

Running Head: MILITARY LEADERS MUST STUDY MILITARY HISTORY

It's imperative for military
professionals to study military history

MSG Rodolfo Beltran III

United States Army Sergeants Major Academy

Base Group: 12

SGM Jamieson, Ron

18 March 2008

Abstract

It's imperative for military leaders at all levels to take time and study military history. In this paper we will discuss why it's important to understand past tactics, techniques and procedures, and how they can evolve into contemporary tactics and procedures. The importance for a leader to analyze the battlefield, and how competent, and confident leaders, can influence outcomes during combat operations.

It's imperative for military
professionals to study military history

It's imperative for military leaders at all levels to take time and study military history. Past experiences and vignettes from historical combat operations can assist leaders in making critical operational decisions, and in properly training their Soldiers for future combat operations. We will take a look why it's important for leaders to study past and present tactics, the importance of analyzing future combat operations, and how different leadership styles can have an impact on a battlefield.

Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (TTPs)

All military organizations throughout the world have some form of set procedures on how to conduct military operations, from the planning phase to the execution phase. Without some form of procedures to rely on, military organizations can face disastrous consequences on a battlefield. All services within the United States (U.S.) military rely on tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs). Without TTPs, military operations would be chaotic and disastrous.

Leaders at all levels must understand the importance for studying and knowing historical TTPs for past war s combat operations, both for the U.S. military and enemy force's the U.S. has fought against. TTPs change from war to war because of the different terrains battles are fought on, and weapon systems becoming more lethal on the battlefield. Back in time, who would have thought of battles being fought in cities amongst the populace like in Iraq.

During the Revolutionary and U.S. Civil War, battles were fought with units lined up in open fields, and volleys of fire from muskets with a maximum effective range between one hundred and two hundred yards.

Trench warfare was the primary TTP during World War I (WWI), where miles and miles of trenches were filled with Soldiers and weapon systems. Tanks and vehicles were introduced during the latter part of the war, causing leaders to change their TTPs. World War II (WWII) and the Korean War introduced the synchronization of air, land, and sea combat operations. Leaders led company and platoon size elements on the battlefield. In the Vietnam War the TTPs were again changed to accommodate platoon and squad size combat operations to counter the TTPs the Vietcong were utilizing. Current military operations incorporate high technological computers, weapon systems, and equipment on the battlefield which has forced leaders to modify TTPs, and continuously have to modify them because our enemy changes theirs.

It is extremely important leaders understand current and past TTPs to enhance their capability to make quick and decisive decisions during a combat operation. One must ask themselves where leaders can refer to learn about the past and current TTPs? This would be historical current field manuals within the military structure.

The first field manual within the U.S. military was the "Blue Book", written by Inspector General Friedrich von Steuben during the early days of the American Revolution. This manual contained procedures for drilling. "The Abstract of Infantry Tactics", was the first tactical field manual published in 1829 which provide guidance both to the officers and noncommissioned officers. The tactical field manual primarily taught at West Point was the "Infantry Tactics, or rules for the exercise and maneuver of the United States Infantry", written by General Winfield Scott. The TTPs within this manual were utilized during the Civil War by both Armies along with medical and engineer field manuals.

Current field manuals contain updated TTPs to assist leaders in planning and executing all facets of military operations at all levels. Reading historical field manuals, leaders can surmise TTPs have evolved from old ones and can be utilized if the same scenario presents itself. It's important military leaders understand the current TTPs, but can diversify themselves by reading historical TTPs.

Mission analysis; Mission, Enemy, Time, Troops, Terrain, Civilians (METT-TC)

Prior to conducting any military operations, a leader must conduct a mission analysis to ensure mission accomplishment. It's imperative current and future leaders understand the importance of carrying out this step after receiving a mission statement from higher headquarters, just like leaders did in the past. Let's take a look at how mission analysis benefited the leaders during the Vietnam War and during Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF).

During the Vietnam War, U.S. military leaders conducted thorough mission analysis prior to conducting any military operation. Leaders at all levels from squad leader to a division commander utilized METT-T. A leader would ensure they understood the mission, their commander's intent. They would then analyze the courses of action the enemy would probably throw at them during an engagement, which would set primary TTPs and contingencies. Leaders would take into account when the military operation would take place and how long it would take for mission success. A leader would then take a look at his combat strength to ensure he had enough troops to accomplish the mission, and analyze the terrain to ensure his men could negotiate it. He would also ensure his weapons systems had the appropriate fields of fire during contact with enemy.

Prior to invading Iraq during OIF I in the year 2003, leaders who were leading their units into combat researched and reviewed the TTPs of the Iraqi Republican Guard the U.S. faced during Desert Storm. They also studied the terrain they would be operating in, both rural and urban. One lesson the U.S. Army learned was the handling of civilians during combat operations with the enemy. They took in consideration to limit collateral damage while conducting military operations in a urban environment. All leaders in OIF and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) understand the importance for conducting mission analysis prior to conducting any military operation just like their predecessors in past combat operations.

Different styles of leadership in combat

Leadership amidst chaos on a battlefield can have favorable results; a sign of a weak leader can lead to disaster. Leaders of today must take the time to study leaders of the past, to understand their leadership dimensions and attributes, both weak and strong. Two leaders of the past that served this nation well were Lieutenant General Jackson, Thomas (Stonewall Jackson), and Lieutenant General Moore, Hal.

As a General of the Confederate Army, Stonewall Jackson was revered by all Confederate commanders. Leaders of today can evaluate his tactical decisions which were impeccable and led to many victories on the battlefield against the Union Army. One can also evaluate Stonewall Jackson's leadership dimensions and attributes, which could mold one's leadership style. As any leader he had some faults, the major one was his lack of mentorship towards his subordinate officers. He stifled their leadership and did not allow any latitude to lead. This affected his unit once he died from a fatal gunshot by his own men upon returning to his front lines, after a completion of a reconnoiter.

As a leader with the U.S. Army, Lieutenant General Moore also displayed outstanding leadership dimensions and attributes as a Lieutenant Colonel during the battle of la Drang, Vietnam. His unit, the 1st battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, landed in the la Drang Valley, adjacent to 4,000 Vietnamese Soldiers who surround his unit of 400 men, and fought for two days. The contributing factor for his successful decision making process during the combat experience, was the understanding of his enemies TTPs, which he studied prior to arriving in Vietnam. Another strength Lieutenant General Moore displayed was his mentorship towards his subordinate officers. He taught his officers to operate as decentralized units. These two leaders studied tactics extensively while one studied the enemies past TTPs resulting in defeating a superior force.

Conclusion

It's imperative for all leaders to study military history. Leaders should set training aside to study a unit's history, and the past leaders who have demonstrated excellent leadership dimensions and attributes. Historical military operations can provide a world of knowledge to one who can decipher the tactics for both forces engaged in combat, along with the leaders that led their units. This knowledge will increase a leader's capability to make quick sound decisions while engaged in combat and ensure he or she can meet the challenges that lie ahead.