SOME MANAGERIAL ASPECTS OF COMMAND

by

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(How can the commander "manage" intangibles such as motivation, tradition, teamwork, and self-confidence? What role does the chain of command play in the command/management relationship?)

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In my command, the task of man-management is given a higher priority than skill at arms or professional ability.

—Lieutenant General Sir John Mogg
Kermit Roosevelt Lecture, 1969

A farseeing Army needs to digress now and then in assessing its performances to make certain that it is recording the lessons which have great impact for the future. In time of war, analysis of the critical battlefield understandably dominates military writing, but it cannot be permitted to hide other great lessons. In the past half-decade, the Vietnamese battle has done just that. The feedback, critique, and assimilation of other important if less spectacular teachings have been dwarfed.

A prime current example is the lack of professional discussion of unit commanders' management roles in what possibly has been a major accomplishment of the US Army, especially in the past five years: the ways and means of manipulating military resources—expanding, contracting, and trading off—in responding to US national security requirements. While the subject has been amply covered at the Department of Defense and budget level, not nearly enough attention has been given to documenting, analyzing, and assimilating the management experiences subordinate to centralized decisions of the defense establishment as a whole. Valuable lessons are waiting to be rediscovered in the next expanding crisis of military consequence.

Two precedents related to the Vietnam buildup illustrate this point: (a) The expansion of forces without any significant

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Lieutenant General Sir John Mogg of the British Army believes in assigning top priority to the matter of "man-management."

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call-up of the reserve training base, and (b) the costing of manpower along with other resources in determining battlefield means. Both reordered past planning exercises and are procedures now established as possible ways of instituting future force level changes. Consequently, in order to be certain that the end results did in fact justify the means there is a great need to trace the effects of these techniques and associated trade-offs from top to bottom.

By quick assessment, the US Army's manipulation of its limited resources in accomplishing the Vietnam buildup appears as a miracle of management. However, the attendant bartering permeated all levels of command and required some "robbing of Peter to pay Paul." The current lack of understanding with regard to subordinate management procedures and problems precludes a positive guarantee that the "miracle" label will hold for the military historian. To an unknown degree, some of the trade-offs have had an adverse impact on the Army. Critical analysis and assessment of the residual effects of worldwide personnel turbulence and training shortfall—beyond that recorded numerically in unit readiness reports—are needed before mobilization plans and programs can be updated with any exactitude.

The evolved management style guides from the top the decisions of Vietnam and has its own dynamic "snowballing centralization of decisionmaking"[1] which does not pause long for critique before continuing on its course. The same management logic is being used in developing trade-offs for the "Vietnamization" of the war and in reducing selected worldwide US forces during the switching of national priorities and dollars from Vietnam to domestic affairs.

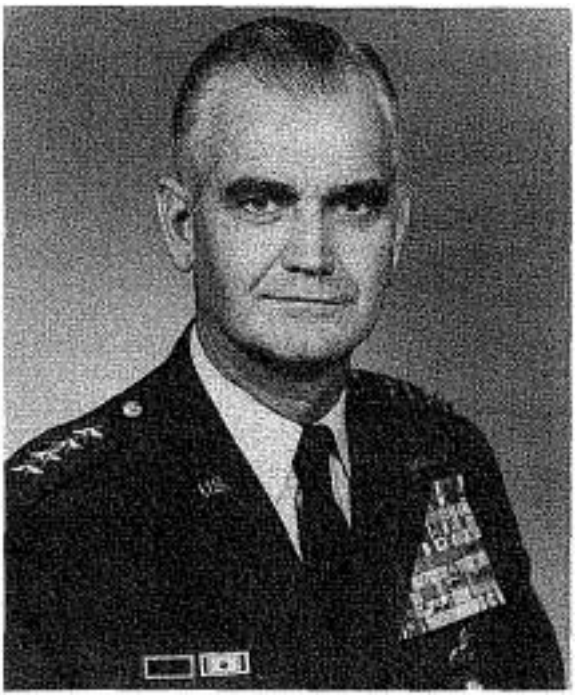
The essential military lesson is that the US Army is now living with but has not yet fully adapted to the new management technique. Cost effective controls which have partly dictated both the mobilization strategy and battlefield tactics of Vietnam are now wedded to the military. Not only are these controls bound to the Army in a dollars and cents fashion, but also in terms of domestic politics. The systems analysis approach to centralized management may well remain as the genius of defense management in the 1970s. These controls will be accompanied by ever-increasing inquiries into current practices—penetration of military command functions—while searching for new efficiencies and dollar economies, or to support a politically-preferred change.

ASSAYING SOLDIER INTANGIBLES

A current example of a combined political and economic "effectiveness" analysis is the search for a "happier" system for procurement of military manpower, one that is at once not overly expensive and yet more palatable to the public than the present draft. In April 1970, President Nixon announced to Congress some proposals designed to move toward a zero draft by 1973. But in the same message he qualified his objective by indicating that "no one can predict with precision whether or not—or precisely when—we can end conscription."[2] Some military spokesmen[3] have opposed the "all volunteer" approach, contending among other things that the draft provides the Army with necessary civil ties to all segments of society. But, indicative of the facts of life in the modern defense management style, more and more political and military spokesmen are giving their support to the volunteer plan. The measurable economic and political costs[4]—not debatable intangibles unadapted to comparative cost analyses—are the factors likely to be persuasive in the budget decisions of defense management.

Hence, in addition to the Army's need for a better in-house assessment of the full impact of past centralized defense management decisions, an even greater need exists to be ready for further "systems analysis" probes concerning the worth and requirements for other as yet unexamined practices traditional to military management.

The obvious target for these queries was pointed out by General Westmoreland: "With over a half of the Army's annual budget being spent on military and civilian personnel costs, efficient use of personnel offers a lucrative



US Army

The Army Chief of Staff, General William C. Westmoreland, has called attention to the role that management can play in solving the Army's problems during the next decade.

area for economy."[5] This information must be sought at all levels, recording why command, management, and leadership techniques do or do not work, to include developing means for gauging the quality of the operational or training result.

WHEN IS A SOLDIER TRAINED? HOW MUCH TRAINING IS ENOUGH?

Centralized decisionmakers, like audit agencies, address themselves to monied concepts and quantity measurements, accounting more for dollars, spaces, time, and hardware than for overall system requirements and results. The "quality" considerations are adapted to simple "go" or "no go" standards. In the 1970s, in order to influence the decisionmakers, Army training managers will be required to adapt to money and quantity measurements to answer the question: When is a soldier trained? The training manager must also know the answer to: How much training is enough? He must know how to establish a military "standard."

The "standard" for Vietnam seems to have settled on eight weeks basic individual training, nine weeks advanced individual training (ten weeks in an experimental program at Fort McClellan),[6] plus "up to 10 days in-unit training"[7] after arrival in Vietnam. Taken at face value, the Army's standards are met largely by time and subject completions, which in turn are balanced to the aptitudes near to the learning base of new recruits and draftees; it sometimes seems that proficiency tends to be measured more by attendance than by quality of performance.

Approached indirectly, a quality soldier—a quality unit—has (1) skills and (2) mental "confidences" attuned always to missions, in common or passed from above. The requisite skills are acquired in a number of ways, the teacher-pupil relationship being obviously common, but self-teaching and induced learning being substantial contributors nonetheless.

The building of the mental "confidences" is the much more elusive requirement of training, but in developing quality soldiers it is equal in importance to the acquisition of basic indoctrination skills. Requisite "confidences" and attitudes are by no means certain in either the professional soldier or the recruit, but they are likely to be stable only for the older soldier.

The quality attributes are interrelated. Skill and confidence each cross-reinforce the development of the other. Motivation, for example, is the near universal ingredient to the building of both "skills" and "confidences." But induced acquisition of both, either in, a positive or negative sense, is also likely, and is underrated in its importance.

Development of fighting skills is related to military training experiences. The building of essential "confidences" is not confined to active duty experience and is no more likely to be developed in the military classroom than in the mess hall or on leave. Leadership more than the instructor contributes to confidence-building unless they are one and the same; team efforts contribute even more than the commander.

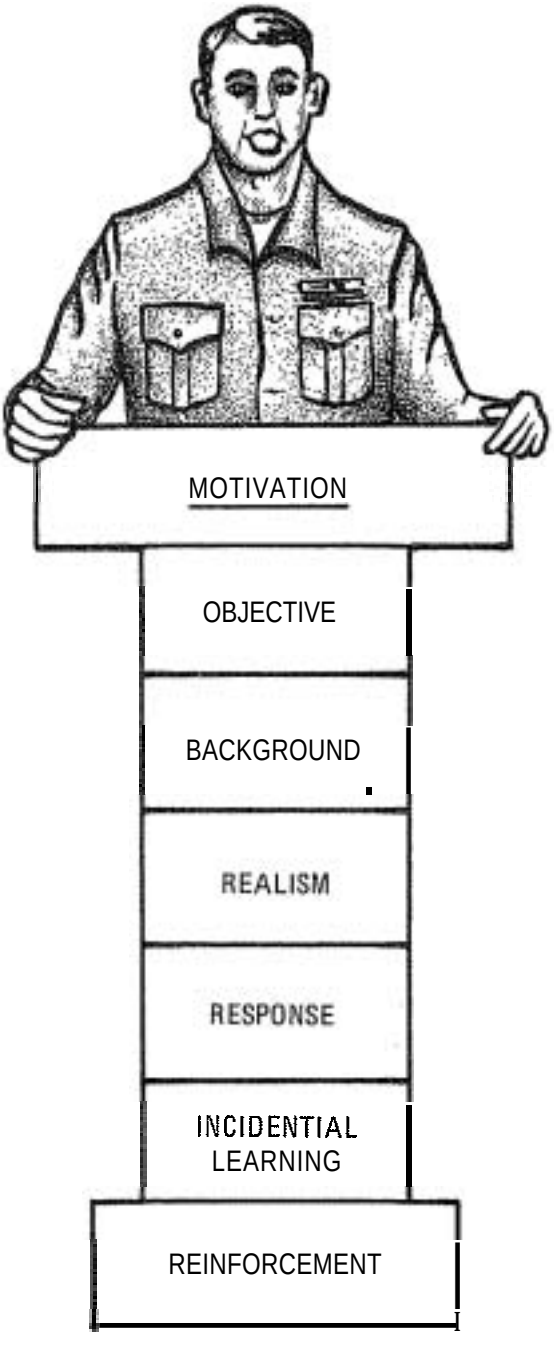


Figure 1. The principles of instruction.

Motivating the recruit and the draftee citizen-soldier to give a quality performance is entirely different than nurturing the same spirit in the professional soldier. Army training in the United States since World War I has been geared to mass production training of the citizen-soldier.

The standard for quality must focus on the professional. For example, the "snappy salute" from the citizen-soldier is not quite so important as is his "hitting the simulated combat target." On the other hand, the professional must do both—do all things—equally well. Otherwise, the "confidences" of the professional in his own abilities and those of his unit will diminish; leadership must recognize and genuinely adapt to both standards, found side-by-side in US Army units.

In general, the training of soldiers is decentralized to the lower levels of competence—which changes depending upon the availability of instructor resources. The really professional unit conducts its own training; the weaker unit seeks a committee solution. But, as mentioned previously, the learning of skills is but half a loaf; acquisition of "confidences" is the other half of quality soldiering. The latter is tied to the unit and the chain of command, not to the instructor pool as such.

To build from an earlier point, the teaching of military skills can be regimented to instructional schedules, but "learning" and acquiring positive or negative "confidences" and "attitudes" cannot. Further, this acquisition cannot be confined to active duty experience only; however, the best opportunities for active duty influence come with positive leadership and identity with the unit team.

Except for the general propensity to decentralize training to the lower levels of competence, there is not enough emphasis in current training documents on the acquisition-half of quality soldier development. In effect, this amounts to managing only part of the training requirement.

MANAGEMENT OF MOTIVATION

A lot of learning, good as well as bad, takes place under the surface. Little of this training is planned or even acknowledged in current training management procedures.

The theoretical limit for full capacity unit training is the absolute capability either to

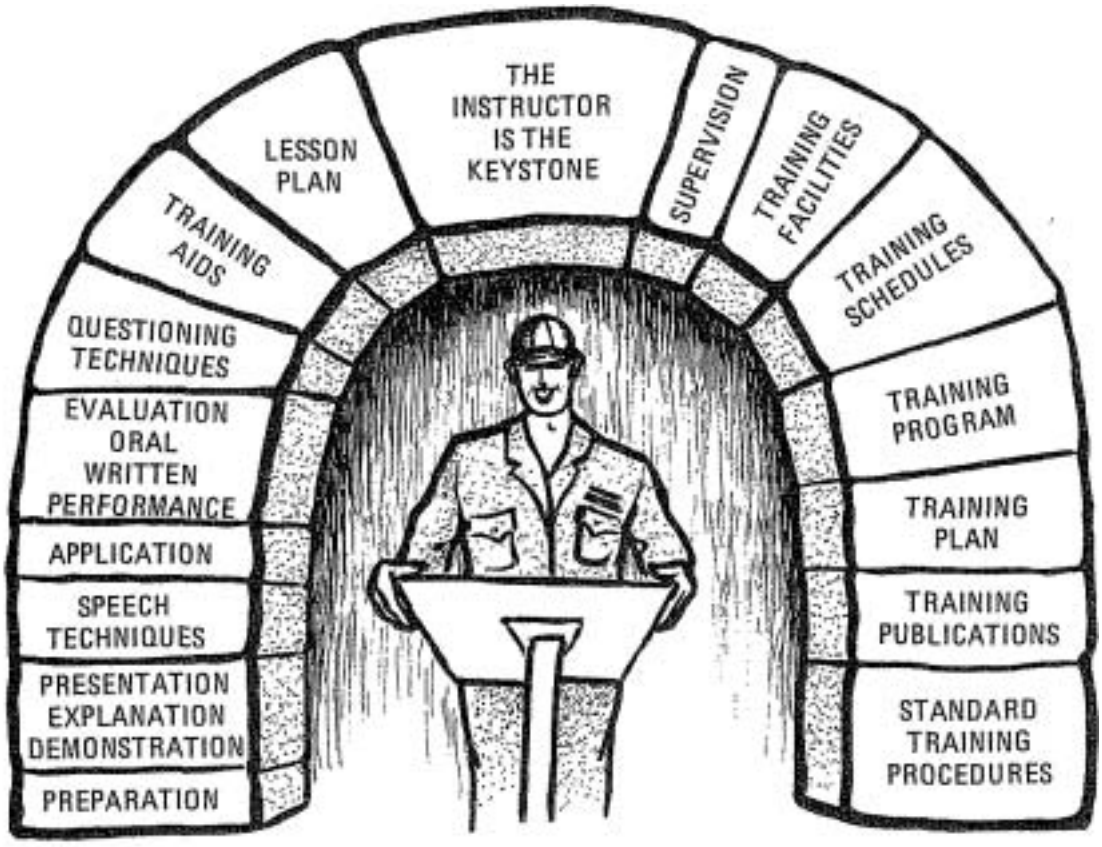


Figure 2. The training arch.

learn or to *teach,* whichever is the smaller. The likelihood of approaching either limit is pure fantasy; the real world lives down near the bottom rung of the theoretical ladder. The potential for unit training accomplishment is an interrelated function of both the learning and teaching capacities. At present, training management tends to underscore the latter.

Actually, learning may well be the more important first step. The truism that learning is assimilated more quickly on the battlefield is obviously due to motivation. Nevertheless, training policy has continued to emphasize management of instructional resources; not the motivational aspects of learning—the receptivity to instruction and retention of realistic training experience. The lesson yet to be learned—inherently obvious in the combat zone—is that inducements to learning (short of combat experience) seldom receive their due, and are not now a conscious part of training management.

The total Army environment and not just "the combat" part may be the key to greater efficiencies in training. What besides a shooting war motivates the soldier to learn? This is an everyday command management question.

A deeper look at the Army's training management guidance as outlined in *Army Regulation 350-1, Army Training,* and *Field Manual 21-5, Military Training Management,* indicates recognition of broader principles. For example:

> Effective training depends on effective leadership, proper organization and sufficient repetition to assure acquisition and retention of desired knowledge and skills. (AR *350-1)*

and:

> The Army training structure consists of the total environment in which a soldier

> develops the knowledge and skills required to accomplish his assigned duties. *(FM 21-5)*

The total impact of this guidance is that training is a decentralized responsibility which passes requirements for training to the lower levels of instructor competence. Theoretically, such guidance tends to ignore the fact that the individual instructor can do little to "unteach" a poor attitude acquired outside his unit.

Current training literature addresses the "motivation" of troops, but dwells on teaching; the instructor is called the "keystone of the training arch" (Figures 1 and 2 adapted from *Field Manual 21-6, Techniques of Instruction*). Perhaps the instructor is not the keystone, perhaps it is motivation that acts as the keystone and cement between teaching and learning.

Leadership and teamwork—possibly *esprit de corps*—are the generators of inducements to learning; they are not confined to the classroom, and most certainly not to a training schedule. Both are related to doing things together, successfully, and can sink to negative values whenever failures occur. Few would deny that there is an interrelation between unit reputation and unit accomplishment, that "the good unit does all things well."

The point is more easily made by looking at the other side of the problem. A "confident performance" subsequent to a combat failure—or training failure requiring retraining—is unlikely, and eliminates much possibility for an expanded performance or new initiative before restoring a winning record and attitude. Generally, it is difficult for a unit to pick itself up from a major failure and go on to an inspired performance. A negative environment or experience stifle initiative at the expense of unit motivation, leadership, teamwork, and *esprit*. Objectives are minimal, and unit reward is relief rather than expanded accomplishment.

Unit leadership and teamwork can often be enhanced by organizing training to take advantage of and to strengthen the chain of command. For example, classroom seating according to crew or squad composition offers the potential for role-playing by small unit teams. In this manner, additional instructional benefits are realized during the teaching of subjects such as crew training or small unit tactics.*

The supposition here is that a considerably greater part of Army training now directed to the individual should instead be addressed to the small unit team. Such direction would take advantage of the intra-team instructional potential and the benefits associated with the concurrent exercise of the chain of command. The subordinate leader's ability to control his group is almost certain to be strengthened, as is the indirect benefit of team-directed training. *But*, the full benefits are likely to appear only if they are planned.

Motivating a short-term soldier to turn in a professional performance is entirely different from motivating the same level of accomplishment in the veteran performer. In the training base there has been a wide variance in training practices, and a marked stretching of professional leadership brought about by the requirements of Vietnam. Nevertheless, a conservative observation is that basic training improved in the course of the Vietnam buildup, and is probably better now than at any time in the past. Further, unit training conducted by inexperienced junior officers and NCOs did not sink to a level that might reasonably have been forecast.**

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*On the other hand, the same seating arrangement can detract from individual learning of non-team subjects wherein the individual's separate views and participation are desired. If arranged by unit teams for this type of training, the soldier may tend to look to the established team for a group reaction rather than participating freely. General subjects such as military justice, code of conduct, and troop information classes would seem to fall in the "non-team" category.

**For example, the drawdown of US Army forces in Europe challenged commanders there to meet the same pre-drawdown mission requirements, but with considerably less resources. The adverse impact on mission readiness was apparent; still the demonstrated abilities—some of the impressive training accomplishments—would indicate that the units there had somehow matched the requirement. Units with few experienced officers and NCOs (and rapid personnel turnarounds) were getting the job done, not as smoothly as before but not nearly so raggedly as comparative assets would indicate. The jobs did not get smaller; men grew to fit the jobs.

It does not seem possible that better instructor performances could account for the relative improvement in training, because professional experience at the unit level diminished noticeably in the process of extending available resources to cover the expanding requirements of Vietnam. Therefore, the improvement is believed to be attributable to the increased efforts of the individual soldier.

It may be that the Vietnam buildup and shooting war environment motivated improved soldier performance and enhanced receptivity to training. The total situation suggests, however, that the motivation was not limited to Vietnam, and that total environment contributes greatly to training efficiencies, far more than any change in instructor quality. Further, it may be that: (a) motivation need not relate directly to subjects being taught, (b) factors considerably beyond those now normally addressed in instructor lesson plans may in fact contribute to the training process, (c) the commander, not the instructor, must play the major role in motivating soldier reception and retention of realistic training experiences, (d) the public image relating to Army duty is a part of the total Army—profession and institution—training management and leadership requirement, (e) the training prerequisite to current and past US soldier development is a much more flexible process than current procedures allow, and (f) training is a flexible commodity that bends to requirements and therefore is both suitable for and susceptible to cost effective management.

Does a shooting war enhance a soldier's learning? What else motivates the soldier to learn? These questions are representative of those associated with everyday, high-priority, Army command management problems.

MILITARY PROFESSIONAL JUDGMENT

Military commanders recognize the close link between good command and good management. They recognize that the decisionmaker at the top in the Department of Defense must rely on the tools of cost effective analysis and that military commanders taken collectively have shortcomings in this same area.

In general, Army leadership recognizes the need for quickly acquiring these modern management skills and is doing something about it by modernizing Army schools and organizations. At the same time, Army leadership is continuing to make decisions of the highest caliber; while these leaders may be a bit uneasy because of their lack of modern systems analysis skills, they continue to make good command decisions. This seems to suggest that: either (a) traditional techniques and old-fashioned methods of military analysis are not all that bad, or (b) a great many skills and judgments of successful command are not now adapted to systems analysis management. There are elements of truth in both statements.

Granted, "Management" and "Command" are not the same. But this, at best, is a short-term rejoinder for the military leader who has demonstrated expertise as a good commander, and is not now scrambling to acquire the knowledge of modern management techniques. Heed of shortcomings must be taken now, for the rejoinder may not apply in the future.

Nevertheless, there is value in addressing the current differences between command and management even while recognizing the close relationship between the two, and the equal applicability of modern techniques for future systematic decision analysis. While accepting these as essentials of future command, it is likewise apparent that the successful leadership skills evidenced by past commanders, untrained in management techniques, are not in the slightest discredited; further, that the analyst's procedures to date have been mechanistic and incomplete by comparison. It seems, therefore, that experienced commanders, now adapting to the centralized decisionmaking process, may be capable of presenting totally different bases for their accomplishments; of insuring that in the process of modernizing—merging command and management—the bases for those accomplishments are not lost.

US Army

In 1968, General Ferdinand J. Chesarek wrote of the Army's need for finding ways of influencing the decisionmakers.

In the past, Americans have been sometimes careless in assaying their military resources—miserly in peacetime, extravagant in war—believing, at least through the Korean War, that whatever was available would be enough. For a variety of reasons, however, past wartime permissiveness and peacetime optimism are now folly. This is true partly because such practices are now prohibitively costly, technologically unfathomable, and politically intolerable, but mainly true because it is just not good business in the modern management sense. Centralized, computerized, and "civilianized" defense management is the rational result and" raises a thorny issue, for it means that at the Army level we must find ways and means of influencing the decisionmakers."[8]

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There is a need for hard observations, critiques, and value judgments by professional men of all important military undertakings, but it should receive equal emphasis at all levels in the chain of command. In particular this is needed for that part of command management that is unique to military leadership and effectiveness in the field. For it is this aspect of defense management that the decisionmaker—the civilian systems analyst—does not now weigh in his centralized measurements of military command effectiveness and requirements. And, finally, it may be that this is the aspect of management that the military profession—the commander—has also taken for granted.

FOOTNOTES

1. Ferdinand J. Chesarek, "Computer Revolution Continues Its March," *Army: 1968 Green Book*, November 1968, p. 65.
2. *US News & World Report*, May 4, 1970, p. 25.
3. Bruce C. Clarke, "Do We Really Want An All-Volunteer Army," *Armor*, November-December 1969, pp. 3-4.
4. *New York Times*, August 26, 1970, p. 1, and October 14, 1970, p. 2.
5. William C. Westmoreland, "Four Ms Is the Army's Watchword As It Faces Challenges of 1970s," *Army: 1969 Green Book*, October 1969, p. 25.
6. James K. Woolnough, "Troop Readiness and Distribution Best Since Start of War Buildup," *Army: 1969 Green Book*, October 1969, p. 41.
7. Frank T. Mildren, "From Mekong to DMZ: A Fighting Year," *Army: 1968 Green Book*, November 1968, p. 90.
8. Chesarek, *op. cit.*, p. 65.