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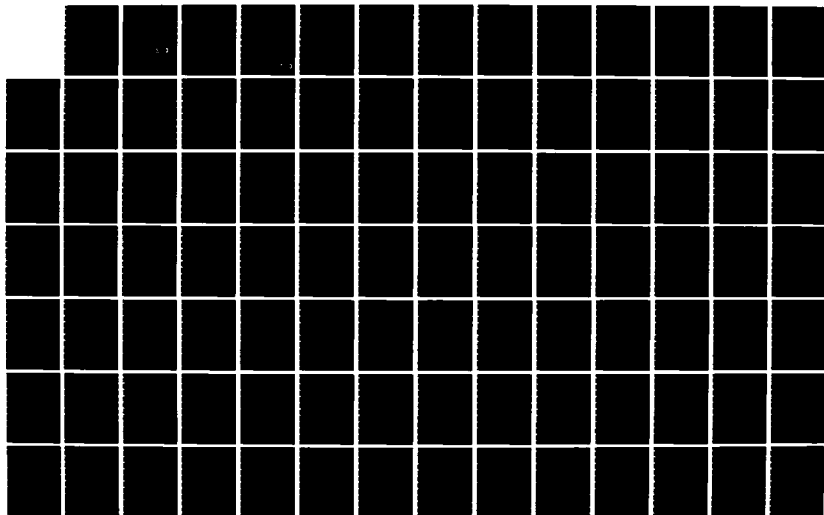
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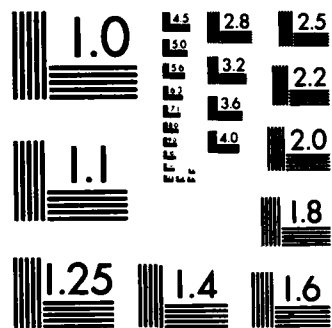
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ELIMINATIONS OR CONTROLLING TRAINING DISTRACTIONS
IN UNITED STATES ARMY UNITS

A thesis presented to the faculty of the U.S. Army
Command and General Staff College in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

by

THOMAS A. HORTON, MAJOR, USA
B.A., Texas Christian University, 1969

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
1983

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This study attempts to determine if training distractions can
be eliminated or controlled in combat units within an Army
division. The investigation is focused on the identification
and cause of training distractions and the commander's role
in eliminating or controlling them.
Investigation reveals that the commander can eliminate or
control many distractions to training. A model has been

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

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This study attempts to determine how training distractions can be eliminated or controlled in combat units within an Army division. The investigation focuses on the identification and cause of training distractions and the commander's role in eliminating or controlling them.

Investigation reveals that the commander cannot eliminate or control all distractions to training. Some training distractions, such as personnel shortages and limited resources, are beyond the commander's ability to eliminate or control. The commander does, however, have the ability to eliminate or control many training distractions, such as low morale and conflicting problems.

A model is presented in this study to assist the commander in eliminating or controlling training distractions.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION
BACKGROUND

The Army training environment holds many problems for the combat unit commander within an Army division. The commander is responsible for all training conducted in his unit. One of the more perplexing problems facing the combat commander in today's Army is how to eliminate or control training distractions in his unit.

Training distractions are activities that impede, prevent, negate, or disrupt the constant flow of training. Training distractions exist in most combat units in US Army divisions, and most commanders' training efforts are affected by training distractions. Some commanders are so concerned with training distractions that they resort to managing them rather than managing training.¹ Much of the commander's time is devoted to changing, altering, or cancelling training because of the effect of distractions on training.²

Before a commander can successfully eliminate or control training distractions, he must understand the characteristics of training and how training is managed.

Training (teaching, instructing) is a solution or a remedy used to achieve desired results. It implies transferring information to change one's state of knowledge or ability

to perform.³ Performance, in training terms, is the execution of an action or event.

Training in combat units is characterized by formal and informal activities designed to prepare individuals and units for duty performance. Such training in combat units is preparation for destroying the enemy in combat.

Training in the Army follows the concept of performance-oriented training, which employs training objectives expressed in terms of tasks, conditions, and standards.⁴

(See Appendix A for additional definitions of terms related to training.) Performance-oriented training requires an individual or unit to perform one or more "hands-on" tasks instead of trying to learn material through lecture or conference methods of instruction. It is learning by doing.

Army training concepts today delineate specific combat tasks that individuals and units must perform. Each task presented to the individual or unit has a condition of performance and a standard that specifies a level of achievement or criteria for that performance. Unit trainers must insure that the skills required are being acquired by the soldiers through this performance-oriented training.⁵

The trainer's duties also include the requirement to conduct individual and unit training. The commander manages this training.

Training managers in the Army include commanders who develop training programs or provide guidance to commanders

who do.⁶ Training managers perform four functions; they plan the training required to accomplish the mission, provide the necessary resources and guidance, conduct, and evaluate the training.

The training manager or commander must insure that individual tasks are logically molded into unit tasks and that units can perform their collective tasks proficiently. Collective tasks are training tasks that prepare individual soldiers to perform those unit tasks essential to the accomplishment of a unit's mission. Collective training for soldiers is somewhat like training an athletic team. For example, in a tank company, collective training is training each tank crew to fight as a tank team and also to fight as part of a platoon and company. Training managers must conduct long and short-range planning to insure that the correct tasks are being trained and that the integration of these tasks into the training plan is accomplished in a meaningful, efficient way.⁷ The combat commander must know and understand the Army Training System before he can plan and execute his training program in this way.

The Army Training System consists of the training base, training in units, and training support. These three elements form the structure that is responsible for maintaining combat readiness in the US Army.⁸

The soldier begins his Army career, receives his first orientation to the Army, and learns basic job skills in

the training base. The soldier will return to the training base periodically throughout his career to learn more advanced job skills and leadership techniques. United States Army training base includes service schools, installation and post schools, training centers located at colleges and universities and US Army Reserve and National Guard schools and academies.⁹ The second element of the Army Training System, training in units, is the most important.

Training in units involves learning and sustaining proficiency in individual and collective skills that soldiers and units need to accomplish the mission of the organization. The commander is responsible for developing the best mixture of individual and collective training that will insure the soldiers and units sustain proficiency in skills needed.¹⁰

The third element of the Army Training System is training support. There are three types of training support; general resources, services, and training support materials.¹¹ General resources are used in the unit's day-to-day operations. They include facilities, land, fuel, ammunition, funds, personnel, equipment, and time. Services include a broad category of training assistance that does not take the form of products. Training assistance is provided to unit commanders (usually from higher headquarters or from external agencies) in the form of training teams developed to meet specific training needs or requirements. Examples of these teams include mobile training teams, new equipment training teams,

new organization training teams, and contract training teams. Training support materials include training publications, training and audiovisual materials, and correspondence courses.¹²

The combat commander in a division must know and understand the Army Training System in order to plan, resource, conduct, and evaluate training in his unit. To enjoy effective training in preparation for combat, the commander must eliminate those training distractions he can and control those that he cannot eliminate.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Training should be the combat commander's number one priority. Combat unit commanders, however, are normally faced with many missions, some of them perceived as number one. In addition to training, some of these missions are maintenance, quality-of-life programs, short-notice requirements, visits, evaluations, tests, preparation for Inspector General inspections, ceremonies, installation or post support, and force modernization. As a result, the commander has no consistent number one priority.

In a letter in October of 1980 to all commanders, General E. C. Meyer, Chief of Staff of the US Army, had these things to say about training conflictors or distractions.

"After more than a year of talking individually to general officers selected for division command and to newly designated brigade

and battalion commanders at the pre-command course, I am frustrated that one of my central themes is apparently not being emphasized. At every opportunity I have stressed the absolute criticality of discriminating between our real mission of training and maintaining and the ubiquitous conflictors such as administrative workload and unscheduled events that detract from primary mission accomplishment. Commanders must get down to company level and determine conflictors as perceived there. Once identified, conflictors must be tracked upward to determine where they originated and for what purpose. The reason that we must involve ourselves rather than direct our staffs to address conflictors is that many, if not most, conflictors originate from within our own headquarters, ostensibly to meet the commanders' needs as perceived by the staff."¹³

One difficulty in producing effective training in combat arms units is the commander's failure to eliminate or control training distractions in his unit. In order to train to win on the modern battlefield, the commander must take corrective action to eliminate or control training distractions.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Why is it so important to eliminate or control training distractions in combat units? There are many responses to this question. One is because Army Regulation 350-1, Army Training, directs the commander to reduce training distractions in order to achieve the Army's training objectives. Even though the regulation declares that the commander should diminish distractions, probably the most salient point for eliminating or controlling training distractions is for the

soldier, to prepare him for combat. The soldier must be trained and conditioned to fight in time of war. Proper preparation for combat will also bring many soldiers home alive. The commander can better teach the soldier to survive combat if training distractions are reduced.

It is important to eliminate or control training distractions to improve the commander's use of time. The luxury of time the commander had in preparing for past wars is gone forever. The United States Army must be ready to achieve victory on the first day in combat with little warning to prepare for impending war. The commander must have well-trained and well-equipped soldiers to win the first battle of the next war.¹⁴

A soldier's time is valuable to him and to his commander. Despite constant activity, there is much of the soldier's time that is nonproductive - even in the best of combat units. The result is bored soldiers, and bored soldiers do not learn and they do not become well-trained.¹⁵ The commander should not waste the soldier's time with activities that have no purpose other than to fill the training schedule.¹⁶ The soldier's time should be devoted to training that will instruct him to survive combat. General Bruce C. Clarke succinctly said, "Men do in combat exactly what they have been in the habit of doing in training."¹⁷ Therefore, in order to save the soldier's time, the commander must focus his energy on his

mission of training and on eliminating or controlling distractions to training.

Another important reason to eliminate or control distractions is to improve unit cohesion. Training must develop individual soldiers into a cohesive fighting team. The commander must never forget that training to fight is the Army's basic tenet. The training must be well conceived and well executed to accomplish the unit's mission as well as to satisfy the commander's responsibility to the soldier. Good training is the key to soldier morale, job satisfaction, pride, unit cohesion, esprit de corps, and combat effectiveness.¹⁸ The commander can ill afford to have training marred by distractions, thus weakening unit cohesion.

Another notable reason for eliminating or controlling training distractions is for the commander to produce the most effective training with the resources available. The commander has a responsibility to the Army, to Congress, and to the American taxpayer to conceive, plan, and execute the best training possible utilizing allocated resources. Allowing training to be degraded by training distractions can prove to be a waste of taxpayer dollars.

Distractions to training can also affect the commander's ability to lead. Leadership, as defined in Army Field Manual 22-100, Military Leadership, is a process in which a soldier applies his beliefs, values, ethics, character, knowledge, and skills to influence others to accomplish the

mission.¹⁹ How does leadership relate to training? The relationship is that training is the main way in which a leader or commander exercises leadership.²⁰ Leaders are the best trainers because they know the unit and its needs, they are in the best position to know what training the soldiers need, they can better control what motivates their soldiers, and they have the most to gain from having a skilled and trained unit.²¹ Therefore, if training is not what it should be because of training distractions, then the commander's ability to lead may be lessened. Obviously, leadership is necessary to accomplish the mission. Leadership is another consideration for eliminating or controlling distractions to training.

Training not only enhances leadership but also is the key to professionalism. The core of professionalism is expertise. Expertise is acquired through a soldier's personal effort and the training he receives. However, personal effort and training can build a soldier's expertise only when he is working toward, or is being directed toward, standards of performance that he can understand. The true professional trainer/commander insures his soldiers can meet established standards of performance.²² The commander or trainer can increase his own professionalism and the professionalism of his soldiers by eliminating or controlling training distractions.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to determine how training distractions can be eliminated or controlled by commanders of combat arms units within an Army division. This purpose was derived after the examination of extensive training management data and from personal experience in training and training management. The project keys on books, Army publications and articles written about training in the US Army. The study also examines two Army Research Institute studies that deal with training distractions. The results of this study are intended to assist the commander of a combat unit in eliminating as many training distractions as possible and controlling those that cannot be eliminated in order to improve his training program.

ASSUMPTIONS

The following assumptions are pertinent to this study.

1. Training distractions in one form or another exist in most US Army combat units within a division.
2. Training distractions affect the commander's ability to plan and execute training.
3. Some training distractions within a combat unit in a division can be eliminated by the commander.
4. Those training distractions that cannot be eliminated by the commander can only be controlled.

5. There are some distractions that cannot be eliminated or controlled.

METHODOLOGY

Questions for this study consist of the following:

1. What are training distractions in combat units within an Army division?
2. Which training distractions can be eliminated and which can be controlled by the commander?

LIMITATIONS

1. This study is limited to an examination of training in combat arms units within an Army division.
2. Army divisions examined in this document are armored, infantry, and mechanized infantry.
3. Combat arms commanders are defined (for the purpose of this study) as officers who command armor, armored cavalry, field artillery, infantry, and mechanized infantry units at company/battery/troop, battalion/squadron, brigade or division level.

This thesis is organized in the following manner. The main body consists of five chapters: the introduction; a discussion of training distractions in combat units within a division; a discussion of which training distractions can be eliminated or controlled; an examination of the commander's role in

eliminating or controlling training distractions; and a final chapter that addresses conclusions, recommendations and implications for further study. Appendix A contains a definition of training terms and Appendix B is the training distractions model.

END NOTES

¹Major Dennis Coates, "Training Distractions: What to do about them", Army Trainer, (1982), 18.

²Coates, 20.

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⁴Major Gary S. Willison, "The Battalion Commander's Guide to Successful Training", (1980), 3.

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⁶US Army, How to Conduct Training in Units, FM 25-3 (Draft) (1982), 1-1.

⁷FM 25-3, 1-1.

⁸FM 25-3, 1-2.

⁹FM 25-3, 1-2.

¹⁰FM 25-3, 1-8.

¹¹FM 25-3, 1-8.

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¹⁴DA Pam 360-822, Commanders Call, US Army Command Information Unit, (1975), 4.

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¹⁶LTC (P) Stanley G. Bonta, "Battalion Commanders Speak Out", US Army War College, (1977), 5-4.

¹⁷General Bruce C. Clarke, "Training Principles", The Army Reservist, (1958), 6.

¹⁸LTC Michael E. Ekman, "Army Total Training System", Commanders Call, (1982), 9.

¹⁹FM 22-100, Military Leadership, US Army Command and General Staff College, (1983), 2-1.

²⁰P971, Training Management, US Army Command General Staff College, (1983), ii.

²¹FM 25-3 (Draft), How to Conduct Training in Units, US Army Training Board, (1982), 1-1.

²²FM 21-6, How to Prepare and Conduct Military Training, US Army Infantry School, (1975), i.

CHAPTER 2

TRAINING DISTRACTIONS IN COMBAT UNITS

Training distractions are rarely addressed in depth in training regulations, guides, pamphlets, books, or articles. In Army Regulation 350-1, Army Training, one of the Army's training objectives is to, "Conserve training resources through increased use of training devices, and simulation and by reducing training detractors, particularly at battalion and company level."¹ The Battalion Commander's Handbook advises battalion commanders to "develop a feeling for training distractors and then make every effort to stamp them out."² This chapter will discuss two publications that identify and explain training distractions and define their causes and effects on units within an Army division.

Training distractions in combat units within an Army division can be classified into the following four categories: those dealing with personnel, resources, training plans, and training execution.

Training distractions dealing with personnel are probably the most frustrating to the commander. Unit personnel shortages and turbulence can be described as one of the factors that prevent the achievement of high training readiness required to execute the Army's mission. A low fill of personnel in a unit makes training difficult. Without a full

complement of authorized soldiers to operate and maintain equipment, some of the equipment may eventually become nonoperational. Soldiers will then lose valuable training time because of a lack of equipment for training.

Shortages of personnel, particularly key personnel (sergeants), usually result in centralization of training at company/battery/troop level.³ (See Appendix A for an explanation of centralized training.) Some commanders have zeroed out platoons and sections and have consolidated crews for training and maintenance because of personnel shortages. This is not conducive to realistic training because it causes hardships on personnel who are in the unit, and it overworks the equipment. This adds a burden on the commander and on the soldiers he is attempting to train. The soldiers must continue to maintain both those vehicles that are manned and those that are not manned.

Personnel turbulence is created by battalion, brigade, and division, as well as the company commander who shifts human resources from position to position to fill vacancies or solve personnel problems. Further problems exist when the soldier is transferred from one duty position to another. There is a time lag between the time the soldier steps into a new job and the time the soldier is qualified or proficient in that duty position.⁴

Another people-related training distraction is the low education level of the soldiers. Lower education levels generally indicate that individual soldiers as well as the unit require a greater training effort in order to attain an acceptable level of proficiency.⁵ In this modern age of advanced combat and tactical vehicles and aircraft, the soldier must be able to read and comprehend in order to repair and operate the equipment. If a soldier cannot perform the duties because of his present education level, then the soldier must be enrolled in the Basic Education Program or the Army Continuing Education Service to give him the basic skills of reading and mathematics.⁶ Commanders who are reluctant to make this investment for the soldier may pay a high price in training effectiveness. This basic education for the soldier will cut into the military training time of the soldier but will eventually benefit the soldier and the unit in the future. The improved education level of the soldier will pay dividends to both the soldier and the unit.⁷

Another personnel training distraction is low morale of the individual soldier. There are many reasons for low morale among soldiers. Some causes are job dissatisfaction, personal problems, or neglect of the soldier by his commander. Motivating soldiers continues to be an important challenge to the combat commander.

As with low morale, personal or individual problems,

if allowed to go undetected or unsolved, will spread to other soldiers in the unit. Personal problems take time from training, usually involve the commander, and detract from the unit's ability to prepare for combat.⁸

Limited resources continues to be a paramount training distraction to the commander. Unavailability of key resources such as fuel, training land, ammunition, and funds can adversely affect a unit's ability to successfully accomplish its mission.⁹ Time can also be classified as a limited resource if it is not properly managed and effectively used by the commander.

Commanders occasionally act in what they think is the best interest of their unit only to find out they have generated a training distraction.¹⁰ The higher the level of command, the greater the scope and force of the distraction. For example, excessive mandatory training can be a planning distraction. Originally conceived to assist commanders and soldiers, mandatory training sometimes overburdens the unit and becomes a distraction to training plans. If a unit's commander has demanding training programs, it is very difficult to interject additional training needed for mission accomplishment or readiness.¹¹

Commanders at division and brigade, who impose much of the mandatory training, are not always sure what type of training is required and in what amounts. The quantity and variety of training needed is best determined by the battalion and

company/battery/troop commanders who know and understand their units' training strengths and weaknesses.

In the past two decades, the Department of the Army has established a number of worthwhile programs to correct deficiencies in education, maintenance of equipment, supply accountability, racial harmony, equal opportunity, sexual abuse and harassment, drug usage and abuse and in many other areas.¹² Occasionally, these programs have been initiated at the expense of training. Rather than phasing a new program into his long-range plan, commanders sometimes cancel scheduled tactical or mission-essential training to accommodate quality-of-life programs. These programs then become training distractions. These well-meaning programs have solved many dilemmas in units, but, at the same time, they have absorbed time normally dedicated to training.¹³

Planning to train is a time-consuming activity for the commander. When changes to the training plan occur, supplemental planning must be done.¹⁴ As a result, preplanned training is altered or cancelled. Inability to follow planned training activities will certainly result in a training distraction.

Visits, inspections, and evaluations are normally productive in assisting the commander by identifying strengths and weaknesses in his unit.¹⁵ However, they can become training distractions if time and effort are spent to create a favorable appearance or impression by the unit. Thus the

visitor, inspector, or evaluator may not see the unit as it really is. If a show is substituted for good training, a training distraction occurs. Unit morale and proficiency that quality training produces will be degraded by this distraction.¹⁶

Numerous nonmission essential and nontactical work details or tasks (e.g., soldiers detailed to operate facilities, conduct post or installation guard) are required for the operation of an installation or post. These slice into training time and are distractions to training by taking soldiers away from training. Even though some benefit can be gained from guard duty, such as drill and ceremonies experience and improving reaction to verbal commands, the benefits do not outweigh the costs incurred by the absence from training. Nonmission essential tasks do not normally prepare the soldier for combat.

Crisis management results when combat units are given short-notice requirements to accomplish.¹⁷ When a commander receives an unexpected mission or a short-notice requirement, he must alter the present training plan in order to accomplish this additional mission or task. This training distraction causes abrupt changes of training, disrupts the planning effort, and affects the execution of training.

An Army Research Institute (ARI) study conducted in May of 1980 explores in depth the categories of training

distractions previously mentioned. The study, Training Detractors in FORSCOM Divisions and How They are Handled, used initial research conducted at Fort Ord, California, with additional study from four other Army divisions in U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM). These divisions are all based in the United States.¹⁸ The study utilized techniques to include structured interviews designed for different duty positions and levels of command, and questionnaires administered to personnel in company/battery/troop leadership positions within the divisions. The study questionnaire was designed to identify those soldiers who performed nonmission essential tasks at company/battery/troop level, how much time these tasks consumed, and their impact on combat training. Figure 1 below depicts the number and type of units that participated in the study.

Unit	Type	Number
Division	Infantry	1
	Mechanized	2
	Armor	2
		<u>5</u>
Brigades	Infantry	1
	Mechanized	3
	Armor	2
	Division Artillery	<u>2</u>
		8
Battalions	Infantry	2
	Mechanized	5
	Armor	4
	Field Artillery	<u>4</u>
		15
Companies/ Batteries/ Troops	Infantry	4
	Mechanized	8
	Armor	6
	Field Artillery	<u>6</u>
		24

Figure 1¹⁹

Figure 2 below indicates the number of interviews that were conducted, the duty position, and unit of each interviewee.

Unit	Position	Number
Division	Commander	2
	Assistant Division Commander	4
	Chief of Staff	2
	G1	4
	G3	5
	G4	4
	AG	5
	OESO*	4
Brigade/Division Artillery	Commander	7
	Executive Officer	4
	S1	7
	S3	7
	S4	7
Battalion	Commander	14
	Executive Officer	12
	S1	15
	S3	15
	S4 and Motor Officer	14
Company/Battery/ Troop	Commander	24
	Executive Officer	21
	First Sergeant	21
	Total	<u>198</u>

Figure 2²⁰

*Organizational Effectiveness Staff Officer

Four areas were initially assumed to be training distractions by the Army Research Institute Study: personnel, equipment, time, and training land.

In addition to identifying training distractions, the

study was designed to identify the impact of training distractions and methods used to eliminate or control them. Commanders were also asked for their recommendations and ideas for potential solutions. (Recommendations and methods to eliminate or control training distractions will be considered in Chapter 4.)

Interviewees were asked to respond in two ways to the questions of training distractions. First, they were asked to name and describe what they perceived to be the training distractions in their units. Next, they were asked specific questions about the impact and the management methods used to cope with the training distractions.

The most significant training distractions (reported in rank order based on the frequency with which they were cited by level or command) are shown in Figure 3 below.

Distraction	Company/Battery	Battalion	Brigade/DIVARTY	Division
• Personnel Shortages	1	1	1	1*
• Individual Performance	2	3	3	3
• Turbulence	3	4	2*	1*
• Installation support and taskings	4	2	2*	2
• Lack of equipment and materiel	5			
• Lack of time	6			

Figure 3²¹

*Indicates a tie in rank ordering distractions

Commanders at all levels ranked personnel shortages as the most disruptive of distractions. A disparity occurred, however, in that company commanders selected six distractions to training, battalion commanders selected four and brigade and division commanders selected only three. Personnel shortages were cited as a training distraction and a contributor to other distractions because of the importance of the duty positions that were not manned. While overall soldier fill was considered adequate in each of the divisions surveyed (from 84-91 percent), critical shortages occurred in battalions in the areas of sergeants and staff sergeants.²²

The impact of personnel shortages in these critical leadership and technical positions was further magnified by placing some of these personnel on special duty at division or brigade headquarters or to perform installation or post functions. Average division headquarters elements were staffed at 118-180 percent of authorized strengths. The impact of personnel shortages at company and battalion level in these critical areas included reduction of soldier performance because of insufficient numbers of leaders/sergeants and reduction of safety both in the soldier living areas and when operating combat equipment due to lack of supervision. In addition, inexperienced personnel functioning as sergeants caused wasted training time, low quality training, and poor maintenance of equipment and supply procedures because initial entry-level

personnel could not perform sergeants' functions. Lastly, the number of untrained individual soldiers increased because there were insufficient numbers of proficient sergeants to add the skills between those acquired in the Army training base and those required for unit functioning.²³

In the area of individual performance, soldiers were described by commanders as being less responsible and less dependable than necessary in an environment with insufficient numbers of leaders/sergeants. Specific problems included English language proficiency, literacy, reading difficulty, and inability to self-supervise and self-train. This situation in units resulted in higher numbers of discipline/adjustment problems and caused more Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) actions and expeditious discharges from the Army. Further, a lower level of individual training and proficiency resulted from the soldier's inability to self-train and an insufficient number of qualified unit trainers.²⁴

Personnel turbulence, especially among sergeants, was consistently named as a principal distraction to combat training. Across the divisions sampled, enlisted turbulence averaged 71 percent per year leaving the divisions (ranging from 44-92 percent). Not only was turbulence cited as a training distraction in itself, but it was also a major contributor to poor individual performance levels.

The most frequently mentioned negative effects of

personnel turbulence were that collective training above company/battery/troop level could not effectively be performed and that readiness reports were sometimes obsolete soon after they were completed. (Readiness reports measure a unit's operational readiness with respect to the unit's ability to perform in combat.) Additionally, the study revealed that commanders were continually frustrated by attempting to train units to higher levels of proficiency than the experience of the soldiers would allow, and progressive individual and unit training was not always possible. Commanders also remarked that soldiers in critical duty positions departed the unit to another assignment soon after reaching minimum competency levels.²⁵

A leading training distraction is the support of installation or post activities and tasking to perform nonmission-related duties that take personnel away from units. Some of these duties are special duty assignments to division headquarters and installation activities and maintenance of the installation facilities such as firing ranges and buildings. Reserve component and Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) support were particularly damaged by individual taskings. Some of these taskings, however, did enhance individual training by allowing individual service members to instruct in their military area of expertise and indirectly preparing them for combat, but these taskings did not enhance collective training.

These taskings tended to deplete combat unit strength, and especially strength of critical personnel, and destroyed planning and preparation that had been performed. It also reduced the quality of future planning.²⁶

The most frequently mentioned training distraction in the area of equipment and material were shortages of training ammunition and of repair parts during intensive training periods. In addition, key equipment such as tanks and armored personnel carriers were nonoperational for long periods of time because they were under repair at unit or support unit facilities. The lack of equipment and material most frequently resulted in the reduction of use of service (live) ammunition, thus reducing realism in training, and in the inability to use vehicles that were in maintenance, which reduced training participation. Commanders also indicated a hesitation to turn in vehicles that were over maximum mileage because they feared there would be no replacement vehicle. Lastly, commanders mentioned that some time was wasted trying to find repair parts.²⁷

The study revealed that a lack of time was found to be the major problem at company level and a minor one at division level. When time was mentioned as a training distraction, it was stated frequently that time was wasted or not provided in adequate "blocks" to be used effectively. Time was identified as a problem, by command level, to the extent shown in Figure 4

below in planning and execution of training. The percentages represent a total of commanders who consider lack of time as a distraction.

Response	Company/Battery/ Troop	Battalion	Brigade/ Division
Not enough time	70%	34%	22%

Figure 4²⁸

As might be expected, those levels of command with staffs and higher concentrations of officers and experienced sergeants perceived time to be less of a problem. Time demands and lack of time were considered to contribute to lower training levels because there was insufficient time to correct identified deficiencies.²⁹

Certain conclusions may be drawn from the study mentioned above. First, training distractions do exist in combat units within an Army division. Secondly, they impede, hamper, and sometimes negate the commander's ability to effectively train his unit for combat.

Do commanders of European-based combat units suffer from training distractions? The answer to that question is yes. The Army Research Institute study of April 1979, Status of Unit Training within USAREUR Units, discussed training distractions in combat units in Europe. The study surveyed 15 battalions (armor, armored cavalry, mechanized infantry, and

field artillery) concerning the status of training. A representative sample of experienced company/battery/troop commanders, S3's (training officers), and battalion commanders were surveyed by questionnaire and interview.³⁰ Commanders reported a large number of training distractions. Many of the distractions were also mentioned by the stateside commanders in the previous study examined. Those training distractions reported by the European-based commanders included too much command emphasis on nontactical and nonmission-essential programs, lack of personnel, and constraints on training.³¹

Constraints on training were reported by 50 percent of the commanders surveyed. Constraints on training were identified as limited training time, limited training areas, irrelevant guard and support missions of installations or posts, changing and conflicting priorities, limited training facilities, and limited funds.³²

Personnel shortage was designated as a training distraction, but not to the degree that it was to FORSCOM commanders. Units were missing only small numbers of sergeants who held critical duty positions. (European-based divisions enjoy a higher percentage of personnel fill than do the United States-based divisions because of their war-deterrent mission in Europe.) European-based unit commanders did have a problem with a lack of personnel present for training. (Present for training is the actual number of soldiers physically at the

training site, location or activity.) This number varied from 35 to 85 percent, with an average of 63 percent of the soldiers assigned who were present for training on a daily basis.

Emphasis on nontactical programs, such as high school education programs, drug abuse programs, and nonmission-essential activities as support of post and installation activities were some of the causes of low present for training strength.³³

Commanders reported that only 38 percent of their combat-related training could be conducted in the unit area, leaving 62 percent to be conducted at local training areas or major training areas. Local training areas are areas located on or near the unit's garrison location, and major training areas are larger training areas that are usually farther removed from the unit's garrison location. Commanders stated that they lost valuable training time and increased wear and tear on equipment while moving to and from local and major training areas. This was a training distraction to these commanders.³⁴

One of the major training distractions to commanders in Europe was changes to training plans. Half of the commanders surveyed stated that changes to planned training were a constant problem. Considering that 90 percent of the training plans covered a short period, 5 to 7 days, changes reported frequently reflect a deficiency in the ability to plan training in advance.³⁵

Changes to the training plans were caused by changes in tasks or commitments from higher headquarters, training management difficulties at battalion and below, changes in resource availability, changes in maintenance requirements, scheduling problems and command vacillation. Results of the scheduling changes were low morale and confusion among the soldiers and officers, less time to prepare training, training degradation, and disruption of the continuity of training.³⁶ Maintaining the training plan is not the hardest undertaking for commanders; the execution of the plan is the most difficult.

The most challenging task for the commander is to implement his planned training program. Commanders are normally satisfied with the planning of training, but not always with the execution or results of training. The quality of training execution is not to their expectations. Commanders have revealed that training is hampered by the training distractions of personnel shortages and turbulence, lack of resources, and lack of time. These training distractions affect the commander's plan of training. When training distractions adversely affect the planning of training, they in turn affect the most important portion of training, the execution of training.

Chapter 2 has examined two Army Research Institute studies and through this examination, two conclusions can be drawn. The first is that training distractions do exist in

combat units (company, battalion, and brigade) within an Army division. The second is that the type and quantity of training distractions in combat units is dependent upon the unit's mission, the commander's priorities, and the priority of fill for personnel based on unit's mission. For example, in Figure 5, the state-side commanders indicated the activities below to be training distractions.

Distractions to Combat Training of State-side Divisions

DISTRACTION	Rank Order (and % responding)			
	Company/Battery (n=66)	Battalion (n=55) *	Brigade/DIVARTY (n=25) *	Division (n=17) *
• Personnel shortages	1 (61%)	1 (45%)	1 (60%)	1 (71%)
• Individual performance	2 (33)	3 (22)	3* (12)	3 (24)
• Turbulence	3 (32)	4 (18)	2* (32)	1* (71)
• Installation support and Taskings	4 (29)	2 (31)	2* (32)	2 (35)
• Lack of equipment and materiel	5 (24)	6 (7)	5* (4)	- -
• Lack of time	6 (18)	5 (9)	5* (4)	- -
• Lack of training areas and ranges	7 (12)	7* (4)	4 (8)	- -
• Budget	8* (6)	7* (4)	5* (4)	4* (6)
• Maintenance support	8* (6)	8 (2)	- -	- -
• Micromanagement	8* (6)	- -	5* (4)	4* (6)
• Inspections	9 (5)	- -	3* (12)	- -

*Number of responses at battalion, brigade/division artillery, and division level exclude interviews conducted with S1, G1, Adjutant General, Organizational Effectiveness Staff Officer, and Comptroller.

• Indicates a tie in ratings

Figure 5³⁷

A disparity occurred in Figure 5 in rating of distraction by commanders. The higher the level of command, the fewer training distractions mentioned.

The European combat commanders listed a few different training distractions as depicted in Figures 6 and 7 below.

Training Distractions to European Combat Units

Training Distraction	Percent of Total Respondents*
Constraints on training (see Figure 6)	57%
Command emphasis on non-tactical programs	50%
Lack of personnel	25%
Lack of cross training with other units	25%
Lack or poor condition of equipment	16%
Lack of definition of mission	2%
None	9%

*Total number of respondents = 44

Figure 6³⁸

USAREUR Training Constraints

Constraint	Average Hindrance Rating*	Number of Respondents
Limited training time	3.5	45
Limited training areas	3.5	45
Limited personnel availability	3.2	45
Loss of key personnel	2.9	45
Lack of Qualified NCOs	2.8	44
Limited training ammunition	2.9	45
Limited training aids	2.4	45
Absence or counterproductivity of training policy	2.1	44
Limited training guidance	1.6	44

*Rating Scale:

3.5-4.0 = Great hindrance

2.5-3.4 = Moderate hindrance

1.5-2.4 = Little hindrance

1.0-1.4 = No hindrance

Figure 7³⁹

The following training distractions were mentioned by both the state-side and European commanders; lack of personnel, lack of training time, nonmission essential activities, and lack of resources. Since these training distractions were identified by both groups of commanders, it could be reasoned that these are the most degrading to effective training. Some distractions mentioned, however, are unique to the geographical location of the command. For example, ROTC support is not performed in Europe. Thus, it was not mentioned as a distraction.

In addition to the distractions mentioned, the commander can expect new ones created by force modernization. The next decade of the Army's life will be one of great transition. Force modernization will include changes in four areas: doctrine, force structure, materiel, and training.

The "AirLand Battle" doctrine is now being taught in Army schools, the "Army 86" organization and its new equipment are being planned for and procured for units, and the training concepts that will keep units abreast of the changing Army are being developed.⁴⁰

Training in the combat units must be synchronized with old concepts as well as the new ones. It must meet both the needs of the current training missions and the future ones based on modernization. This will present the commander with added training distractions and reinforce some of those training distractions that presently oppose effective training.

The commander must be able to train individual soldiers and junior officers to effectively employ and maintain more complex, lethal, and expensive equipment. He will be required to attain and maintain readiness standards in difficult situations. There will be an increase on the demands for time, greater restrictions on the availability of training areas, and additional costs for ammunition. The commander will be required to train his unit on two or perhaps three like systems during this transition period. This situation will require additional training support products, different training objectives for the use of different equipment, and more assistance from the commander's higher headquarters to produce meaningful training.

The commander may experience difficulty in maintaining present training standards and combat readiness because of the changes in materiel, organizations, and doctrine. The combat commander will be required to produce high quality training and to specifically justify the additional resources needed to obtain this quality training.

The commander may expect high levels of personnel turbulence in spite of the regimental system. The regimental system may not solve the personnel turbulence problem. He may not receive increased resources to assist him in his transition. Normally allocated funds may be required to be used for day-to-day expenses in addition to modernization expenses.

In order to survive this transition, the commander must develop policies that competently manage training and resources to remain combat ready.

Only after force modernization is implemented in his unit will the commander be able to determine if he has the ability and resources to eliminate or control these training distractions.

To produce effective, well-trained units and individual soldiers, the commander must eliminate or control training distractions. Which training distractions can be eliminated and which ones can be controlled? This question will be answered in the following chapter.

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¹⁰Coates, 23.

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CHAPTER 3

WHICH TRAINING DISTRACTIONS CAN BE ELIMINATED OR CONTROLLED?

Chapter 2 discussed the categories of training distractions and presented their effects on the commander's ability to effectively train his unit. This chapter will identify the training distractions that cannot be eliminated or controlled by the commander and those that can.

A variety of training distractions cannot be eliminated or controlled by the company/battery/troop, battalion, brigade, or division commander. Personnel shortages is one such distraction. The responsibility to eliminate or control this most disruptive of all training distractions belongs to the Department of the Army, Department of Defense, and Congress. (This distraction may be unsolvable even at that level.) The combat commander, however, has neither the resources, ability, or authority to do so.

The other training distraction dealing with personnel, personnel turbulence, may have its adverse impact lessened by the regimental system that the Army is now testing. Until recently, the Army has been managing the distribution and assignment of soldiers on an individual basis. With the advent of Cohesion, Operational Readiness, and Training (COHORT) companies, batteries, and troops as the prelude to the regimental system, the Army anticipates a reduction of personnel

turbulence in these units while giving the individual soldier a new sense of identity and unit pride.¹

Lack of resources for training will always be a serious distraction. Lack of funds, training areas, and fuel pose a serious problem to the commander. Because of congressional budget restrictions, imposed budget restraints by the Army, the combat commander will always suffer from a lack of these needed resources. His only recourse is to judiciously manage what funds he has been allocated and plan his training accordingly.

The commander can seldom eliminate or control changes initiated by his higher headquarters. The commander must operate within the changes and guidance set forth by his commander. He may attempt to anticipate future changes by his superiors, but he has no capability to get rid of or regulate externally created changes that adversely affect his training plans. In addition, the commander has little influence over his superiors who place emphasis on certain programs (training or non-training), policies, and activities. He must accomplish the missions and tasks assigned to him and stress those areas that his superiors emphasize.

The execution of training is affected by changes, short-notice requirements and guidance from higher headquarters. The commander may only react to and not eliminate or control these training distractions. These training distractions adversely affect the commander's execution of training.

However, on occasion, a change could positively affect the execution of training. For example, if a commander received a mission or a task that he felt was impractical or nonmission essential, he could request a deviation from that task from his superiors. If approved this change would be beneficial to his unit. Generally, the commander is able to negate the adversity these distractions of training bring about.

The commander's ability to eliminate or control training distractions in his unit (company through division) is dependent on several variables: the unit's priority of personnel fill, command guidance, command climate, and the commander's motivation or level of commitment to eliminate or control training distractions. These variables are important in the commander's ability to get rid of or to regulate training distractions. These variables will be developed later in this chapter.

The combat commander does have the power or the assets to eliminate or control some training distractions involving personnel, training plans, and the execution of training. Distractions to training dealing with personnel who possess low education levels may be solved by the company or battalion commander. The commander may elect to send the soldier to school to raise his education level. The soldier will probably miss some training periods initially, but the trade-off of enrolling him in school versus not enrolling him will

result in a better educated soldier and probably improved soldier performance.

Low morale among soldiers can be improved if not eliminated. Motivating soldiers is a never-ending process. It continues to challenge even the most imaginative commander.² Probably the most important factor in assuring high morale among soldiers is the commander's responsibility to know his soldiers and to look out for their well-being. A commander who sincerely cares for his soldiers will usually have a unit with high morale. Keeping soldiers informed, insuring that tasks and missions are understood, supervised, and accomplished, and employing the unit in accordance with its capabilities will result in positive leadership which will yield high unit morale.³ High morale will normally increase the soldier's receptivity to training.

The majority of personal problems in a unit may be resolved by the commander if detected early and if positive corrective action is taken. These personal problems, however, can never be completely eradicated from a combat unit. Some soldiers will always have personal problems.

The commander has the ability to reduce internal personnel turbulence in his unit through effective personnel management. Detailed planning based on personnel losses and gains will reduce internal personnel turbulence. Unexpected losses of personnel will sometimes occur, resulting in internal reassignment of soldiers.

In summary the training distractions of low education levels, low morale, and personal problems can normally be solved by the company or battalion commander's sincere concern and care for his troops. The commander can also reduce internal personnel turbulence.

Unlike personnel training distractions, the commander has a limited capacity to eliminate or control those distractions involving resources. To some commanders, time is a limited or precious resource. The commander can only manage his own time, he cannot guide the time of his superiors or the time of his subordinates. He may recommend time management fundamentals or systems to those subordinate to him who require assistance, but he cannot influence external time management. He cannot manage the time of either his superiors or his subordinates. Poor time management by these persons adversely affects his training plans and actions. Other resources, such as funds, fuel, training land and areas, can only be managed more efficiently by the commander. The commander will never receive all of the resources he feels he needs or requires to train his unit as he would like.

The commander can dispose of or regulate the majority of programs that conflict with training. For example, he can establish his own training management system or, preferably, he can use those provided by the Army. Two good systems are BTMS and CTMS. The Battalion Training Management System (BTMS)

trains leaders from squad through battalion level on how to plan, resource, conduct, and evaluate training. The Commander's Training Management System (CTMS) trains commanders and their staffs above the battalion level to perform their duties in the Army Training System.⁴ Through these systems, the commander can learn how to properly handle internal changes, conflicting programs, and time management. These systems will assist the commander in eliminating or controlling training distractions.

There are several things that can be done to eliminate or control training distractions to the execution of training. First, and probably most important, training should be the number one priority. Training should be accomplished first and then other activities next. A second way to reduce distractions to the execution of training is to insure all activities of a unit are coordinated with training. All activities should be planned to support training. Focusing evaluations on the execution of training will also help to reduce distractions as will allowing subordinate commanders to make decentralized decisions about their training. The last procedure to eliminate or control distractions to the execution of training is to require subordinate commanders to train in spite of distractions. This is probably the best solution to the problem.

The commander is the only individual who can eliminate or control training distractions. Bringing training distractions under control is one of the most difficult challenges he

faces in time of peace. The commander is confronted with this challenge daily. Many coordinated efforts are required to eliminate or control training distractions. Unless these distractions to training are minimized, commanders may be unable to prepare soldiers for combat even if soldiers are highly motivated and well equipped.⁵ To minimize these distractions the commander must adopt certain policies to eliminate or control training distractions. Chapter 4 examines the commander's role in solving the training distraction issue.

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CHAPTER 4

COMMANDER'S ROLE IN ELIMINATING OR CONTROLLING TRAINING DISTRACTIONS

The emphasis on systems modernization, massed fire power, and greater mobility tends to lead soldiers to the conclusion that they, as individuals, are not an important factor on the modern battlefield. The commander should avoid this pitfall. The unit's training program should be a balance of building individual soldier skills and confidence through unit training. The thrust should be to challenge and to impress the individual soldier that he is the key to success.¹ The only way to insure this success is to make training the most important activity in the unit. To elevate training to its proper position in unit priorities, the commander must be the focal point in eliminating or controlling training distractions.

In addition to those specific recommendations mentioned in Chapter 3 to eliminate or control training distractions, the commander must establish goals that will aid in elimination or control of training distractions. These goals fall into the categories of training planning, training evaluation and inspection, staff planning, decentralization, and the execution of training.

The first set of goals should be established by the

division/post commander. These goals are listed below:

- Make training the number one priority.² If this is not a realistic goal, then reduce the number of "number one" priorities that a commander has. The number one priority in a unit is what that unit spends the most time on, the most resources on and involves the most soldiers in. Training should be the single activity that cancels all other activities. It should not give way to higher priority programs or be done after other priority tasks have been accomplished. All of the commander's efforts should be focused on making training number one.

- Establish a training cycle plan to enhance training. For example, the X,Y,Z concept is used successfully by many divisions in the Army. The cycle X, or prime time for training, could consist of three 7-day weeks. The Y cycle could follow, consisting of two 7-day weeks dedicated to individual training or semi-prime time training. The last cycle, Z, could consist of three 7-day weeks used for post support missions and some training if time permits.³

- Establish a healthy climate for training.⁴ For example, a commander should be allowed to make training mistakes and benefit from them. Mistakes are necessary for learning.

- Have medical, dental and other soldier support activities coincide with the training cycle.⁵ This will allow more soldier participation in training and enforce the "training is number one" philosophy.

- Do away with nonmission essential activities such as roadside spot checks, formal replies by indorsement and pre-inspection inspections.⁶ Normally, these do not add to combat readiness.

The division commander must set the pace and the direction of training in his division. Subordinate commanders will emphasize training to the same degree as the division commander.

Commanders in the division should attempt to establish the following goals:

- Commanders should require that all nonmission essential tasks be fully justified before accepting the task.⁷ All work details should be reevaluated and the approving authority should be elevated if necessary.

- Commanders throughout the division should know and understand their role in the Army Training System.

- "Override dumb things."⁸ The commander should cancel those things that are stupid and do not enhance training.

- Base all training on the preparation to go to war and win.⁹ If a task or mission does not fit this criteria, then it is nonmission essential. Realistically, however, these requirements exist and some must be accomplished. Attempt to reduce nonmission essential tasks.

- Make every commander responsible for the collective training of his unit as well as individual training of its members.¹⁰ This should begin with the squad leader and continue through the division commander. In addition, each individual soldier shares some of that responsibility for his own development.

Commanders should establish goals in order to eliminate or control training distractions dealing with the evaluation of training. Those goals are listed below:

- Evaluate proposed training programs before accepting them.¹¹ If the proposed training program is not realistic or does not produce realistic results, then it should not be accepted.

- Commanders should not overemphasize training evaluations or inspections.¹² Training benefits are sometimes lost if too much emphasis is placed on them.

- Inspect the inspector.¹³ A formal evaluation should be made of the training inspector. Occasionally the

training inspector knows little about the training he is evaluating and is not qualified to render a proper training evaluation. Inspecting the inspector will surface this type of situation and normally solve it.

Sometimes staffs (battalion through division), seeking to meet the combat commanders' needs as they perceive them, add to rather than reduce training distractions. These goals should assist the commander in eliminating or controlling training distractions caused by his staff:

- Make staffs coordinate the planning of all types of activities, remembering that training is number one.
- Train staffs to avoid initiating short-notice requirements.¹⁴ If possible, short-fused requirements should be denied.

Commanders should decentralize training.¹⁵ The authority and responsibility for the detailed planning, scheduling, conduct, evaluation, and supervision of training should be delegated to the lowest element in the unit that is capable of effectively managing training. This does not relieve higher headquarters from their responsibility to establish objectives, monitor and evaluate training, and issue guidance to insure training effectiveness is maintained.

Training as well as decision making should be decentralized.¹⁶ Company and battalion commanders should be allowed to have the freedom to create training programs to satisfy

their own unit needs. These commanders are in a much better position to make that training determination than the brigade or division commander.

The last goal commanders should establish in their fight to eliminate or control distractions concerns training execution. These goals are as follows:

- Make commanders aware that the execution of training is the most important phase of training. With the lack of personnel and financial resources, emphasis should be placed on increasing the quality of the execution of training.
- Commanders should resist lowering training standards rather than raising training performance.¹⁷

These goals are but one part of the commander's role in eliminating or controlling training distractions. Another important function of the commander is implementing training guidance. In June of 1980, the Chief of Staff of the Army, General E. C. Meyer, issued a paper prepared by the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans that presented a Department of the Army overview of training. It outlined six points essential to effective training and gaining soldier confidence. By following these six points, a commander can reduce training distractions. These six points were:

- The Army must train to tough, measurable standards related to combat tasks.

- The Army must standardize and practice operational battle drills.
- The Army must learn to make and follow good training plans.
- The Army must learn to focus on what is important.
- The Army must learn to work smart and share the load.
- The Army must train and coach subordinates.¹⁸

These six points were the basis of the Army's Standardization Program which was designed to standardize the way the Army is to train and fight as an effective, cohesive team. A standardized effort to plan and follow training programs can result in a standardized effort to eliminate or control training distractions.

Thus far, this chapter has examined the role of the commander in the elimination or control of training distractions by indicating that he must establish goals that will assist him in reducing training distractions, and implementing training guidance such as the Army's Standardization Program. Lastly, the commander's motivation to eliminate or control the distractions must be discussed.

A commander's motivation is a combination of his desires and energies directed at achieving a mission or a goal. Motivation is the cause of action.¹⁹ A commander must

be positively motivated to eliminate or control training distractions.

There are many elements that affect the commander's motivation in eliminating or controlling training distractions. One of these is command guidance. In a March 1981 letter, General Meyer again stated that training is the highest priority. "In several past letters, I have stated and restated my concern with focusing on training and maintaining. I have indicated my discouragement that training has not been the centerpiece of your programs, as I believe it must be if we are to improve the Army's state of readiness."²⁰ This is an indication that some commanders were not placing the emphasis on training as required by the Chief's guidance.

Commanders at division and below are probably not responding because they do not know of the guidance, or they simply do not care, or they are unable to meet his guidance. Probably the real reason for noncompliance with this letter by commanders is that they still have too many number one priorities. From their perspective, nearly all missions are number one. They cannot afford to fail in any mission they are given by their superiors. Rather than trying to do a few things better, commanders attempt to do all things better. As a result training, which is not the number one priority but is usually in the top ten, suffers. Training is accomplished in a mediocre rather than in an outstanding manner. Why are

commanders motivated to classify many missions to include training as number one? One reason is command vacillation.

Command vacillation can appear in the form of changes in training objectives, conflicting training guidance and command guidance, and alterations in command philosophy. Command vacillation adversely affects the commander's motivation to keep training the highest priority or his attempt to elevate it to the number one position.

Command vacillation will cause the commander to establish many missions as number one. For example, one month the commander may designate Reserve Officer Training Corps support as the number one priority; then the next month the number one priority may be preparation for a field training exercise. Command vacillation also affects the commander's motivation in eliminating or controlling training distractions. Because of command vacillation, solving the training distraction problem may be far down the list of things the commander must accomplish. The commander's superiors may feel that solving the distractions problem is not that important. As a result the commander may feel the same way.

The combat commander may feel that solving the training distraction problem is unrealistic and, therefore, not spend time working on the problem. This could cause the commander to concentrate his efforts in other directions and average or substandard training may result. The commander

may also feel that he will always be confronted with training distractions, so why be overly concerned about them.

This chapter has examined the commander's role in eliminating or controlling training distractions by first establishing goals that will assist him in solving this difficulty. Some goals must be established by the division/post commander while others must be developed by the brigade, battalion, company, troop and battery commanders. Implementation of training guidance such as the Army Standardization Program was the next role the commander has to perform. Standardizing training and training efforts will enhance the commander's ability to solve training distractions. This program will assist commanders and will build confidence among soldiers by eliminating some of the frustration and waste of time associated with learning to do the same thing a new way with each soldier's transfer.²¹ Commander's motivation to solve the distraction problem is probably his most important role. If the commander is motivated to set forth an honest and forceful effort to eliminate or control training distractions in his unit, then he will be successful in eliminating and controlling many of them. The commander is the only individual who can do this. He must be convinced that training distractions can be eliminated or controlled and that he is the focal point in this task.

END NOTES

¹US Army War College, The Battalion Commander's Handbook, (1981), 24.

²Major Dennis Coates, "Training Distractions: What to do About Them", Army Trainer, (1982), 23.

³US Army, Fort Carson and the 4th Infantry Division (Mech), Commanding General Policy Memorandum Number 7 - Training Policy, (1981), 4.

⁴LTG Walter F. Ulmer, Jr., "Training Distractions", Guest Speaker at CGSC, 16 February 1983.

⁵Ulmer.

⁶Ulmer.

⁷Coates, 23.

⁸Ulmer.

⁹Ulmer.

¹⁰General R. S. Shoemaker, "Set Objectives, Decentralize", Army Trainer, (1982), 24.

¹¹Coates, 23.

¹²Coates, 23.

¹³Ulmer.

¹⁴Coates, 24.

¹⁵Coates, 23.

¹⁶Coates, 23.

¹⁷Coates, 23.

¹⁸General E. C. Meyer, "Army-Wide Standardization Program", (1980), 2.

¹⁹US Army, Military Leadership, FM 22-100 (Coordinating Draft), (1983), 9-1.

²⁰General E. C. Meyer, Command Letter, Training, (1981).

²¹Meyer, "Army-Wide Standardization Program", 2.

CHAPTER 5

Thus far, this thesis defined the problem of training distractions in Chapter 1, looked at the causes of training distractions in combat units in Chapter 2, and examined which ones can be eliminated or controlled in Chapter 3. In Chapter 4, the role of the commander, company through division, in eliminating or controlling distractions to training was discussed. In Chapter 5 conclusions are drawn about the data presented in the previous chapters. In the recommendation section of Chapter 5, a training distractions model is presented to assist the commander in identifying distractions. The model then leads the commander through a thought process to eliminate or control training distractions. The last section of Chapter 5 lists some further studies which may be undertaken to broaden the efforts of this thesis. Conclusions to this thesis will be discussed first.

CONCLUSIONS

In Chapter 2, training distractions were categorized into four groups; training distractions dealing with personnel, those dealing with limited resources, and those dealing with training planning and execution. Two Army Research Institute surveys revealed that combat units stationed in the United States and in Europe experienced training distractions. Both

of these surveys supported the four groupings above and substantiated the supposition that distractions to training will always be present to a certain degree in combat units.

Chapter 3 examined which training distractions can be eliminated or controlled by the commander. Specific procedures to eliminate or control each group of distractions were discussed, and realistic solutions for the commander were recommended. Those training distractions which cannot and those which can be eliminated or controlled were also discussed in Chapter 3.

As identified in Chapter 4, the commander's role is most important in solving the training distraction dilemma. Before the commander can begin to eliminate or control distractions, he must be convinced that training in peacetime is the most significant event his unit performs. He must make every effort to insure training is the number one priority in his unit. He must believe that making training number one is possible and that it is a realistic and an obtainable goal. He must have the moral courage to back this philosophy with its actions. The commander must also prioritize all other activities after declaring that training will be number one.

The commander, however, must not expect to eliminate or control all training distractions, for this is unrealistic. He must instead accept the fact that some distractions will always be present, and he must conduct training in spite of

these distractions. The commander must make a concentrated effort to rid his unit of the majority of distractions and then attempt to control as many as possible.

The commander must insure his staff has the same mindset about training distractions, that many can be eliminated and most can be controlled. The commander and staff at battalion, brigade, and division must be ruthless about resisting the urge to create additional distractions no matter how well their intention might be.¹

The commander and his staff must also be imaginative in devising ways to help the company commander and first sergeant by scheduling existing requirements to avoid conflicts. The best way to accomplish this is through careful development of the long-(12 to 24 months) and short-(3 to 4 months) range training plans at company level using the Battalion Training Management System (BTMS) planning sequence. (See Appendix A for additional information about BTMS.)

The commander must then be fiercely determined not to alter these well-developed plans once they have been conceived. The sacredness of the training schedule is a great source of comfort to the trainer/commander and to the soldier who will receive the training.² The importance of eliminating or controlling distractions to training for the soldier or for the unit must never be underestimated.

Training is the Army's primary peacetime mission, with

the goal of improving combat readiness by conducting the most realistic training possible with the resources available. However, training occurs in a constrained environment. It is constrained by inadequate budgets, rising costs of equipment, conflicting requirements on available time, personnel problems of turbulence and untrained soldiers, as well as conflicting priorities to the planning and execution of training.³ The commander must cope with these problems that detract from training's number one priority. Force modernization will bring additional challenges for the commander.

The concept and system (The Army Training System) for eliminating or controlling training distractions is in being. Although resources are not abundant, they are adequate. The commander must provide the purpose and dedication to reduce distractions.⁴

Research of this thesis has provided a compendium on training distractions. Its value is that it explains training and gives the commander a start point to begin to reduce training distractions. It provides the commander with data to initiate his quest for distraction-free training.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The information provided in Chapter 1 through 5 and the training distractions model at Appendix B should assist the commander in eliminating or controlling training distractions. The suggestions in this work should allow him to

identify distractions and then choose appropriate solutions to eliminate or control them. It is recommended that the commander use both to reduce training distractions.

The training distractions model was designed to:

- Act as a guide to illustrate how to develop a thought process to eliminate or control distractions.
- Be clear, concise, and useful.
- Be a time saver for the commander in identifying distractions and providing solutions.
- Be applied to any training distraction to any training event.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

This thesis and the model presented will not eliminate or control all of the training distractions the commander will encounter. It is, however, an adaptable tool with employment potential in Army divisions in training and training management. Any person, agency or activity is encouraged to take what has been developed in this thesis and the model and rework, revamp, or revise it to fulfill their training needs. These agencies include, but are certainly not limited to, The U.S. Army Training Board, The U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, and any of the Training and Doctrine Command service schools.

END NOTES

¹P971, Training Management, US Army Command and General Staff College, (1983), 31.

²P971, 31.

³US Army War College, Army Command and Management: Theory and Practice, (1980), 26-5.

⁴Ibid., 20-21.

APPENDIX A

DEFINITION OF TERMS

DEFINITION OF TERMS

BATTALION TRAINING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (BTMS): trains unit officers and NCO to perform their jobs in the Army training system. BTMS trains leaders from squad through battalion level on how to plan, resource, train, and evaluate performance-oriented training.¹

CENTRALIZED TRAINING: Training that is controlled, programed, and conducted by a headquarters normally above company/battery/troop level that is responsible for the training.²

COLLECTIVE TRAINING: Training, either in institutions or units that prepares a group of individuals (crews, teams, squads) to accomplish tasks required of the group as an entity.³

COMBAT READINESS: Capability of a unit to perform its assigned missions as derived through plans; those missions or functions performed in combat. The status of personnel, equipment, supplies, maintenance, and training is considered in determining this capability.⁴

COMMANDER'S TRAINING GUIDANCE: Specific information a commander should provide a trainer to permit that trainer to prepare and to conduct training properly.⁵

COMMANDER'S TRAINING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (CTMS): trains commanders and their staffs above battalion to perform their jobs in the Army training system. CTMS trains these higher level commanders and staffs on how to support the subordinate commanders and how to plan, resource, train, and evaluate their own training needs. Training management instruction in schools prepares students to use the Army training system in their future assignments.⁶

COMMANDER'S TRAINING OBJECTIVE: An objective written in performance terms (task, condition, standard) developed or selected by a commander/training manager that specifies the terminal performance(s) the soldiers undergoing training must meet or exceed.⁷

DECENTRALIZED TRAINING: Release of authority and responsibility for the detailed planning, conduct, and evaluation of training to the battalion or separate company level. Brigade headquarters and division headquarters retain responsibility for providing mission-type guidance to their subordinate units, for allocating training resources, for coordinating, and for supervising and evaluating training.⁸

EVALUATION: A process that seeks to determine the extent of the learning process of individuals and units. The purpose of evaluation is to determine if training objectives have been attained. It provides the training manager with

the information he needs to modify or update his training program. External evaluations are performed by higher headquarters, while internal evaluations are done by the unit itself.⁹

INDIVIDUAL TRAINING: Training the individual officer, noncommissioned officer or enlisted person receives, either in institutions or units, that prepares the individual to perform specific duties and tasks related to an assigned job or duty position. Individual training begins when the individual enters the Army and continues throughout his service.¹⁰

MISSION-RELATED TRAINING: Individual or collective training that contributes directly to the accomplishment of the unit combat mission. It includes a wide variety of activities and excludes such diversionary activities as special duty, administrative appointments, general education classes, honor guards, fatigue details, and routine medical care.¹¹

PERFORMANCE-ORIENTED TRAINING: A training strategy in which learning is accomplished through individual or collective performance of one or more tasks, under specific conditions until the individual or unit can demonstrate the level of proficiency established by the training objective. The basis for conducting performance-oriented training is the training objective.¹²

PRIME TIME FOR TRAINING: An established period of

time (hours, days, or weeks) devoted entirely to mission-related training. It should be established at the lowest level possible with the maximum number of personnel attending while maintaining unit integrity.¹³

RESERVE COMPONENTS: The Reserve of the US Army consists of two components: The Army National Guard of the United States and the Army Reserve. The Reserve components are the initial and primary sources of units and individuals for force expansion in case of national emergency.¹⁴

TRAINER: A person whose duties include the requirement to prepare, conduct, and evaluate individual or collective training.¹⁵

TRAINING EFFECTIVENESS: How the soldier performs the commander's training objective. If the soldiers can meet the training standard of the commander's objective, the effectiveness of training can be judged a success. If the soldiers fail to meet the established standard, the trainer must try to pinpoint the reasons. If there are deficiencies in the use of resources or in meeting the training objectives, the commander and trainer must make corrections. The effectiveness of training is judged in terms of its contribution to the unit's combat readiness. It is possible to have very efficient training without meeting an acceptable level of effectiveness. This occurs when the commander sets the wrong training priorities

or when individuals or units fail to achieve established training standards. The training manager must understand that the training and evaluation process is continuous, with combat readiness as its goal.¹⁶

TRAINING EFFICIENCY: How well the trainer uses available training resources.¹⁷ The efficiency of training is judged in terms of resource use. How well did the trainer use available resources? An example of the efficient use of resources is the development of a squad leader's proficiency in requesting and adjusting artillery fires. Training for this objective can be conducted entirely on a firing range, using large quantities of ammunition. Yet, the desired standard can probably be achieved through the use - for most of the training - of an artillery "puff board" (training simulator device).¹⁸

TRAINING MANAGEMENT: The art of employing limited resources (human, physical, financial, and time) in a manner that permits efficient and effective development of individuals and units so they can successfully accomplish their peacetime and wartime missions.¹⁹

TRAINING MANAGER: A commander or staff officer who is responsible for the preparation or monitoring of a training program. The duties include:

- (1) Assignment of training objectives

- (2) Provision of necessary support for training
- (3) Continuous evaluation of training effectiveness
- (4) Insuring that the feedback system from training evaluations serves to diagnose weaknesses and improve the training. The battalion commander is the principal training manager.²⁰

TRAINING OBJECTIVE: A three-part statement that specifies (1) an individual or unit task, (2) the condition(s) under which the task is accomplished, and (3) the training standard(s) required to demonstrate minimum acceptable proficiency. The following are the definitions of the three parts of a performance objective:

(1) Task. A statement that specifies an action to be performed by an individual or unit.

(2) Condition. Statement(s) that specify the circumstances under which a particular task is to be performed, e.g. information or equipment provided or denied for the performance of the task.

(3) Training standard. A statement that specifies the minimum acceptable proficiency required of an individual or unit in the performance of a particular task.²¹

END NOTES

¹US Army, CGSC, Programmed Text for Training Management, PT 100-1, (1982), 18.

²US Army, How to Prepare and Conduct Military Training, FM 21-6, (1975), 166.

³FM 21-6, 166.

⁴FM 21-6, 166.

⁵FM 21-6, 167.

⁶PT 100-1, 18.

⁷FM 21-6, 167.

⁸FM 21-6, 167.

⁹PT 100-1, 7.

¹⁰FM 21-6, 168.

¹¹PT 100-1, 7.

¹²FM 21-6, 169.

¹³PT 100-1, 7.

¹⁴US Army, CGSC, Introduction to Reserve Components, Programmed Text, PT 100-6, (1982), 4.

¹⁵FM 21-6, 170.

¹⁶PT 100-1, 27.

¹⁷FM 21-6, 171.

¹⁸PT 100-1, 27.

¹⁹FM 21-6, 171.

²⁰FM 21-6, 172.

²¹FM 21-6, 172.

APPENDIX B

TRAINING DISTRACTIONS MODEL

TRAINING DISTRACTIONS MODEL

INTENT

The intent of this model is to present a clear, concise, and common-sense plan that will provide the commander with a thought process with which he can eliminate or control training distractions.

LAYOUT

This model begins with a procedure chart that depicts the seven steps necessary to negotiate the model. Following the model are detailed explanations of each step of the process. Even though this model deals with the training distraction of personnel turbulence during the training event of M1 (tank) transition training, it may be adapted for use with any training distraction to any training event. The principle of its use and the steps remain the same.

COMMENT

While following this model, keep in mind that training is a dynamic activity with many interacting factors. Once the model is initiated, the commander may elect to omit, repeat or take some steps out of sequence in order to assist him in solving training distractions. This prototype is only a recommended guide to the commander and is one process to reduce distractions.

SITUATION

The specific situation for the model presented is as follows:

- The unit is an M60A1 tank battalion in an armored division located in Germany.
- The battalion is at 98 percent of personnel fill.
- The battalion experiences a 15 percent personnel turnover rate per quarter.
- Major training events for the next year (12 months) for this unit are below:

1st QTR-M1 tank transition training, 45 caliber
pistol qualification and familiarization

2d QTR-Tank gunnery (Tank tables 1-1X)

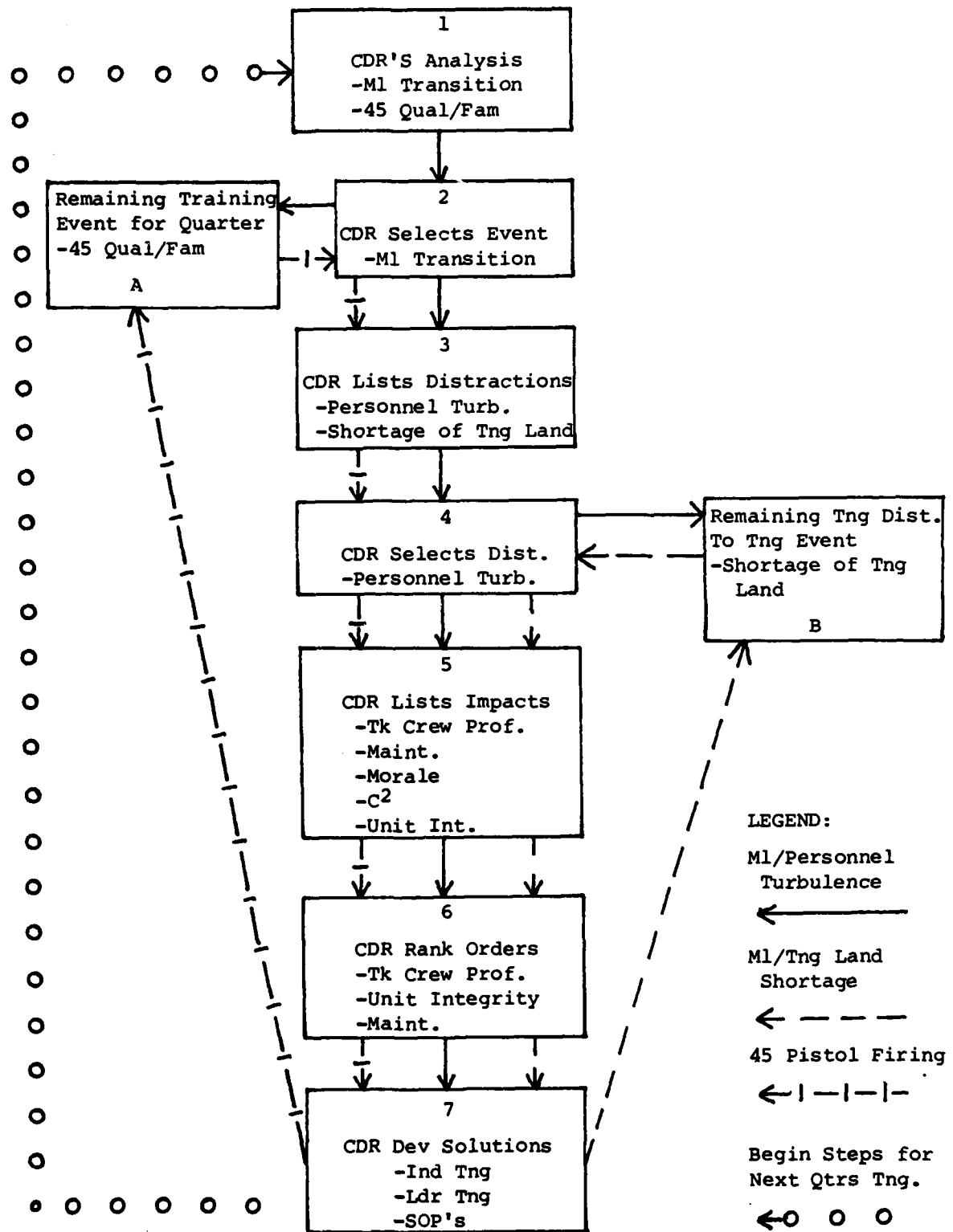
3d QTR-Individual/platoon/company training

4th QTR-Major Training Area tactical training
platoon and company

The seven steps of the training distractions model are indicated below:

- 1 Commander's analysis of the next quarter's major training events.
- 2 Commander selects the most important training event of the quarter.
- 3 Commander lists the training distractions to the training event chosen.
- 4 Commander selects the most disruptive training distraction(s) to the training event.
- 5 Commander lists the impacts on the training event caused by the training distraction.
- 6 Commander rank orders the impacts on the training event caused by the training distraction.
- 7 Commander develops solutions and implements them to eliminate or control the training distraction.

TRAINING DISTRACTIONS MODEL



EXPLANATION OF THE STEPS

STEP 1

In Step 1 the commander must analyze the major training events of the quarter. In the situation, the battalion has two major events occurring in the 1st Quarter, M1 tank transition training and 45 caliber pistol qualification and familiarization. M1 tank transition training might consist of deprocessing the tank, performing unit maintenance on the vehicle, and the beginning of tank crew training on the M1.

STEP 2

In this step the commander selects the most important training event of the quarter. He has selected the M1 transition training. The other training event, 45 pistol firing, will be placed in Block A. It will remain there until all training distractions to the M1 transition training have been eliminated or controlled.

STEP 3

The commander now lists all training distractions to the M1 transition training. Some possible distractions would be: shortage of training land, personnel turbulence, shortage of repair parts, and a shortage of M1 maintenance tools.

STEP 4

In Step 4 the commander must select the most disruptive training distraction to the M1 transition training. In the model example, he has chosen personnel turbulence. The commander felt a 15 percent turnover of soldiers was more important than a shortage of land, parts or tools. Those training distractions not selected this time will be moved to Block B to be handled later. After the commander has solved the personnel turbulence distraction, he will return to Block B to begin working on those remaining distractions.

STEP 5

This step is where the commander lists all of the adverse impacts on the M1 transition training created by the training distraction of personnel turbulence. Some possible impacts would be: a decline of tank crew proficiency, loss of unit integrity, a lack of thorough maintenance procedures, morale problems, and some command and control difficulties.

STEP 6

In Step 6 the commander rank orders the impacts the distraction will have on M1 transition training, beginning with the most disruptive first. His rank ordering could look like this: decline of tank crew proficiency, morale problems,

lack of thorough maintenance procedures, loss of unit integrity, and command and control difficulties. The commander is now ready to move to Step 7.

STEP 7

The last and most important step, the commander develops solutions to the personnel turbulence distraction and begins their implementation. One solution would be to begin an intensive individual training effort. This individual training can be integrated into all major training events that occur throughout the year. He may decide to establish leader training, for sergeants through captains in his battalion. He may ask subordinates to identify possible replacements for critical positions as early as practical. He may task company commanders to make as few personnel changes as necessary to decrease internal turbulence. The commander may focus training on realistic Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) to reduce retraining. The commander may reduce to a minimum the number of special duty soldiers in his battalion. After the commander has eliminated or controlled the distraction of personnel turbulence, he then proceeds to Block B where he will begin solving the next training distraction to M1 transition training, shortage of land.

BLOCK B

The commander now selects the training distraction of shortage of land and takes this distraction through Steps 4, 5, 6, and 7. Upon completion of all of the training distractions to M1 transition training, the commander moves to Block A to deal with the second training event of the 1st quarter, 45 pistol firing.

BLOCK A

The commander is now ready to deal with the second training event of the quarter, 45 pistol firing. From Block A the commander goes through Steps 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 using the same procedures as with the training distractions to the M1 transition training. The commander continues this cycle until he has handled all of the distractions to the training events for the 1st quarter.

REPEAT THE PROCEDURE

The commander moves from Block 7 to Block 1 and continues the process for the following quarters for the remainder of the year.

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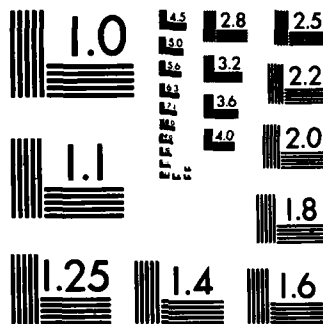
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