TRAINING FOR WAR

By Tom Kratman

This is a work of fiction. All the characters and events portrayed in this book are fictional, and any resemblance to real people or incidents is purely coincidental.

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Dedication: For Lieutenants Bill White, Lee van Arsdale, Mike Smith, Terry Jones, Jorge Garcia, Ken Carter, Steve Reynolds, Rich Hayes, Tom Dubois, Phil Helbling, Steve Natschke, Jaime Bonano, Scott Fitzenreiter, Mike Cook, Scott Brown, Chad Snyder, and Tom Matte

It's hard to serve two masters, or two audiences, with a single paper. I'm going to give it a try, anyway, because the subject matters to most of the things I care about, in this case my army (and her sister services), hence my country, and (this being the other master) my current job, which is writing science fiction, hence my family. Interestingly enough, while one might normally think of military training in science fiction as totally at odds with military training in life – and it often is – I've seen at least as much fantasy and wish fulfillment in Army training as I have in some science fiction.

Then, too, I've been with an army that had just come out of a losing counter-insurgency campaign. Leaving aside the racial tensions, which were, at the private soldier level, amazingly ferocious, what was perhaps still worse was the company grade leaderships' almost complete lack of understanding of our primary mission, which was how to train for the next war, or any conventional war. I can't fault them for their devotion to duty, nor for their character, which was properly hard and harsh. But, when the Army and Marine Corps outside of Vietnam had become little but replacement depots for Vietnam, when that same leadership had been given nearly back to back tours there, interrupted only by short tours in dysfunctional units, when large chunks of the NCO Corps, which was even *more* put upon than the Officer Corps, left en masse, the ones remaining could hardly be criticized for not learning something the Army and Corps either just weren't teaching or had spent a decade teaching the opposite of.

We trained hard, to be sure, miles on thousands of miles of marching with heavy packs (where "heavy" could and often did mean more than body weight), and still more awkward loads, alternatively freezing and roasting, bleeding and blistering. And doing not very much, really. As a character development tool the program had much to recommend it. As a training regimen, it left something to be desired.

"Left something to be desired?" Ummm…Kratman, old boy, just *what* exactly?

And awayyyy we go! But ere we do…

Caveat One: Most of what follows is non-doctrinal; it's either just me, my approach, or the approaches of some other good military trainers from whom I learned a great deal. Some of this will be presented as axioms, some as vignettes, and some as illustration or speculation. Rather than say, "I did this," or "Carter did that," or "Smith thought this was a good idea," or "White used to push this" or "van Arsdale suggested that," the vignettes will be presented in the person of Private, Corporal, Sergeant, Lieutenant, Captain, Major, and Colonel Hamilton. Why him? Easy; Hamilton was one of my more likeable characters in my books. There's a little of all of those in Hamilton, anyway, plus quite a few others.

Caveat Two: It would be nice to be able to say that everything here will apply as much to women as to men. Sadly, I'd be lying if I said I believed that. I don't. I do believe that it might, if we approached the subject of women in combat with half a grain of sense (see, e.g., my previous article for Baen, *The Amazon's Right Breast*, as well as my novel, *The Amazon Legion*). But c'mon, that's not going to happen, not with the PC lunatics having control of the keys to the asylum. What I rather expect to happen, though, is that woman are going to volunteer to *stay away* from combat arms in huge and overwhelming numbers, that most of those very few who do go combat arms will be – shall we say, charitably – a bit on the masculine side, and that they might well become just one of the guys, with as much interest in, say, chasing girls are any male grunt, ever.

Caveat Three: Eventually, Inshallah, I intend to turn this into a book. I retain the right to change the number and numbers of the axioms, vignettes, and rules, or any other thing I damned well feel like, at that time, and said book will be the definitive edition. Until then, this will have to do.

I

Axiom One: The functions of training, the reasons we train, and all training can do for us, boil down to five things: Skill Training, Conditioning, Development, Selection, and Testing of Doctrine and Equipment.

The armed forces have a serious doctrinal lack when it comes to explaining why we train and how we do. Since they can't articulate things like, "No, Doctor, Ranger School sucks in the way it does because we are conditioning and selecting, not merely teaching skills," we get changes demanded from unqualified amd ignorant people, with credentials that bear no particular relationship to train for war.

I've spent, by the way, a number of decades since I first floated this axiom around, looking for a valid argument against it from anyone entitled to an opinion. I still haven't gotten one, beyond the merest quibble. Every practicing trainer would probably recognize these as valid, even if they wouldn't necessarily articulate them in exactly the same way.

The five functions should not be looked at as things that can be added up, to come to an approximation of a unit's or individual's training status. To even hope to do that you would have to be able to measure some immeasurables. Forget it; all the really important things *can't* be measured, while all the really measurable things *aren't very important*.

But if you could measure everything, trying to add their values together would still be the wrong way to look at it. After all, a soldier or a battalion, be they ever so skilled, are still worthless if they lack the courage to stand in line of battle, or to press the assault home. Instead, the proper way to look at them would be as things that must be multiplied by each other, with any factor being a zero causing the total to be worth zero, even if one approached infinity. Of course, again, since most of these are anywhere from difficult to impossible to measure, you're not going to get a true value. The important thing to remember is that a zero in one is a zero overall, and even a serious weakness is one means weakness overall.

It's also worth remembering that there is crossover. Better shooting ability, a skill, requires a degree of physical conditioning, but also *conditions* greater confidence, for example. Greater confidence *develops* greater trust and unit

cohesion. I will treat these functions as distinct, for the most part, the better to illustrate them. But they are actually much fuzzier, with much more crossover, than that. They also apply in different ways at different levels, while some are appropriate to leaders, not so key to followers, and still others are collective, applying not just to everyone but to everyone in a unit *together*.

Axiom Two: Skill Training is the easiest.

Skill training is pretty obvious stuff: shoot, move, communicate, repair, account for, manage, request, fill out the form, clean it…there are thousands of tasks, but under a thousand for any given MOS (Military Occupational Specialty, that's "job" for you non-cognoscenti). If in doubt, there are manuals to tell one how to do *everything*. A man or woman of average intelligence could learn to do most of them, and some could probably be done by a docile chimpanzee. Even fairly poor armies can do a fair job at skill training. They may not, of course, but they *can*, if only by sending people off to better armies to be trained. Of the five functions, skill training is the easiest, hence not necessarily the most important, for any given set of skills.

Among the reasons skill training is the easiest is that almost all skills are pretty measurable: hit the target, prepare and send the proper call for fire to the mortars or artillery, do the recon, write the operations order, analyze the map with regard to the enemy, camouflage the position so it cannot be seen from in front, drive the track without wrecking it, blow up X. Etc. Etc. Etc. You usually know when your troops have a skill down as good enough. You can tell when you've reached the point of diminishing returns, the point at which trying to get the task which must be done in thirty seconds done in twenty-nine just isn't worth it, given how much else there is to do.

Axiom Three: Conditioning refers to the molding of non-conscious, instinctive, or non-intellectual characteristics, and the body. It is hard, not least because the mental and emotional aspects of it are nearly impossible to measure, objectively.

Science fiction often touches on conditioning, and sometimes with a certain amount of insight, albeit generally of the negative kind or by omission. Think here, Warren Peace in the late Bob Shaw's book, *Who Goes Here*. Or Keith Laumer's Boloverse. What do those two have in common? That the minds of the combatants can be directly programmed, or obedience unto death can be directly programed, easily and reliably, thus obviating the time consuming and incredibly iffy task of conditioning the combatants directly. Somewhat similarly, John

Scalzi's Old Man's War provides artificial bodies tuned to perfection, thus eliminating the need to train those bodies.

In other words, no, we can't do any of those things, now, and must rely on more traditional methods which are, again, iffy. They will remain iffy, too, for the foreseeable future. The trainer has to do the best he can, even knowing that he'll never know for certain if that best was good enough.

So what do we condition for? We condition for group solidarity and for an innate sense of right and wrong or, maybe better said, to uphold the innate sense of right and wrong the troops bring to the colors. We condition for courage (even though we also develop courage) for, as Aristotle observed, we become brave by performing brave acts. In practice, that means that by overcoming fear once, and then again and yet again, we acquire the habit of overcoming fear *and* we acquire the non-conscious presumption that we can overcome fear without necessarily having to think about it very much. You might say that, since fear is an emotion, we combat it emotionally.

There are also physical skills that fall under conditioning. For example, shooting a rifle; we drill getting into firing position, the (formerly eight, last I checked three) steady hold factors, so they are done automatically, without thought.

That short list hardly touches on the subject of positive conditioning. Suffice to say that if something desirable in human character is non-intellectual or emotional or physical, we will for the most part work on conditioning it. And, if we have two brain cells to run together, we'll realize how uncertain is our success, and how likely it may be that the troops, being human, are simply faking it, for anything non-physical and possibly even for the physical. Conditioned responses – conditioned in peace – to do things dangerous or unpleasant in war, will *always* be problematic.

Another area of conditioning, one highly pervasive in most western armies and in the Russian Army, involves battle drill. This, however, is a subject worthy of its own entry, below.

Conditioning is not only conditioning for something, it is also conditioning against something. For example, modern Outward Bound began life when it was noticed that young British sailors, with their ships torpedoed and sunk from beneath them, would very often simply give up and die in circumstances where they could have saved their own lives fairly easily. Why? Because they'd never been exposed to hardship and took even fairly mild hardship as too much to deal with. Outward Bound, among other things, conditioned sailors against giving up to hardship so easily, by exposing them to hardship. It saved lives, for a certainty. And, if it cannot be said that Outward Bound won the war, it *can* be said that it helped.

Vignette One: Even a goddamned horse knows enough to come in out of the rain.

Fort Campbell, Kentucky, late 1975.

The troops – they were a mortar section, rather badly understrength – staggered along the ochre-hued firebreak under painful, exhausting, and demoralizing loads. The least burdened of them was still humping well over a hundred pounds, and some of the more heavily laden bore half again more than that. They were soaked from the outside by rain, from the inside by sweat. There were no vehicles; this was the middle of the gas crunch when enough gasoline was simply not to be had. Worse, it was raining, that miserable Fort Campbell rain that came down lightly but steadily all day, then turned freezing at night. Worse than that, the mortars were last in order of march, meaning that a hundred and fifty-odd grunts had tenderized the dirt of the firebreak for them, turning it into a knee deep morass.

"Even a goddamned horse," says Spec-4 Shipley, who, like the rest, has been transformed into a two legged pack mule, "has sense enough to come in out of the rain." Shipley's voice carries and is met by a chorus of approving grunts, spiced with a few poignant curses at the idiots in charge who don't have sense enough to get them in out of the rain.

Private Hamilton isn't so sure. He's at least as miserable as anyone else. But the question in his mind is Kipling's, *"Knowledge unto occasion, at the first far view of death?" In other words, Ship, do you really think we'd do this in war, without just falling apart, if we hadn't gotten used to it in peace? I have my doubts. And we're not, loads notwithstanding, horses.*

Axiom Four: We *develop* more intellectual faculties – or moral faculties that require thought – needed by the soldiers and their leaders.

Development is probably not as hard or iffy as conditioning, in the sense that, at least, the truth can be known, success can be, to some degree, validly measured. Still, it remains harder than skill training, and it is time consuming. It is mostly about leadership, yet not entirely, except insofar as every man under fire must often lead himself, make himself do some things he'd really rather not. That, and insofar as the moral echo of troops who have been well developed can sometimes reverberate in their leaders, giving those leaders a little more support in doing their jobs.

All the services share the same fourteen leadership traits. For the most part, we try to develop these in all the troops, at all ranks. Some we condition. And

some partake of both. Feel free to argue with the categorization of the list below; I toss it up more for illustration than as prescription.

Leadership Traits	Mostly Conditioned	Mostly Developed	Fairly Even
Bearing	X		
Courage			X
Decisiveness		X	
Dependability		X	
Endurance	X		
Enthusiasm		X	
Initiative		X	
Integrity		X but	
Judgment		X	
Justice		X	
Knowledge		X	
Loyalty			X
Tact		X	
Unselfishness		X but	

But how do you know how you're doing? It's a toughie, but something hard training can do is give you some hints.

Axiom Five: We subject the troops to hard, dirty, and dangerous training to select from among them.

What are we selecting for? We're selecting leaders. We're looking for people who might do well with special training or in particular jobs. (Sometimes that's negative: "Schmidlap has proven worthless as a rifleman and machine gunner; let's try him out as a driver.") We want to identify and eliminate from service the stupid, the selfish, the treacherous, the unethical, the cowardly. If we're from a culture like most of those in the Middle East (more on this later), we might try to select for people who can overcome their cultural conditioning and accept non-blood relations as quasi family.

Ranger School would be an excellent course for selection, though we really don't use it for that. Especially valuable would be the peer evaluations which,

unlike OERs and NCOERs[1], tend not to be inflated. The big thing though is that traditional Ranger School provides warlike levels of hardship and stress, which allows us to evaluate who does, and who does not, have what it takes to command in war.

Axiom Six: Without subjecting our equipment, and at least as importantly, our doctrine, to realistic testing, we can never identify our intellectual-doctrinal, moral, and materiel weaknesses, nor fix those.

That seems to me so self-evident that I'm loathe to add to it. That said, I probably have to. Why? Because that need to test doctrine and equipment to the point of failure comes with a price tag. Men die. Still, the adding can be done later, in a better place. Read on.

[1] Officer Evaluation Reports and Non-Commissioned Officer Evaluation Reports

II

Axiom Seven: "Training is everything and everything is training."

That's an old saying. It's a true saying, too. There is training value, though not always positive value, in everything we do, every day. And training is all we have to work with. The problem is that people sometimes take it to mean that everything is possible with training, that we have an infinite ability to make infinite silk purses out of any number of sow's ears. Sadly, it's just not true, no matter how much we might like to, or self-congratulate about having done so, and no matter how much certain quarters may envy the military's ability to mold people into any given form. Here's why:

Axiom Eight: All the really important training the soldier either gets more or less with mother's milk or he is *most* unlikely ever to get it.

I often criticize liberalism and leftism for their fixation (often denied, in an attempt at intellectual sleight of hand) on the presumption of easy, reliable, certain malleability and perfectibility of man.[2] I suspect that's the big reason for the fascination they often show with the military. To them it must seem that by making people willing to kill, which surely must be unnatural, and making them willing to die, which surely is still less natural, the military is demonstrating a skill at changing, forming, and reforming people the left can only admire, and desire to control.[3]

The problem is that that doesn't really happen by anything we can deliberately do. We can't change anyone profoundly. We can sometimes maybe change a little around the margins. We can occasionally get someone to reveal something – not always something good, either – that was already inside them that they didn't know about.

It's easiest to see this when you go to a military course with foreigners. No matter how good the training, they leave as almost exactly what they came to the course as, with maybe a plus up in a few skills. Some are great; they arrived great.

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[2] See, for example, Lenin's New Soviet Man, the initial draft of the SDS's Port Huron Statement, the liberal penchant to go into education, their faith – not universal but widespread – in counseling and psychonalaysis. For a good book on the subject, and why they're wrong, see Stephen Pinker's *The Blank Slate*.

[3] This has been going on for centuries. See, eg, the Babeauvists in revolutionary France.

Most are well-connected military trash when they leave, just the same as they were when they arrived.

I tend to be most interested in military problems, be they tactical, operational, strategic, administrative, logistical…you get the idea; if you want my attention, make the problem a military one. That's one of the reasons why I object so strongly to the left's conflation of racism and cultural bigotry or cultural discrimination, or even objective cultural analysis. It's even worse with the more recent conflation of those with sexism or bigotry against gays.

Example; Arab armies, with only a few exceptions – exceptional because of a peculiar make up in those few cases – stink. I mean they just suck. They're awful. Why the hell do you suppose half trained Israeli citizen soldier militia have routinely beat them like they owned them for *decades*? It's because they're militarily rotten. And they're militarily rotten because of the outlooks, values, and beliefs they acquired as young boys, as mentioned, more or less with mother's milk.

Now one might – and surely someone will – take the preceding paragraph as racist. And the problem with that is it's not only no solution, the claim deflects even the possibility of a solution. "Their culture makes it impossible to trust anyone not a blood relation." "Racism!" "They've got a tendency to leave maintenance up to God." "Racism!" "Their leaders routinely extort money from the rank and file because said rank and file are not blood relations." RRRaaaccciiisssmmm!!!"

Vignette Two: Me and my brother against my cousin; me, my brother, and my cousin against the stranger.

Wadi Natrun, Egypt, Summer, 1985

Lemme tell ya a story, true story as it happens.

Some twenty-eight years ago, during Bright Star 85, the Egyptian Army – clearly one of the better Arab armies – set up some tents for us not around Wadi Natrun, generally northwest of Cairo. The Egyptian lieutenant in charge of the detail looked at the Americans, looked at the tents (which were, by the way, better than ours), looked at the Americans...

Plainly he was thinking that an American's signature on a hand receipt would do him no good if one of those tents grew legs. He put his platoon in formation and announced, "I need three guards".

Every man reached into his back pocket, pulled out a wallet and began peeling off notes. The three who came up with the smallest bribes were picked to guard the tents. These three then proceeded to hold hands (this doesn't imply gay in Arab cultures, though there is a homoerotic tendency there) and squat by the

side of the road, crying like babies. And it is understandable that they cried because for the next four days they got no food or water except what our men gave them out of pity. Their officer didn't care; they weren't blood, after all.

See, the Arabs are what the sociologists like to call, "amoral familists." This means that they are usually incapable of forming bonds of love and loyalty with anyone not a blood relation. Even there, degree of blood relation determines where loyalty legitimately lies. The saying in the area is, as written above, "Me and my brother against my cousin; me, my brother and my cousin against the world." This not only allows one to extort* baksheesh *from non-relations, but clouds every military unit that is not blood/clan based.

Picture the poor Arab private. He knows no one in his unit gives a shit about him; after all, he doesn't give a shit about any of them, either. They're not family. What happens when that private is placed in the loneliest position in the world, the modern battlefield? He runs at the first sign things are going badly. (He'll be fine as long as they are going well, though. Note: things rarely go well.)

Add in the fantasy mindset. Don't forget "Insh'allah", (which is like "mañana," but without the sense of urgency) which makes it somewhat impious to train really well since it is all the will of God anyway. Add in a set of social values that despise and loathe doing physical labor.

Militarily, they've got nothing going for them, as long as they insist on following western models of non-blood based military organization. However, if one can escape from the "Raaccciiisssmmm!!!" meme, and think about the problem objectively, there is a way to make better Arab units. This is to base them around blood: Their families, clans and tribes.

There are still at least two problems with this: The clans tend to be internally hierarchical. This means that the military chain of command may not be the real chain of command as in when the battalion commander's driver is his uncle, hence senior in his clan. Trust me, this happens.

These sorts of units – think the Saudi National Guard or the Jordanian Arab Legion (meaner than weasel crap, the both of them, tough, hard as nails, and brave) – have anything from a fair amount to an extraordinarily high degree of trust in and loyalty for each other. They can and will fight and fight hard. The problem is that they have a very finite tolerance for casualties because at some point those losses endanger the standing, power and security of the clan. Then they'll break off the fight, too. Even then, though, they won't usually simply drop their weapons and run, but will retire in good order.

But for the more mundane Arab units, are they rotten because they're mentally genetically inferior? No; they're about as bright as anyone, despite a penchant for first cousin marriage in many places. Is it because they're natural

cowards? Oh, puhleeze! Sorry, but no; cowards don't don and use explosive suicide vests or fly airplanes into buildings or drive bomb trucks into barracks. If anything, they may be gutsier than the human norm. Is it because of all the wonderful high tech weapons the Jews get from America? No, myths aside, the half trained Israelis' citizen militia were stomping the largely professional, western trained and equipped Arabs when the Jews had almost nothing beyond home-made armored cars, rifles, and a few machine guns, while the Arabs had the best the west was producing at the time. No, the Arab problem is cultural, assimilated so early that they really cannot be trained out of it. That said, some are off key notes in their own cultural symphony; I've met a handful, here and there. With these, something can sometimes be done, if they can be *selected* out from the ruck and muck. Usually, though, these guys are not well connected, which counts there, and so are selected against.

Conversely, we – military leaders – sometimes take credit for things we have had little or nothing to do with.

Vignette Three: Though I be the lone survivor

Fort Stewart, Georgia, April, 1986.

The problem, an attack on an enemy strongpoint, was a toughie. First, there was an anti-tank ditch to get the tracks though. Then were was a broad and deep low density minefield. The defenders had out extensive barbed wire obstacles, tactical, supplementary, and protective. [4] On the plus side, at least the weather was nice, with a pleasant breeze wafting somewhat unevenly from the south.

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[4] From FM 3-21.8, The Infantry Rifle Platoon and Squad

Protective Wire

8-58. Protective wire may be a complex obstacle providing all-round protection of a platoon perimeter, or it may be a simple wire obstacle on the likely dismounted avenue of approach toward a squad position (Figure 8-6). Command-detonated M18 Claymore mines may be integrated into the protective wire or used separately.

Tactical Wire

8-59. Tactical wire is positioned to increase the effectiveness of the platoon's direct fires. It is usually positioned along the friendly side of a machine gun FPL. Tactical minefields may also be integrated into these wire obstacles or be employed separately.

Supplementary Wire

8-60. Supplementary wire obstacles are employed to break up the line of tactical wire to prevent the enemy from locating platoon weapons (particularly CCMS and machine guns) by following the tactical wire.

There were gaps in the tactical and supplementary wire, but the protective wire was solid. That is to say, it was solid except that at five or so spots the triple standard concertina wire was assembled such that it was held together with smooth poles assembled from the camouflage and radar scattering screens' support systems. This was so that a gap could be created quickly by the evaluators, almost as quickly as it could be with a Bangalore torpedo, if the attacking platoons managed to insert and "detonate" their simulated Bangalore torpedoes. Blow the simulator; pull the poles out; the wire would separate leaving a gap. (Note: this technique would *not* work with Soviet concertina, which is under compression and fills gaps. Then again, neither do Balganlores work for beans against Soviet type concertina.)

The "Bangalores," in this case, were more pole sections, though almost filled with concrete to simulate something like the weight of a real Bangalore while allowing Bangalore-like assembly, and with a grenade simulator taped to the friendly side for reasonably realistic "signature." (This was consistent with a) Range Control's anal retentiveness about setting off large explosions away from the ranges and, it must be admitted, b) not getting anybody killed.)

Once through the final wire, the platoon's problems were just beginning. Not only was there a trench system, with solid bunkers, defended by a reinforced squad, but there were booby traps., some of which shot flames a few feet, grenade simulators were flying, wads of barbed wire were tucked into cut outs in the sides of the trenches so they could be released to block the trench, and people were shooting at each other with blanks at a range that would have given the safety folks the vapors.

The first platoon went through with no real problem, some burns, some cuts, some bruises, and a couple of only just averted fistfights. Same with second. The last platoon, however, had a visit from the dangling dong of destiny (hat tip, Joel Rosenberg, RIP).

There they were, the smoke screen from a couple of smoke pots covering them, the Bangalore set off, the retaining pole pulled out, and the damned concertina was tangled. One man couldn't get it apart. Two couldn't. Eventually everybody is clustered pulling at the wire, barring only the crews of the M113s and a couple of guys, PFC Searles and PV2 Benson, out on flank security. And then the wind shifted, the smoke lifted, and there was a machine gun facing right at the breach.

Ratatatatat! Whinewhinewhinewhinewhine from the MILES[5]. Everyone – except the track crews, Searles, and Benson – is hit. "This exercise is *over*," mutters Captain Hamilton; "time for a redo. NH%$&BFTE!!!"

Hamilton, however, is wrong, dreadfully wrong. From off on the flanks, Searles and Benson, neither of them quite out of his teens, both crawl inward to where the rest of the platoon's dismount squads, plus the platoon leader and platoon sergeant, are laying there, silently. The wind shifts back, laying the smoke screen that shouldn't have shifted in the first place.

As senior man among the survivors on the ground, Searles takes charge. The two privates then proceed to loot the bodies for ammunition, to include several dozen grenade simulators. They wrench the wire apart, then rush through for the friendly side of the smoke screen. The pair then pass through the smoke on the bellies, before beginning to leapfrog – taking turns with suppressive fire – to the trench system. There, they grenade their way in, and proceed to clear it bay by bay, even though outnumbered six to one. Neither the OPFOR's fire[6], nor the booby traps, nor even the trench blocks slow them more than incrementally.

In the end, is it Hamilton's or the Army's training program that caused or allowed this? No, or, at least, not exactly. Yes, their technical and tactical skill came from their training. And apparently nothing in their training had destroyed their individual initiative. (One might be surprised at how often military training does just that.) Those, clearly, were good and commendable things, and Hamilton was right to be pleased with the boys' performance. But there was something else going on, something that *no* military training can give.

Those two boys grew up with their parents driving determination into them. They grew up with people – teachers, religious leaders, Mr. Martin down the street who lost a leg in Korea – telling them what's right and wrong. Everything on that list of military leadership attributes that could be and was demonstrated on the exercise – courage, decisiveness, dependability, endurance, enthusiasm, initiative – those kids got from Mom and a host of others back home.

Vignette Four: "Whoever is careless with the truth in small matters cannot be trusted with important matters." — Albert Einstein

Hamilton, then a captain, was new in command. And, as the pulsating prong of perversity (again, hat tip, Joel Rosenberg, RIP) would have it, the Annual General Inspection was coming…yes, the dread IG…and in about three days. There were some problems, too. One of those involved a fairly hefty amount of

[5] Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement System. For any non-military readers, thin: A system of laser tag on steroids.
[6] Opposing Force

excess property on hand but not accounted for. He knew it was there, too, but wasn't too worried about it since he wasn't missing anything. He'd have the supply sergeant pick it up gradually, over the next couple of months.

Less easy to deal with was the state of the orderly room, the company headquarters. The things – there was a row of five of them in a single building, divided by brick – had been subdivided sometime in the past into supply rooms, NBC rooms, various offices, and the arms rooms. They were due to be refurbished soon and it was forbidden to spend any money on them, not so much as a can of paint, because of that.

Unfortunately, all those dividers were in pretty bad shape. I'm talking holes in the walls, rips, tears…just a mess.

So Hamilton is walking from his office to the loading dock in back and sees the company armorer (who also took care of repair and utilities) taping Army posters over the holes, to give a nice impression to the IG. He stops and watches the armorer work at it for a while.

The problem is that the armorer isn't fixing a deficiency; he's covering one up. And there Hamilton made such a big deal in his opening talk with the troops about personal integrity, honesty, courage.

"Harrington," asked Hamilton of the armorer, "is it true that we can't fix these walls because the whole thing's supposed to get refurbished?"

"Yessir."

"And is it also true that we've requested they be repaired, more than once."

"Yes, sir, and they always tell us to pound sand. I've got the work order numbers to prove it, too."

"I see…here's what I want; I want you to put a three by five card up next to each of those posters, detailing the damage they're covering and giving the work order number where we've requested repair and why the work order was refused."

"Siiirrr…???"

"You don't understand?"

"No, sir."

"Okay, it's like this. To hell with the IG. But damage invites more damage. The appearance of worthlessness and ruin suggests nobody cares. Nice things, however, that are undamaged, get taken care of. It's very human. That's what's behind the Montessori school idea, actually.

"But covering up can become a habit. Bad precedent can be an awful thing. So I want you to cover the damage, for the sake of averting any more damage, but I want to admit what we're doing, for the sake of not doing damage to our – the whole company's – integrity."

Fortunately, the IG took it in the spirit in which it was done.

That was a pretty direct approach to something. But there are also indirect approaches.

Vignette Five: "Disciplined in the school of hard campaigning…"

Fort Sherman, Canal Zone, 1977

Dressed in black dyed jungle fatigues, Sergeant Hamilton had a squad out busily portraying communist guerillas for a battalion of the 82d Airborne, going through the jungle school. The 82d was not having a particularly happy time of it, either, whether from Hamilton's squad or from any of the other squads.

One of the nightly events, for Hamilton's crew, is to walk through ambushes, four a night. He does that, for sixteen renditions. Every one of them but one stinks. Hell, it's preposterous; he can usually hear them in the ambush position, slapping at bugs or just fidgeting. He can smell the insect repellent. Moreover, their noise is disturbing the wildlife, which is further warning to Hamilton's squad of OPFOR.

But there was one ambush that was just perfect. The only way he knows they're there at all is because it's one of the standard ambush positions. They are utterly silent. The animals don't even notice them. And when they spring the ambush? It is a glorious dance of precision and perfection. It is violence personified.

All Hamilton and his men can say is, "Wow! That was great!" But they don't know why this one was different.

"The Old Guard,[7]" says the lane walker from the Jungle Operation Training Center, wonderingly. "That was a platoon from the Old Guard that tagged along with the 82d."

Hamilton: "You're joking, right?"

"No," says the lane walker. "I'm as shocked as you are. I guess all that drill and ceremonies, and standing at attention in the cold, must build some awesome discipline. I was right there with them while the bugs lunched them. You *know* what the insect life is like out here, but never a twitch. And they *never* snivel."

The upshot of which is that training – especially training about a matter of character, as discipline is – can sometimes cross over from one area to another.

[7] The Old Guard, the Third Infantry Regiment, is the Army's ceremonial organization in the Washington DC area.

III

Tasks, Conditions, Standards

Everything in training in the Army and Marines, though the terminology may differ in the Corps (or in the other services), is a task, done under certain conditions, to certain standards. That, at least, is the theory. In practice…well, not so much.

One of the problems resides in or around the concept of standards.

The first of these problems is, well, just what do standards mean without conditions. Everyone's seen the captain whose company always puts on a good show, where the troops' hair is always cut, the lockers sorted to perfection, the floors in the barracks gleaming, never a cigarette butt in the police call area, etc. Quite likely, too, that there's never a DUI, that everyone contributes to Army Emergency Relief, and the operationally ready rate for the vehicles approaches one hundred percent. "That captain has high standards," say his superiors.

Does he really? What if looking good is all they do? What if the reason for the one hundred percent OR rate is that the vehicles are never used, nor even inspected closely, lest something go wrong or be found wrong?

In fact, that captain has a very different set of task, conditions, and standards he's operating from. The task is: Look good enough to higher to get that coveted water-walking OER. The key conditions are: To the exclusion of everything else. And whatever standard we might think to apply are meaningless, because of the real task and the real conditions.

That example is extreme, of course, but it is not unreal. Sometimes it even works to advance the inherently illegitimate task, and the clear bastard of an officer. And, naturally, the troops not being dummies, and training being everything and everything training, this kind of program is also training them, to put appearances first, last, and always.

Vignette Six: Nobody is useless, but some people's highest and best use is as a bad example.

The mission to attack Cerro Galera, on the southwest corner of the Panama Canal Zone, just northwest of Howard Air Force Base, was so miserable – it being densely overgrown and extremely steep – that it was assigned almost by roster. The mission was partially evaluation driven, with serious bad OER karma for commanders of units that failed the evaluation. It was also partially real world

driven as, in the event of hostilities with Panama, there was a fair to middling chance that the heights would have to be cleared.

The battalion commander could apparently care less about real world considerations; what mattered to him was his OER, and part of his set of conditions for gaining that water walking OER was, "to the exclusion of all other ethical and moral considerations." In support of that, and even though he could not have done it for real war, nor for legitimate training for war, he spontaneously and surreptitiously altered the conditions. Instead of the attack up Cerro Galera going in as a real simulation, the battalion commander had ropes installed all along the slope to make the going much easier and faster than it should have, or legitimately could have, been.

(As an aside, it came as a surprise to no one who knew this battalion commander when, later, as a colonel promotable, commanding a training brigade, he browbeat his headquarters company commander into falsifying his Army Physical Fitness Test score. It *was* something of a surprise, though, when the Chief of Staff of the Army allowed the wretch to be promoted to brigadier general and then retire, rather than court-martialing him as he plainly deserved. But then the Army's major task is, all too often, "look good" with conditions, "no matter the cost in ethical precedent." Oh, yes, it is. How do you suppose officers like that thrive?)

This illustration leads to something else:

Axiom Nine: In the absence of valid conditions, standards are completely meaningless.

A few examples: 1) Task: Engage target with a rifle … Conditions: Given range of one hundred feet, an infinity of ammunition, a zeroed rifle, no wind, on a perfectly clear, sunlit day, with the target painted bright orange. Standards: hit the target at least once. 2) Task: Run twelve miles. Conditions: Given three days, a smooth flat pavement, athletic clothing and shoes. Standard: Arrive. 3) Task: Conduct reconnaissance patrol. Conditions: given an MTO&E[8] infantry squad, a perfectly flat golf course overlooked by a hill, the hill being accessible, in the absence of an opposing force, with various displays laid out on the golf course, in plain sight, without camouflage, said displays showing friendly and enemy equipment, in an inactive NBC[9] environment, with a working radio, in the daytime,

[8] Modified Table of Organization and Equipment

[9] Nuclear, Biological and Chemical. Inactive means nobody's using them.

without fog or precipitation. Standards. The unit identifies eighty-five percent of the equipment displayed…

You get the idea. Cub scouts could do any of those. *Brownies* could do any of those. There's nothing wrong with the standards, per se, but the conditions make those standards meaningless.

Conversely, try this:

Task: Conduct Deliberate Attack

Conditions: Given an MTO&E infantry company, with sixteen hours to prepare, from issuance of the warning order from battalion to crossing the line of departure, with the operations order from battalion coming not more than four hours after the warning order, the LD being at a distance of four kilometers, the objective being two kilometers past that, with the entire area between the LD and the objective subject to direct enemy fire, mines, indirect enemy fire, in an active NBC environment, with an enemy platoon one third the strength of the company, dug in, said platoon blocking access to the objective, with trenches and bunkers, the enemy having tactical, protective, and supplementary wire emplaced, plus a protective minefield. The OPFOR has both MANPADS[10] and light cannon for air defense. The company will be supported by the battalion's heavy mortar platoon, two sorties of A-10s, and one battery of 105mm towed guns. Ammunition for indirect fire support is not constrained. Terrain is jungle. There may be streams and / or swamps to slow progress. Casualty assessment will be mixed MILES and evaluator judgment.

Standards: The objective is taken. The OPFOR platoon blocking the way suffers not less than seventy-five percent casualties. The company suffers not more than twenty-five percent casualties. No friendly unit endangered by friendly fire or action.

I trust it's not too hard to see how those standards are actually fairly tough to meet, given those conditions.

Note that changing any of those standards or any of those conditions requires some thought and judgment. If you reduce the size of the enemy force, maybe you want to eliminate the two sorties of A-10s. If you make the minefield more substantial, maybe you need to give the company more time and attach a platoon of engineers.

As a general rule, too, I'd suggest that for collective combat tasks the following table for force rations should be adhered to.

	Attacking	Defending
Combat Unit	3:1	1:3

[10] Man Portable Air Defense Systems. Stingers, Redeyes, Blowpipes, Strellas, Grails, etc.

Combat Support Unit	6:1	1:2
Combat Service Support Unit	10:1	1:1

Yes, by the way, I am saying that the most rear echelon of service support units still needs to be trained to fight, to defend and also to attack, and that that table gives a fair estimate of the chief condition – force ratio – to do so successfully and train to do so successfully. What? A maintenance platoon conduct a deliberate attack? Yes. See the German "Snail Offensive," Russia, 1942, at *Military Improvisations During the Russian Campaign*, CMH Publication 104-1, which is available on line, for free, at history.army.mil.

So that's one problem with standards, when they're established without reference to the conditions. The other problem is when the standards aren't really standards at all, when, instead, they become "performance measures." What's a performance measure? It's generally a step which, if taken in the right sequence, is thought to equate with success at the task. The ARTEP, the Army Training Evaluation Program, is replete with performance measures masquerading as standards. The big problem, though, is that performance measures usually lack quality control and too often key on trivia. Trivia? I recall a test on using a lensatic compass at Fort Stewart, in the 1980s, whereby whether a soldier passed or not had to do with which thumb went over which when using the center hold technique. It was absurd, the more absurd for how seriously it was taken.

Not quite so trivially, but perhaps as uselessly, the ARTEP will have dozens of steps, say, for that deliberate attack mission, from receive the warning order to initiate necessary movement, to establish assembly area, to conduct troop leading procedures, to move to the line of departure…

All of those have some value for an evaluator to look at, but none of them, taken alone or together, equals success in quite the same way as: "The objective is taken. The OPFOR platoon blocking the way suffers not less than seventy-five percent casualties. The company suffers not more than twenty-five percent casualties. No friendly unit endangered by friendly fire or action." And if you can't evaluate based on those, once again, look to the conditions to see if you have made them thorough enough, and difficult enough, to simulate war reasonably well.

Changing conditions, toughening them, is also a way to effectively heighten the standards but without the demoralization attendant on changing them, which changes say, in effect, "I told you you were good before. I lied. That's why I'm raising standards now." Toughening the conditions can consist of reducing preparation times, changing light and weather conditions, adding obstacles, directing the route over unbreached and unbridged obstacles, making it an active

(as in they’ve been used) chemical warfare environment, increasing the enemy force, change it to a nighttime task, etc.

IV

Vignette Seven: oh, of *course* the enemy will always set himself up for maximum vulnerability to your drills and standard operating procedures.

(The following is extracted from *Carnifex,* Volume II in the Carreraverse)

Cano was *pissed*. Being taken by surprise, ambushed himself by the *Duque*, was just too fucking much. Bad enough that—

"Relax, Tribune," Carrera said, not ungently. He was actually impressed with the kid. "I just have some questions. It was a *good* ambush. Really. What bothers me was that maybe it was *too* good. Why do you think it was so good?"

Cano didn't relax. Sure, he wasn't a signifer anymore; he was entitled to tie his boots in the morning without tying the left one to the right one. Even so, this was the bloody *Duque*. He was a bastard; everyone knew it. Cano could just see his career flying off to parts unknown and unknowable. He could—

"I asked a question, Tribune," Carrera reminded.

"Oh . . . sorry, sir. I was . . . I just wasn't expecting you to—"

"I *asked* a question, Tribune."

"Yes, sir. Sorry, sir. Well . . . sir . . . we've done this ambush here maybe a dozen times just since I've been leading the platoon. The boys know what to do and, then again, we drill the shit out of it . . ."

Aha.

"Jamey! Call the Chief of Staff, the I and the Ia. I don't give a shit if they're asleep. Get 'em up."

Vignette Eight

Hamilton couldn't figure it out. He *knew* the company—his new company—was well drilled. Yet every problem thrown at them this brisk Fort Stewart morning they pretty much flubbed. It was taking longer for them to react than it should have if they'd never drilled a step.

It took the common sense of his driver to explain it: "Everything you've thrown at them is different this morning, sir. For example, that ambush? Well, you had it placed over there on the right and behind. Normally, it's always up ahead, either right or left."

"So?"

"So they're having to stop, think, overcome the conditioning of *years* of doing it the other way, then think of what to do for this. And they've drilled so much they're not good at thinking quick."

"Oh. How come you're still a private."

"I'm new, sir. Not stupid, but new."

Battle Drills and SOPs[11]

Drills are preset and rehearsed to the point of conditioned solutions to common battlefield problems. Though I can see the point, for some of them, I'm not a huge fan, overall. There are a few reasons for my lack of enthusiasm. One is that, used enough, the enemy can study them at leisure and arrive at the perfect counter to almost any given drill. Another is that war is chaotic and unpredictable such that the drill is usually somewhat inappropriate. The same generally holds true for Standard Operating Procedures, individual tasks done to perfection, crew drills, and formations.

There are some very good armies that historically have been utterly dependent on battle drills, crew drills, SOPs, and the like. Almost every army uses at least some of that. But for those that use only some, there's a marked reluctance to get too very dependent on them, in part, I think for the time training them (to the point of conditioning) involves, and in part because an army dependent on drill will tend to select for leadership people very comfortable with drill, with present solutions, which are precisely the wrong people to put in charge of an inherently and irredeemably chaotic endeavor like war.

There are a number of other objections to overreliance on drill besides the two I mentioned, above. I suggest using the below as a set of filters for what should and should not be turned into drill.

Drills, if they're to be reliable, must be conditioned into troops, almost as if the troops, leaders, too, were Pavlov's dogs. So if the subject of the drill simply *can't* really be conditioned in a normal human being, well enough to rely on it, *don't* try to make a drill of it.

Even if the matter is something a normal human being can be conditioned into, conditioning usually takes a lot of time. Time, of course, is usually at a premium. Thus, even if something can, in theory, be conditioned, if you don't have the time to condition it, don't waste what time you have on the impossible.

Drills—like the other things, mentioned above—are executed under certain conditions. If those conditions are subject to radical differences such that no

[11] If this sounds familiar, yes, this part of the talk, which I've been giving for years, was modified for inclusion in *Carnifex.*

amount of practical drilling can condition them all, do not train as a drill something that will only be true infrequently.

Military units suffer losses. They are almost never at full strength. If a drill requires a particular level of manpower or equipment, and you can reasonably predict that that particular level of strength will rarely be met, don't bother.

Those last two are related. We legitimately and effectively use crew drill for armored vehicle crews. And why not? The inside of a turret—the key condition—doesn't change. The crewmen have seats they stay in. The gun doesn't move laterally or horizontally relative to the crew. The internal communications gear typically works. For the other key condition, strength, the crew of an armored vehicle generally lives or dies together; they generally suffer no attrition that matters in the short term. Yes, it sometimes happens but not commonly. So a drill for a crew like that—a crew drill—makes sense.

The same holds true for much that the mortars and artillery do. Their positions may change from place to place, but the important thing, the gun, is always the same. The positions they build to protect the gun and themselves are always the same, too. The casualties they take, mostly to other mortars and artillery, or air, tend to be either catastrophic or insignificant.

Artillery and mortars don't usually come under small arms fire. Mines are only rarely a problem for them. For the most part they lose men to aerial attack and counterbattery fire from enemy artillery. That fire either is close enough to emulsify the crew, or it's far enough away, when it explodes, to do only limited damage to the crew, or it is so far away it is irrelevant to the crew.

In the first and the last of those cases, that the artillery crew was drilled numb doesn't hurt matters. It can still either do the job or it is dead. In the middle case, because gun crews are much larger—or at least ought to be— than the bare minimum needed to load and fire the gun, and because artillery crew drill is simple enough that everyone can be, and in a good crew is, trained to do all the jobs. Therefore, even with some losses, the gun can still fill the important jobs with adequately trained troops and still function at a reduced rate of fire.

The drill at the crew level becomes much more problematic when we rise above the level of a single, simple crew to a platoon of mortars, tanks or tracks, or a battery of guns. Then the key condition is no longer the same all the time. Units above the crew level always have to adjust: to terrain, to the enemy situation, to their own strength. Indeed, the variables for infantry are infinite, a few drills won't do and the number that might do is impossible.

In any event, before you decide to train something as a drill, ask yourself also whether the conditions—to include your own strength—are likely to be the same in war all the time.

Note that the Russians, one of the more thoroughgoing drill-based armies, show a key point for drills above the crew level: a line remains a line, even when you erase some portion of it. As they do, if you plan on doing a drill or formation with any unit above the crew level, you had best consider making it some variable on a line or similarly simple geometric shape. A wedge or echelon, for example, counts as a line. Only that kind of formation or drill is very sustainable after losses.

Similarly formations: picture a platoon, normally of four vehicles, trying to bound forward by sections of two vehicles. That's fine, as far as it goes. Ah, but what about when the platoon is down to only three vehicles? Then it doesn't work so well anyway, and hardly at all in the same way. The three vehicle platoon moves either with an inadequate overwatching force—one vehicle—or the section on overwatch is two vehicles and the single track sent ahead to bound feels alone and abandoned, advancing most reluctantly.

So under normal combat conditions—because, again, normal is understrength—the bounding overwatch drill has less benefit than you expect and need, and all the time spent on drilling such movement tends to be wasted. On the other hand, a company bounding forward by alternating its platoons can work because even if a bounding platoon has taken some losses, it is still capable of covering its own front and has enough sub units left to give each other moral support to go forward.

Time to execute the drill in battle is another consideration. Some things don't have to be conditioned in order to be done. Even in battle there is often time to give more than one-word drill commands. Before deciding to train something as a drill, consider if there would normally be time to give orders to have your troops act more appropriately than a drill would allow.

Then, too, one should prioritize. Ask yourself if the drill a matter of life and death for an individual, victory or defeat for a higher unit? I don't mean simply that under some rare circumstances a well-executed drill might be life or death for us or the enemy. I mean is a precise conditioned response virtually always that important?

Sometimes it is. Reaction to a near ambush is that kind of circumstance. So is using a Bangalore torpedo[12] to breach an obstacle, especially when attacking a position held by an enemy with a very responsive artillery support network . . . if surprise fails you and you must clear a path quickly.

At a lower level, the individual level, there are also a few tasks like that. The whole field of combat demolitions is dangerous enough to justify drilling troops to

[12] I'm not actually sure Bangalores are still in the system. There are limitations, however, to the MCLIC, the Mine Clearing Line Charge, sufficient to justify making your own, even if they're no longer in the system.

do it perfectly every time. The time to put on a gas mask is about that critical, too. Although, as a little experiment in the downside of drills and SOPs, sometime have your troops come under a chemical attack when they are advancing at a crawl under fire, with inadequate cover and concealment. Watch how our boys, already well-drilled on immediate action for a chemical attack, stand up despite the direct fire to put on their masks.

"Only the very simple can work in war," as Clausewitz observed. Complex drills simply won't work, even leaving aside that the time required to condition something goes up with that something's complexity, even as the probability of conditioning it drops.

As suggested above, your enemy is probably not a fool. He will adapt to your drills very quickly, given a chance to study them.

The final problem with basing one's tactics and training around drill is that there is a mindset, common in many armies, which has no understanding of war as the chaos it is. To these people everything is controllable, everything is predictable. They will forget that war is about prevailing against an armed enemy, who does not think about himself as a target set up to give you the best possible chance of success, but instead will do everything he can to thwart and destroy you.
In peacetime maneuvers, these people and their units often do well, even better than those who see war more clearly for what it is. They then stretch the idea of drill beyond the legitimate limits it has, and try to make everything a drill, everything precise. Skills and purely measurable factors assume an unmerited importance. Worst of all, leaders and troops are not trained to *think*. Their *moral* faculties are not developed.

After the First World War there, the victorious French Army developed some very standardized drills for higher formations. The German Army examined these division level drills in wargames on maps and came to the conclusion that they were, most of the time, more effective than the more chaotic approach the Germans had favored. Nonetheless, the Germans didn't adopt the French methods. The French continued to drill; the Germans continued to treat war as uncontrollable chaos and trained their army accordingly.

France fell in *six weeks* in 1940.

And now, just to prove that a foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of small minds, I'm going to break the filters I gave above and suggest one drill for heavy units, tank, mechanized infantry, motorized infantry, plus other vehicle mounted units, that meets almost none of them. This is a drill—in two variants—for underway fueling, feeding, and arming.

In the first of these, four trucks—a mess truck, a fuel truck, an ammunition truck, and a trash truck—line up on the road, either to one side or, if the road's

wide enough and the fuel truck has two nozzles, in the middle of it, and the troops go through on their vehicles. At the first truck, the mess truck, the squad leader holds up the number of fingers for the people he has to feed. The mess folks on the truck dish out that many meals, covering one of the meals for the driver, who can't stop to eat. The non-driving personnel begin wolfing their food down like ravenous, wild, mad, rabid beasts. The driver continues on to the next truck, fuel, and stops the track. He then tries to imitate the others (*nomnomnom*), while someone plugs the fuel nozzle into the vehicle and the fuel folks oversee the pump. Meanwhile, the squad leader sends one private jogging to the next truck, with a written list of the ammunition needed. When the vehicle is fully fueled, or as fully fueled as it can be made, in times of logistic austerity, the driver puts down his chow and moves up to the ammunition truck, where the ammunition is waiting. This is tossed over and dumped on the floor of the track, pending a rest halt or assembly area where it can be properly stowed. Someone bends down and does the best stowage he can, under the circumstances. The driver might or might not get a bite at this time. The ammunition placed below, the track moves on to the trash truck. While going there, all the trash from the previous day, plus the garbage and paper plates from the meals just consumed (I mentioned "ravenous, wild, mad, rabid beasts," did I not?) and tosses it over in passing.

The second version is basically the same, except that everybody is moving the whole time. Yes, it takes a little practice. But, with practice, a mechanized infantry company can be fed, fueled, rearmed, and have its trash removed in ten or eleven minutes, while never becoming a stationary target for enemy artillery.

Why do this as a drill though? Good question. Try this: much time in training is wasted by stopping, starting, and building up momentum and inertia. This way cuts way down on that. Too, like Collins' example of passing out ammunition on the route march to the line of departure, something that simply feels real, and, chrome-like, adds that sense of, "this is what it will be like," which tends to carry over past the minor event to the major exercise, validating the exercise. Additionally, it has the effect of inculcating in the mind of every man in a heavy, mobile unit that speed is their best asset, more than guns and armor.

As for the disadvantages noted in battle drill, they don't generally apply to this, since it is not an exercise in using force to overcome force, against an intelligent, self-willed enemy.

Vignette Nine: sometimes the best way to learn to understand and defeat your enemy is by walking in his shoes:

The mission was deliberate attack at the company level, but it was an OPFOR mission, in this case to simulate a Soviet motorized rifle company conducting an assault from the march. MILES would be used.

Well, thought Hamilton, *I don't think it would be unprincipled to use the actual Soviet drill for this. Rather, unless we do use that drill, we'll be in violation of the conditions for the problem*.

So he called together his lieutenants and explained to them they were going to simulate a Soviet unit—"Oh, yes, boys, *you* are going to command the company in rotation for this."—doing things the Soviet way, as the only way to properly test their sister company, the platoons of which would be defending battle positions.

And that was what they did for the day; they practiced doing things the Soviet way. This involved rolling in column to about twelve hundred meters away, forming platoon columns as they closed, dismounting just out of small arms range, forming on line, and walking forward firing from the hip. It culminated with the platoon leaders calling, "Into the assault: FORWARD!" and the troops shouting, "Urrah!" and then charging at the run, screaming like Furies and firing like maniacs.

The first platoon of the other company wasn't expecting that. They ran.

Wow, thought Hamilton, *I sure didn't expect that*.

The second platoon of that company ran, too.

Uh, oh., thought Hamilton; *I think we have just discovered that our units are going to run for their lives if they ever have to face a Soviet Army doing even the simplistic crap it's been trained to do. I see no end of bad in our future.*

The third platoon was going to run; Hamilton was with them while one of his lieutenants commanded the company. He could see them getting ready to bolt. They didn't, but only because the battalion commander declared an artillery-delivered FASCAM (FAmily of SCAatterable Mines) minefield right in front of Hamilton's company. Never mind that as a battalion commander he lacked the authority for FASCAM on his own hook. Never mind that the entire divisional artillery could not have delivered it so instantaneously, if that had been all they had to do.

(In other words, that battalion commander, faced with someone using realistic conditions, decided to adopt an unrealistic condition to avoid what he apparently felt was personal humiliation. For shame.)

The rest of the story is that, when it became Hamilton's company's turn to defend by platoons, the sister company had learned to do the same Soviet battle drill, possibly with a couple of improvements. Hamilton's first platoon…stood. Hamilton's second platoon…stood. Hamilton's third platoon stood—and without the battalion commander giving them an impossible FASCAM obstacle.

I think, thought Hamilton, *that the difference isn't so much in the quality of the companies. I think it's that my men were inoculated by seeing the Soviets from the inside, first.*

V

Training individuals and the chain of command.

The Army's record, I know, and the Marines, I've been told, is not all that good here. We waste a lot of time. We misdirect a lot of time. Worst of all, we centralize in such a way as to remove from non-coms, especially squad leaders, their historic responsibility to train their own troops. A side effect of that institutionally directed irresponsibility is that the squad leaders are often a lot weaker than they ought to be.

Vignette Ten: Knowledge is power.

Camp Swampy, 1986.

When Hamilton was a young puppy of a lieutenant, his company commander made him promise that, when he took command of a company, he wouldn't change a blessed thing for at least six weeks. Instead, he solemnly promised, he'd do a lot of LBWO, asking questions, and then analyze.

He did that for the first six weeks of his first command. In the process, he saw all kinds of interesting and eye-opening things: People sleeping in the barracks on duty time, squad leaders who really didn't have the first idea that they were responsible for their troops, in toto, squad leader time consisting of people playing ping pong in the dayroom. And this was in one of the *better* companies of that battalion, Hamilton's predecessor having been a first class officer, in general (though he never made general).

Hamilton didn't really blame the squad leaders or platoon sergeants. And his platoon leaders were all brand new. The officer corps had castrated the NCO corps decades prior. They were so used to being told what to do, all the time, to having their time managed by higher, that the idea that they were responsible was just alien to many, maybe even most, of them.

So Hamilton called everybody from squad leader on up into his office and gave a little speech, more or less to this effect:

"Boys, I've been in the Army about nine and a half years by now. I think probably every year, sometimes twice, some company commander or other would announce, 'People, I'm sick of this fucking off in the barracks. We're gonna account

for every man, every minute. We're gonna tighten up the training schedule...We're not gonna let a minute go to waste..."

"Yeah...no. That usually worked for about ten days until the next crisis came upon us and some new priority popped up; then we went right back to what we'd been doing.

"We're going to try something different. Rather, we're going to try a few things different.

"Item one: Look at your new training schedule. Note where it says 'sergeants' time'? Right; it doesn't; it's gone. All time that I don't specifically take is sergeants' time. Now flip it over.

"Item two: Remember where it used to say 'opportunity training'? Note that now it says 'mandatory opportunity training.' That means you *are* going to do it; trust me on this. I'm testing Friday afternoons. If your guys fail, we'll retest Friday night until Saturday morning, if that's what it takes. Yeah, it's micro-managing. For the moment.

"Item three: Where's the time coming from for this? Go back to what I said in item one; I'm not putting anything on the schedule that isn't _my_ major event. So you now have a lot of time."

The first week they didn't believe him. He had the first sergeant select two men from each squad, randomly, and used his platoon leaders and platoon sergeants to test. The men failed. So the dirty bastard kept the whole company there retesting until about 23:30. Next week, two of the squad leaders believed. Their people passed. The rest stayed until about 22:30. The next week it was four, until maybe 21:00.

It took six weeks but, by that time, they all believed.

Hamilton kept it up for another six weeks after that. Allegedly, one – at least one; might have been more – of his squad leaders had troops coming up to him and saying, in one case literally, "Forsooth, Sergeant, I am in desperate need of getting laid. Sadly, if we don't pass the muthafuckin' CO's test Friday, it won't happen again this week, either. So please, PLEASE teach me this shit."

After that twelve weeks was over there was another little prayer meeting in Hamilton's office. The gist of that was, "Okay, now you know you can do this; you can train your own troops without being told where and when to do it. The next step is that now *you're* going to decide what *your* squad needs. Right. Now give me five Soldiers Manual tasks, three if they're exceptionally hard. Yeah, that's each of you. Yeah, I'm still going to test Friday night."

That program, in conjunction with some other things, worked pretty damned well. By well I mean that when the annual hands on Skill Qualification Test[1] rolled around, the rest of the battalion shut down for two or three weeks to prep. Hamilton's crew didn't. Instead, they went to the field, did a best squad

competition, some deliberate attacks, couple-three live fires, some patrolling, some anti-armor ambushing...and basically had a good time. They came in from the field rather late the night before it was their turn to take the SQT (which in that battalion was done much like an EIB test, _very_ anal). Hamilton told the boys, "Oil your rifles, knock the mud off your boots, get a good night's sleep. See you out here in the morning."

Seven people in that company didn't max the test. That was something over two thirds of all the maxes in the battalion, which is pretty good considering he had less than ten percent of the battalion. The top nine squads were Hamilton's, ten counting company HQ. The top three platoons were his, and nobody else was even close. All his squad leaders acquired a pretty vast level of prestige with their own troops and within the battalion, overall.

After that, he still collected their tasks, but just spot checked occasionally. The sergeants were doing it, all individual training, entirely on their own hook. And from there he could put in a date and time for a given inspection or any other event related to his squads and be quite confident it would get done, efficiently and well.

(Oh, the next year, where he paid zero attention to the upcoming SQT, only four of the men didn't max it.)

Vignette Eleven: Be innovative if you want your troops to learn innovativeness. Be determined if you want to develop determination in the men.

Hamilton thought the boys were ready for a plus up – a toughening up – in the condition for Mission Essential Task: Conduct Deliberate Attack. What he had in mind to do was a night assault river crossing with his own company and two smallish platoons attached from a different company (E, aka AT), where the large platoon from Echo Company would play the Opposing Force. The site chosen was the old site for M113 water operations. It had a couple of advantages over other places, notably having slow moving water, a causeway through the middle, and a complete lack of alligators, which is always nice. Crossing the causeway – deemed to be a bridge for the exercise – would be one of those not real bright moves. Besides, the optimum way to take a bridge is both sides simultaneously.

Hamilton requested a dozen RB-15s, 15 man rubber boats, which could hold one hundred and eighty men, which was about right. The Engineers promised him seven, which could hold one hundred and five. Then they changed this – rather late in the game – to seven RB-7s, seven man rubber boats, which could hold forty-nine. What showed up on his figurative doorstep was four RB-3, one of which

leaked, which could hold nine…to get about one hundred and eighty men across the stream…under fire.

So Hamilton finds himself standing there, glaring at these freaking four (minus one; don't forget that leak) miserable RB-3s. He wonders if the battalion commander who declared the nonsense FASCAM is behind the shortfall, but, *No, Tuffy's not that bright.*

He has a tactical plan: The two attached platoons are going to be a) a diversion, then the force to grab the near side of the "bridge." Thus, he doesn't absolutely have to get them across by boat. The machine guns, too, can cross over later. They'll support by fire initially, so that's another dozen or so men that didn't have to cross right away.

But I've still got about a ninety of my own men and I can, in theory, only get nine of them across, at which point the boats are on the other side and they can't be rowed back.

Asks Hamilton's supply sergeant: "What the fuck we gonna do, sir?"

Hamilton looks at the boats. Looks at the far side of the stream. Looks back at the boats. And then he has one of those epiphanies, rare in anyone but perhaps rarest of all in himself:

"Get me," he tells supply, "a roll of 550 cord or, failing that, that twine that comes on the conical spool."

"Huh?"

"Just do it."

Then he goes to explain how they're going to do this to the men.

******

What they end up doing is grossly overloading the RB-3s with five men each, no packs. To the stern of each boat they tie off a length of twine. And for each boat there is a three man team to haul it back from the far bank in a hurry and force feed the next load on. The two diversionary platoons are AT, hence somewhat less than ept as dismounts. This is good; Hamilton doesn't want ept; he wants want noisy. They're bait and good bait's supposed to wriggle.

So the AT platoons, acting as riflemen, make a horrific racket by the "bridge" east of the crossing point. All the OPFOR pick up and move to cover the bridge, apparently on the theory Hamilton might just be stupid enough to try one of those Charge of the Light Brigade rushes.

While they're doing that, the rest of the troops sneak up to the river / canal (it was actually more like a canal, though, technically, it was a river), bearing the boats, already prepped with twine. The machine guns go to the right of the crossing point, about forty-five degrees from the far side of the bridge.

The boats are loaded, the guns in position, and the MGs well sited to support. In they go. The machine guns kick off with pretty impressive support, actually. OPFOR are pinned in the wrong place. Row-row-row your pissant RB3. Dismount. Secure the far side. Start hauling the boats back. "Hey, Schmidlap; where's the twine?" "I dunno; I thought Weaver had it." "Hell, no, you were supposed to make sure…"

Yep: All three boat teams lost the twine. *Damn*!

Into the water go the load teams splashing around looking for the twine. They find it. The boats get hauled back and the next fifteen men board the grossly overloaded RB3s. Row-row-row…

Dismount. Splash. Loose footing. Glub, glub, glub.

"Haul the boats back."

Somehow, two of the load teams manage to lose the twine again. Into the water….splash-splash… "I've got it…here it is."

Haul the boats back. Force feed the load…row-row-row…this time they don't lose the twine.

On the far side, it's just a wonderful cluster. Some of the OPFOR (on their left) realize what's going on and try to shift. Others, further away, are still fixated on the two AT platoons. And, losing the frigging twine or not, Hamilton and crew are still building up combat power a lot faster than they can shift around.

And then there are seventy or so men on the far side, sweeping the entire bank, left to right.

Contemplate that in relation to two young privates from a shattered platoon accomplishing a mission that should have taken a platoon.

Combatives

Outside of in Ranger School, the Army's usually not overly enthused about training combatives, close, hand to hand, combat. There are a lot of good reasons for that. One, troops get injured in the normal course of the thing, simply from hitting and throwing each other. Either that, or the thing ends up being slow motion nonsense, or pull your punches *bad* training. Then, too, actually fighting like that is, like a bayonet fight, among the least likely things to happen in battle. Thirdly, we don't really have a good, practical, teachable system of combatives. Indeed no system could be very good for the highly limited time we can spend at it.

Still, there are some benefits to spending a few morning physical training sessions pounding on each other, notably character development through physical pain. That said, I recommend the following:

1. Do so many pushups first and during that the soldiers' muscles are exhausted. This way, they can strike with all the force and speed they can muster, but that force will be very light and the speed slow.
2. Do no pushups if you're practicing throws and falls. You *want* them to be able to roll with the throw and you want your throwers able to let them down in fairly controlled fashion.
3. Borrow some foam neck braces from the medicos for strangulation and garroting practice. Watch carefully because they might hurt each other anyway.
4. Remember that even sheathed bayonets and pugil sticks can damage people. Watch these things *most* carefully.

Counseling

A good maxim to follow here is that nobody's OER or NCOER should ever come as a surprise. Another good maxim is that nobody's going to get any better unless he knows where he's deficient.

Because of these, I strongly recommend using the very same forms for regular, routine performance counseling as are used for the current OER and NCOER. I further recommend turning all those graded areas into tasks, with conditions and standards. Lastly, I recommend being honest, in real English, as opposed to honest in the parody of English normally used in evaluations. You know, the parody whereby "somewhere a village is missing its idiot" turns into "this sergeant / lieutenant / captain is the greatest thing since canned beer." If you're going to be honest with performance counseling, be sure you explain to your subordinates that those honest comments and numbers, if numbers ever make a return, will be translated into parody English and be suitably inflated for actual evaluation for record purposes. They won't believe you at first but you have to try.

I used to have a couple of pretty good sets of tasks, conditions and standards for these, as part of a pretty good SOP. The rating systems have changed too much for those to be useful to you. Still, to give one example, suppose there's a block for physical fitness, as there always is. The task for counseling purposes might be called something like, "Attain and/or Maintain Physical Fitness." The conditions may read, "As an officer or non-commissioned officer, in an MTO&E infantry unit, with not less than X days a month off, and not less than Y days a month not in the field and hence available for physical fitness training." Standards might read, "Pass the APFT[2], fall out of no runs or road marches without a doctor's letter affirmation of illness or injury consistent with inability to complete same." The counseling SOP might then say that failure to meet the bare minimum standard will result in a less than top score in that area, with a negative comment, while meeting

the bare minimum will result in a normal, maximum score in the area (recognizing that said maximum is the result of score and language inflation), while achieving a score in the APFT of between the minimum to pass and the maximum possible might get a favorable comment, space permitting, in the evaluation report and maxing it would get a favorable comment in the evaluation report.

And surely, since I've spent some time here talking about integrity, someone is going to observe, "But isn't using bogus verbiage and ridiculously inflated numbers an ethical violation?"

It's a good question, but it's not exactly the right question or, rather, questions. The right questions are, "Beyond destroying my subordinates by using standard English and standard numbers in my evaluations, when no one else does, or won't for long, and no one believes at face value those numbers and comments, anyway, what good am I doing?" and "When language and numbers are grossly inflated for a particular purpose, and everyone knows they are, isn't the real lie in using standard language and numbers, which everyone reads against that inflated system?" My answers to those questions are, "none," and, "yes."

I suppose I've seen a dozen or more different OER and NCOER systems, over the years. In every case that I've seen, the systems started with, "This time it's going to be different. This time we're going to be honest." It never is and stupid officers who believe the Pravda, and enforce the lie (see above, yes, in this case honesty in one sense is a lie in another) invariably cause vast damage to juniors whose only crime was being assigned to units commanded by morons. When this happens again, and it will again, zip your mansuit all the way up to the neck and say, "No, we're not going to play this. I will not wreck my subordinates so my boss can make a purely spurious comment on his OER support form."

Vignette Twelve: No, hitting a moving target is very difficult indeed.

Hamilton – and this is a very different manifestation of the eternal Hamilton than usual – found himself as a, no lie, no joke, horse-mounted dragoon in Grey's Scouts, Rhodesia, in the mid-seventies. This particular version of Hamilton had been a United States Marine, once, and thought he could shoot. His Rhodesian colour corporal thought rather differently.

The corporal lined his squad up along a slope, the line running downhill. Then the corporal produced a large truck tire, in the center of which he'd mounted a target. "Lock and load," ordered the corporal. "Now see if you can hit this," said he, starting the tire rolling downhill. Every man basically emptied a magazine at the target and not one hit it, not with even a single bullet, on that first attempt.

Think about how simple that is to do. How it doesn't require electronic devices, radio bandwidth, computers, fragile controllers, or much in the way of

time or other resources. And consider, too, that the technique will be available anyplace you can find a tire, a cardboard or paper target, and a slope. Oh, and a little instruction on lead and in flight ballistics would probably be useful, as well.

As mentioned elsewhere in this article, though, marksmanship is one of those things that needs mostly to be conditioned. This is also true for hitting a moving target. Contemplate, however, MILES, the laser training engagement system mentioned previously. It has no ballistic properties. Time of flight is much faster than for a bullet, indeed it is essentially instantaneous.

I would suggest that using MILES is training people, conditioning them, to be bad shots, and that the more they use MILES the worse shots they are being conditioned to be.

Cause and Commitment

It's a truism that men don't fight for causes, they fight for their comrades. It's a half-truth, though, and like other half-truths, wholly misleading.

Why? Because the cost of fighting is pain, pain from the loss of those same comrades. In the absence of a reason to put up with that, the sensible group of soldiers, neither wanting to die nor wanting to lose friends, simply deserts, or carries out their missions in the most lackadaisical and safest manner possible. In short, without a cause they can believe in, eventually the day comes when the soldiers won't fight at all.

Go look up, "combat refusal Vietnam." And then, since it can actually get worse than mere mutiny, look up, "Fragging."

That doesn't mean the cause needs to be drummed into them with the most heavy-handed propaganda Hollywood and Madison Avenue can come up with. Frankly, as with EO nag sessions, gender sensitivity training, and any of the other, similar wastes of time, the troops just tune it out, as they tune out all the politically correct propaganda regularly inflicted on them by the EO fascisti. They don't usually care all that much about who invaded who, or the pristine excellence of the current president, nor parties, nor spreading democracy around the world, nor preserving feudalism in Kuwait. It's sufficient for them to know they're fighting for secure energy supplies, so we don't fall into an industrial dark age and so our people do not starve. It's not bad for them to know – indeed, it can overcome all kinds of gray areas in a nation's past conduct – that we're fighting for survival. Revenge is good, too.

Vignette Thirteen: We become brave by doing brave acts. – Aristotle, *Nichmoachean Ethics*

Aristotle looked at this as a matter of habit. There is surely some truth to that, but I would suggest a good part of it is process, too. From *Carnifex*:

***Escuela de Montañeros* Bernardo O'Higgins, Boquerón, Balboa, 8/3/467 AC**

Jesus, this shit terrifies me.

Ricardo Cruz had his left hand jammed into the crevice of an otherwise nearly sheer rock wall. The hand was formed into a fist, effectively locking him to that wall. His other hand searched for further purchase higher up while his booted feet rested precariously on a couple of finger-widths of ledge. A rope was coiled around his torso.

Cruz's job was to get the bloody rope up the cliff, attach a snaplink to whatever could be found, and create a belay system so that the rest of the men could follow safely. On the way up Cruz mentally recited the very unofficial and much frowned upon version of the Cazador Creed.

Considering how fucking stupid I am . . .

Aha! There was a little outcropping of rock. He grabbed tight hold of it and began working his left leg to another little spit of a ledge.

Appreciating the fact that nobody lives forever . . .

The ledge and the outcropping held. Heart pounding, Cruz unballed his left fist, removed it from the crevice and began feeling up and along the wall for another place to anchor his hand before he risked moving his lower foot.

Zealously will I . . .

Cruz's foot slipped.

*****

…try to fuck every female I can talk into a horizontal . . . FUCK!

Cruz felt his lower foot slip vertically. That put excess demands on the other one, which likewise lost its hold on the rock ledge. His left hand hadn't quite found purchase. In much less time than it takes to tell about it he found himself hanging by the fingertips of one hand, and not even all of those.

His body slammed the cliff face, almost causing him to lose his death grip on the outcropping. Moreover, while his helmet protected the bulk of his head, in slipping he had managed to scrape the left side of his jaw along the rough rock wall. He felt hot blood drip down his neck.

His first instinct was, frankly, akin to panic. It lasted milliseconds before training and experience took over.

I've been scared witless before and overcome it.

I can again.

*****

The first thing Cruz's questing fingers found was a tiny little spur of rock. It would never do to support his entire weight but, gripped by two fingers and a thumb, it was just enough to take some weight off of the overstrained fingers of the other hand. His heart began to slow, if only slightly.

Okay . . . so I have at least two or three more minutes of life. My fi ngers will hold that long. A lot can be done in two or three minutes.

Next, his foot found the previous ledge it had occupied. He was unwilling to take quite the same perch he had had previously. He spent some of his one hundred and twenty to one hundred and eighty seconds feeling around for the best position he could find. When he found it he tested it, spending a few more precious seconds. He then allowed his foot and leg to take some weight from his whitened, tired fingers. At last, breathing a little more easily, Cruz found a spot for his other foot and began to rest his fingers in turn.

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Yeah, it's a true story.

Officer and NCO Professional Development

We pay a lot of lip service to this. Actual execution? Not so much.

In my not so very humble opinion, Professional Development, properly, is training of leaders in one of three areas: To take over higher levels of responsibility, to perform in MOSs not their own or work more closely with MOSs other than their own, to learn more esoteric areas that are within the leader's MOS, but not normally well trained either in the school system or in the Army at large. I would say, thus, that a class in how to conduct a 100% inventory for a change of command is proper for lieutenants, since most of them will be taking over companies and thus have command responsibility for property at some point. Road marching an entire company would be, for a platoon leader, similarly useful. Planning air support or artillery support, which is normally done at higher levels would be the same. Military history is a clear subject for professional development, for every level and rank. Cultural studies could be legitimate subjects, and almost certainly are for areas where we are going to fight where the culture is, in some sense, itself the enemy. Training management fits, especially since the demise of BTMS[3].

What's not OPD or NCODP, though it is often presented as such, are subjects that are better put out in meetings, or in specific classes, that do not accomplish those three things mentioned above. The latest nonsense on gender

orientation sensitivity from the EO fascisti is not really professional development. Nuances of the latest scheme for evaluation reports likewise doesn't fit.

Music and Song: "The song for the soldier is a war song," it is not, "I don't like spiders and snakes."

The great thing about war songs is that it's conditioning below the conscious level. You see, soldiers will often resist conditioning, if they know that you're trying to condition them. But singing? That's so innocent, even as we "Rally round the flag, boys," that we'll gladly go, "Over there," to be "Dog-faced soldiers"…

Even the act of singing – quite without any martial theme – has training value: "We're here and we're together."

That said, lotsa luck, actually. Though there is vast training value is having the troops sing together, actually getting American soldiers to sing, other than cadence songs, which don't usually work the same way or for the same reason or to the same ends, is about impossible.

I recall an article I read once in the old Infantry Journal (the predecessor, along with the Field Artillery Journal, of AUSA's Army Magazine, not of Infantry Magazine), written during WW II by a US Army infantry private who had been a German Army infantry private in the Great War, lamenting our unwillingness to sing. According to the article, in the old German Army singing was a training event and they had singing lessons and practice at company level. Maybe that would work, but one doubts we'll ever find the time and determination to do it.

Which is a shame, really, because, once you paid the price in time and effort, you could continue to draw dividends on your investment more or less forever.

Crime and Punishment (at the company and battalion levels, and below)

We don't really punish, via non-judicial punishment, to deter; anyone who can be deterred from breaking the rules in a serious way by the fairly trivial punishments company and field grade officers can impose is probably too deficient in character ever to make much of a soldier. Instead, starting with the premise that most of the men want to do the right thing, if only to think well of themselves, we punish to prevent demoralization of those righteous soldiers, which demoralization will result from failure to punish the wicked.

Most official punishment will be non-judicial and related to minor infractions. If you're having to court-martial someone, presuming he's found guilty, he will cease to be a problem for you, for the most part.

Here are a few rules, taken from a long ago OPD session with my lieutenants and used – in a somewhat exaggerated version – in my novel, *H Hour*:

Rule One: Non-judicial punishment should be very rare, indeed. Most problems can and should be handled well before it gets to you. If you find you're having regular NJP sessions, there is something wrong with your command.

Rule Two: Take the time to plan the event. That means write out the script and rehearse it, if only in your mind. If you're a decent human being; it's hard to be a harsh bastard. Rehearsal helps.

Rule Three: Use it as an opportunity to build your chain of command. Get input in front of the culprit from the squad leader, platoon sergeant, and platoon leader. Ask the question: 'Is this soldier salvageable?'

Rule Four: Always max out the guilty bastard, but then suspend any punishment you think is excessive, or likely to do more harm than good. Taking money or rank or both from a married man hurts his family, something you ought not want to do, if it's at all avoidable, because it is likely to ruin someone salvageable, to say nothing of harming the innocent. Restricting him to the barracks hurts him, in fact, gives him a serious – possibly terminal – case of lackanookie. Tie that in to the recommendations from his chain of command. Remember, too; suspended punishment reduces the probability of appeal, which helps uphold your authority.

Finally, Rule Five – and I cannot emphasize this enough: Always, always, *always* add to the punishment, '*and an oral reprimand*.' Once you invoke those words, you can give an ass chewing so abusive that it might get you court-martialed in other circumstances. There is perhaps no practical limit in what you can say and how you can say it, because you will have invoked the magic words. To the best of my knowledge and belief, there is no legal limit. (Oh, go ahead; check with JAG. I'm getting on in years, after all, and things change.) This also tends to partially cover up your excessively kind and generous nature in suspending a goodly portion of the more material punishment. That said, sometimes you will want to do the oral reprimand first. And, in any case, remember that a commander is always on stage.

But, again, this sort of thing ought to be rare. How do we keep it rare? How do we keep it rare in an army springing from a litigious, rights obsessed, Mammy Yokumesque ("Good is better than evil because it's nicer!") society? A bureaucratic society? A society that insists on consolidating power up, rather than distributing it down?

There was a time when most disciplinary problems were handled by sergeants with anything from pushups to extra duty to a minor beating. We can, I think, do without the beatings, but is it really wise not to trust the men and women we trust to lead our soldiers in war with the power to discipline those soldiers?

My approach – I commend it to you – was to tell the troops, "When your sergeant tells you to drop for pushups, or gives you a spot of extra duty, take it as a compliment, that he sees some worth in you. He doesn't have to be that lenient. He can bring you to me for much worse punishment. If you don't want to do the pushups, don't. If you don't want the extra duty, fine, no one will make you. At least until the non-judicial punishment is imposed."

Of course, if you're going to do that, it's best to explain to the sergeants not to, and *how* not to, abuse it.

NOTES

[1] The Army doesn't actually do this anymore, which is maybe just as well.

[2] Army Physical Fitness Test. The Marines have their own, as do the other services.

[3] Equal Opportunity, the bureaucratic successor in interest to the race relations bureaucracy.

[4] Battalion Training Management System. While imperfect, and imperfectly understood and executed, it was one of those things – once mandatory, now defunct – that helped the Army out of the post-Vietnam doldrums. I believe it was done away with on the premise that its guidance had become part of the Army ethos. I *strongly* recommend at least considering bringing it back to recover from the middle eastern and Afghan campaigns. For the reader, you can find something about BTMS and its history at Anne Chapman's *The Army's Training Revolution, 1973-1990.* Also, a fair number of used books for the various levels of BTMS have found their way into commerce. No, you can't have my copies.

VI

Collective Training

There are a number of different approaches one can take to collective training. If I had to characterize the American technique, I would say we use the building block approach, heavy on repetition. By "building block approach" I mean we train on, say, assembly area procedures as an independent item, as we may train on conduct of a vehicular movement along a road as an independent item, and as we may train on bounding overwatch or react to near ambush or assault as independent items. To a considerable extent, drill is the mortar that holds those building blocks together.

I am unconvinced that this is the best way to do it. The reader may take that as meaning, "I am fully convinced that this is *not* the best way to do it." In the first place, review those filters I gave for drills. Again, most things we train on as drills ought not be done as drills. This makes for a very weak mortar, heavy on the sand. Secondly, this approach really doesn't grab the troops' attention, their hearts and minds. "Boo hoo…so we missed X in the assembly area? So what?" Thirdly, this approach, being mostly performance measure oriented, tends to lack quality control. "Yes, you did Z. How well did you do it and how do you know? Oh, someone checked he blocks for performance measures, did they?"

Instead, I offer the following as a better alternative to the building block approach.

A Mission Essential Task List (METL) for a Mechanized Infantry Company or Battalion

1. Conduct Movement to Contact culminating in a Hasty Attack / Meeting Engagement[13]
2. Conduct Movement to Contact culminating in a Hasty Defense
3. Conduct Airmobile Raid
4. Conduct Deliberate Attack
5. Attack on Urbanized Terrain
6. Defend on Urbanized Terrain

[13] I wouldn't overemphacize the meeting engagement part. People have been expecting the meeting engagement (where two opposed forces moving towards each other run into each other) to be critical for a century or more. It rarely or never is. Still…sometimes…

7. Defend Battle Position
8. Delay in Sector (Company and Battalion) / conduct anti-armor ambush (Platoon and Squad)
9. Conduct Recon Patrol (Squad and Platoon task, with implications for higher)
10. Conduct Ambush Patrol (Squad and Platoon task, ditto)

Provisos:

1. Every building block-like step in the ARTEP can be included in these mission essential tasks, and will be qualified and verified by whether the unit succeeds in meeting the standards (not performance measures) for the tasks. Assembly area procedures and troop leading procedures? They're in every mission. Road marches? They're in almost every mission. Reaction to X or Y or Z? That's up to you to include in the conditions for whatever missions you see fit to include them in.
2. The number ten is key, because of the way the troops – leaders, too, usually – think. "Ah, we can do everything but the airmobile raid so we're about ninety percent combat capable, which is not bad." The number ten is also sufficient to give just about every imaginable set of conditions and enough variance in missions to develop problem solving ability for problems involving the use of force to overcome force.
3. Trick of the trade: it is usually very difficult to come up with enough opposing force to make a recon patrol a real challenge. Try this: As part of a competitive exercise, start the troops – we'll assume nine squads – in a circle with about a kilometer or kilometer of so between each of them, a roughly ten kilometer circle, in other words. Hmmm…go ahead and draw that rough circle on a piece of paper and label the positions for squads 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 Imagine that 1 is at the top, or north. Now find the center of the circle. Now emplace a recon objective, maybe it's the battalion mortar platoon, due south, about one third of the distance between the center and the circle. That is the objective for squads at points 1, 2, and 3. Now go around one hundred and twenty degree and emplace another recon objective, maybe a mess tent. That is the objective for squads beginning at points 4, 5, and 6. Do the same for 7, 8, and 9, with perhaps a headquarters tent with much radio traffic noise. Note that because of the way the thing is set up, squads starting at 1,2, and 3 must pass through – or fight through – six other squads, near the center of the circle, to get their information, and are very likely to run into two more close to the objective. Again, if part of a competitive

exercise, this will make for a tough, tough, tough recon patrol. Randomize the starting positions for the squads.

4. Helicopters are expensive to use, hence often hard to come by for training for a mech unit. A raid is a difficult mission, indeed one of the most difficult. To me it makes a certain sense to use this hard to get asset under the most difficult circumstances, to get the maximum feasible training benefit.
5. Surprise is a hard thing to simulate in peacetime training. Yet taking advantage of surprise, and working to achieve it, is very important in war. Still, time counts. Like those ambushes Hamilton's squad had to walk through, if he hadn't known they were there he'd never have been certain to walk through them, which would have made the exercise a waste of time for the ambushing units. In that kind of case, it's sufficient to tell the troops walking into the ambush, "Pretend you don't know they're there until they either open fire or you actually hear something suspicious." For things, though, missions like raids, where surprise is key and the defending force, if ready, can basically stomp the raiding party in a way they couldn't in war, you have to go a step further. One approach that can work is to put the defending troops in their sleeping bags, dressed and with boots but with their equipment off. When they think they hear something they can alert and move to their defensive positions as soon as they have their equipment on and in hand. If they alert falsely, they go back to their sleeping bags, with their boots off. That means that when they alert, they've got to get their boots on before moving. If they alert falsely again, off come the uniforms. This also serves to train the raiding force to move fast once the enemy knows they're there.
6. The other principles of war: Mass, Objective, Security, Maneuver, Offensive, Unity of Command, Simplicity, and Economy of Force, also should be drivers of your training. While you're at it, add in my modifications: Attrition, Annihilation, and Shape.
7. Any of those missions can, with imagination and even a modest degree of moral courage, be trained as live fire exercises.
8. The US Army tends to emphasize maximum fill of supply at all times. This made a certain sense in front line spots like West Germany and Korea, where moving to one's battle positions on short notice was more important than training for tough times. In the states, however, or Germany now (not Korea), though, keeping the fuel tanks constantly full is conditioning for the easiest circumstances, logistic plenty. It would be better, as conditions for the tasks in the above METL, to drain the tanks

and restrict the amount of fuel the S-4 (supply officer and section/ supply and transport platoon fuel section) has to give out to no more than the minimum needed for the next mission. That, rather than conditioning the troops to fill tanks, conditions them to conserve, and to plan, and not to waste.

9. History is also a grand driver for setting up exercises. *Read Infantry in Battle*, *What Now Lt?* (the 9th Division one, not the Robert Babcock book…if you can find a copy. I have one; so does the War College. That may be it), or *Make Every Shot Count* (though I have some issues with that). The Center for Military History is replete with free publications that are useful reading for a soldier, and also useful for setting up problems.
10. There is a temptation, almost insuperable, given the expense of first class training, to squeeze every little plus and minus out in the after action review, or AAR. DO NOT BOTHER. The troops will learn what they learn from what they experience in an exercise. They will listen to about three each plusses and minuses, after which it all is either tuned out or lost in the noise. Keep your AARs short and sweet, tell them whether they met the stands and if not, why not, and limit yourself to three of each, up and down.
11. There is a strong prejudice against last minute changes to the training schedule. Most of that prejudice is residual, from the days that the post-Vietnam era ruin of an Army simply could not plan and keep to a training schedule. That is still something to be wary of, and changes ought never be permitted due to – people ought to be fired over – simple laziness and inability to plan and supervise. That said, there is one excellent reason to change the training schedule even at the very last minute and, rather than being blameworthy, it is highly praiseworthy. Try this: every day, contact Range Control to see who has cancelled X range for the following day (or even, if you are very good, and your command is, that very day). Why? Because the odds are very good indeed that it isn't just a range or training area that's not going to be used, but ammunition, too. And, as the unit that has cancelled is not going to want to lose their ammunition allocation for next year; they will probably be willing to just give it to you. You might be surprised how often you can do a night ambush, or a movement to contact live fire, with ammunition someone else ordered but cannot use.
12. I've recently become aware that the Army, which used to have a great many useful subcaliber devices and simulators to simulate major rounds of ammunition at a fraction of the cost, now has few or none. Puff

Boards? The last one was turned in from Fort Benning about six years ago. Where once there were pneumatic firing devices for mortars, which cost nearly nothing to use, now there are collections of unserviceable parts and questions: "Hey, anyone know what this was for?" There used to be 14.5 mm for artillery and 22mm inserts for dummy sabot rounds for mortars, now those are gone. Gentlemen, ladies: Austere times are coming; indeed, they're already here. Get those sub cal devices back in operation. Order new ones. That said, sub cals can be made a lot better by following this procedure: Find an open sandy area for the subcal impact area. Build a bunker at one edge of it. Make sure the bunker cannot see anything full size. Reduce the viewport as necessary so it can't. Dig a trench to the bunker, that turns into a crawl tunnel near the end. The objective is to get the troop to lose track of full scale, so that when he looks through the firing / vision port of the bunker it all looks normal. Treat the open area as a big sand table. Put in hills, dunes, streams, lakes, buildings, roads. Make a map, with grid system. Add toy tanks and troops. Even if you don't have sub caliber ammunition to use, get your best pitcher, with grenade simulators, to toss them at the grid the FO sends. Have an FDC verify the data for different types of calls for fire.

13. Training is a matter of life and death. There is no such thing as "good enough." There is only, "as good as we can be given the time and resources." And if you are good enough in a task, meeting the standards? Toughen the conditions. And if you are good enough and the conditions are tough? Move on to the next task.

Collective Live Fire Training

By live fire I do not mean knocking down targets on an administrative qualification range somewhere. Something is not a live fire merely because of the use of live ammunition. By live fire I mean the execution of those METL tasks, above, or other, similar tasks, with targets substituting for a live enemy (though they ought to act fairly alive) and the unit doing all those things it would do in war against a live enemy.[14]

[14]The Soviets categorized live fires in different ways, one of which was – no, I am not kidding – force on force. I had an acquaintance, we can call him "Hans," who had been Waffen SS in World War II, who explained to me how this was done in German forces, back then. Basically, the thing was highly choreographed – something the Germans were not ordinarily comfortable with - and completely without any problem solving attributes. It was a purely moral conditioning exercise, intended to condition troops against excessive fear from enemy fire. As such, people were killed. Hans admitted to one who was killed – machine gunned, actually - that he considered to be half his fault and half the fault of the troop who was killed. Because of the need for extensive choreography, to say nothing of the risk, I do not actually recommend this. It is, however, a good mental exercise to train people in mitigating risk.

Live firing is, potentially, the most valuable training we can give people. There we can train skills: Shooting, moving, communicating, planning, giving orders, supervising. We can condition people against fear to some extent because, properly done, there's a heightened element of risk. We can develop their problem solving ability in problems involving the use of force to overcome force. We can test our equipment and doctrine under conditions most closely approaching war. And we can select for leadership and elimination from service, in part because of the heightened risk.

Sadly, live firing in the Army or Marines can be, and typically is, the *worst*, the most *counterproductive*, training on offer.

Why? Well how about that walk-crawl-run thing? You know, the one where leaders, rather than developing their own order, are issued their order. You know, the one where the troops go through a flat open range, with maybe a few piles of logs and low berms, about seven times going, "bang…bang…bang." You know, the one where they then do it three more times with blanks. After which, maybe, that is to say if the man responsible for the range is totally convinced that all training benefit has been eliminated, that every possible value has been sucked from it, they do it with live ammunition.

We call it, "Walk-Crawl-Run," but, in fact, from start to finish, the troops never are running. At that last rendition they're still crawling; they're just doing it on a moving sidewalk.

And what have we done, by this? We've conditioned the troops, utterly convinced them, that they and their leaders just aren't competent to fight.

There is a place for this: ONCE. The very first time. Ever. Or if a unit has had nearly one hundred percent turnover since the last one, which really ought never be allowed to happen. But after that, having shown how to do it, to keep on with the travesty has nothing but bad effects.

For that matter on site rehearsals generally suck most of the value from training. We justify this because the enemy, being gentlemen, always let us rehearse on his ground. Or something. Or how about giving the leader or commander the plan, rather than letting him develop his own from higher's plan…because he's just not competent...and never will be, since you won't let him even try.

My advice then is do it like war, or don't do it at all.

Doing it like war also means not establishing a second chain of command, called "safeties." Why not? Because they are responsible. Being responsible they will take charge. They will give orders. There is little more dangerous than a troop on a live fire exercise getting orders from both his immediate leader and this

other person who has taken charge of him. It confuses him. Confused troops do dumb things.

Get that? Having safeties, establishing a separate safety chain of command, is inherently *un*safe.

So how do we do it?

First, do *not* establish that second chain of command. Do, however, task your evaluators to watch out for danger. Tell them that the only command they are permitted to give to the troops going through the exercise is a complete halt for everyone. "Stop! Cease Fire! Lock and clear!" Period.

VIII

If everything were to be discountenanced in
peace by which an accident might possibly occur,
soldiers would be greatly sinned against, since they
would be enfeebled and rendered inept for war, the
chances of losses being doubled at the same time.
—Field Marshal Colmar Freiherr von der Goltz,
The Nation in Arms

Axiom Thirteen: Safety is a combat multiplier; all the best safety publications, regulations, and bureaucrats say so. The problem is that it's often – in practice it's usually – a multiplier with a value of less than one.

A little less than half of our day is spent at night, or in other forms of limited visibility. Night has been the aide of the outmatched for millennia. Failure to be prepared to fight at night destroyed the Athenian expedition against Syracuse. And even if the more powerful party, as long as your enemy may resort to operating at night, you must be able to meet him.

Despite this, in a repetitive show of absolutely cutting edge, world class moral cowardice and unfitness for office, some years ago a succession of commanders taking their units through the National Training Center, at Fort Irwin, decided against doing a night attack, because of the risk assessment. This lasted for about two years to my knowledge; it may have gone on longer.

Just think about the short-sightedness, careerist selfishness, poor judgment, and moral cowardice implicit in that. Then ask yourself just what the hell we *select* for in promoting senior officers.

Vignette Fourteen: Don't forget about luck, good and bad

The CG who made the old 193rd Infantry Brigade, in Panama, unusually nuts – it had, though, always been a little strange – was named Leuer. Leuer's contribution to safety was to require all the officers to put red dots on their watch faces: "Time Out For Safety." If he was serious about it, none of us believed it. It was the kind of place where, if someone was shot on a live fire range, you didn't stop training but just called in a "Dustoff" and kept going. Yes, really.

Most lieutenants simply stopped wearing a watch, in rebellion at what they saw as hypocrisy. They had no problem with the risks, mind you, only with the pretense that anyone cared about the risk.

After Leuer left he was replaced by Woerner. Woerner didn't really seem to fully understand what the 193rd was when he took over, so we got progressively nuttier and nuttier, which is to say progressively more disdainful of anything that so much as smacked of safety, without his understanding or realization of what was going on more or less behind his back.

So, one week, one of the platoon leaders in the company Hamilton was XO for ordered a metric buttload of demolitions, the study of which said platoon leader had taken as an elective, so it was said, at West Point. He trained the company on the classroom part, with heavy emphasis on Factor P, for Plenty. Then the company went to a place not all that far from Range 12, which was an abandoned major ammunition supply point. The commander sent Hamilton along to keep the platoon leader from doing anything *too* outrageous.

The only helmet on the range was Hamilton's, under the theory that the most probable cause for a fatality (this was perhaps optimistic) would be a hangfire of sorts that went off while someone was checking out why the explosive failed to go boom, after the regulatory wait. Since Hamilton was the senior officer present, that was going to be him. Worst come to worst, he didn't want anyone to have to fill out any paperwork having to explain why his disembodied head wasn't in a helmet. The one vehicle was his M151 jeep, or given local pronunciation, "heap."

After blowing up some small shit, the next event was to try to send a rather large tree into orbit. They started by using a shaped charge to blow a hole into the Earth underneath the tree. Then they start packing. In went one hundred and sixty-eight sticks of military dynamite. That was followed up with a couple of forty pounder cratering charges. Okay, maybe it was four or five. In went some

TNT. Okay, it was a lot of TNT. Then they added a *leetle* touch of C4, for ambience. And they were ready to go.

Hamilton looked at his jeep. He looked at the base of the tree. This is a big tree, an easy twelve feet across, maybe even fifteen. It's a big-assed tree, in any case. Hamilton looks up and up. *Tall tree. Really tall*. He told the platoon leader, "Hold up a minute," then – anticipating a nasty survey should the jeep be damaged – he told his driver to drive about four hundred meters away and listen for screams.

Then he told the platoon leader, "Okay, go ahead."

Remember, his was the only helmet for miles.

With a beatific smile, the platoon leader squeezes the blasting machine and touches off the tree, which starts to rise. And rise. And rise. Actually, it looks like a leafy Saturn V heading for space. It's really beautiful and, fortunately, when it stops rising and starts to fall it falls in the other direction.

Unfortunately, tons and tons of dirt and, oh, yes, rock come down. Miraculously, nobody gets hit or, at least, not seriously hit. There are, go figure, a few bruises here and there. Of injuries, though, that's it. But about a quarter ton boulder lands not all that far from Hamilton, *exactly* where his jeep had been parked. No, not a few feet either way. Had he not had it moved, his driver would have been squashed like a bug.

Now, one can take several lessons from that. One is that it was incredibly stupid, from start to finish. It was. The second is that luck plays a tremendous role in human affairs. It does. And the third lesson was that Hamilton was never again, not even once, to be cavalier with any demo above the one pound level. Never.

Vignette Fifteen: Don't forget about luck, bad and good

It was SOP in Hamilton's unit, the one he served as an Exec for, that Claymore mines, safety regs be damned, could be set off perfect well a meter or so in front of the firer, provided that sandbags – two or three or sometimes four of them, for the timid – were placed behind them to absorb the blast and the plastic fragments.

So the company is giving a demonstration of daisy chaining Claymores, linking them with det cord to set them all off, simultaneously with a single detonator, or "clacker." There are targets set up along a berm a hundred meters or so from the bleachers whence the troops watch. There are also sandbags behind the claymores, which are perhaps fifty meters from the berm.

Along comes another officer, formerly of the same battalion but now, sadly, contaminated by Fort Sherman's unrighteous ways.

"No, no, no. There'll be none of that daisy chaining here," insists he. "Move those Claymores to the other side of the berm.

Well, after some fruitless argument – fruitless because this defector of an officer owned the range – Hamilton gave in…with indefinable misgivings. So the whole bloody assembly was disassembled and the Claymores and sandbags were moved to the other side of the berm\, with the targets being moved further downrange still. Then they were set off.

Now you have to picture this; for the first time in memory this company is actually doing *something* like following the rules. And, because they did, when the backblast, which is only limited, not eliminated, by the sandbags, picks up a stout rock, which it drives back against the earthen berm, turning said berm into a launch rail.

Up, up and away, goes the rock. Down, down, down, comes the rock. Right onto the knee of a medic, sitting the bleachers, watching the demonstration. Smash! Ouch! "Medic!"

So much for following the rules.

Vignette Sixteen: You want me to do *what*?

"I want a rolling barrage preceding the troops up the final objective."

"Whew," said Lieutenant Hamilton, "that's a pretty tall order, boss."

"Yeah, well, figure it out."

"Yes, sir." *Crap! How do I do this?*

In the event, what Hamilton did was think about the attributes of the systems available – 105mm M102 howitzers, 107mm heavy rifled mortars, and 81mm smoothbore mortars – to do what his battalion commander wanted, to walk a rolling barrage in front of the assault line.

Right off he tossed out the 81mm mortars. They were just not accurate enough. Being finned they were subject to derangement by winds. And quality control at the factory was probably not everything one might have wanted.

The 107mm rifled mortars were better. Within their range, on a windless day, they were about as accurate as a 105, though their trajectory was usually high enough that winds, if present, could move them around a little.

And then there were the 105s.

For the latter there were four attributes of importance, though it took some thought to identify them. The guns had lesser deviation error than range error. They could fire shells on delay fuse. They could be pre-fired, which is to say, pre-registered. They could use meteorological data to correct for any changes after they were registered. Most of this was also true of the 107mm mortars.

Right off, Hamilton made several decisions. One was that the mortars and the 105mm howitzers would set up to fire at right angles to the anticipated assault line, so that any deviation would move the guns right or left, as the troops faced, but not long or short, into their ranks. Moreover, the mortars would only fire on the final objective. The third requirement was that every round to be fired would be pre-registered. Fourth was that all guns would fire with delay fuse, which was tactically sound, even more visually impressive to the troops, and much, much safer.

In the event, it worked well. At a certain point in the exercise, the infantry company commanders going through the live fire would receive authority to fire the rolling barrage. They'd call for it and the guns would go through their dance, dropping rounds seventy-five to about one hundred and fifty meters ahead of the line. The delayed explosions lofted great quantities of dirt and rock skyward. The troops were impressed and the artillerymen had to be sent to the hospital to have their erections surgically reduced. Okay, I'm lying about the last part. But not by much.

Vignette Seventeen: Opportunity knocks but once

"Hey, sir, what do you want me to do with this?"

"This" was a dud 4.2 inch mortar round, held in the sergeant's hands, that he'd carried from the half completed fighting position where it been uncovered, fortunately without going off. Hamilton nearly wets himself. You don't, you just *don't*, mess with duds.

Thinking, *Oh, fuck,* Hamilton turns the sergeant around and begins to guide him closer to the impact area to the north. It's not far.

Says he, "Let's just put it on the other side of the lip of the OP line, shall we?" He then walks the sergeant, arm around the sergeant's shoulder, to where he wants the round put down…gently.

Gay? Not at all. Hamilton just needed to make sure that a) the sergeant didn't fall and b) that if the round went off – 4.2 inch was a little deadlier than a 105mm shell – he would not survive the experience. In any event, they did get it placed back on the ground ten or twelve feet down from the lip.

Then, thinks Hamilton, *Aha, training opportunity*. He tells the sergeant, "Go take apart one of those claymores and prime this thing for demolition." Then he has the unit – actually two companies, training together – line up south of the lip, such that there was probably thirty or forty meters of dirt between them and the round. Nothing with any velocity can go to them directly, and anything that goes up, with come down with only terminal velocity, if that.

"Okay boys; heads down! *This* is what incoming feels like!"

KAABOOOOMMM!

Appendix 1

Things we are not, never have been, and hopefully never will be serious about:

1. We have to be ready to go to war tomorrow!

Oh, really? Let me tell you what life would be like for an army totally dedicated to going to war tomorrow. Every CO would call the troops in, every day, at somewhere between midnight and 0230. They would then load all the vehicles, check shot records, run the boys (oh, and girls, too, of course) through JAG, etc. Ammunition would be taken from the bunkers, broken down and distributed (and then the clever and thoughtful commander would start the paperwork for the survey for the ammunition damaged).

Then, while waiting for flights to be arranged and ships and flat cars to show up, they'd send everyone home for one last chance at a little woopie with Mama (or Papa, I suppose). There would be no training to get better for going to war, someday, because, by God, the number one thing to do is to be ready to GO – that is the operative word, "Go," not win, but "Go" – to war tomorrow.

Of course, we don't do that. Nobody does. Nobody ever has. Nobody ever should. Everyone knows it's silly and so pays it little more than lip service. Instead the "going" part is just one more mission, and often shunted to a low priority to allow time to train to win the fight once we get there.

Besides, jumping through our butts and improvising are among our greatest strengths.

2. It is completely impermissible and doubleplusungood ever to get a soldier injured or killed in training.

Again, oh really? Let me tell you what an Army would look like that never got a soldier killed or hurt in training. It would stay in the barracks. All training would be done on simulators…heavily *cushioned* simulators. The troops would never be allowed to take their weapons from the arms room. Foot marches and other physical training would be strictly forbidden, lest somebody have a heart attack. Parachute jumps for parachute units? "No, nay, never!"

Instead, we *know* everything we do carries risk and we accept that, even as senior cowards and frauds dishonestly pander to "enlightened" sentiment and say, "It is completely impermissible…"

We can't say how many senior non-coms are going to have heart attacks on foot marches under heavy loads, but we know someone will. We can't predict when a tank will catch fire, the fire suppression system fail, and a driver, trapped inside, will burn alive. But it has happened before and probably will again. We can't say when the jump masters will screw up, put two people out opposite doors at the same time, and have those two jumpers smash into each other, before falling to their deaths. But that, too, has happened and, given an infinity of time and sufficient jumps, it will happen again. Or something just as bad will. Or an unpredictable wind will spring up and drag several troops to their deaths. Or dump them in trees, where one will hang and another be impaled. We can't say when a track will drive off a bridge into the water, drowning the crew. But, boys and girls, it's going to happen.

I would further suggest that anyone who mouths the platitude opening this section, or any variant thereto, has thereby demonstrated dishonesty and morale cowardice sufficient to *select* them out of the armed forces. At the very least it should be a bar to promotion or selection for command.

3. Every Marine a rifleman.

A rifleman as someone who can shoot with a reasonable expectation of hitting a target, within the rifle's effective range, where no one's shooting back? Sure, this much of a rifleman the Marines can produce. So could the Army – so could the Andorran Army, if they had an army – if it chose to. But a rifleman actually morally and emotionally integrated into a unit capable of closing with and destroying the enemy, or repelling his assault by fire, close combat, and counterattack? One doubts. In fact, one rolls on the floor laughing. Oh, sure, there's always the individual exception. Counting on individual exceptions is right up there with confusing hope and a plan.

This doesn't mean that it isn't worthwhile to try to keep a combat mentality among one's service support types. It is definitely worthwhile. What it means is, as the Sphinx told the Aussie, "Don't expect too much."

Appendix 2: Build your own targets

Training doesn't, or at least shouldn't, stop in the theater of war. Rest is needed, of course, or the troops begin to morally and mentally disintegrate, but the biggest and most important rest troops pulled out of the line get is relief from danger and the stress danger brings. It is in those rests that new troops are best integrated, and best integrated by hard training with the old troops.

I'm not a huge fan of electronic targets. They have their place, but they also have certain disadvantages, expense, the need to be dug in from direct fire, unreliability, ease of hitting , and – because they're so easy to hit, unrealistic zombie-like behavior. They just won't stay down. They're also going to be about last priority for shipment to the theater of war.

Remote control electronic targets are also not necessary to conduct live fire training. And, since we do in war what we practice in peace, it is rather important that the troops learn how to build and use their own in peacetime, so they can do it from available materials in war.

For the following you are, or anyone tasked to pull targets is, anywhere from twenty or thrity to thirteen hundred and thirty feet (one four hundred meter roll of commo wire) from the target. The troops about to attack the objective which includes the targets are all around you. The box - which is, say, about 18"L by 30"W x 6"D is, at rest, closed. (The size isn't key, experiment a little.) The hinges are towards you, as is the base of the target. The head of the target is away from you.

1. The basic live fire target begins with an e-type sillouette, or any other roughly man-shaped, lightweight but sturdy target. Cut a round hole inside the target, center of mass, four to six inches in diameter. Make sure the sides of the hole are fairly smooth.

2. Take a wooden ammunition box with a hinged cover. Almost any box will do, though I've always preferred mortar ammunition boxes. Nail the silhouette to the box cover, with the bottom of the target nearest the hinges. You may need to put strips of wood over the target before driving the nails, to distribute the stress on the target.

3. Put a nail in the box's lid, on the edge away from the hinges, and another in the base of the box, also away from the hinges. Connect with cord to

keep the target from being pulled all the way forward, to where it won't fall back again.

4. Drive a nail into the lid of the box, between the hinges. The nail is just in the lid, but not interfering with anything else. It provides a point of attachment for the stick, below, such that when you pull on the commo wire, the stick stands up, which then provides that roughly forty-five degree angle to lift the sandbag, hence lift the target, without overstressing the balloon.

5. Take a fifteen to eighteen inch stick and drill a hole in one end, from side to side. Run string through the hole, and affix to the nail in 3, above. This stick is for leverage. Why? The problem with this kind of target is that, at rest, it's parallel to and quite close to the ground, as is the commo wire. You can tug on the commo wire forever, but all you will do is overstress and break the balloon or glove, or tear the wire from the sandbag, leaving the target flat and useless. What you've got to do it elevate the commo wire in some way, so that it is tugging the sandbag/balloon at about a 45 degree angle, give or take. But you've got to do that in some way that doesn't give away the position of the target. Hence the stick which, at rest, lays flat, but when tugged on, stands up.

6. Take a sandbag and place in in the hole in the target, open side down.

7. Stuff a filled balloon or a blown up and tied off surgical latex glove, into the sandbag.

8. Site the target where you want it, and fill the box at least partway with dirt, to prevent the target being pulled completely over. Run commo wire from the sandbag to the stick, affixing it to the stick, then on as far as needed toward the beginning point of the live fire.

9. When you pull the commo wire, the stick will rise, giving leverage to allow the target to be pulled up. It can be pulled up and dropped as much as desired, until a friendly troop manages to put a bullet through the balloon or glove, allowing it to collapse and the commo wire to pull the sandbag through the hole. After that, the target will go down and stay down.

10. It is possible to make the target "shoot," once at least, by using a practice grenade fuse, with the spoon held down by a loop of wire, it being pulled out of the wire, or vice versa, when the target is raised. Christmas tree lights and batteries can be used at night. A small chemlight hidden by a fold of MRE packet, taped to the front of the target, works too. I am sure there are other methods, as well; use your imagination. Using your imagination is about half the point of this paper.

    Note, here, that marksmanship in combat – the probability of a hit – drops to a fairly tiny percentage of the probability on an administrative range. The smallness of the part of the target that must be hit for a kill compensates for that reduction.

There are a number of possible variants to this target system. Instead of a hole being cut, a C of coat hanger wire can be affixed to the target with the balloon-filled sandbag jammed in that C, hanging from a cable or pole. Trenches and fighting positions can be dug and targets with the wire variant can be carried, raised, and lowered by live soldiers under that cover. They can be hung and put on trip wires to swing down in trenched and tires houses. The targets can be connected as a series and hung from an overhead cable to be pulled through the kill zone in an ambush.

It is possible to do with these something that is ordinarily very difficult, a live fire company defense with a reasonable number of the enemy. That said, it takes a lot of work, a lot of ammunition boxes, and a *lot* of commo wire and rope.

Do not skip the sandbag and go directly from balloon or glove to wire. Even if the balloon can take the stress, it usually won't. Plus, the heat of the sun will tend to expand the balloons to bursting.

Appendix 3: Chrome

Chrome, a word I've borrowed for these purposes from the wargaming community, are things that add realism and spice to an exercise, but are not, strictly speaking, necessary for it. A certain amount of it is worth putting into the preparation for training, as long as it doesn't become a distractor of limitation on training. It has no useful purpose of its own, but only in the service of other training. It validates that training in the hearts and minds of the soldiers, by making it seem most real, hence making them feel most prepared.

When General Collins wrote, in his *Common Sense Training*, about excess emphasis on realism as sensory (my phrasing of it, not his) – sight, sound, smell – I

am almost positive he was criticizing *REALISTIC COMBAT TRAINING and how to conduct it*, by a lieutenant colonel named Robert Rigg. Rigg's book, published in 1955, is replete with ways to put that sensory experience into training. Some of those ways are fantastically clever. Others – borrowing corpses from a morgue or medical school to accustom the troops to the sight of dead bodies – strikes me, frankly, as bizarre. Worse, I'm not sure what it does to the troop to see the dead mishandled, treated disrespectfully, and used as mere props. I doubt it does anything good, given that the troop knows he may himself be among the dead someday in the not too distant future.

That treatment of the dead isn't the only objection one might have for Rigg's book. It is *so* resource intensive that not more than a fraction of what he suggests could be done by a unit below division level. If done at division it would probably suck away every bit of chrome potential for any lower unit. And if restricted to division-run, then the training for the troops would come very infrequently indeed. I suppose this may have made sense in the army of the 50s, an organization mostly lost and looking for a mission amidst a nuclear doctrinal wasteland, and to some extent unserious. I think Rigg's purpose was mostly conditioning the troops against simply freaking out at the sights and sounds of the battlefield. If that were that much of a threat, it would be more valid.

By the way, if you don't think Rigg is still having his effects, ask yourself if the training experience at the National Training Centers would really be appreciably less if the OPFOR vehicles were not rigged with those expensive and somewhat fragile VISMODs to look like Russian / Soviet equipment?

Again, though, chrome, if not taken to ridiculous extremes, can have value.

Some suggestions – a not very exhaustive list; rather, a very inexhaustive list – for chrome for particular METL and other tasks:

1. Deliberate Attack: If it includes a preparatory bombardment, have craters blown or dug around the objective. They would be there in war. They add confusion and difficulty to movement, but they also provide covered and concealed positions for the troops to rush to and from.
2. For a night live fire ambush, clothe the targets and hang boots from them. Put items of intelligence value – maps, diaries, and letters to and from home – in their pockets and boots. There is a recipe for making fake blood with food coloring and powdered chalk. Put some of that in the pockets, as well.
3. For any offense or defense, if there are old armored vehicles in the training area or range, put a mix of waste oil, diesel, gasoline, cut up old tires, and maybe some condemned meat in a half barrel inside and set

them off. Doesn't cost much. Doesn't take much effort. And the smoke and smell do add a certain something.

4. Do not issue ammunition in the assembly area. Deliberately withhold it until the troops are marching to the Line of Departure, then pass it to them from the back of a vehicle as they pass. (This one I've shamelessly ripped off from General Collins. No, as a matter of fact I don't feel a bit guilty.)
5. For MOUT, Military Operations on Urbanized Terrain – city fighting, basically – go through the Defense Reutilization and Marketing Office, DRMO, formerly Property Disposal Office, PDO, for scrap furniture, clothing, anything else that might be found and fix up the houses. That's not just for visual impact, old clothing can hide booby traps. Furniture can conceal mouseholes and, broken apart, provide material to fortify.

The most thorough incidents of chrome in training I know of occurred during a counter-guerrilla ARTEP in Panama in 1978, for 4th Battalion, 10th Infantry. For it, two A teams from 3rd Battalion, Seventh Special Forces, were detailed to provide "special effects."

For one event, a hill was notionally bombarded by about thirteen mortars and eight 105mm guns, plus some A-7s from the Air Force's wing down there, for three or four hours. While the notional bombardment was going on the special effects special forces went to work. They first used a fair quantity of demolitions to blow down trees and crater the earth. They took several troops and moulaged them up nicely. Not content with the standard moulage kits, from eyes hanging by threads to guts extruded from bellies, the SF folks put wads of cottage cheese on heads to simulate brains. They also had six gallons of condemned whole blood which was liberally poured over the cottage cheese and moulage sections and pieces. They'd set traps and caught some animals, which they killed and then burned the bodies of to give the air that nasty stench of overdone meat and carbonized hair. Fires were set. The "wounded" troops were further put through a short course in acting, so that their screams and moans would be about as close to real as possible.

I remember that the first man off the helicopter, when a platoon was sent in to do a bomb damage assessment, took one look, one sniff, one earful of heartrending shrieking, then promptly bent over and threw up.

For another event for the same ARTEP, the special effects teams wired several kilometers of jungle with demolitions overhead, in the trees. These they set off as one company, "Mad Dog" A-4/10, if I recall correctly, moved through the jungle, at night, supported by their own mortars firing illumination (risky, and a pain in the ass, frankly, but a nice touch when you can get away with it). The

demo would be set off overhead when the company was below it, as if it were enemy artillery or mortars.

Some years later I was reminiscing with a senior NCO who had been in that company, at that time, doing that night movement to contact. He said, "I had two tours in Vietnam, both as a grunt. But I never felt as much like I was in a war, *really* in a war, as I did that night movement on the counter-guerrilla ARTEP with A-4/10."