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EVALUATING THE UNIT MANNING SYSTEM:
LESSONS LEARNED TO DATE

An Informational Guide
for Unit Leaders and Staffs

Department of Military Psychiatry
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PREFACE

This paper is one of a series of occasional, informal accounts of work in the Division of Neuropsychiatry at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research. The reports generally address topics in Army preventive medicine for which implementation responsibility lies significantly outside the Medical Department. Although their contents may overlap partly with our publications in the scientific literature, most papers are based on trip reports, briefings, and consultations involving specific Army audiences. Comments to the senior author are welcome.

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Scientists from the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research (WRAIR) have participated in the Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA) field evaluation of the Unit Manning System (UMS) since its inception in 1981. To date, WRAIR researchers have visited over 50 conventional and 80 COHORT companies. They have studied eight rotated combat battalions and their seven traditionally organized sister battalions. They have followed the development of five light infantry battalions from the outset of the new Light Division concept. They have observed six DISCOM battalions. Contacts with small units and their higher headquarters total over 450 person-days of observation (about 20 percent on field training exercises), more than 1650 interviews, and over 26,000 surveys.



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SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

"There is one thing stronger than all the armies in the world: and that is an idea whose time has come."

-- Victor Hugo

The effects of military unit cohesion in preventing performance disintegration in battle were amply demonstrated in research carried out in the U.S. Army in World War II and Korea, in the German Army in World War II, and in the Israeli Army in the 1973 Arab-Israeli War. (See WRAIR New Manning System Technical Report No. 1 for an extensive overview of this subject.) Except in special and elite combat units, however, military cohesion has not been valued as a combat multiplier in the U.S. Army. Prior to this decade and the development of the Unit Manning System, cohesive units were incidental creations, usually a function of the special gifts of commanders, or a fortuitous accident, or the by-product of units contending with external threats or special mission demands.

The New Manning System (now the Unit Manning System, or UMS) was developed in 1981 along lines suggested by the 1979 HQDA ODCSPER-sponsored Army Cohesion and Stability Task Force (ARCOST). The human ends envisioned in the development of the UMS and its COHORT (Cohesion, Operational Readiness, and Training) unit movement system were the creation of military units possessing the kind of unit cohesion that could (a) ensure enhanced levels of bonding, confidence, and mutual trust prior to commitment to battle and, therefore, (b) resist high levels of psychological breakdown due to battlefield stress. Historically, most American military units acquired these characteristics only after actual combat exposure. Current battle scenarios make this traditional "bleeding" of units impractical, if not obsolete.

COHORT created a system whereby company-sized units were initially trained and assigned together. These COHORT units held out the promise that their increased stability and potential for cumulative (or accretive) training might increase tactical skills above the levels normally achieved in conventional units (where personnel turbulence requires repetitive training).

WRAIR scientists have participated in the HQDA evaluation of the UMS since its inception. When HQDA refocused this evaluation in 1985, WRAIR assumed a major role in this new effort as well. In the initial phases of this evaluation WRAIR identified two major sources of confusion in the initial implementation of the UMS (COHORT) initiatives. First, the UMS initiators never promised anything more than better trained soldiers who were more confident in each other and more likely to stand and fight in the first battle. The UMS (COHORT) configuration was not designed to rest vexing problems such as reenlistment rates, SQT scores, PT scores, and soldier grumbling about the Army.

Second, some leaders had unwarranted expectations concerning the quality of interpersonal bonding. Military unit cohesion is

not a fuzzy, warm feeling among the privates that sends them marching off to war humming regimental ditties. Rather, military unit cohesion represents bondings of soldiers of equal rank as well as between ranks, commitment of all ranks to the military mission, and the affirmation of special properties of their group, team, crew, company, or battery that keeps them alive in combat.

This document describes the key historical concepts that underlay the processes of soldier bonding and military unit cohesion, summarizes the main findings of WRAIR's UMS research, offers principal lessons learned for military leaders and staffs, and describes WRAIR's future research directions.

SECTION 2

HISTORICAL AND CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

"Four brave men who do not know each other will not dare to attack a lion. Four less brave, but knowing each other well, sure of their reliability and consequently of mutual aid, will attack resolutely."

-- Ardant DuPicq

Military Unit Cohesion

Military unit cohesion is a complex concept. It is the product of (a) bonding of equals (soldiers with each other), (b) bonding of superiors and subordinates, (c) bonding and affirmation of the special properties of a group (a team, a crew, a platoon), and (d) a set of perceptions of the skills and abilities of oneself and others.

Cohesion processes are both emotion-laden (affective) and task-oriented (instrumental). The metaphors that combat personnel use in describing their relationships are those of love, kinship, and fraternal bonding. These metaphors are rooted in perceptions of the degree to which the skills, competencies, and interpersonal linkages of oneself with others ensure survival of both oneself and the group. These perceptions can be grouped under the term "psychological readiness for combat."

Psychological readiness for combat is comprised of five dimensions: horizontal cohesion, vertical cohesion, individual morale, confidence in group combat capability, and confidence in leaders. These dimensions of psychological readiness provide the soldier with supportive relationships that mediate the effects of stress. They provide the soldier with a psychological "armor" of strength and competence, through the instrumental and affective bonds that increase his odds for safety and survival in an hostile environment.

The Ecology of Warfare

In human terms, architects of ancient warfare designed systems to support the soldier's commitment to battle. Effective military units placed members into a disciplined mass. Soldiers drew support, strength, security, a sense of invulnerability, and an enhanced capacity to perform their mission from the physical presence of the "line" (the shoulder to shoulder contact with their fellows) and from confidence and competence practiced in the drills of the parade ground. The well-trained, well-disciplined soldier submerged himself in the line of battle-- marching, turning, moving, thrusting, parrying, discharging musketry as one mighty whole.

The psychological integrity of the soldier was dependent in large part upon the maintenance of the physical integrity of the line of battle. If the line broke, the soldier was likely to break also and become psychologically incapacitated. The Roman Legion built its organizational structure and devoted its core

training to ensure the functional integrity of the line of battle. Ordering of drill was reinforced by the social ordering of the legionnaires. The squad of ten men always ate, lived, and fought as a group. In the Roman Legion, therefore, the social, the training, and the tactical spheres merged to reinforce each other to optimize the combat performance of the line of battle. This general model governed formally constituted armies from classical times through World War I.

The ecology of warfare has changed rapidly since the middle of the 20th Century. Current predictions for future "worst-case wars" -- mid- to high-intensity main force warfare on the integrated (nuclear and chemical) battlefield--raise the expected shock, intensity, and stress of combat to unprecedented levels that will sharply increase psychological and performance breakdown among soldiers. Conceptions of the modern battlefield include (a) high lethality and high intensity, (b) sustained operations in the face of multi-echeloned attack, (c) decentralization of forces operating in small groups, and (d) extreme dispersal of small units on the battlefield having no tangible contact with each other.

Decentralization and dispersal destroy the physical solidarity of the line and replace it with the need for an intense psychosocial solidarity among small unit members. Such solidarity implies high levels of learned, unquestioning trust and respect among soldiers and between soldiers and their leaders. More critically, achieving such levels demands greater unit self-knowledge than is commonly found, greater interpersonal support, and sharper reductions of extraneous distress and distractors. The worst-case war may be a "come as you are war," fought with little or no prior build-up or preparation. Because of the lethality and the speed with which modern armies can operate, battle success may well be defined by the effectiveness of pre-existing small units during the first week to month of the engagement.

The model for this type of war is the 1973 Yom Kippur War, which involved high-intensity, high-density, conventional conflicts. It was characterized by five to nine pulses of combat per day as opposed to the two to three of most past wars. The Yom Kippur War was the first between main force armies with modern, non-nuclear weapons and tactics. Decisive battles took place within a three-week period. The outcome was determined by the ability of outnumbered Israeli maneuver units to contain the massive thrusts of their opponents, to maintain unit integrity and performance under conditions of overwhelming stress, and to sustain soldier performance in the face of continuous enemy operations and weaponry deployment designed to cause maximum behavioral breakdown.

The Yom Kippur War brought back into prominence the issue of protecting the soldier and the unit against psychological breakdown in battle. Initial, and preliminary, Israeli reports estimated that ten percent of all casualties during the three weeks of active engagement were combat stress related. Later revisions of these figures by Israeli scientists (who subsequently counted non-evacuated psychiatric casualties,

psychiatric casualties with physical wounds, and those presenting after the cease-fire) raised the estimate to 40-50 percent. (It is important to remember that most of these casualties occurred in units "tossed together" in the rapid mobilization that occurred in the hours following the onset of fighting.) The Egyptians, in private conversations, reported combat stress casualty rates equaling 50 percent of their total casualties.

The Israeli Defense Forces also reported that highly cohesive units, with strong horizontal and vertical bonding and strong unit self confidence, experienced minimal numbers of combat stress casualties as well as maximum possibilities for reconstitution of units after battle. These observations paralleled those made of unit breakdown in a study of American combat units in World War II, namely that unit sustainability in combat was not related to the proportion of casualties in the unit but to other unit characteristics. For example, highly cohesive, confident units sustained effective combat with casualty levels well above 50 percent without total breakdown; less cohesive and unsure units fell apart with notably fewer casualties.

In 1979 the senior Army staff recognized that much of the U.S. Army was not capable of meeting the demands of current tactics, technology, doctrine, and weaponry. In many units, cohesion was minimal; palpable hostility and adversarial relationships across ranks were typical. Many units offered little or no support to their members. Senior Army leaders approved the COHORT concept to help meet these challenges and to prepare combat units for the demands, the stresses, and the terrors of the future battlefield.

Changing the Replacement System

The Army's individual replacement system, instituted during World War I to place large numbers of soldiers in the combat theater rapidly for geopolitical reasons, was based on the fundamental concept of industrial mass production. Soldiers were defined as interchangeable parts in systems that required stereotyped behaviors ("by the numbers"). Under those assumptions, unit performance was presumed to be a simple summation of individual soldier skills. Those assumptions were further reinforced by the vision of military operations as essentially driven and shaped by material technology and not by the structure and nature of the human groups performing those operations.

Since World War I, the U.S. Army has placed increased emphasis on the individual soldier and on managerial efficiency rather than on unit cohesion as a combat multiplier. This emphasis has impeded the development and maintenance of unit cohesion because it encourages the soldier and the small unit leader to focus on the individual--honing individual skills instead of collective, team skills.

The Army's Unit Manning System and specifically the COHORT concept was designed to achieve two goals. First, it was intended to increase unit cohesion and thereby enhance individual

psychological readiness for combat. Second, it was designed to provide the opportunity for unit leaders to develop accretive training programs. The critical element for achieving these goals was the stabilizing of soldiers and leaders together for a period of time sufficient to reach these objectives.

SECTION 3

RESEARCH FINDINGS

"Our major obligation is not to mistake slogans for solutions."

-- Edward R. Murrow

Early Observations

WRAIR's initial observations of COHORT units in USAREUR (1983-84) demonstrated that keeping first-term soldiers together after one-station-unit-training (OSUT) achieved greater horizontal cohesion than that achieved in conventionally organized units. Even the most skeptical commander confided, "They aren't perfect, but they look damned good in the field, better than most of my conventionally organized companies." COHORT units achieved these high marks from senior commanders despite the envy of sister units over perceived favoritism, despite the distractions of repeatedly being shown off to visitors, and despite hostility toward COHORT's newness from some senior leaders.

During this same period WRAIR identified two problems in realizing the original COHORT objectives. The first was extreme variability in the degree to which COHORT units were vertically bonded. The OSUT experience seemed to weld the lower ranking enlisted soldiers into a cohesive whole, but turbulence (frequent turnover) of NCOs and officers interfered with the development of vertical cohesion. In addition, some COHORT unit leaders had obvious difficulty talking informally with their soldiers. Instead of joining the unit and earning respect--as they will have to do in combat--these leaders reacted with social distance and an authoritarian leadership style better suited to leading trainees or green troops without an established social history.

Some leaders also found the possibility of cumulative training threatening and embarrassing. They were threatened when the troops balked at repetitive training on skills they had already mastered, and embarrassed that they had little else to teach them. It is not surprising that these COHORT companies showed satisfactory horizontal bonding; but unfortunately, they were not vertically well bonded, and they did not show dramatic increases in training because their leaders were unprepared to capitalize on the opportunity for accretive training.

Unit Life-Cycle Perspective

WRAIR research on the impact of COHORT on families and communities suggested additional reasons why some COHORT units achieved only a fraction of their potential. Observers noted the same variability among COHORT commanders with respect to family-to-unit bonding and emotional identification with sponsor units that had been noted with respect to soldier-leader interactions. Very few leaders were capable of conceptualizing either their own roles or the unit's mission in life-cycle terms. Instead, leaders only saw a series of discrete events (ARTEP, AGI, OCONUS rotation), each event essentially unrelated to other

events in the unit's life cycle. This is a questionable assumption in conventional units and a serious fallacy in a COHORT unit where the personnel are stabilized. In a COHORT unit it is clearly possible to build on the experiences of the last event to better prepare for the next. But many COHORT leaders consistently ignored these opportunities, possibly because they were not trained, or required to think, beyond a six-month training schedule.

When a company/battery leader fails to see the world beyond the next unit "event," both the failure to capitalize on potential family involvement and the failure to plan and execute cumulative training become understandable. The difference in thinking is between, on the one hand, where the leader wants the unit to be in six months, one year, and two years (which includes ARTEPs, AGIs, and rotations as means to accomplish the leader's vision), and, on the other hand, merely wanting to pass the AGI (as an end in itself) before beginning to think about the next event in the unit's life. This suggests that the COHORT potential can be better realized by teaching commanders to think of themselves and their units in terms of a unit life-cycle rather than discrete training events. This possibility presumes a battalion command climate supportive of longer range planning.

WRAIR's COHORT research suggests that the consequences of taking a life-cycle view are dramatic. Units taking such an approach encouraged considerable family involvement in the OCONUS rotation planning and preparation process, and these units had very positive rotations. Units that began their rotation preparations early (language training opportunities for families, for example) engendered a positive mindset among family members that continued following their rotation. Units that took adequate time to settle their families on arrival (both at formation in FORSCOM and after the OCONUS rotation) adjusted better than units that immediately began field-training activities. Clearly, family members will tolerate considerable uncertainty and hardship if they are helped to understand the reasons and if they are able to trust that their needs will eventually be taken into consideration by unit leaders.

The COHORT (Stabilization) Concept

A series of surveys, interviews, and observations have demonstrated consistent differences in horizontal cohesion in favor of COHORT units. This finding is not remarkable; it simply confirms what an experienced commander already knows: the longer soldiers train together the better they know one another, and the better they perform.

What was remarkable was the persistence of these differences despite almost every type of organizational chaos the Army could throw at COHORT units. COHORT units rotated between Europe and CONUS, and remained better bonded than nonCOHORT units. COHORT units endured pronounced leader turbulence, and remained better bonded. COHORT units took up new equipment or resumed using old equipment, yet remained better bonded. COHORT units lived with conflicting information, rumors, resentments, and local disregard of the HQDA personnel policies, and remained better bonded. The

enhanced horizontal bonding in these COHORT units was remarkable because it endured despite events and actions most likely to undermine it.

The battalion rotation experience also suggested the importance of unit stability in creating higher levels of horizontal cohesion. Some battalions simply had their personnel stabilized with the expectation they would serve together for some period of time after their return to CONUS. These stabilized units showed levels of horizontal cohesion comparable with OSUT-trained and stabilized units. These units also had definite tasks that were important, meaningful, motivating, and that required well organized leadership. They continued training, then readied and turned in all equipment, then rotated between OCONUS and CONUS. Without a demanding mission like equipment modernization or rotation, simple stabilization may not have had the observed effect.

This is not the whole story, however. Observations and interviews indicate that work life in these rotated units was qualitatively different following stabilization. Apparently the expectation of continued service with the same people permitted the exchange of equipment and expertise across platoons and companies in more ways and with greater frequency than before stabilization was announced.

Some Lessons from Battalion Rotation

Extensive interview and observational data confirmed that the Army can rotate battalions with few untoward effects on soldiers, their families, or communities. Unfortunately, the Army typically made these efforts much more difficult than they needed to be. For example, each unit and community faced its rotation problem alone, as if it were the only unit rotating, and as if the Army had never attempted rotating units before. Consequently, some of the same mistakes made in the earlier company rotations were repeated in the battalion rotations. Contrary to popular belief, the Army is not through with unit rotations, including both company sized units (the continuation of moving COHORT companies to USAREUR) and battalion sized units (including a number of Apache helicopter units are scheduled to rotate to Europe as part of force modernization and reconfiguration). Unless these unit leaders attend to earlier lessons learned, they will start from scratch, unmindful that many problems have already been addressed and solved.

The second lesson learned is that a rotation is a peacetime, permanent change-of-station (PCS) move. It is not a tactical deployment. This distinction is important because the planning and operational tasks involved in moving a large group of soldiers and their families requires an enormous amount of time and energy spread over a prolonged period. It is the distinction between "taking a trip" (deployment) and "moving" (PCS). Without the additional staff resources necessary to accomplish the move, the units participating in the battalion rotations were forced to devote staff time and energy to this task, often at costs to their operational and training duties. In most cases the primary burden fell on the battalion executive officers. Their

performances were outstanding, but the costs were high (i.e., the disruption of their normal duties and the personal stress they experienced in trying to manage two full-time jobs).

In addition, some senior officers and staff planners lost sight of the fact that, unlike a deployed unit, a rotating unit must have sufficient time to settle-in after its arrival and before it undertakes major training activities. For the sake of gaining a few additional days of post-rotation field training, some units placed their unsettled soldiers and families in very stressful situations. Over the course of the previous company COHORT rotations to USAREUR, we learned that those units that took adequate time to resettle families after the rotation generally outperformed those units that rushed into training activities. Based on limited information, the same findings were replicated in rotating battalions.

Unit Replacement and Reload

One of the most worrisome policy implication of WRAIR's UMS findings lies in the unit replacement data. Interviews and observations revealed little appreciation by battalion staff, and no appreciation on the part of company level leaders, for the importance of military cohesion. The practice of treating incoming replacements as individuals rather than as a cohesive group to be kept together suggested that the concept of maintaining cohesion has not penetrated to the small-unit level even now. Many leaders seemed oblivious to the possibilities of cross-leveling within mature companies to create places for intact replacement packets. Given their "druthers," the commanders we observed preferred to fill spaces by breaking up preformed replacement packages. Cohesion in highly cohesive units is not reduced by such cross-leveling, as it provides a way to capitalize on mutual knowledge and support found in both preformed replacement packages and existing unit cultures. Unless this mindset that views cohesion as the business of company leaders, not just HQDA is changed, the whole UMS experience will melt back into the individual replacement system it was designed to eliminate.

Changing personnel practices at battalion and company levels will not be easy. The U.S. Army has operated on an individual replacement model since 1917. Few company grade officers or NCOs imagine doing business any other way. It is one thing to raise and deploy COHORT companies and battalions as a matter of policy. It is something else to teach small unit commanders to use intact replacement packets. Policy and pronouncements have little effect this low in the Army organization where COHORT policy can be circumvented by leaders employing conventional notions of numerical equity rather than replacing with intact cohesive packets.

Leading COHORT Units

COHORT units place particularly severe demands on leaders in three ways. As a function of group norms taught during OSUT, COHORT soldiers typically hold high expectations and uncompromising dedication to the mission. They expect their

leaders to be equally dedicated and to be reservoirs of professional competence.

The second source of pressure is that leaders of COHORT units cannot succeed if they show favoritism, nor can they divide and conquer. COHORT soldiers share a common perspective, and the speed of their peer-group communications is formidable. Any blunder, injustice, or professional lapse by a leader is known to all his soldiers immediately.

The third problem leaders of COHORT units face is organizing and implementing a progressive training program that keeps units growing in proficiency and soldiers challenged over several years. Before COHORT, few officers or NCOs outside of Ranger battalions had run training programs that went beyond one year. The officer corps and the NCO corps have to upgrade their skills if they are to develop accretive training experiences that can bring out the potential offered by COHORT stabilization.

Creating Vertically Cohesive Units

In units that established a reasonable degree of chain-of-command stabilization, vertical cohesion varied according to several factors. The officers and NCOs who developed cohesive companies, for instance, differed from their less successful colleagues in their knowledge of their profession, in their ways of interacting with their troops, and in their focus on the mission.

First and foremost, the successful leaders were more interested in and knowledgeable about the process of making war than were the others. Superiors, peers, and subordinates judged them to be masters of their profession.

Secondly, successful leaders fundamentally respected and cared for their subordinates. Respect did not make the leaders blind to limitations, but there was a basic sense that leaders and followers were all worthy members of the fraternity of arms. Such leaders did not fear that their subordinates would ruin their reputations unless their behavior was closely circumscribed. This factor has reliably differentiated vertically cohesive units from noncohesive units, not only in COHORT units but in other units in CONUS and USAREUR studied over the past five years, and in units studied during World War II.

Leaders and followers in vertically cohesive units respected each other for their abilities, and had no need for rituals of subordination. This phenomenon has been found in the most effective units of the U.S. Army, the German Wehrmacht, and the Israeli Defence Forces. Further, the officers, sergeants, and privates in vertically cohesive units liked each other, and sometimes the affective levels were intense. The relationships resembled those found in tightly integrated units in combat.

Further, leaders who exploited fully the potential of the COHORT system trusted their subordinates and worked to develop them. Ownership of the mission, and the sense of being entrusted with it, strengthened vertical cohesion and confirmed the feeling

of mutual commitment to a common goal. Units on a dispersed AirLand battlefield, for instance, can accomplish their missions only if they have experienced the processes of acquiring information, exercising authority, and thinking independently. Soldiers who own the mission become affectively committed to it and cognitively involved with it.

Successful leaders interacted with their soldiers through attention to their personal, familial, and professional welfare. The effective leaders had good judgment about what constituted a serious personal concern and what was an effort to "get over." They were not afraid to rely on their soldiers' ability to handle being trusted and respected. In cohesive units, more cases of soldiers were noted understating physical or familial problems than overstating them. The way these leaders cared for their soldiers in no way resembled coddling or currying favor with them; nor was caring incompatible with discipline. Caring consisted of keeping promises and conserving soldiers' physical and psychological resources. Caring included punitive action; a soldier who misbehaved expected to be punished. These leaders realized that their failure to punish misconduct would trivialize the efforts of their better soldiers.

The third factor common to vertically cohesive units Army-wide was focus on the combat mission. Committed soldiers felt that hard work and sacrifices designed to develop a solid combat capability was a mission that dignified, or even ennobled, them. While a valid mission lent meaning to hard work and misery, deviation from the mission made a mockery of the soldiers' sacrifices and efforts. Deviation also aroused anxieties because most privates completed basic and individual training believing in the likelihood of combat. Demonstrations, eyewash, and competitions interfered with efforts to become the kind of proficient fighters who can survive in battle. Similarly, shortages of fundamental items of equipment raised doubts about whether the mission was real or not, and about whether the military hierarchy above their unit was competent to support them in battle. Belief in the mission was fundamental to the soldier's sense of self-worth; when leaders compromised that belief, the psychological fabric of vertical cohesion began unraveling.

SECTION 4

LESSONS LEARNED

"The hardest thing to learn in life is which bridge to cross and which to burn."

-- David Russell

The WRAIR evaluation of the human dimensions of the Unit Manning System/COHORT supports the following conclusions:

- o THE PRIMARY HUMAN DIMENSIONS THAT AFFECT PSYCHOLOGICAL READINESS FOR COMBAT ARE:
 - Horizontal cohesion (soldier-to-soldier trust and confidence)
 - Vertical cohesion (caring and concerned leadership)
 - Personal morale
 - Confidence in unit (company/battery) combat capabilities
 - Confidence in leaders' abilities
- o PSYCHOLOGICAL READINESS FOR COMBAT IS A FORCE MULTIPLIER. HIGHER PSYCHOLOGICAL READINESS MEANS GREATER:
 - Confidence in leaders
 - Confidence in unit combat capabilities
 - Willingness to go into combat with the unit
 - Identification with the company/battery
 - Perceived teamwork in the unit
- o UMS/COHORT FACILITATES DEVELOPMENT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL READINESS FOR COMBAT
 - COHORT units score consistently higher than nonCOHORT units on most dimensions of psychological readiness for combat
 - COHORT units are able to resist the potentially corrosive effects of rotation, leader turbulence, changes in equipment, changes in fighting doctrine, and organizational reconfiguration
 - COHORT units enhance the potential for family-unit bonding
 - USAREUR and CONUS unit leaders agree that COHORT units consistently perform collective tasks and sustain themselves under stress better than conventional units
 - Leaders view COHORT units as consistently better at movement, maneuver, occupation, and communication at small unit levels (platoon, company) than conventional counterparts
- o THE COHORT EXPERIMENT POINTS OUT CERTAIN PROBLEM ISSUES
 - Lack of leader training prevents use of accretive training opportunities
 - Rapid leader turnover deters unit vertical cohesion and disrupts the development of long-term unit norms and standards

o THE COHORT EXPERIENCE HIGHLIGHTS CRITICAL LEADERSHIP ISSUES

- Leadership practices can contribute to enhanced psychological readiness
- Predictable duty day and training schedules contribute to vertical cohesion
- Personal morale is affected by perceived leader concern for families
- Misinterpretation of fraternization policies can deter effective relations among ranks
- Leaders must convey clear standards and expectations of what is important
- Integrating soldier replacement packets while maintaining unit cohesion requires learned skills
- A supportive command climate is essential if subordinate leaders are to exhibit caring and concerned leadership
- COHORT soldiers judge leaders carefully and expect the highest levels of competence and concern
- With stabilized personnel, poorly trained or unconcerned leaders create long term problems

o COHORT CONTINUES TO BE MISUNDERSTOOD

- Some leaders fault COHORT for not producing results that were never promised: higher individual performance measures, fewer AWOLs and UCMJ actions, higher reenlistment rates
- NCOs and troops often blame what they do not like about their current assignment on "COHORT"; yet, they strongly endorse the heart of COHORT: the opportunity for soldiers who came in together to train together and to stay together

o COHORT UNITS PLUS POSITIVE LEADERSHIP CAN CREATE HIGH-PERFORMANCE UNITS

- At every USAREUR and CONUS site visited, the combination of COHORT companies and competent, concerned, and caring leaders produced units judged by their battalion and brigade commanders to be among the top units in their command
- Frequently, senior officers and NCOs expressed greater combat confidence in COHORT companies (with positive leaders) than in "elite" units with which they had served in combat

SECTION 5

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

"The certainties of one age are the problems of the next."

-- R.H. Tawney

The information provided by WRAIR's study of the human dimensions of the Unit Manning System was used in the Army's decision to make a unit replacement system the norm for manning and deploying combat forces. Data collected by WRAIR scientists have also sharpened important leadership issues crucial to developing and sustaining high performing units capable of successfully engaging enemy forces on the modern battlefield. Future research at WRAIR will focus on these small-unit leadership issues, including the important contributions that family and community factors make to unit readiness. This future UMS research will involve:

1. The final data collection in the ongoing Unit Manning System Soldier Survey and the analysis of the entire five waves of panel data collected over the past three years (including three corresponding waves of spouse data).

2. Initiation of three related studies that follow-on to previous Unit Manning System studies. These new efforts include:

- a. Examining the process and effect of package replacement of both COHORT and nonCOHORT units. As pointed out in WRAIR's 4th UMS Technical Report, the full implications for morale and cohesion in integrating new "packages" of first term soldiers into existing units in a planned manner are unclear. We do know that unit reconstitution in wartime is crucial to the psychological survival of newly arrived soldiers and is a potentially critical factor in sustaining or reloading a unit within a combat theater.

- b. Conducting a series of interviews with leaders and soldiers in company-sized units that have been consistently high or low on our measures of psychological readiness for combat. The primary objective is to uncover the actual behaviors and interactions that correspond to the responses obtained on the Unit Manning System Soldier Survey. There is a need to know the actual behaviors, interactions, and experiences that drive the formation of these attitudes, feelings, and beliefs.

- c. Expanding current survey and interview work into combat support and service support units. There is little current information about the social processes in these units. These units differ from combat units in their composition, training, and deployment doctrine. These units will face a severe physical and psychological test in any mid- to high-intensity conflict. The survival of such dispersed small organizations (and the combat forces that they support) may depend primarily on the psychosocial nature of relationships in these groups.

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