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Task Identification and Skill Deterioration in Peacekeeping Operations

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As with any military operation, peacekeeping requires a force well prepared for the mission. Personnel not acquainted with the tasks and demands of peacekeeping, however, can impact a contributing nation's ability to sustain peace (Durch, 1993). For a unit assigned temporary peacekeeping duty, an investment in learning and sustaining new peacekeeping skills must be made, but perhaps at the cost of not maintaining war-fighting skills. This introduces a dilemma: to what extent should peacekeeping skills be learned, and how often should they be refreshed as opposed to what extent can a deterioration in war-fighting skills be accepted? Furthermore, what are the characteristics of typical peacekeeping tasks, and how well are they remembered if they are not sustained?

This chapter examines several facets of these issues. In particular, how are peacekeeping tasks identified, and what are the underlying characteristics of learning and remembering them? Also, what do we know about predicting the decay of skills related to these tasks, and what are the tendencies of units in prioritizing tasks for sustainment training during a peacekeeping assignment? To address these questions, three applied studies are reported, associated with two peacekeeping missions involving U.S. troops. The first concerns identifying peacekeeping tasks and predicting their decay based on an empirically derived analytic model. Here, the tasks relate to a peacekeeping mission to Bosnia. The second study concerns the identification of tasks and the predeployment training patterns of two units assigned during separate rotations to the Multinational Force and Observers mission in the Sinai. One unit was drawn from the regular army and represented the active component of the U.S. Army, whereas the other was composed primarily of reserve-component soldiers. The third study, which further examined the same two units, concerns the comparative behavior of these units in sustaining proficiency on both peacekeeping and war-fighting tasks during their deployments.

Throughout the chapter, the construct of skill decay, or deterioration, is used. *Skill decay* refers simply to the natural forgetting of tasks over periods of nonuse or nonpractice. The capacity to retain skills, or skill retention, is the complementary effect. *Tasks* are the descriptors that identify the behavior linked to an established performance standard. An example is "Determining Grid Coordinates" to a specified degree of accuracy within a certain time period. *Skill* refers to an individual's (or team's) capacity to execute a task to a standard. The study of skill decay has a long history as an area of study in experimental psychology (Ebbinghaus, 1885) with implications for education, training, and human factors design. Here it is linked to the skills of the peacekeeper.

The training of peacekeeping skills is central to this chapter. *Training* refers to "the systematic acquisition of skills, rules, concepts, or attitudes that result in improved performance in another environment" as identified by Goldstein (1993, p. 3). Traditionally, training is linked to organizational objectives and correcting deficiencies in the workforce (Kraiger & Jung, 1997). Here, training is related to a successful peacekeeping mission and the identification and development of specific skills underpinning a successful mission.

TRAINING FOR PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS

The literature on peacekeeping operations relegates training to a decidedly secondary role. Most work focuses on geopolitical issues, internationalism, military strategy, and economics. Some authors (e.g., Diehl, 1988; Kutter, 1986) contend that deploying highly trained combat soldiers for peacekeeping operations places our troops in a paradoxical situation. Successful peacekeeping soldiers must function well in environments where only minimal force is usually required. Under these circumstances, their strength lies not in their lethality but rather in their ability to negotiate and make compromises. The guidelines for conduct may change, the rules of engagement may be modified, and the individual's role as a soldier becomes less certain. This can lead to psychological ambiguities for highly trained war-fighters (Britt, 1998).

According to Kutter (1986), previous behavioral research has established that careful predeployment training can succeed in preparing soldiers and leaders psychologically for peacekeeping. During preparation for a peacekeeping deployment, training focuses more on mission-relevant rather than basic soldiering or war-fighting tasks. Upon completion of the assignment, the focus of training reverts to war-fighting performance because a reconstruction of deteriorated skills and competencies is essential for readiness. Of course, much of this depends on the status of the unit prior to a peacekeeping assignment. Certain units from some nations specialize in peacekeeping, whereas others must be trained on peacekeeping skills during a predeployment preparation phase. Before examining the decay of these skills, I present a review of how tasks are selected for a peacekeeping mission.

Identification of Tasks and Peacekeeping Courses

Let us first turn to peacekeeping on a broader scale. Within the UN, there is no single unified training system. The UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations coordinates and standardizes training among member states contributing to peacekeeping operations (Kidwell & Langholtz, 1998). This department develops training manuals, provides expert training assistance, and conducts train-the-trainer and senior management seminars. Each nation, however, is responsible for the screening, training, and evaluation of the personnel it sends as part of its national commitment. The UN Institute for Training and Research, Programme of Correspondence Instruction provides self-paced training courses on various aspects of UN peacekeeping, with titles such as Principles for the Conduct of Peace Support Operations or Methods and Techniques for Peacekeeping on the Ground.

Within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), an examination of training practices reveals the broad scope of peacekeeping tasks. Faced with new challenges and missions, NATO has changed its organization and strategy, opening itself to new members and recently emerged nations. The Partnership for Peace (PfP) and Combined Joint Task Forces are examples of initiatives to increase security and stability in Europe (NATO, 1998). The introduction of the PfP initiative in 1994 added a new dimension to relationships between countries and a call for training and cooperation for peacekeeping and related areas, such as humanitarian aid and dealing with refugees. Thus far, eight countries have established PfP training centers to provide qualitative education and training support to military and civilian personnel and to reach interoperability objectives and PfP goals. The course offerings are open to civilians and military personnel of PfP and NATO countries.

Courses cover areas concerning operational and military-political considerations as well as technical-tactical courses and a variety of seminars. The PfP training center in Turkey, for example, offers 24 courses, including Civilian Military Cooperation, Military Observer in Peace Support Operations (PSO), and Mine Counter Measures. Many of the specific tasks in these courses relate to NATO interoperability objectives, such as command and control procedures, maps and symbologies, and land operations. Another example is the PfP training center in Slovenia, which specializes in language training, in particular courses to meet interoperability objectives for peace support operations, such as language requirements for air traffic control or CNN/BBC listening skills. A third example is the PfP training center in Austria, which offers courses such as Staff Officers Course for PSO and Military Police Course for PSO.

The selection of tasks is naturally driven by the demands of the assignment. Training is usually clustered into modules, and the modules are coupled to learning objectives. The courses are typically between one to three weeks in length, although some can require several months. The participants are assumed to possess adequate soldiering skills acquired in their home country, so

the training focus is on the mission-specific tasks. As with nearly all skills, however, once acquired they are subject to deterioration unless they are exercised shortly after the training.

Skill Decay. Regardless of the mission, soldiers and peacekeepers alike rely on three abilities as they attempt to perform their military tasks: (1) ability to retrieve from memory previously learned knowledge (job-related facts, rules, terminology, etc.); (2) ability to combine incoming information, evaluate a situation, and decide among alternative courses of action; and (3) ability to execute the chosen action or procedural step in a sufficiently skilled manner (Sabol & Wisher, 2001). Skill decay refers to the degradation in performance over time due to a lack of practice. It has been studied extensively, showing that large amounts of forgetting can occur naturally over periods as short as several hours or as long as many years (Wisher, Sabol, & Ellis, 1999). Models have been developed and empirically validated to predict skill decay of procedural, or step-by-step tasks (Hagman & Rose, 1983). Related to skill decay is the notion of knowledge decay, though the two are often, and erroneously, interchanged. Knowledge decay is surprisingly more stable, with an expected relative loss of approximately 15% to 20% during a full year (Conway, Cohen, & Stanhope, 1991; Semb & Ellis, 1994). The decay rates of procedural tasks, as illustrated in the study later, varies greatly. Such procedural tasks are commonly used in peacekeeping assignments.

AN APPLIED STUDY ON PREDICTING SKILL RETENTION

The U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences (ARI) examined the 27 tasks selected for training prior to deployment to Bosnia or Hungary as part of Operation Joint Endeavor (Wisher, Sabol, & Ozkaptan, 1996). The training was conducted at the U.S. Army 7th Training Command in Germany. The tasks were individual in nature. Each soldier needed to score a "Go" on the task (indicating successful performance) in order to proceed to the operation. The tasks were identified by the command as those being of highest importance to soldiers deploying to this particular peacekeeping operation.

All newly learned skills are subject to forgetting unless they are practiced periodically. There is thus a normal tendency over time for a decrease in the percentage of soldiers able to perform unpracticed tasks at the "Go" level. The rapidity of the decline in proficiency is dependent on use (or practice) after the original learning and on certain characteristics of the task itself. That is, the time course of forgetting for different tasks during periods of nonuse is predictable. The purpose of the analysis of the 27 tasks, then, was to offer predictions of skill decay. These predictions could then serve as the basis for scheduling sustainment training during the deployment, especially for tasks that are critical and easily forgotten.

The source of the predictions is an empirically based model developed by ARI researchers and endorsed by the Army Training Board. The basis for the model, derived from numerous field studies, is described by Hagman and Rose (1983). Essentially, predictions can be derived through structured interviews with subject matter experts who rate 10 key characteristics of each task as described here.

Data Collection Methodology

Data were collected through structured interviews with eight instructors from the 7th Army Training Center. Each instructor was responsible for a particular task area, and each task area had between two and seven tasks. The instructors were very familiar with the tasks, having taught them daily for more than a month. Each interview took between 20 and 45 minutes, depending on the number of tasks examined.

Tasks were first discussed in general terms, and then a series of 10 questions were asked for each. The questions concerned these characteristics: (1) availability of a job/memory aid while performing the task; (2) quality of the job aid (if available); (3) number of steps to execute the task; (4) requirements for sequencing the steps; (5) built-in feedback for each step; (6) time limits; (7) mental processing demands; (8) number of facts, terms, and rules a soldier must know to perform the task; (9) difficulty of remembering these facts, terms, and rules; and (10) motor control demands (precision of finger, hand, and arm movements). A point-scoring system, derived from the model, was applied to the responses. The aggregate score yielded a basis for computing a task retention curve. (Note: The higher the level of task retention, the lower the degree of skill decay.) Examples of the predicted retention curves for a highly perishable task, "Extraction from Minefield," and a moderately perishable task, "Working in the Cold," are presented in Figure 6.1.

An instructive manner in which to present the findings is in terms of predicted retention after a two-month interval of nonuse. This interval is relative to the time a soldier last performed the task to standard, either during initial training, sustainment training, or actual field use. A two-month interval was selected because it is here that the divergence of retention rates between tasks begins to become pronounced. The predicted retention for each task, measured in terms of the percentage of soldiers who would perform the task successfully, is presented in Table 6.1. A *job aid* refers to a means to facilitate performance by minimizing the need for recall from memory, such as a label with start-up instructions attached to equipment.

Recommendations for Application

Several factors must be considered when applying these findings to the scheduling of refresher training. Obviously, the criticality of a task for a particular unit must be the primary consideration. If, for example, the "React to

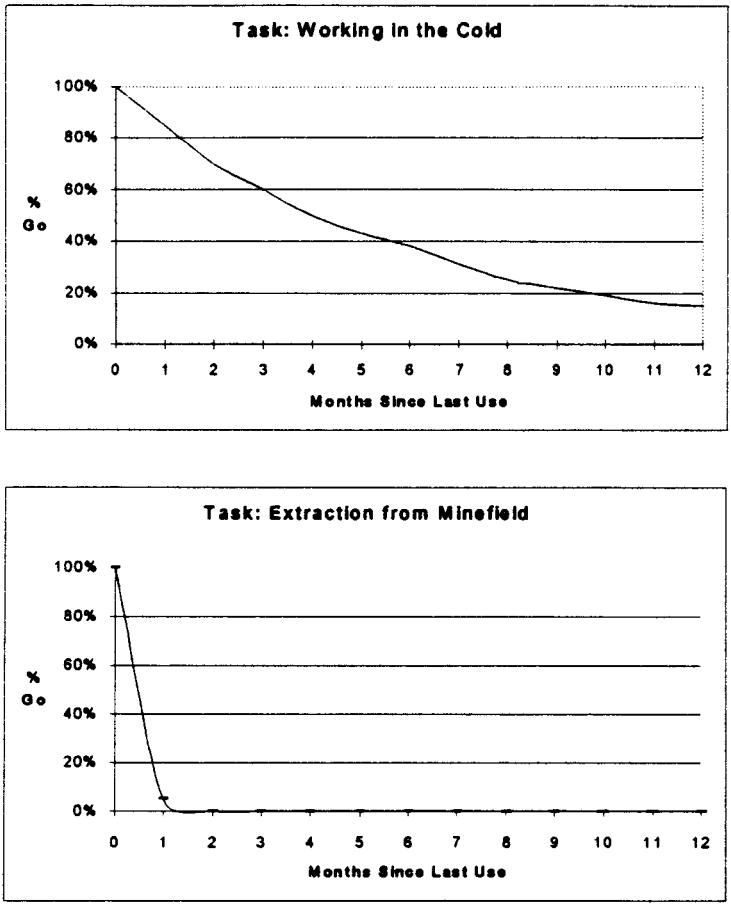

Figure 6.1 Predicted Decay of Two Tasks

Mines" task is judged as highly critical, it should be included in a sustainment-training schedule, even though it is predicted to be well retained. However, if a task such as "React to Media" is judged not to be highly critical for a unit, perhaps because of the unit's remote location, it may be a low priority for training, even though it is predicted to be only moderately retained.

Another consideration is frequency of use. Task retention becomes an issue after periods of nonuse. If, for example, tasks are being executed properly in the field regularly, there is little opportunity for them to decay. Patterns of field use vary across units and even within a particular unit, so the frequency-of-use factor must be determined cautiously. As the data suggest, retention of tasks can vary greatly after a period as short as two months. Also, because a

Table 6.1
Predicted Retention of Peacekeeping Tasks

RANKING OF TASK RETENTION
(Task ranked 1 is hardest to remember.)
%Go = percentage of soldiers predicted to perform the task at 'Go' level after two months of nonuse

Rank	Task	%Go
1	Extraction from Minefield	0%
2	React to Civilian on Battlefield	8%
3	React to Sniper	9%
4	Prevent Shock	18%
5	Carbon Monoxide Inhalation	28%
6	Apply Tourniquet	29%
7	React to Indirect Fire	30%
7	Winter Driving	30%
9	Vehicle Search	34%
10	Negotiation	36%
11	Rules of Engagement	42% (27%)
12	React to Media	54%
13	V Corps Convoy Mine Strike Drill	56%
14	Living in the Cold	62% (48%)
15	Identify/Detect Trip Wires	68%
17	Driving Postcheck	71% (44%)
17	Working in the Cold	71%
17	Identify/Detect Booby Traps	71%
19	Sleeping in the Cold	73%
20	Recognize/React to UXO	75%
21	Mine Detection	76%
21	Locate a Mine by Probing	76%
23	Driving Precheck	89% (62%)
24	Personal Search	90% (62%)
25	React to Mines	96% (68%)
26	Field Dressing/Pressure Dressing	98%
27	Indications of Mines/Body Traps	99% (84%)

Note: Tasks with two "Go" percentages have job aids; percentages in parentheses apply when job aids are not available.

task is predicted to be performed well does not guarantee a soldier will remember under what conditions or when it should be performed. The context of task performance also needs refreshing during sustainment training.

The recommendations summarized here and the predictions of skill retention from Figure 6.1 were captured onto a 4-by-6-inch laminated card and referred

to as the "Trainer's Guide for Refresher Training—Operation Joint Endeavor." These were distributed to units in the field of operation in Bosnia and Hungary.

AN APPLIED STUDY ON PREDEPLOYMENT TRAINING

Tasks related to peacekeeping operations are generally not the sole focus of predeployment training. Training on established combat and basic tasks continues, to a degree, throughout the predeployment period. Because many facets of normal military operations apply to peacekeeping operations, training to enhance the skills of a unit's primary mission should be a continuing feature of predeployment training. The following study illustrates several points: first, the identification of mission-specific peacekeeping tasks; second, details on the blending of these new tasks with soldiering tasks during a predeployment training; and third, the contrasting behavior of small units in the field in prioritizing their sustainment training activities in view of their differing follow-on missions. This applied study concerns the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) for the Sinai peninsula.

The MFO was created as a neutral organization to observe and report violations to the Egyptian-Israeli Treaty of Peace, 1979. As part of its contribution to the MFO, the United States has deployed an infantry battalion for six-month rotations to the Sinai continuously since 1982 (Segal, Furukawa, & Lindh, 1990). This battalion has the peacekeeping responsibility for an area of operation in the southern third of the Sinai, bordering the strategic Gulf of Aqaba and the Strait of Tiran. In 1995, for the first time, a rotation composed mostly of volunteers from the reserve component assumed the mission. Hereafter, this unit, comprising 80% reservists, is referred to as the *composite unit.*

The singular mission of this composite unit was the Sinai assignment. Unlike units rotating from the active component (AC) that were assigned the MFO mission, the composite unit did not need to adjust from a war-fighting mission to a peacekeeping operation because it was drawn from a multitude of units across the country. Nor did it need to reorient to a war-fighting mission afterward, because the unit was immediately deactivated. Deploying a newly formed composite unit to a stable peacekeeping operation has this attractive feature: no need to regear to a collective war-fighting capacity.

The expected degradation of war-fighting skills, those that are not applied or trained during a peacekeeping mission, has been recognized as a drawback to deploying active component units to such missions (Taws & Peters, 1995). The drawback comes from an immediate reduction in readiness to the battalion's parent division. The time needed to prepare (about three months), execute (six months), and then reorient to war fighting afterward (at least three months) adds up to at least a year of reduced readiness for the parent division. In contrast, a unit derived largely from reserve volunteers has much less of a negative impact on overall readiness. Because of its unique characteristics and lack of

drawdown to overall readiness, it is instructive to contrast the predeployment training activities of a composite unit to the predeployment phase of an AC unit rotation to the MFO mission. Note that there is no principled reason to expect that a concentration on executing peacekeeping skills will interfere with the execution of war-fighting skills. Rather, it is the lack of time to sustain war-fighting skills that leads to skill degradation, though this point may be debatable regarding tasks related to the restraint of force (e.g., shoot to miss).

Training Requirement

The composite unit was formed from reserve volunteers and regular army soldiers solely for peacekeeping operations in the Sinai (Phelps & Farr, 1996). The predeployment training activities spanned a period of 11 months. The training encompassed a variety of topics that included soldiering tasks and tasks unique to the demands of peacekeeping operations, such as the history and culture of the Sinai region, making detailed observations and reports, and becoming familiar with new and explicitly defined rules of engagement.

A key element of the MFO mission was to observe and report violations of the Egypt-Israel peace treaty. The soldiers were required not only to be able to recognize aircraft, ships, vehicles, license plates, and uniforms, but they also needed to be knowledgeable about standard reporting formats for the mission. Learning the individual tasks unique to the mission was critical in the predeployment training phase. A program to develop unit cohesion and sharpen leadership skills was another component of the predeployment preparation. Training on small-unit collective tasks—mainly squad level—was also conducted, in part to develop cohesion.

Predeployment Training Phases

The training concept called for dividing the predeployment training into three phases. These phases were geared to the formation of the unit in three stages, beginning with key leaders and staff personnel, adding the leadership cadre, and finally the bulk of the junior enlisted personnel. A key document, the *MFO Pre-Deployment Training Management Plan*, assisted the unit's leadership in identifying the essential predeployment training requirements. It also advised the inclusion of some senior trainers in the reconnaissance to the Sinai, enabling them to better direct the predeployment training.

The plan identified 18 lessons, each specifying objectives, conditions, and standards for the training, as well as required equipment and a suggested conduct of training. Table 6.2 lists the 18 lesson names.

Throughout the predeployment training, the commander sought opportunities for team-building activities. Training on the mission-essential tasks was to be conducted primarily by squad leaders. One purpose for this was the early

development of small unit cohesion, which would presumably promote performance of the units during their deployment to the Sinai.

Training Phase 1

The goal of the initial phase was planning by the first five members to join the staff. The mission analysis was performed during this phase, and a mission-essential task list was established with associated collective and individual tasks. The primary outcome was the predeployment training guidance issued after 90 days.

Among the early objectives was a compilation of soldiering tasks, many considered common tasks, that would be trained to the leadership during Phase 2 and to the bulk of the unit during Phase 3. These tasks were segmented into three tiers. Each tier is further divided into blocks, most blocks comprising tasks from a common area, such as first aid. A tier comprises approximately 45 tasks. A sample of some of the soldiering tasks identified as critical to this particular peacekeeping mission is presented in Table 6.3.

Training Phase 2

This phase occurred over a 150-day period. The emphasis during this phase was to train the trainer on both soldiering tasks, which are commonly referred

Table 6.2
Predeployment Training Lessons

1. Introduction to the MFO	10. Use of force and firearms
2. Introduction to the Sinai	11. Survival
3. Field sites	12. Hygiene
4. Patrols	13. First aid
5. Observation	14. Vehicle drills
6. Recognition	15. Explosive ordnance disposal
7. Reporting procedures	16. Helicopter operations
8. Communications	17. Cooking
9. Threat assessment and defense measures	18. Generators

Table 6.3
Sample of Soldiering Tasks Trained during Predeployment

Determine grid coordinates	Identify terrain features on a map
Identify topographical symbols on a map	Locate an unknown point by resection
Prevent shock	Put on field dressing
Put on a tourniquet	Give first aid for burns
Guide a helicopter	Search and scan
Locate mines by visual means	Move under direct fire

to as *common tasks* in the U.S. Army, and MFO-specific tasks. During this phase, 213 soldiers were added to the unit, bringing the unit strength to 218.

The train-the-trainer process was conducted on the Tier 1 and Tier 2 tasks. Because the trainers were NCOs familiar with many of these tasks, the training was more a refresher course. In addition to the critical training areas, soldiers were also trained on topics such as guard duty, land navigation, radio-telephone operator procedures, civil disturbance, water safety, counterterrorism, military justice, and alcohol and drug abuse. The common task training, along with the land navigation course, was integrated into a four-day field training exercise.

Training Phase 3

The final phase occurred over a 99-day period. This final phase served as the bulk training period for the unit, because the majority of soldiers (an additional 352) joined the unit at the beginning of this phase, raising the unit strength to 570. This phase covered rifle marksmanship, common task training, squad training and patrolling, and MFO-specific tasks (e.g., Arabic phrases, aircraft identification) and MFO specialized tasks (field sanitation, generator operations, cooking). The third phase included an MFO site field training exercise. The culmination of the third phase was a certification exercise, followed by two weeks of block leave.

The training of soldiering tasks reflected in Table 6.3 required six weeks. Training was accomplished primarily at the squad level. A "crawl-walk-run" approach to training, that is, a level of instruction starting at an elementary level and progressing to a level of task performance conforming to the required conditions and standards, was adopted. Included in this six-week period were two weeks of squad training on collective tasks. Also included was a four-day patrolling exercise. The goal here was to train fire teams and squads in dismounted patrolling, such as conducting a local security patrol, and establishing temporary observation posts, activities that would be performed at the remote sites in the Sinai. Afterward, the concentrated training of MFO tasks (tasks 1–14 in Table 6.2) was conducted over a 10-day period, introducing the soldiers to the Sinai mission.

Sector Training and Certification

Squad sector training was conducted as a battalion-level field training exercise. The goal was for the battalion to execute the mission in the local training area as it would be executed in the Sinai. Posts were assembled to resemble the layouts of a remote site in the Sinai, either an observation post, a checkpoint, or a sector control center. During the occupation of sites, the squads trained for four days on specific MFO tasks that would be tested during the certification exercise the following week.

Eight critical MFO-specific tasks were evaluated during the certification exercise. Altogether, 535 soldiers were evaluated and certified. There was no set

limit on the number of attempts a soldier could make on a particular task, but the evaluators maintained established conditions and standards in qualifying a soldier as a "Go" for any particular task. Overall, soldiers performed extremely well, with 98% of the tasks being performed successfully on the first attempt.

Comparison to Active Component Unit

Predeployment Phase. An active component battalion assigned the Sinai mission on an earlier rotation was tracked in order to contrast its predeployment training with that of the composite unit. Because the AC unit was already intact, its predeployment training clearly differed from a composite unit. No personnel build-up phase was required, other than accessing some specialists into the unit, such as linguists. Rather, an abrupt shift from a war-fighting mission to a peacekeeping operation occurred. The MFO-specific skills described earlier obviously needed to be learned, so, of necessity, there was a period of intense training during the predeployment phase. Predeployment training began in earnest 111 days before departure (D-111) to the Sinai.

The initial week of MFO training consisted of blocks of leader and individual training, on tasks such as Arab customs and courtesies, rules of engagement, survival skills, and reporting procedures. The second week of training focused on squad leader training and validation, squad specialty training, and an exercise conducted at the simulation center on post. The overall goal was to provide squad leaders and the task force chain of command with the bigger picture of observing and reporting to either a sector control center or the tactical operations center.

A physical mock-up of an MFO site was completed on D-97. Predeployment training for squads continued through D-66. A field training exercise, during which squad validation was internally conducted, started on D-61. Squad validation was completed on D-46. General preparation and block leave for the advance party took place next. Final preparations were underway during this period, with the first main body departing on D day.

Soldiers' Assessment of Predeployment Training

Ratings of the adequacy of the predeployment training, from the soldiers' viewpoint, was accomplished through a pair of questions included in an ARI questionnaire related to leadership, motivation, and cohesion. Soldiers from the line squads of the composite unit and an active component unit rated the adequacy of their training for both MFO and soldiering tasks. The ratings were provided toward the end of their Sinai deployment, when they would best be able to reflect on the adequacy of training in light of their peacekeeping experiences. As shown in Figure 6.2, about half of each group thought there had been too much MFO task training, and only around 15% thought there had

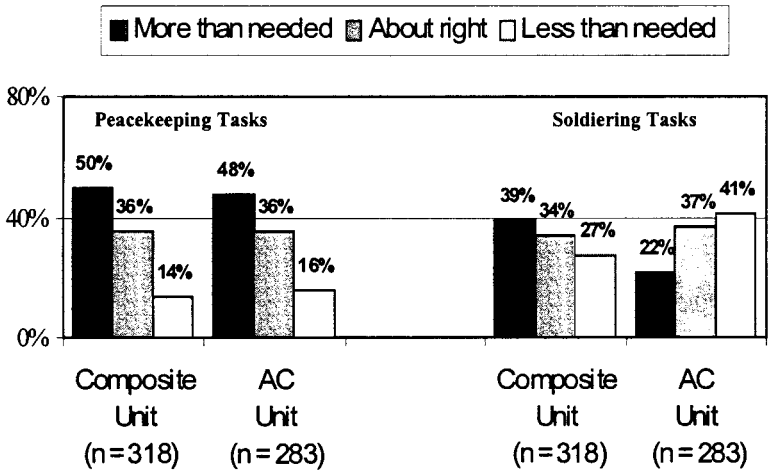

Figure 6.2 Soldier Rating of Predeployment Training

been less MFO training than needed. The pattern of ratings on training adequacy for MFO tasks, then, shows no difference between groups (chi square test for independence, $\chi^2 = 0.43$, ns).

A much different story emerges for the soldiering tasks, as shown in the right half of Figure 6.2. Here, there is a distinct difference in the rating patterns between the two groups ($\chi^2 = 23.2$, $p < .001$). For the composite unit, 39% believed the training on soldiering tasks was more than needed, compared to only 22% of the AC unit. One explanation for the difference can be the conventional orientation by the AC unit on their usual war-fighting mission, which certainly demands a high level of proficiency in soldiering skills. Even a temporary departure from this orientation while serving as peacekeepers may have induced a perception of inadequacy by these soldiers. It should be noted that upon return from the Sinai, an AC unit normally requires six months of reorientation training on soldiering and war-fighting skills to be considered mission ready.

AN APPLIED STUDY ON TRAINING WHILE DEPLOYED TO A PEACEKEEPING MISSION

Maintaining skills during a Sinai tour is important for members of all rotations, regardless of their follow-on assignments. It is useful, then, to examine the daily patterns of training that occurred during the execution of the MFO mission. Composite units are unlikely to have follow-on missions, simply because the personnel disperse to many separate units upon redeployment. This can prove advantageous in peacekeeping operations. For example, a composite unit can, without later penalty, emphasize the maintenance of peacekeeping

skills throughout the mission. Certain skills would be susceptible to significant decay unless used or retrained, as illustrated earlier in the predictions of skill decay for the Bosnia mission (see Figure 6.1). In contrast, an AC unit may, in anticipation of its follow-on mission, shift emphasis from peacekeeping tasks toward soldiering tasks at some point during the rotation. Balancing the training needs of the immediate mission against the need to maintain selected soldier skills is a significant judgment call for trainers at all levels, but especially at the squad level, where responsibility rests in the day-to-day training at remote sites. Here, the daily training patterns may reveal how this balance is managed.

During a unit's deployment to the Sinai, training continues on both peacekeeping and soldiering tasks. This training occurs at the remote sites during a typical three-week rotation and is generally conducted by the squad leader. The amount of training directed at collective war-fighting skills is restricted. Although there is limited training available for squad- and platoon-level tasks with access to a small arms range, the lack of an adequate maneuver area, the lack of time, the demands of other duties, and the treaty's requirement not to appear aggressive prohibits any significant training of collective tasks.

Training Patterns at Remote Sites

One consideration in deploying an active unit to a peacekeeping mission is the degree to which the individual soldiers' and overall unit's performance on essential war-fighting tasks degrade after a period of little or no use. In anticipation of this skill deterioration, an AC unit may increase the frequency of soldiering tasks in the training schedule at some point during the rotation. The situation may be different for a composite unit. Such units could concentrate equally on peacekeeping and soldiering tasks, because upon redeployment they would not regroup as a unit, let alone prepare as a unit for a war-fighting mission.

Squads rotated to remote sites have the continuing requirement to train on individual tasks, both MFO-specific and soldiering tasks, generally at the call of the squad leader. Squad leaders are required to schedule daily training activities, which typically involve three or four individual tasks. A clear-cut way to document any differences is by tracking the daily training activities of squads while at the remote sites. These activities reflect both training guidance from the unit's leadership and the squad leader's sense of the tasks on which training is needed. By categorizing the tasks selected for training as either peacekeeping or soldiering, the cumulative patterns of training can be analyzed for trends within a rotation and between rotations from different units.

Methodology

Special squad training booklets were developed by ARI and distributed to all squad leaders. Instructions on their use were given on the front page of the

booklet. Six weeks into the rotation, ARI researchers met with each squad leader to encourage the accurate recording of daily training schedules.

For the AC unit, the analyses were derived from the recording of 4,622 tasks trained at remote sites during the first 20 weeks of training. Interestingly, the number of times that peacekeeping (or MFO) tasks were trained, 2,301, nearly equaled the number of times soldiering tasks were trained: 2,321. Figure 6.3 charts these data in terms of tasks trained per day, beginning with D day (arrival in the Sinai) and incremented by seven-day intervals, so the "D" point on the abscissa represents training during the first week, "D + 7" represents training during the second week, and so on. Each point represents the average number of peacekeeping or soldiering tasks trained during that week. Clearly, there is an emphasis on training MFO tasks during the first four weeks, then a convergence through D + 105 (week 16), then a divergence toward soldiering tasks out to week D + 133 (week 20), when data collection discontinued. Apparently, the active component unit was concentrating training time on the peacekeeping tasks early and then gradually shifted to soldiering tasks as they neared their redeployment date.

Comparison to the Composite Unit

The same squad training booklets were provided to the squad leaders of the composite unit. Data could be recorded only from D + 35 through D + 126, so the between-rotation comparison is restricted to this period. The data obtained were sampled from the remote sites in about the same proportion from the three types of remote sites—sector control, observation post, and check point—allowing an acceptable comparison to be made between the composite and AC units.

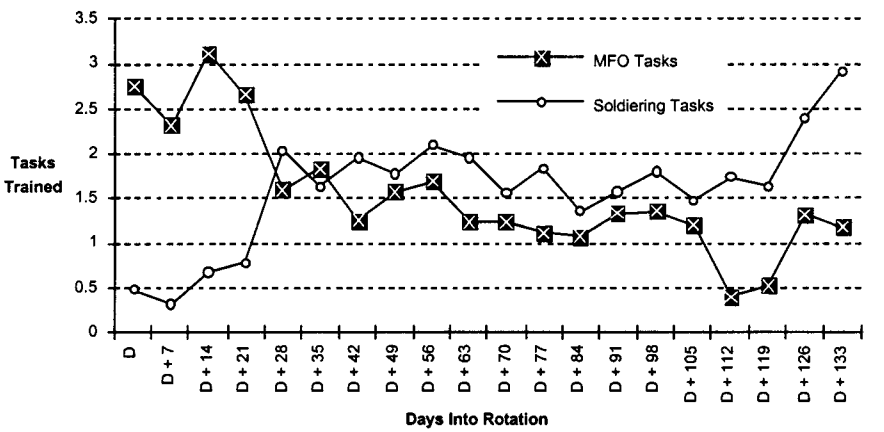

Figure 6.3 Tasks Trained on Daily Basis—Active Component Unit

The comparison data are presented in Figure 6.4. To illustrate an effect we believe is revealing, the AC unit data from Figure 6.3 have been replotted in the following manner: rather than charting the number of MFO or soldiering tasks, we have combined those measures into a single measure. Specifically, we computed and plotted the proportion of tasks trained that were MFO, so if 20 soldiering and 80 MFO tasks were taught during a week, the value 80% was plotted. All available data points are plotted in Figure 6.4. A linear trend line (depicted as a dashed line) is superimposed over the data points for both the reserved unit and the AC unit. The statistical analysis of these trends, however, was restricted to the D+35 through D+126 time period, because both units furnished data for comparison during this period.

These data (D+35 through D+120) were analyzed through a moderated regression analysis with two variables (time and unit) and an interaction (time by unit). The first step of the regression shows that as time increases, there is not a significant relationship of the ratio of MFO tasks taken together ($t = 0.35$, $p = 0.73$). Step 2 of the regression shows a significant difference in the ratio of MFO tasks trained between the two units ($t = 7.26$, $p < .001$). Finally, the third step shows the interaction of time and unit to be significant ($t = 2.57$, $p = 0.02$), indicating that the slopes of patterns in training differ between the two units. This is graphically illustrated with the divergence of the linear trend lines (depicted as dashed lines in Figure 6.4). This then establishes that the training patterns at the remote sites do differ between the two units, with the active component favoring soldiering tasks as the six-month mission progresses to completion.

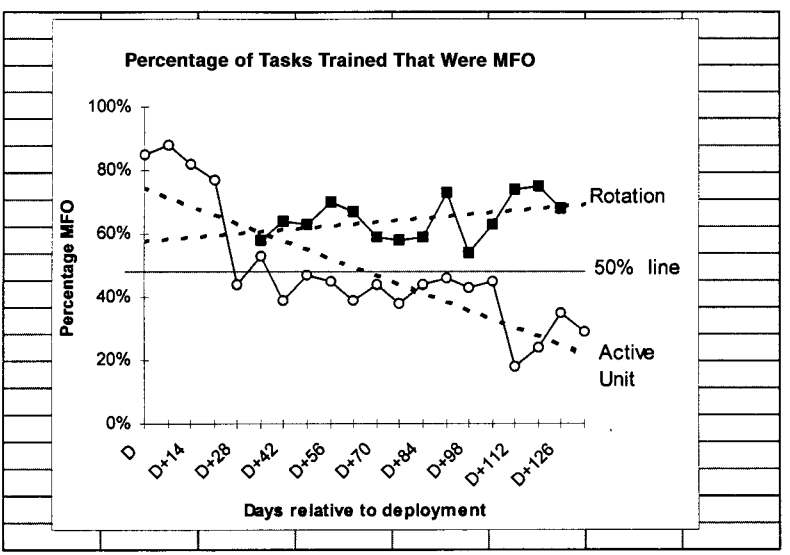

Figure 6.4 Trends in Training Peacekeeping Tasks at Remote Sites

SUMMARY AND FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

At the request of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Peacekeeping and Peace-Enforcement Policy, the DOD Inspector General formed a study team to review specialized training for peacekeeping operations (DOD Inspector General, 1994). The study concluded that peace operations had a different requirement for knowledge, skills, attitude, and environmental considerations than war fighting. At the same time, the study also concluded that a well-trained, disciplined force was a fundamental prerequisite for conducting peacekeeping operations.

The identification of specialized tasks for peacekeeping operations has been reviewed. As one would expect, it is clearly driven by the requirements of the mission. For example, the "Working in the Cold" task included in the predeployment training for Bosnia is inappropriate for the predeployment training for the Sinai mission. The majority of specialized peacekeeping tasks examined here are procedural (step by step) in nature. Thus the predicted deterioration of peacekeeping skills can be derived from an existing analytic model, and recommendations can be provided to trainers for selecting tasks for sustainment training.

The AC unit had a clear trend toward favoring soldiering tasks for refresher training during the peacekeeping mission. The concentrated training of peacekeeping tasks for the first four weeks of the rotation coupled with the soldiers' perceptions that the MFO training during the predeployment phase was more than adequate may have been sufficient preparation for the AC unit to execute the mission. Although they continued to sustain peacekeeping tasks, through training and of course through practice on the job, the unit favored training soldiering tasks toward the end of the rotation. What is important here is the relative pattern: as time progressed, the contrasting trend of the composite unit was a steady ratio of peacekeeping to soldiering tasks.

As described in the introduction to this chapter, an inherent drawback to deploying an AC unit to any peacekeeping environment is the reduction in readiness of the parent division. For the Sinai mission, this reduction extends for at least one year. Our data indicate that not only does an AC unit view their predeployment training of soldiering tasks as being less than needed (41% vs. 27%; see Figure 6.2), they also gear toward soldiering tasks as the mission progresses. Perhaps the unit leadership is sympathetic to their primary mission as war-fighters rather than their temporary mission as peacekeepers. This argument would not extend to a specially formed unit of reserve volunteers, who disperse to many units upon redeployment. Another possibility is perhaps the AC unit perceives the peacekeeping mission as being more threatening than the composite unit, thus needing to stay sharp on soldiering skills. Whatever the reasons, there is a clear difference between units in both their perceptions and their within-mission training preferences.

Although both peacekeeping and soldiering skills, as defined in this chapter, appear to deteriorate because of lack of training, there are other ways in which

soldier skills may in fact be enhanced by the deployment experience. Specifically, decision making and leadership may be developed in ways unique to the deployment experience because of the independence and responsibility frequently required of small teams on peacekeeping deployments in sector. These kinds of skills may not be assessed by the kind of metric developed in the training environment, but they remain, nevertheless, a key component of military performance.

Peacekeeping is a multifaceted mission that requires a balance of soldiering tasks and mission-specific peacekeeping tasks. Not only must these tasks be identified during a planning process and trained during a predeployment phase, they must also be maintained during the mission. The natural deterioration of these tasks needs to be recognized, and refresher training that takes into account the criticality, recency of use, and predicted retention of these tasks can underpin optimal performance. To add to the claim of Kutter (1986) regarding the importance of predeployment training, skills must continue to be maintained throughout a peacekeeping operation.

NOTE

The views and opinions expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of the Department of Army or the U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences.

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14. ABSTRACT

Three applied studies are reported, associated with two peacekeeping missions involving US troops. The first concerns identifying peacekeeping tasks and predicting their decay based on an empirically derived analytic model. Here, the tasks relate to a peacekeeping mission to Bosnia. The second study concerns the identification of tasks and the predeployment training patterns of two units assigned during separate rotations to the Multinational Force and Observers mission in the Sinai. One unit was drawn from the regular army and represented the active component of the US Army, whereas the other was composed primarily of reserve-component soldiers. The third study, which further examined the same two units, concerns the comparative behavior of these units in sustaining proficiency on both peacekeeping and war-fighting tasks during their deployment. It is concluded that a well-trained, disciplined force was a fundamental prerequisite for conducting peacekeeping operations. Although both peacekeeping and soldiering skills, as defined in this chapter, appear to deteriorate because of lack of training, there are other ways in which soldier skills may in fact be enhanced by the deployment experience, which the chapter describes.

15. SUBJECT TERMS
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