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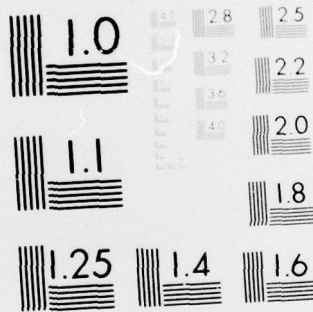
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Research Memorandum 64-3

**SELECTION AND ASSIGNMENT OF
COMBAT AND SPECIAL WARFARE PERSONNEL**

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Combat Selection

9 Research Memorandum 64-3

6 SELECTION AND ASSIGNMENT OF COMBAT AND SPECIAL WARFARE PERSONNEL

10 Francis F. Medland

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SELECTION AND ASSIGNMENT OF COMBAT AND SPECIAL WARFARE PERSONNEL

The COMBAT SELECTION Task conducts research to improve the means of selecting enlisted men who possess the qualities required for effective combat performance, with a special view to future warfare. Currently, attention is directed primarily toward a related problem, the reduction of attrition in Special Forces training and improved assignment of trained special warfare personnel.

Research on problems of Special Forces personnel had been conducted under a separate task through FY 1960, when research to develop a selection battery was completed and the Task closed out. Later, however, the Army's emphasis on limited warfare brought about a requirement for additional research on Special Forces selection problems. As a consequence, the Combat Selection subtasks have been subordinated to the more immediate human factors problems of the Special Forces.

The present report first presents a brief statement of past accomplishments in combat selection. The second part of the report describes current research designed to improve the selection and utilization of Special Forces personnel.

RESEARCH ON SELECTION AND ASSIGNMENT IN COMBAT FORCES

The combat arms share requirements for talent with other arms and services, particularly the technical services. Overall improvement in the quality of assigned personnel is therefore sought by developing means of identifying a larger number of men with potential for making good combat soldiers, particularly men whose fighter potential differentiates them from other men of generally high caliber.

As a result of research beginning in 1949, two new measures were developed and introduced into the Army Classification Battery (ACB) as a basis for classification to the combat arms. The Classification Inventory, a personality questionnaire, is a component of the Infantry Combat Aptitude Area (IN); the General Information Test, which samples knowledge of masculine-type outdoor activities obtainable typically through participation, forms a part of the Artillery, Armor, Engineer Combat Aptitude Area (AE). Subsequent research under the COMBAT SELECTION Task was designed to supplement these two tests as a means of improving the differential identification of men with adequate combat potential. A set of instruments, in addition to those now in the ACB, has been developed to further the Army's capability in identifying personnel who will be effective in combat. To date, despite extended research, no wholly suitable situation has arisen permitting an appropriate empirical check on the validity of these instruments. However, the measures will be validated when an appropriate criterion situation is found.

RESEARCH ON HUMAN FACTORS PROBLEMS IN SPECIAL FORCES

THE ENLISTED PROGRAM

Enlisted input to special forces comes from airborne qualified volunteers. Upon assignment to Special Forces, the enlisted man must qualify in one of the five basic MOS skills as well as in the specific and relatively unique skills required in Special Forces operations. Attrition has been high in the Special Forces training program--ranging as high as 70% in the total training cycle. In the MOS phase of training alone, attrition has ranged from about 20% in the Weapons MOS to about 55% in the Medical MOS.

Under APRO's SPECIAL FORCES Task completed early in 1961, a selection battery was developed and validated against success in Special Forces training. The Special Forces Selection Battery was officially implemented in 1961^{1/}. However, there was reluctance on the part of implementing officials to apply a research-determined cutting score on the grounds that quotas could not be met if any significant number of applicants were screened out. By late 1961, when the strength of Special Forces was substantially increased, the rate of attrition during early phases of training at the Special Warfare Center had climbed to about 70 percent. Based on this situation, the Special Warfare Center requested that the U. S. Army Personnel Research Office undertake research to increase the applicant pool, to tighten up the screening procedures, and consequently to reduce attrition from the training course.

THE SPECIAL FORCES SELECTION BATTERY--DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION

The selection battery which became operational in 1961 consisted of four measures which in combination provide a means of effectively screening out volunteers who are not likely to succeed in Special Forces training. Components of the battery were established on the basis of studies in which ten experimental measures, plus current tests and aptitude area composites of the Army Classification Battery, were validated against a criterion measures of performance in field exercises. The tests were administered to a sample of 250 trainees. Upon completion of the basic course, the trainees were required to demonstrate their proficiency in nine principal areas of the training. Score on the following nine performance tests constituted the criterion measure:

^{1/} DA Circular 611-41, Implementation of Special Forces Selection Battery, 13 July 1961, and AR 614-62, Selection and Assignment of Personnel to Special Forces Organizations, 21 August 1961 provide for the use of the Battery but do not provide for application of a cutting score.

Weapons. Assembly, disassembly, and use of infantry weapons.

Communications. Using a transceiver to open a communications net, transmit a message, receive a message, and close down a communications net.

First Aid. Application of proper procedures to treat such conditions as gunshot wounds, drownings, and other accidents.

Survival. Demonstration of proper methods of living off the land and general survival.

Land Navigation. Plotting a course on a map to include four points over a distance of 5 miles and to traverse the course on foot, touching each of the four points, within a certain period of time.

Demolition. Identification, selection, placement, priming, and detonation of various explosives.

Organization and Development of Guerrilla Forces. Demonstration of skill in application of basic principles of guerrilla warfare, using a sand-table to select proper locations and to lay out a complete guerrilla complex.

Aerial Resupply. Arranging for an aerial drop of supplies and equipment behind enemy lines, using a sand-table.

Guerrilla Tactics. Demonstrating how to plan and execute raids and ambushes, using a sand-table.

Three of the experimental tests were found to be good predictors of performance at the end of training.

Special Forces Suitability Inventory. A noncognitive measure designed to tap aspects of personality make-up hypothesized to be germane to suitability for Special Forces activity.

Critical Decisions Test. A measure of risk or chance-taking tendency. Few facts and limited time for deliberation characterize the test which is presented by tape recorder and test booklet.

Locations Test. A measure of ability to perceive space when actual terrain features are used as the visual stimuli. The examinee must orient himself in photographs.

The three measures are each relatively unique in the psychological dimensions measured. Used as a battery together with the Infantry Aptitude Area^{2/}, the tests resulted in a multiple correlation coefficient of $R = .63$, or $.55$ when corrected for shrinkage (Table 1).

Table 1

COMPONENTS OF THE FINAL SPECIAL FORCES SELECTION BATTERY

| Component | Correlation Coefficient |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Aptitude Area IN | .49 |
| Special Forces Suitability Inventory | .42 |
| Locations Test | .39 |
| Critical Decisions Test | .35 |
| R uncorrected | .63 |
| R corrected for shrinkage | .55 |

CURRENT SPECIAL FORCES MANPOWER PROBLEMS

When in 1961 the problem of attrition from Special Forces training became acute, it was evident that the research approach should be broadened to include aspects of manpower utilization. The psychological requirements of Special Forces operations, under conditions of limited warfare or full-scale war, are both extensive and relatively unique. Not only must Special Forces personnel be top-notch soldiers, they must also possess the maturity, self-discipline, and dedication required for their special mission. Training of Special Forces personnel is long and expensive. It is costly to the Army to discover, after a sizable block of training has been completed, that individuals are unsuitable to Special Forces assignment. It is also demoralizing to a trainee, who may be an otherwise good soldier, to find that he is not suitable for the assignment for which he is in training.

Present research planning is directed toward development of additional noncognitive measures which would supplement or replace components of the Special Forces Selection Battery providing increased effectiveness in selection for Special Forces training. As part of the present effort, the

^{2/}The Aptitude Area (IN) is a composite score based on two tests of the Army Classification Battery, Arithmetic Reasoning and Classification Inventory, used to identify men who have combat potential for the Infantry.

relationship between present operational measures (such as ACB scores, etc.) and attrition in MOS training will be studied with a view to improving the classification procedures presently used by the Special Warfare Center in making initial MOS assignments.

Concurrently, a more extended effort is being initiated to develop measures of personal effectiveness in post-training performance in pursuance of Special Warfare missions. This effort involves the development, in collaboration with personnel of the Special Warfare Center, of a systematic, uniform evaluation procedure for recording the quality of the individual's performance throughout his Special Forces career. Information as developed also will be utilized in the research program as a criterion against which selection measures can be validated. When validated, the objective measure can be used by the Special Warfare Center in the identification of unsuitable or marginal personnel, or for guidance in assignment and utilization decisions.

Peer ratings of performance in field training situations are used as interim criteria until the procedures outlined above can be implemented. In this connection, attention is being given to improved techniques for obtaining effective ratings.

THE OFFICER PROGRAM

Officers do not volunteer for a Special Warfare career, but are assigned to Special Warfare as a tour of duty. The assigned officers are sent to the Army Special Warfare School for a four-week "Special Warfare Staff Officer" course. Upon completion of the course, and prior to beginning their post-training assignment, they are assigned to an eight-week course in one of the Special Warfare areas: "Special Warfare Officer"; "Counterinsurgency Operations"; or "Psychological Operations Officer."

In the opinion of the staff of the Special Warfare Center, lack of objective selection standards for the assignment of officers to this duty has created attrition problems in the training program--and what is more serious, performance failures on special warfare missions. While no data are available on the frequency of inadequate performance, such failure is regarded as a significant problem.

Present planning for research on this problem includes:

1. Development of a continuous evaluation program for Special Warfare officers similar to that outlined for the enlisted program.
2. Identification of cognitive and noncognitive factors important to success in special warfare. Exploratory research has been initiated to develop measures of characteristics believed to be pertinent to success in the training program and in the field training exercises which simulate conditions of special warfare missions. A preliminary experimental test battery has been developed for administration to the Special Forces Officer class which begins

training in January 1964. This battery will be validated against training and field exercise criteria obtained twelve weeks later. On the basis of results obtained here, a revised selection test battery will be developed.

3. Investigation, with personnel of the Special Warfare Center, of feasibility of developing differential classification procedures for use in assigning officer input to one of the three Special Warfare specialties.

In addition to undertaking investigation of the selection problems for both officers and enlisted men, exploratory studies are planned on identification of personal and interpersonal factors related to effective group performance in Special Warfare activities. The objective of this research is to develop techniques for assigning personnel to specific detachment so as to maximize the effectiveness of the detachment in carrying out its assigned mission. This effort will draw on results of research outlined above in the development of selection procedures and evaluation methods and will include development of a system for recording and collating information considered pertinent in decisions on Special Warfare assignment.

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