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Actionable Intelligence 1

**ACTIONABLE INTELLIGENCE THROUGH HUMAN INTERACTION**

**Actionable Intelligence Through Human Interaction**

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This paper starts with a good premise but the execution does not support it. The Upton example mentions tactical intelligence but the tank destroyer example doesn't address tactical intelligence. The historical consensus is that tank destroyers were unsuccessful, and that is why they disappeared at the end of WWII.

well written, sparse documentation

**Abstract**

Throughout American military history, a controlling influence exists that establishes success or failure. Military intelligence demonstrates over and over again that even the best, most accurate information is useless if received too late. Strangely enough, improvements in technology have not overcome good actionable human intelligence collection as the best pathway to success. Technology improves our ability but past conflicts demonstrate personal human interaction as the most effective resource for intelligence collection.

## ACTIONABLE INTELLIGENCE THROUGH HUMAN INTERACTION

**BROAD TOPIC:** “Using two examples covered in H100, analyze the efficacy of various techniques used by military units to obtain actionable intelligence in order to achieve mission success. What factors have proved over time to be the greatest obstacles to obtaining actionable intelligence? In your analysis, be sure to address what techniques appear to be most favored by military forces- and why. How effective have such techniques been in the past and how effective do you believe they will be in the near future? In your conclusion, identify the techniques you believe will best help U.S. Soldiers obtain actionable intelligence in the contemporary operating environment.”

**THESIS:** Technology improves our ability but past conflicts demonstrate personal human interaction as the most effective resource for intelligence collection.

Since the beginnings of recorded history, men have been at war. It is an almost inescapable fact that conflicting ideologies will lead to conflict amongst their believers as well. With any profession, experts surface due to their ability to succeed. The profession of arms is no different. From the depths of time, these experts all agree. In order to defeat an enemy, it is paramount that you know more about your foe than he knows about you. This intelligence has many times led directly to victory or defeat. Due to its importance, many techniques have been developed to collect it. Even with all our current technology, however, there is one technique that proves its merit over and over again. Technology improves our ability but past conflicts demonstrate personal human interaction as the most effective resource for intelligence collection.

*source?*

Although there are examples that prove this thesis throughout world history, I will concentrate on the American military experience. Primarily, examples will be taken from

the American Civil War and World War II. Intelligence gathering during these events is directly linked to success or failure and there are prime examples of this in both these events. These examples are linked by one common bond, regardless of time period. That bond is the involvement of human beings in the gathering process. Though technology allows amazing evolution in the process, the human is still the most important facet of collection. Only the human can use wit and understanding to skillfully predict an enemy's weaknesses in order to dominate them. No machine can really empathize and the day they do we may have a new enemy for all mankind. Our young country's finest military leaders, like the Civil War hero General Emory Upton, realized this and strived from early days to incorporate it into every operation .

#### General Emory Upton and Intelligence in the Civil War

General Emory Upton was an 1861 graduate of the United States Military Academy (Cohen, 1995, p. 6). He was thrown directly into the maelstrom of the American Civil War where success meant survival and failure meant death. At the tender age of 21, he learned how to fight and win in the bloodiest conflict in American history. Never very political, General Upton had little respect for his civilian leaders. He thought their involvement was not based on their concern with how to win the war but instead, in how to further their own personal interests (Cohen, 1995, p. 2). Combat leadership could only be successful, in Upton's opinion, from the ground level, in and amongst the men who did the fighting.

These men were, for the most part, completely loyal to General Upton. He had the uncanny ability to think "outside the box" in modern parlance. Upton was one of the few leaders of the time who could understand how developments in modern weaponry and

warfare could and would affect tactics and strategy. Techniques of battle and the leaders who used them would have to adapt to these simultaneous developments in order to succeed on the battlefield. More had to be understood about the arenas in which they fought. General Upton understood that knowledge was indeed power.

It is a true testament to the men of the era and their toughness when you consider over half a million Soldiers lost their lives in the struggle between the states. What irritated General Upton the most was how needless many of these losses were. So much sorrow could have been avoided by simple attention to two things. The first was a standing Army in existence rather than state volunteer militias. Upton complained about what we as Soldiers have seen happen over and over again. At the end of every conflict, there is always a massive drawdown that leaves our national Army as a skeleton. This was its state at the beginning of the Civil War and the reason the Federal government could not quickly put down an insurrection (Cohen, 1995, p. 8). The second thing was intelligence gathering.

The United States lost massive numbers of its best young men on both sides of the Mason-Dixon line. They fell in doomed attacks and tactical blunders by Generals who gave no attention to analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of their foes. Even when some intelligence was gathered through the use of maps and troop strength analysis, many times this was ignored and men were figuratively poured into the meat grinder of charging against earthworks and trenches. The new weaponry pounded these men into the mud and General Upton made public remarks often about the ineptness of his commanders and their inability to synthesize data given to them from observers on high (Barry, 1918, p. 2). Upton knew a better way.

Emory Upton used contacts in the local area as well as his own men to go out and proactively gather information on enemy disposition. By gathering this information, he was able to make a better plan, at least for the men in his command. His habitual success ensured he would be used time and time again to pioneer new tactics for fighting on a (battlefield devoid of flintlocks) (Barry, 1918, p. 2). When he was assigned the task of attacking an entrenched defense with troops in column at the Bloody Angle, he didn't just send his men onto the bayonets of the Confederate Army. He used human intelligence obtained by human eyes and ears to first decide where to breach the trench and then how to press the attack for optimum success (Brown, 1953, p. 127). *Petersburg?*

The breach was a complete success but General Upton had to call back his men because of the sheer confusion of his higher leadership <sup>caused by the successful</sup> ~~at the column attack success~~. They did not know how to fully press the advantage so the Union forces that broke the Confederate line could be supported in depth. Nonetheless, the attack was a complete success and a great example of using the human intelligence of determining the weak point in his enemy's defenses to multiply an Army's chances of success. General Upton was ahead of both his foes and allies in his appreciation for intelligence with regards to timing and vulnerability and continued to champion collection of it throughout his career. His writings were published by the Army in 1904. By that time, many of the reforms he championed had come to be, including a standing Army that possessed a permanent branch for human interaction intelligence gathering, the Military Information Division (MID) (Tidd, 2008, p. 9).

The MID developed into agencies that continued to gather tactical knowledge to be used to defeat our enemies throughout the First World War. With the reemergence of the

German Army and rise of the Nazi party in Germany from 1923-1939, war was once again on the horizon that would affect the entire planet's population. Germany, Italy, and Japan used new technologies and the German strategy of "Blitzkrieg" was especially effective. Blitzkreig (German for Lightning War), emphasized the use of tanks and other motorized armor assets to quickly overcome enemy defenses by superior maneuver capability (Bushong, 2005, p. 24). All the world's major armies were examining the concepts of mechanized warfare but the Germans put it into action first thus ~~causing~~<sup>forcing</sup> the Allies to find a way to combat it (Bushong, 2005, p. 25). More than ever, accurate intelligence was needed to fight this threat on both the strategic and tactical levels. One development to stop this armored threat was the advent of tank destroyer battalions which would see combat for the United States in the early years of US involvement in World War II. Their success or failure depended on how they used intelligence to fight their more powerful foe.

### Tank Destroyers in World War II

To combat the threat placed on the battlefield by German tanks, specialized units were created with specific missions of tank destruction. They were meant to be elite units that had at their disposal the most modern tools of warfare (War Department, 1944, p. 52). One of these tools was new means of collecting information on the enemy. The world was different from the Civil War. Developing technologies existed like airplanes and radios that hadn't existed in Upton's day. Aerial reconnaissance and radio intercept added new dimensions to a commander's view of his enemy. This was especially important to the Tank Destroyer battalions. They were expected to find the enemy and hold position in the face of his assault as <sup>Am?</sup>(their) weapons were more effective at close range (War Department, 1944, p. 5). Anything that could be used to minimize exposure to a Panzer tank's main gun

was a benefit and added to the survivability of a Tank Destroyer. Intelligence was one such tool and it's most accurate depiction came from human eyes.

A large section of the 1942 and 1944 Tank Destroyer manuals were devoted to the tactics, techniques, and procedures of reconnaissance elements (War Department, 1944, pp. 51-76). These reconnaissance units were tasked with finding the enemy forces through primarily clandestine methods but if necessary through fire, maneuver, and report.

Airplanes and radar could be used but nothing was as effective as Soldiers on the ground with their eyes on likely enemy positions and constant interaction with local populace.

Skillful manipulating<sup>on</sup> of these local relationships could yield a treasure trove of information with which to fight Germans. Attacking was their intent but sometimes that wasn't the best use of their assets (War Department, 1944, p. 2).

Eventually, tank destroyers would not be units unto themselves. By the end of World War II, almost all assets had been reassigned as attachments to Infantry and Armor organizations to bolster defensive strength (Lamont, 1998, p. 43). It seems that the battalions just did not possess the maneuverability to keep up with the intelligence gathered by their organic reconnaissance assets. This should not be taken as a downfall; on the contrary, it bolsters the reputation of tank destroyer elements immensely.

Source?

Due to their difficult mission of seek and destroy, human intelligence again came to the forefront of warfare. Never before had the importance of reconnaissance been so widely studied and developed. This development aided all combat units, not just tank destroyers, and proved once again how important the human element was in gathering actionable intelligence. These battalions survived throughout the war but dissolved into the

other branches in 1946. With this combination, the techniques developed in armored reconnaissance also became part of these other branches as well.

### Conclusion

Whether it is armored reconnaissance, observers with a spyglass or personable men interacting with the local populace, the most successful techniques of intelligence gathering have always been done by humans themselves. No computer or machine can analyze and develop ideas like the human brain. Using this tool to make “Every Soldier a sensor” will continue to provide our forces the best intelligence with which to develop operations. History shows this to be true and this trend will continue. The 2008 United States Army Posture Statement requires all Soldiers to understand and implement the concept of ES2 or “Every Soldier is a Sensor”. As the current war shows, in agreement with conflicts of 65 and 145 years ago, the single most important key to success in battle is to know more about your enemy than he knows about you. Also shown is the fact that the best way to get this knowledge is through the eyes, ears, and nose of a human being.

*Source not  
in References*

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