STUDENT ESSAY

COHESION: THE VITAL INGREDIENT FOR SUCCESSFUL ARMY UNITS

BY

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Cohesion: The Vital Ingredient for Successful Army Units is an extremely will researched and written essay. It explores, in detail, the concept of cohesion and its impact on the effectiveness and efficiency of military units. In the introductory chapter, cohesion is defined through the use of extracts from several authors and examples from contemporary battles. After having laid a framework, the author in subsequent chapters, vivitly illustrated the application of cohesion to modern fighting forces, both in the peace and war time setting.

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Sources, both within the military and civilian academicians are balanced throughout to produce an easy reading document which captures and holds the attention of the reader. The writing style, informal and without wasted words, compliments the comprehensive research.

I recommend forwarding the essay to the Defense Technical Information Center. It should be mandatory reading for those who may question the Army's cohesion iniatives.

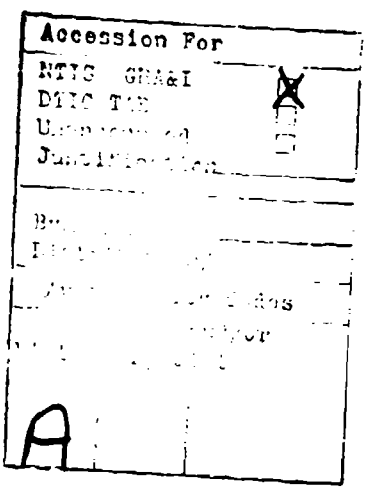
US ARMY WAR COLLEGE

INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH BASED ESSAY

COHESION: THE VITAL INGREDIENT FOR SUCCESSFUL ARMY UNITS

BY

COLONEL FRANCIS B. KISH



19 APRIL 1982

INTRODUCTION

> - Four brave men who do not know each other, will dare not to attack a lion. Four less brave men, but knowing each other well, sure of the reliability and consequently of mutual aid, will attack resolutely.[1]
>
> - The value of cohesiveness is illustrated most dramatically in military operations . . . . Victory usually goes to the commander who has been able to apply a united, well-integrated force against a confused or divided enemy.[2]

The two quotations cited above, one the words of an eminent military theorist, the other the thoughts of a noted behavioral scientist, underscore the relevance of the concept of cohesiveness to military units.

For too long, the subject of cohesion has been given lip service by the US Army hierarchy. However, since the appointment of General Edward C. Meyer as Chief of Staff in 1979, it has become a high-visibility front burner topic. The CSA's current initiatives include: establishment of the Regimental System; extension of command tours for battalion and company commanders; initiation of a company replacement plan (COHORT — cohesion, operational readiness and training); and elimination of overstrength units. General Meyer seems determined to create an environment that will foster the development of cohesive units to compliment his manning, modernization and doctrine initiatives of the 1980's.

Given the emphasis being placed upon cohesion today, it is essential that the professional Army officer become familiar with all aspects of the concept. Hence — the raison d'etre for this paper. It is

designed to serve as a single source document — a primer if you will — on cohesion in Army units. All aspects of the topic — beginning with notions concerning the concept in general, expanding into combat and peacetime considerations and concluding with current US Army initiatives and their chance for success — are addressed.

CHAPTER I

COHESION: WHAT IT IS — HOW IT'S DEVELOPED -- AND WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

Before embarking on an in-depth study of cohesion in military units, we should define the term, discuss its method of development and cite some reasons for its importance. Some thoughts concerning the meaning of cohesion are as follows:

- o Loosely defined, cohesion represents feelings of belonging, of solidarity with a specifiable set of others who constitute "we" as opposed to "them."[3]

  LTC Larry Ingram

- o Unit cohesion is the unit's ability to stay together and fight effectively against heavy opposition. It is a prerequisite for success in combat.[4]

  CPT Edward P. Maher

- o Group cohesion is the extent to which members of a group function as a unit and are free from dissension, conflicting interests and disrupting forces.[5]

  Hemphill

- o Cohesion is the result of forces acting on soldiers that attract and bind them together, producing a commitment to other unit members and the unit as a whole to accomplish the mission.[6]

  General E. C. Meyer

As we progress through this paper we should keep in mind several words and phrases from the above listed definitions: feeling of belonging — solidarity — we — togetherness — free from dissension — goal satisfaction — success — commitment to unit. These words and phrases form the foundation for an understanding of the concept of cohesion. Now that we have an idea of what cohesion is, let's look at how it's developed in military units.

Cohesion in military units results from three basic factors: morale, discipline and loyalty. Each of these, which is dependent upon the other two, warrants further discussion.

Morale is the mainspring of the Army. It is the primary driving force which in the words of an early field manual "keeps your hands and feet working while your head says it can't be done."[7] Morale for the soldier, according to General Bruce C. Clarke, comes from three things:

— Knowing that you have an important job to do.

— Being trained to do that job and doing it well.

-- Being rewarded for your good work.[8]

The Army is responsible for points two and three. However, the public must set the stage for the first point by visibly supporting the military institution.

Discipline is essential to maintaining morale. Tough, fair and impartial discipline is the cement that holds a unit together. All soldiers, regardless of rank, must clearly understand that discipline is a state of mind or attitude, effective only when there is an overriding desire to respond in a certain manner. Further, its existence depends upon an acceptance of a specified code of ethics or behavior.[9]

Loyalty takes a long time to develop. Group loyalty occurs only

when soldiers have worked together for long periods of time, shared several tough experiences, developed close bonds with comrades, watched their leaders perform competently and gained faith in their ability.[10]

A unit with high morale, tough but fair discipline and loyalty to itself and its members, is a cohesive force in peacetime as well as in combat. Cohesive units win wars and from the American Revolution through World War II, our Army demonstrated its ability to decisively win the land battle. Since then — in Korea and Vietnam — the results have not been as clear. Although both of those wars were filled with examples of individual bravery and outstanding performance by select units, it seemed that the Army, an institution lacked the psychological strength necessary for victory. For this reason alone, i.e., failure to achieve victory in our last two wars, the study of cohesion is important.[11] As we entered the decade of the 1980s with its sophisticated weapons and communications systems, and reflected on what had happened to our Army during and after Vietnam, the rationale for understanding cohesion and attempting to enhance it gained an even greater importance. Consider the following:

- o In a short notice "come as you are war" there will be insufficient time for an external threat to congeal our fighting units or unite the public sector to support military operations. We must have cohesive units before the war begins.
- o The sheer terror of modern combat will be devastating. Psychiatric casualties will greatly exceed those experienced in World War II and Korea. Whereas our experiences in those wars indicated that 25-30 days on the line were necessary to generate stress casualties, the Israelis encountered them in

24 hours in their 1973 war. The reason is the lethality of today's warfare. It is obvious that there is a time/intensity tradeoff whereby either prolonged exposure to mid-intensity warfare or brief exposure to high intensity war is sufficient to produce casualties.

- The nagging (seldom spoken in public) fear by Army leadership that something is seriously wrong with the social structure of the Army. The indications of lower quality recruits from 1976-1980, a rise in junior officer/NCO resignation rates, first-term attrition, a widespread pattern of drug and alcohol abuse, racial and sexual abuse incidents, and studies in soldier satisfaction pointed to an organization lacking cohesion and highly vulnerable to a disastrous number of psychiatric and non-battle casualties if committed to battle.[12]

Now that we have a basic understanding of cohesion and its importance to our Army, let's next discuss the general application of the concept of the military.

CHAPTER II

APPLICATION OF THE CONCEPT OF COHESION TO THE MILITARY

The aspect of military organization that has received the most attention from social scientists has been the role of primary groups in maintaining organizational effectiveness. By primary groups, sociologists mean those small social groupings in which social behavior is governed by intimate face-to-face relations.[13]

During World War II, many sociologists in the armed forces were impressed with the critical contribution of cohesive primary group relations to morale, especially in situations of stress. Many of them discovered that, prior to their personal experience in the military, they had overemphasized the significance of ideological and political values in conditioning the effectiveness of military formations.[14]

The crucial role of satisfactory man-to-man relations in combat effectiveness was a universal observation during World War II. As an example, two noted U.S. Army Air Force psychiatrists, Roy R. Grinker and John P. Siegel, summarized their work as follows: "The men seem to be fighting more for someone than against somebody."[15] Additionally, an analysis of group cohesion in the Wehrmacht (German Army) from 1938-1945 produced this hypothesis:

> For the ordinary German soldier, the decisive fact was that he was a member of a squad or section which maintained its structural integrity and which roughly coincided with the social

> unit which satisfied some of his major primary needs . . . . He was likely to go on fighting, provided he had the necessary weapons, as long as the group possessed leadership with which he could identify himself and as long as he gave affection to and received affection from other members of his squad and platoon. In other words, as long as he felt himself to be a member of his primary group and therefore bound by the expectations and demands of its other members, his soldierly achievement was likely to be good.[16]

Finally, with respect to the Second World War, the noted military historian S.L.A. Marshall stated:

> I hold it to be one of the simplest truths of war that the thing which enables the infantry soldier to keep going with his weapons is the near presence or presumed presence of a comrade.[17]

The definitions of group cohesiveness cited in Chapter I of this paper suggest that cohesiveness in a group is maintained through friendship relations or at least through some form of mutual reciprocated attraction. The relations that develop seem to be highly personal ones in which group maintenance and goals are intrinsically valued for their own sake. The two major combat studies of World War II (The American Soldier by Stouffer, et. al., and Cohesion and Disintegration of the Wehrmacht by Janowitz and Shils) present this type of personal relation. These studies implied a rather rich cluster of primary group ties shared by many members of units as large as squads or platoons. However, there is investigative evidence that this type of relation was less pronounced in American units in the Korean War and that it decreased even further during the war in Vietnam.[18]

In Korea and Vietnam, primary group ties became more molecular and granular in structu e, often taking the form of a series of two-person relationships rather than affiliations among large numbers of men. This changed conception of primary group ties seems to reflect the fact that considerable variation in scope and content of primary group ties is to

be expected, depending on the conditions and circumstances surrounding small military groups.[19]

Thus, in Korean spatial dispersion and personnel rotation may have inhibited the development of more extensive interpersonal systems of a comradely character. The "buddy" relationship between two soldiers, which is addressed in greater detail later in this paper, was prevalent and built around mutual interest in minimization of risk.[20]

Moskos found, in his study of primary groups in the Vietnam War, that cohesiveness was not maintained primarily by friendship relations. On the contrary, he found the self-serving aspects of primary relations to be the most important. For the individual soldier to realistically improve his chances of survival, he was forced to develop primary group relations. Moskos supports this hypothesis by examining the combat soldier's letter writing pattern. He points out that letters from squad members who returned to the United States to those remaining in the combat zone were rare. Usually, when a soldier rotated out of a unit, his comrades never again heard from him. This rupture of communication took place despite pronouncements of lifelong friendship during shared combat experiences. Moskos concludes that primary relations in Vietnam were a social contract which became fulfilled when a soldier departed the combat zone.[21]

As this paper unfolds, it is necessary to bear in mind that cohesive primary groups do not just occur; they are fashioned and developed by complex military institutions. At most, primary groups operate to impose standards of behavior (in garrison life and in combat) and to interpret the demands of military authority for the individual soldier. The goals and standards that primary groups enforce are hardly self-generated; they tend to rise from the larger military environment and

from the surrounding civilian society.[22]

The information presented in this chapter has indicated that cohesive primary groups are highly important for effective military performance. Next, I want to discuss the factors affecting the development of cohesion in military units; first, in the combat environment and then in peacetime situations.

CHAPTER III

FACTORS AFFECTING THE FORMATION OF GROUP TIES IN SMALL MILITARY COMBAT UNITS

Researchers have cited a plethora of factors that affect the formation of small group ties in combat. For the purpose of this paper, thirteen have been selected for detailed discussion: social background of unit members; personality of unit members; protectiveness of immediate leaders; performance of immediate leaders; military discipline, professionalism and the role of soldierly honor; commitment to one's social-political system, ideology and patriotism; war indoctrination; exigencies of military life and of the combat situation; a threatful situation; technical aspects of weapons systems; replacement system and rotation policy; social prestige and the soldierly profession; and egalitarian practice within the military organization.

Social Background of Unit Members

A number of scholars have noted that a common social background assists soldiers in developing intimate personal relationships. Similarities in previous social experience, such as social class, regional origin, or age appear to contribute in this manner.[23] With respect to the application of this factor to United States combat soldiers during the Vietnam War, Sherard stated:

> The majority of combat soldiers come from the lower socio-economic levels of society. They are relatively uneducated and tend to come from minority groups. This background

> assists the members in developing intimate interpersonal relations; similarities in social experiences in civilian life supply a meaningful basis for responding in military life as well.[24]

A special problem of social cohesion directly related to social background was the integration of minority troops into the primary group structures of American military forces. Primary group structures can become incompatible with the requirements of the organization when the criterion for making the assignment is a group characteristic such as race or ethnic origin. The process of desegregation of the armed forces has been a powerful verification of sociological theory concerning social cohesion and organizational effectiveness. Sociological theory does not hold that segregated units would under all conditions weaken organizational effectiveness. The experience of the Japanese-American battalions in World War II attests to the contrary. This is a case where segregation did not prevent Japanese-Americans from achieving group goals, namely, demonstrating their loyalty and articulating effectively with the authority structure. Segregation of black troops worked to the opposite ends. The outcome was to prevent the development of groups with social cohesion committed to the military hierarchy.[25]

Personality of Unit Members

Among the characteristics mentioned as facilitating an individual's participation in the primary group life of his unit is the ability to offer and receive affection in an all-male society.[26] In analyzing the findings of The American Soldier, Shils noted:

> Given the individual soldier's responsiveness to the opinion of his comrades, the execution of a generally accepted command will be in part motivated by expectations of favorable responses from others sharing the same goal. The grant of approval awakens favorable responses in the recipient and an affectionate relationship is established which has its own standards of mutual helpfulness and devotion.[27]

Additionally, Janis has called attention to the importance of family background, especially identification with one's father, as affecting the individuals soldier's capacity to enter into informal group relationships. His comments follow:

> Perhaps the most essential feature of transference from the standpoint of group dynamics is the tendency to overestimate the power of the surrogate person, which heightens sensitivity to his expressions of approval and disapproval. When a conscientious officer is unconsciously regarded as a father surrogate, the men under his command will be strongly motivated to accept his orders and adhere to group standards, if only to maintain the approval of the man who is now endowed with the attributes of a significant authority figure from the past.[28]

Protectiveness of Immediate Leaders

The individual soldier's need for a protective and exemplary authority whose qualities permit identification has been documented in studies of the American Army and the Wehrmacht in both world wars and in the Chinese Communist Army during the Korean War.[29] An example of this factor can be seen in the following statement made by an exceptionally talented regular German Army officer:

> The leader must be a man who possesses military skill; then his men will know that he is protecting them. He must be a model to his men; he must be an all-powerful, and still benevolent authority . . . . He must look after his men's needs, and be able to do all the men's duties better than they themselves in training and under combat conditions. The men must also be sure that their officer is duly considerate of their lives. They must know that he does not squander his human resources and that the losses of life which occur under his command will be minimal and justified. . . . A good officer is fatherly and exhibits considerate behavior in his relations with his men . . . . He is not above giving numerous small indications of affection such as congratulations on birthdays and anniversaries and addressing his men as 'Kinder' (children).[30]

Kish noted in "The Military Career of Harry S. Truman" that Truman's World War I artillery battery suffered only a few casualties. A statement by Vere C. Leigh, an enlisted member of the battery, par-

tially explains this and is another example of "protective and exemplary authority," as well as being applicable to the next factor (performance of immediate leaders):

> There were pretty heavy casualties throughout the regiment and the division, but we didn't have many. We were just . . . well, part of it was luck and part of it good leadership. Some of the other batteries didn't have that kind of leadership. Truman looked after us and cared about us and knew what the hell he was doing. There's such a thing as sticking your battery in spot they shouldn't be and then getting a bunch of people killed and wounded . . . . Truman never did that.[31]

Performance of Immediate Leaders

Tactical leadership based on example and demonstrated competence promotes social cohesion and reduces the need to rely on commands based on the threat of sanctions. Stouffer et al. cite several examples of this factor in the American Army in World War II, but only two will be recounted here:

> A wounded veteran of the North African campaign said: 'About officers — everybody wants somebody to look up to when he's scared. It makes a lot of difference.'[32]

> The officer's behavior often was taken as a model by the enlisted men, who might identify with him and try to be like him. This identification was most likely to occur when the officer had their respect and admiration. This respect and admiration did not come easy. If the officer shared the dangers and hardships of his men successfully and proved his courage in battle, they would then be more likely to do their part. The officer who held back from taking personal risks invited similar behavior from his men.[33]

Military Discipline, Professionalism and the Role of Soldierly Honor

Apolitical motivation of the order of "getting the job done," being "a good soldier who does his duty" and "not letting comrades down" were found to be in evidence in the Wehrmacht and the United States military forces during World War II.[34] Subjugation to military discipline sup-

ports those young soldiers who experience the need for asserting manliness and toughness, a need which regression to an adolescent condition in military life reactivates. Coincidence of these personal needs with group norms and military codes reinforces group cohesion.[35] Moskos noted that the following observation, made on the ethic of masculinity among Wehrmacht soldiers during World War II, seemed equally appropriate for American soldiers in Vietnam:

> Among young males in middle and late adolescence, the challenges of love and vocation aggravate anxieties about weakness. At this stage fears about potency are considerable. When men who have passed through this stage are placed in the entirely male society of a military unit, freed from the control of an adult civilian society and missing its gratifications, they tend to regress to an adolescent condition. The show of toughness and hardness which is regarded as a virtue among soldiers is a response to these activated adolescent anxieties about weakness.[36]

However, Moskos underscored the fact that an exaggerated masculine ethic was much less evident among soldiers after their units had been bloodied. He noted:

> As the realities of combat are faced, more prosaic definitions of manly honor emerge. (Also, there is more frequent expression of the man role in manifestly sexual rather than combative terms, e.g., 'I'm a lover, not a fighter.') That is, notions of masculinity serve to create initial motivation to enter combat, but recede once the life-and-death facts of warfare are confronted.[37]

Little's investigation of the American infantryman in the Korean Conflict revealed similar findings:

> Once a unit is tempered by combat, definitions of manly honor are not seen to encompass individual heroics. Quite the opposite; the very word "hero" is used to describe negatively any soldier who recklessly jeopardizes the unit's welfare. Men try to avoid going out on patrols with individuals who are overly anxious to make contact with the enemy. Much like the "dud" at the other end of the spectrum, the "hero" is also seen as one who endangers the safety of others. As in the case of virtually all combat behavior, the ultimate standard rests on keeping alive.[38]

Commitment to One's Social-Political System, Ideology and Patriotism

There is substantial agreement among those who have studied different military organizations that a soldier's patriotism and attachment to related secondary symbols generally can provide, at the very least, "the rudiments of one of the most important preconditions for the formation of primary groups; this, in turn, has a positive and immediate function in strengthening the soldier's will to exert himself under dangerous conditions."[39] This formulation, which Shils provided in his commentary on The American Soldier, did much to clarify seeming ambiguities of data and conflicting interpretations and has been generally accepted as being applicable to the armies of other nations as well.[40] With respect to his interviews of American combat soldiers during the vastly unpopular Vietnam War, Moskos stated:

> I propose that primary groups maintain the soldier in his combat role only when he has an underlying commitment to the worth of the larger social system for which he is fighting. This commitment needs not be formally articulated, nor even perhaps consciously recognized. But he must at some level accept, if not the specific purposes of the war, then at least the broader rectitude of the social system of which he is a member . . . . Despite the American soldier's ideological unconcern and his pronounced embarrassment in the face of patriotic rhetoric, he nevertheless displays an elemental American nationalism in the belief that the United States is the best country in the world. Even though he hates being in the war, the combat soldier typically believes — in a kind of joyless patriotism — he is fighting for his American homeland.[41]

Political ideals are of greater importance in strengthening cohesiveness in those fighting forces in which the cadre structure is highly politicized. Shils and Janowitz noted that the Nazi "hard core" within the Wehrmacht was instrumental in strengthening the stability and effectiveness of squads and platoons.[42] A similar function was cited by George in his study of the role of the cadre of the Chinese Communist

Army during the Korean War. His comments with respect to the politicization of the cadre structure in the primary groups (squads and subsquads) follow:

> At the heart of the cadre's job is the indoctrination and direction of the soldiers within the unit in accordance with party goals. To accomplish this task, he is provided with a variety of approved techniques and mechanisms. These can be categorized under two headings. One set of techniques can be grouped under the heading of Comradely Relations. When using these techniques the cadre is functioning in the role of leader to the men (concern for their welfare; make a favorable first impression; set the example of a good communist soldier, etc.).
>
> The second group of techniques can be referred to as the Morale Informants System. In this role he is concerned with the more direct mechanisms of resocialization, attitude change and mission accomplishment. His goals are two-fold: (1) to remold men and create a good communist soldier, with the potential of someday becoming a cadre; and (2) seek to mobilize the uncommitted, even if only temporarily.[43]

War Indoctrination

This is related to the tacit patriotism and the attachment to other secondary symbols and similarly plays an indirect role in the formation of primary group ties. War indoctrination traditionally stresses two themes: (1) the legitimacy and/or justification of the war (this is based on an account of the origin of the war, the nature of the enemy and the character of the war aims); and (2) the wisdom and/or necessity of fighting it (this includes an estimate of expectations of success and a prediction of the probable consequences of defeat).[44] Moskos provided an example of this factor in his book The American Enlisted Man. It is as follows:

> Because of the combat soldier's overwhelming propensity to see the war in private and personal terms, I had to ask specifically what the United States was doing in Vietnam. When the question was rephrased in this manner, the soldiers most often said they were in Vietnam 'to stop communism.' Typical comments were: 'The only way we'll keep them out of the states is to stop them here'; 'Let's get it over with now before they

> become too strong'; 'They have to be stopped somewhere'; 'Better to zap this country than let them do the same to us.' The suasion of the so-called 'domino theory' is powerful among combat soldiers as well as the general public back home[45]

Exigencies of Military Life and of the Combat Situation

These will often suffice in themselves to create a sense of elementary social cohesion and a mutually shared recognition of the necessity for "buddyship," cooperation and comradeliness for survival.[46] Little discussed "buddyship" in detail in his investigation of the U.S. infantryman in Korea. Some of his findings follow:

> 'Buddy' is a term that has a distinct meaning in combat, quite different from the type of person that they had thought of as a 'friend' or 'pal' before they reached combat. A buddy was expected to do much more than a friend for the person who had chosen him. The combat buddy was seldom chosen until a condition of mutual risk was recognized. Solidarity developed when two men realized that they were going to face danger together and without another person to lean on, performance in a combat role would be too much to take.
>
> Although one man would think of another as a buddy, he seldom stated it in those terms or boasted of the attachment publicly. Only when the chips were down would his choice be displayed. The buddy was a defense against social isolation and the demoralized feelings of loneliness on or near the battlefield. Your buddy was always there when you needed him.[47]

The obviously most significant exigency of combat is the external threat facing the group as a whole. In fact, it is the threatful situation which makes the study of cohesiveness in military units unique. For this reason, the threatful situation will be treated as a separate factor and considerable space devoted to it.

A Threatful Situation

Combat involves a major external threat on the group as a whole. As mentioned in Chapter II of this paper, the increase of group cohesiveness as a result of a threatful situation has been verified by

numerous studies. However, a shared threat sometimes increases hostility in group members and decreases cohesiveness. As an example, in Nazi concentration camps inmates went so far as to identify themselves with the source of the threat.[48] Additionally, the disintegration of primary groups in the Wehrmacht during the closing stages of World War II fails to support the hypothesis of an increase in group cohesiveness with an increase in threat.[49]

How can these differing points of view be reconciled? With respect to military groups, it seems that three critical variables can be isolated. The first variable is the nature of the threat: does it overwhelm the group or can the group cope with it? Up to a certain, as yet unknown, point where the group feels it can make the situation better, group cohesion will increase. Past this point, each individual becomes more concerned with self-survival and group cohesion decreases. Perhaps this explains the actions of the inmates in the Nazi concentration camps and the Wehrmacht soldiers late in World War II. A reduction of the threat was possible only by disassociating oneself from the group.[50]

A second variable seems to be the degree to which members share equally the consequences of the threat and the responsibility for coping with it. If, as in military primary groups, all share equally the consequences of the threat (being killed or wounded, e.g.), increased cohesiveness should result. Additionally, although the formal unit leader has the ultimate responsibility for coping with the threat, each man in the unit has a specific assigned task and his failure to accomplish the task may result in the death or serious injury of a comrade. Thus, the specification and distribution of responsibility also serves to increase group cohesiveness.[51]

The third and final variable is the possibility of escape from the

threatful situation. In a military primary group, exposure to a common external threat becomes a unifying force only when escape from the situation is ruled out by formal military authority and sanctions. The individual combat soldier realizes that he cannot escape from the situation and that his best chance of survival rests on the support he receives from his primary group. Hence, the cohesiveness of the primary group increases.[52]

Technical Aspects of Weapons Systems

While generalizations with respect to this factor are most hazardous, it does seem that weapons systems which maintain close physical proximity of team members and enhance the process of communication contribute to primary group cohesion. In fact, Janowitz states in his combat studies that the increased importance of the primary group concept in the military is an outgrowth of the trend in weapons which requires that and increasing number of personnel operate as teams. Bomber, tank, submarine and artillery gun crews are all testimony to this trend. In fact, even the combat infantryman is trained to function as a member of a fireteam.[53]

Additionally, weapons systems are accorded differential prestige in the military establishment, and the higher the prestige of the weapon the greater the contribution to group solidarity. The weapon becomes part of the self-image of the person, and the more powerful the weapon, the greater its contribution to battle and the greater is the person's sense of potency and group solidarity. Social cohesion is not merely a human phenomenon; it is also an outgrowth of environmental conditions, and in the military, this means the technical dimensions of the various weapons systems.[54]

Replacement System and Rotation Policy

Most European military forces, plus those of Communist China and North Vietnam, replenish understrength units with packets of small groups of men. This reflects an effort to build upon previous associations and loyalties and strengthen organizational cohesion. Conversely, the American military system has traditionally tended to treat replacements as individual components rather than as a group members. When men do not know each other, combat units suffer in their effectiveness.[55] As an example, in a study of some 70 tactical episodes of Operation Neptune (the airborne phase of the Normandy Invasion), it was found that only a minor fraction were successful if the original unit was disrupted in the drop. When an officer or noncommissioned officer collected a group of men he had never commanded and tried to lead them into battle, the results were almost uniformly unsatisfactory.[56]

In the Vietnam War, there was a rapid turnover of personnel in United States units, occasioned by a one year rotation policy. As a result, the development of closer primary group ties appears to have been restricted while, paradoxically, this policy contributed to the morale of the individual combat soldier. The effect of the rotation policy on the cohesiveness of United States infantry units in Vietnam was explained thusly by Sherard:

> It can be seen that there are three types of soldiers within each primary group at any particular time. These are: the 'Newcomer' with 0-2 months in country (or until his first big combat experience); the 'Veteran' with 4-10 months; and the 'Old-timer' with 10-12 months. The basic cohesive unit involves only the Veterans the Old-timers. The Newcomer can't be depended upon to provide support to other group members primarily because he doesn't know how. Consequently, he tends to be isolated from the group and often is given the most dangerous mission . . . . 'Old-timers' tend to be highly conservative and are unwilling to take the risks they did

> earlier in their tours . . . . Generally, they receive the support of the Veterans although they are not expected to return this support. Thus, we see an example of group cohesion not being grounded in reciprocal choices.[57]

Social Prestige and the Soldierly Profession

George postulates that raising the social prestige of the soldierly profession and improving civil-military relations within a country helps to enhance the self-respect of soldiers and thereby contributes to the formation of social cohesion in small military units in combat and peacetime. He cites China (a country where, until the communist take-over, soldiers had been held in traditional disrepute by the civilian population) as a prime example of this factor.[58]

The effect which a lowering of social prestige can have on the military forces of a nation could be observed in the United States both during the Vietnam War and in its aftermath. Many Americans held the military profession in low regard and the serviceman's awareness of this contributed to a decrease in cohesiveness in some primary groups.

Egalitarian Practices Within the Military Organization

Again utilizing Communist China as an example, George notes that favorable results were achieved in the Korean War from the introduction of egalitarian practices into military services that have traditionally been highly coercive, arbitrary and discriminatory. Evidence exists that the Peoples Liberation Army, with its emphasis on "democratizing" respect, equal and rational service conditions, mass participation in official ideology, rituals and group decision making, has been successful in encouraging the individual soldier to identify with and participate in the prescribed type of small group life.[59]

This chapter has examined in detail several factors affecting

military group cohesiveness in a combat environment. After reviewing these factors, it seems obvious that cohesiveness in combat is a necessity for success. Not as obvious is the need for togetherness in the peacetime Army. The next chapter examines this topic.

CHAPTER IV

COHESION AND THE PEACETIME ARMY

As a result of the studies stemming back to World War II, Korea and Vietnam (many of which were discussed previously in this paper) by Shils and Janowitz, Grinken and Spiegel, Samuel Stouffer, SLA Marshall, Little, Janowitz, Moskos and others, the central importance of comradely ties among individuals in small combat groups is now widely accepted. The importance of unit cohesion in times of peace, however, is much less agreed upon. The argument that we must create cohesive units prior to our commitment to combat usually falls upon deaf ears. We are not evaluated on cohesion, so, therefore, other things — training — the AGI — the ARTEP — Operational Readiness Rates — take priority. Cohesion is "nice to have" but certainly not "necessary." The general feeling of many leaders is probably summed up by a VII Corps Battalion Commander: "The enemy will take care of our cohesion building. Right now, my job is training, not making the troops feel good."[60]

I contend that cohesion in our peacetime Army is equally as important as cohesiveness in combat. This chapter presents data to support that contention and emphasizes the detractors to peacetime cohesion present in our Army today.

Several studies have been completed concerning cohesion in a peacetime environment. Goodacre (1951) found a high positive correlation

between sociometric measures of cohesiveness and problem solving scores of units engaged in field exercises. Hemphill and Secrest (1952) studied bombing crews in both peacetime training exercises and in combat over Korea. In both instances, the sociometric scores of crew cohesiveness were positively correlated with bombing accuracy scores. In a related area (athletic competition), Klein and Christiansen (1969), Vandervelden (1971) and Wydmeyer and Martens (1978), all found highly cohesive basketball teams were more successful than less cohesive teams.[61]

The most recent and perhaps the most credible survey of today's Army was conducted by the VII US Corps Inspector General in Germany in 1979 and 1980. A battery of questions, based upon conversations, interviews and test runs with soldiers and leaders plus close inspection of cohesion studies from World War II, Korea and Vietnam, was given to 20 battalions. A total of 37 soldiers per battalion participated. Included were:

- The Battalion S1
- 2 Company Commanders
- 2 First Sergeants
- 3 Platoon Leaders
- 3 Platoon Sergeants
- 8 Squad/Section Leaders
- 18 Junior Enlisted (including 3 that arrived within the 30 days prior to the IG's visit).[62]

The survey showed a definite and positive correlation between "high cohesion" units and performance of eight tasks/areas to a desired standard. These tasks included: the Army Training and Evaluation Program (ARTEP); the Annual General Inspection (AGI), Skill Qualification Test

(SQT); Physical Fitness Test; Operational Readiness Test (ORT); Administrative Discharges; UCMJ Rate (Article 15s and Courts Martial); and Reenlistment Rates. It is interesting to note that only the questionnaires of the junior enlisted personnel were reliably different in differentiating the "most" cohesive from the "less" cohesive units - and — further on only the following four questions:

- How often aside from meetings does the company commander talk to you personally?

- Is your squad/section leader ever included in after duty activities?

- How often, aside from meetings, does your platoon leader talk to you personally?

- Who would you go to first if you had a personal problem, like being in debt?[63]

It was also interesting to note that the "high third" units in the VII Corps survey were Armor and Cavalry outfits — both of which are organized around small groups of soldiers in a fighting vehicle. Further, the scores of all units tended to increase in proportion to the "time on the job" of the people questioned.[64] It would seem based upon this survey that cohesion is a powerful contributor to battalion performance, a "training multiplier" and ultimately a "force multiplier."

With the above studies in mind, I now want to address several factors and practices that affect cohesion in today's Army. These include: the use of drugs and alcohol; leaders and leadership; recruiting methods; the support of our society; stability; and the military family.

Drug and Alcohol Use.

Activities that promote interpersonal bonding have three characteristics: (1) they fill large blocks of time and are seen by participants as enjoyable; (2) they involve minimal skill so anyone can participate; and (3) they specify some more or less well-defined opposition group. Drug and alcohol use fits all three of these criteria.[65]

The Army picks up its soldiers willy-nilly (no common background) and drops them into a transient environment in which they are expected to manage large blocks of time away from homes, families and friends. Time needs to be filled in the company of other people and if the young soldier is to find a social support system he must turn to this work group. However, with our rapid personnel turnover, he doesn't have much time to form a lasting work group relationship. Therefore, he turns to drugs and alcohol which fit the bill perfectly. They offer a variety of distinct shared activities and a unique group history that can effortlessly create a sense of comradeship literally overnight. Furthermore, periodic health and welfare inspections, urinanalysis, search and seizure operations provide a real and well-defined threat among the persecuted.[66]

Drug use is good for morale — but — only for individual morale, not unit morale. Social networks that are formed around drugs never include all members of a work group and hardly ever include a significant mixture of rank. Drug use literally splinters the social organization of a unit, setting off users from non-users, sowing distrust and not so subtly undermining respect for and confidence in the chain of command.[67]

A successful drug/alcohol prevention program needs to provide alternatives for the group identity and sense of belonging now provided

by their use. The focus must be on destroying the "we versus they" structure and creating strong group loyalties in small work groups in which each soldier is a member. This structure must include young and old, married and single, barracks dwellers and those living off post and officers and non-commissioned officers.[68]

Leaders and Leadership.

The most serious problem in the command climate today is the unspoken division of the command structure (the leaders) versus all others (barrack dwellers, dependents, and often NCOs (the led)) and the total absence in all these groups of a wider community of shared interests, beliefs, values and commitments to anything other than self. Junior enlisted, NCOs and officers form "natural" groups in today's Army and their attitudes toward each other hardly evokes the concept of teamwork. Each group holds the other in disdain, offering "laziness" and ignorance or both as their major characteristics. "Fraternization" is considered a cardinal sin and units struggle for existence with few if any common experiences."[69]

All of this underscores the importance of leaders in the cohesion concept. It is important to remember that the four bonding questions in the VII Corps Survey all involved non-formal contact between the leaders and the led. Leaders must interact with their soldiers — in both formal "work" environments and in informal "play" atmospheres.

In any army battalion, it is appropriate to speak of cohesive work groups, cohesive squad and platoon leaders, cohesive company commanders, and a cohesive battalion staff. Each of these are face to face primary groups and to the extent that they share similar purposes, goals and enthusiasm for the larger collective we can conclude esprit is present

to some degree. George refers to such arrangements as hierarchical and peer cohesion.[70]

In similar fashion, battalion staff members regularly interact with brigade staff members, who in turn are linked with division staff members; thus it is possible for esprit to be transmitted and distributed throughout a sizable collective made up of primary groups that are not coextensive in their memberships, but are linked to one another by members who occupy link pin positions in several groups. This concept is referred to as vertical cohesion.[71]

Both vertical and horizontal cohesion can be achieved by selfless leaders - at all levels - who are sincerely interested in their subordinates. Soldiers must think of their NCOs and officers as representing them to higher headquarters and not representing the higher-ups to them. Loyalty must be "down" as well as "up." The day is past when holding a leadership position insures respect and obedience. If today's soldier is to be led effectively, they must value the respect, esteem and friendship of their leaders more highly than their own safety and comfort.[72]

Additionally, there must be institutional reinforcement for commanders who "make the best of what they have." Most company commanders will tell you that an indispensable part of their job is "weeding out the bad apples." General Bruce C. Clarke's admonition that unit excellence is the result of the ability of leaders to develop the least talented members of the unit have fallen on deaf ears. Commanders would be relieved for returning equipment as casually as defective troops are discharged. In a 1978 USAREUR survey, soldiers being discharged from that command characterized their company commanders as: uncaring; insensitive to human problems; and concerned with mission completion

which they view as incompatible with troop welfare programs. I submit that commanders can be mission oriented and simultaneously caring, sensitive and involved in troop welfare problems. As SLA Marshall once said: "The good company has no place for an officer who would rather be right than loved, for the time will quickly come when he walks alone, and in battle no man may succeed in solitude."[73]

Recruiting.

Soldiers have no concept of what to expect in the Army. They view recruiting movies at more than face value, expecting complete freedom after duty hours in a dormitory environment. Young men and women expect and want the Army to provide challenge, discipline and hard work. More often than not, they find soldiering much easier than anticipated.

Thus, the foundation of cohesion, which I submit is truth, is built upon a flimsy base. From a recruiting standpoint, we must present the Army as it really exists. The context for cohesion begins the moment a young citizen walks into the recruiting office or views a recruiting film in a high school auditorium.

Support of Society.

The Army will never achieve cohesion without the support and respect of the American people for it as an institution. Soldiers must feel that they have an important job to do for their country. These feelings only come from expressions of gratitude and respect from families, friends, relatives, teachers, ministers and the general public. Failure to "make it" in the Army must be regarded as failure to honorably serve one's country. A recent survey reflected few admissions of shame by soldiers being discharged prior to completing a normal term of

service. Most felt their families would be glad to see them because of an awareness of their dissatisfaction with the Army. One man appeared genuinely and profoundly shocked at our suggestion that some people might view his "Chapter 5 Discharge" negatively.[74]

Stability.

Although we have already noted many peacetime detractors to cohesion, two of the major culprits have not been discussed — rapid personnel turnover and the individual replacement system. First, rapid personnel turnover. From 1978-1980, most CONUS based FORSCOM divisions had a 18-22 percent quarterly personnel turnover rate. This high turnover rate usually resulted from levies for Germany and Korea, first term reenlistment (station-of-choice or MOS change), administrative discharges and normal service separations. The critical aspect of the turbulence is leadership turbulence. Consider the two examples, both of which, were typical of Army units.

- A tank Company Commander in Germany (during a 15 month tour, 1979-1980) had nine different platoon leaders and ten different platoon sergeants.[75]

- During the 26 months (1975-1977), General George S. Patton, Jr., commanded the 2d Armored Division at Fort Hood, Texas, the number of officers manning the Division's key positions were as follows:

o Assistant Division Commanders	Five
o Chiefs of Staff	Three
o ACofS, G1	Three
o ACofS, G2	Three
o ACofS, G3	Three
o ACofS, G4	Four

o Brigade Commanders	Six
o Divarty Commanders	Three
o DISCOM Commanders	Two
o Maintenance Battalion Commanders	Three
o Signal Battalion Commanders	Three
o Engineer Battalion Commanders	Two
* o Cavalry Squadron Commanders	Four

* One relieved after 11 days in command for alcoholism.[76]

Many studies indicate that the "desired" or "ideal" time on the job for a key leader is about five years; less than three years is not long enough and seven years is too long. Men are willing to respond to the orders of their superiors when they have confidence in them and in their peers. Building confidence takes time as does building the competence from which confidence derives. Neither can be achieved in an organization, military or otherwise, whose people move like tumbleweeds in the desert wind.[77]

Although stabilization of leaders is vital, so too, is reduction of personnel turnover at the "Indian" level. Stabilization at the squad, section, crew and platoon level is the building block for a cohesive organization.

Second, individual replacements. As mentioned in the chapter concerning cohesion in combat, the US Army's personnel replacement system is based upon assigning individual soldiers to units. This system violates all principles of creating cohesive organizations.

The individual replacement upon arriving in a peacetime unit is extremely vulnerable. He has no support for his own values and he is immediately confronted by the solidarity of the barracks dwellers by whom he must be accepted. With our high proportion of married personnel

(particularly our NCOs), the barracks culture is controlled by the soldiers least likely to be committed to Army goals. The individual replacement must conform to these values. He is immediately stripped of the enthusiasm, motivation and commitment developed in Basic Training.[78]

The Military Family.

The Army has not come to grips with the fact that most of its members are married. In fact, about 25 percent of the lower enlisted population is married, as are 80 percent of the senior noncommissioned officers and 95 percent of the officers.[79]

Whereas VII Corps in Germany conducted a study to determine the level of cohesiveness in battalions, V Corps, also in USAREUR, conducted a survey that wondered not only about soldiers but their wives and families as well.

Again, the researchers encountered the themes of isolation and the need to be identified with something beyond the self and the family. Whether talking to officer or enlisted wives, homemakers or those with jobs outside the home, the pervasive theme was lack of identification and community. In many ways, the stories of dependents were more poignant than the stories of the VII Corps barracks dwellers. Soldiers at least have a chain of command and a place in that chain. At least soldiers have someone to interact with; but, wives felt they often had no one other than their husbands who too frequently were gone because of work requirements (field duty primarily). Three different studies of successful soldiers, unsuccessful soldiers and soldiers wives all pointed to the importance of group membership, of feelings of being needed and needing others as a critical dimension of individual happiness and satisfaction.[80]

With well over fifty percent of the force married, we cannot afford to fracture the soldier's lives into work roles versus other roles such as father, husband and community leader. It seems obvious that the major function of the military community must be to enhance cohesion, to foster a unity of purpose to provide something to fight for that extends beyond the self. This requires a much different way of looking at units and communities than we are now using.[81]

Thus far this paper has examined the topic of cohesion in a combat and peacetime environment. In the final chapter, an analysis of the Army's attempts to improve cohesion are discussed. Additionally, ideas that go beyond the current initiatives are presented.

CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

The research conducted for this paper has convinced me that cohesive units are absolutely essential for military success — both on the battlefield and in a peacetime garrison environment. The most important task of the US Army is to foster the group cohesion and solidarity that will enable it to win our country's future wars.

The initiatives of General Meyer to create cohesive units are sound ones. They are based upon all the positive factors for establishing cohesion that were cited in Chapters III and IV of this paper. They can achieve their objective if they are given a fare shake by Army leadership. Sarcastic comparisons of previous initiatives that failed, Gyroscope, e.g., only serve to undermine our Chief of Staff.

After surveying approximately 50 sources on the topic of cohesion and based upon my experiences as a company and battalion commander, I am convinced we can do more to foster togetherness in today's Army. Some of these ideas may be considered "radical" and/or "tradition breaking" but they, too, deserve thoughtful consideration. Listen as I surface ten ideas and recommendations. Many of these had their genesis in the minds of three men: Mike Malone, Larry Ingraham and Rick Manning, all of whom are referenced in the bibliography.

The Role of Department of the Army Vis-a-Vis the Unit.

However, much of the large scale changes being proposed by Department of the Army are necessary for cohesion, they are not sufficient. DA can assure that individuals live and work close together for sufficient periods of time to develop cohesion; but it is the lower level of leaders — the Division, Brigade and Battalion Commanders right down to the squad leader — who provide the experiences, determine the nature of the interpersonal interactions and actually create the bonds of unit cohesion. However, it must be reemphasized that all levels of the Army must be involved. No single action at any level is going to make a difference — only multiple actions in concert throughout the Army will make an impact. If ever the Army needed "togetherness," it is on the CSA's attempt to create cohesion.

The Military Family and the Military Community.

We need to continue our emphasis on the importance of the military family and rethink our concept of the military community. The Army once again must be thought of as a "way of life" and not a job. We should be able to offer a closeknit community with all the satisfactions of "small town America" rather than the faceless suburb common on too many of our military posts. But how do you create military communities that enhance cohesion? Here are a few thoughts:

1. Expand our definition of a military unit and use it as a building block of our communities.

- Every individual (soldiers, dependents, Post Exchange Managers in Overseas areas, Red Cross workers, school teachers, etc.) are aligned with a battalion.

- Military units sponsor dependent activities such as

Little League Baseball, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, etc.

- Recreational facilities such as craft shops are scheduled by unit rather than by individual soldiers.

- The club system is organized by unit rather than by rank.

- The Battalion Dining Facility becomes the Community Center with time set aside for activities of its members (squad and platoon parties, e.g.).

2. Involve our dependents in the operation of the military community and its facilities.

- Wives would be responsible for planning, coordinating and operating nurseries, child care centers, libraries, DYAs, etc.

- Train dependents in overseas areas in crowd control, evacuation procedures, and perimeter defense. In other words, involve them totally in the training for NEO and civil defense related activities.

3. Restructure our military housing to reinforce unit integrity. To the fullest extent possible, assign dependent housing by unit and by rank. As an example, all officers from a battalion would live in one area — all enlisted people from that unit in an adjacent area.

The Replacement System.

We must abolish our practice of individuals replacements - now. Replacements can be assigned in small packets — dyiads or triads. We don't have to depend solely on company or platoon packages as an alternative to individual replacements. Further, since basic training provides an opportunity for soldiers to develop close relationships with one or two other soldiers, why not assign troops directly from Basic to

the Divisions? Export AIT Teams to the Divisions to provide the necessary Advanced Individual Training.

The Regimental System.

I think the Regimental System can work. However, we need to think carefully about its target audience. In my mind, it's primary value is not for the first term soldier. Rather it should be focused on the career soldier by providing a structure and a set of concepts that will support him and create more cohesive units. It should be looked upon — and I think it is — as a device to structure the behavior of a "cadre" Army. If the "lifer" thinks and behaves in terms of it's values, he will create cohesion for the less stabilized flow of lower ranking soldier. However, the system is not a short term solution. It will take 3-5 years to take hold and another 5-10 years to begin to pay dividends. This means the system must be continued by General Meyer's next two or three successors if it is to succeed.

Miscellaneous.

Here is a hodge-podge of ideas and thoughts about what the Army can do to assist in the development of cohesive units.

1. Devote significant portions of military school education to insuring that cohesion is seen as an essential element of combat readiness. Actively teach how to build and maintain cohesion and teamwork in our ROTC, Military Academy and Service School programs.

2. Recognize and advance those leaders who demonstrate a commitment to their units, their soldiers and the Army — rather than to their own careers.

3. Encourage competition based upon group efforts (squads, sections, platoons and companies) rather than individual performance.

Athletic competition, among and within companies, as an example, is an ideal method of fostering cohesion at the level we desire it. Make the "Company Level Championship" the highlight of a Division's Sports Program.

4. Sign on recruits for a specific unit rather than a specific job. Reinstitute the concept of "regional" units. As an example, the Big Red One would be a Midwest Division, the 7th Infantry Division a California-Nevada-Arizona Division, etc.

5. Decentralize as many functions as low as possible. Examples of this include:

- Company dining facilities.
- Company commander responsible for the unit fund.
- More disciplinary authority for the company commander (perhaps reduction authority through the grade of E6).
- More company commander authority in promotions and school selections.
- Assignment of Physicians Assistants to companies.
- Return of administration capability to the company.

6. Let the "troops" become totally involved in <u>formal</u> company activities. Some examples:

- An avid hunter can teach cover and concealment, map reading and rifle marksmanship to his peers.
- The company jocks are responsible for physical training.
- Mechanics can supervise repair of POVs in the unit motor pool after duty hours.
- The camera buff can prepare a slide show for visiting

VIPs and newly arrived personnel.

7. Train and test our soldiers as teams or buddies. Why not give SQTs, CBR Proficiency Exams, Weapons Qualification and even Physical Fitness Test utilizing this concept? Let's say that Smith and Jones have to score 550 on the PT Test rather than 300 each on an individual test. Why not incorporate a "buddy event" in the PT Test — a two-man relay, e.g.?

8. Establish a leadership school after basic training. It would be three-five days in length and taught by the Drill Sergeants. It's purpose is not to develop leaders but to teach our young soldiers what leadership is all about. It will help them to communicate with their leaders and understand "them bastards up at platoon."

9. Officially make the ARTEP evaluative. Most people look at it as such anyway. Crank a measure of cohesiveness into it. Include a live fire exercise that will enable the soldiers to develop confidence and trust in each other and their small unit leaders.

10. Let newly assigned Brigade and Battalion Commanders have an opportunity to create a cohesive "organization" prior to assuming command. As an example, why not permit the brigade staff, Command Sergeant Major and Battalion Commanders to meet the Brigade Commander for a week at Fort Leavenworth. Include it as part of the Pre-Command Course.

In conclusion, the Army, with General Meyer leading the way, is making great strides in improving the environment for cohesion. I remember a Mike Malone lecture at Fort Leavenworth several years ago. He said, "Cohesion is the natural state of man." I agree. Our task in the Army is not to "make cohesion happen" but rather to "help it happen."

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