390.
9. *Ibid.*, 6–7.
10. *Ibid.*, 7.
11. *Ibid.*, 7–8.
12. *Ibid.*, 189.
13. *Ibid.*, 417.
14. *Ibid.*, 418.
15. *Ibid.*, 8.
16. Charles Kettering (1876–1952) was a prolific American inventor and a highly regarded engineer and businessman. As an inventor, he was the holder of 186 patents and was instrumental in the development of the electrical starting motor and leaded gasoline. As a businessman and engineer, he was the founder of Delco and the head of research at General Motors for nearly thirty years.

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Medal of Honor

Sgt. Maj. Thomas P. Payne

Sgt. Maj. Thomas P. Payne was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions during a hostage rescue mission on 22 October 2015 in Kirkuk Province, Iraq. Then Sgt. 1st Class Payne was an assistant team leader on a special operations joint task force with a mission to rescue over seventy Iraqi hostages being held by the Islamic State (IS) in a prison compound in the northern town of Hawija.

President Donald Trump presented the Nation's highest award for valor in an 11 September 2020 White House ceremony. In his remarks, the president said of Payne, "We stand in awe of your heroic, daring and gallant deeds. You truly went above and beyond the call of duty to earn our Nation's highest military honor."

Inserting in CH-47 helicopters, Payne and his team of American and Kurdish Special Forces landed and immediately became engaged in a firefight with IS forces. They fought their way to one of two buildings in the prison compound known to house the hostages, where Payne used bolt cutters to cut the locks on a prison door and free nearly forty hostages.

Hearing an urgent call from other task force members engaged in a fierce battle at the second building, Payne urged his team to maneuver about thirty meters to the heavily fortified building, which was partially on fire. As his team fought through the enemy fire and repelled IS fighters who were detonating suicide vests, he risked his own life by entering the burning building multiple times to breach the locked doors and free the remaining prisoners.

"Pat and his fellow Rangers fought through the fire, the bullets and the deadly blasts," Trump said in his speech. "He ran right back into that raging blaze ... and



Sgt. Maj. Thomas P. Payne in 2020. (Photo courtesy of the U.S. Army)

released the rest of the hostages as the building began to collapse."

Payne's team was able to liberate and extract seventy-five prisoners by helicopter, although the aircraft were packed so tight that his team had to stand for the return flight. The team killed twenty enemy fighters during the mission, but sustained one fatality, Master Sgt. Josh Wheeler.

For more on Payne's award, see the U.S. Army's Medal of Honor website at <https://www.army.mil/medalofhonor/payne/>. ■