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TACTICAL ENGAGEMENT SIMULATION

AFTER ACTION REVIEW GUIDEBOOK

ARI FIELD UNIT AT PRESIDIO OF MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA
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20. ABSTRACT (continued)

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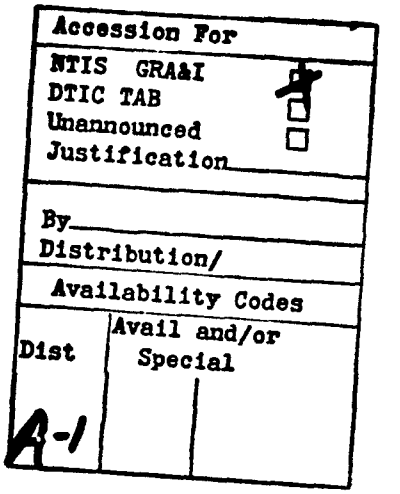

TACTICAL ENGAGEMENT SIMULATION

AFTER ACTION REVIEW GUIDEBOOK

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Human Performance
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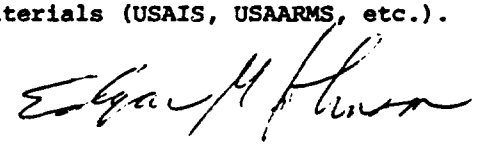
FOREWORD

The Tactical Engagement Simulation (TES) provides the most realistic training available to a modern peacetime Army. Training information based on TES exercises can help commanders objectively evaluate their unit's performance and can assist the Army to improve its overall training. To accomplish these goals, it is necessary to provide a means of performance evaluation and feedback that takes into account the capabilities and operational characteristics of learning, and current combined arms tactical doctrine. The After Action Review (AAR) is one way of providing such training evaluation and feedback.

The AAR method was originally developed in the early 1970s as part of the SCOPES and REALTRAIN systems. Since that time, AAR techniques have been evaluated in several research projects, undergone considerable refinement, and recently adapted for use with the Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement System (MILES). This AAR Guidebook is the latest extension of AAR methodology and contains procedures for preparation and conduct of AARs at squad, platoon, and company levels. Each of these sets of AAR procedures is presented in lesson plan outline format and take into account the amount and types of information likely to be available to each specific echelon's AAR leader. The central characteristics of the AAR are also discussed and contrasted with those of the traditional critique. Training diagnosis methodology as well as AAR technique and style are also covered. In addition to the small unit trainer relevance, this guidance is also relevant to TRADOC activities concerned with preparation of training materials (USAIS, USAARMS, etc.).



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TACTICAL ENGAGEMENT SIMULATION AFTER ACTION REVIEW GUIDEBOOK

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I. THE AFTER ACTION REVIEW (AAR)

After a tactical training exercise, feedback should be provided to units in order to increase and reinforce learning. In the past, feedback has been given during a critique in which the senior evaluator presents his analysis of the unit's performance and indicates what the unit did well and what they did poorly. In a good critique, the evaluator also indicates training strategies for correcting the unit's major problems. Before the development of tactical engagement simulation training methods (e.g., MILES), the critique was the principal method for informing units about their levels of proficiency. For conventional (non-tactical engagement simulation) training, the critique was an adequate solution to the feedback problem because the scarcity of objective performance data made extensive interpretation of tactical events necessary.

Tactical engagement simulation training systems began to be developed during the early 1970s. These methods, characterized by reasonably accurate weapon effects simulations, provided the opportunity to replace the critique with a more effective teaching technique. In order to distinguish it from the traditional lecture-format critique, the new feedback method was called the After Action Review (AAR). The following comparisons explain the nature of the AAR by contrasting it with the familiar critique.

The AAR Increases Soldier Participation.

In a critique, commanders and soldiers are basically an audience; in an AAR, they are participants. This difference dramatically increases teaching effectiveness for three reasons. First, as educational and psychological research has consistently shown, active participation in a learning activity (as opposed to passive observation) greatly increases the amount of information learned and retained. When the same information is presented in a lecture or emerges in a group discussion, the information is better retained after a group discussion. Second, in a discussion, topics are often approached from several points-of-view, thus increasing the chance that participants will gain greater insight into the topic at hand. In contrast, only one point-of-view is presented in a critique--that of the lecturer--and the chances that a large proportion of the audience will benefit are substantially less. Finally, direct participation increases motivation by providing a sense of

involvement in the learning process. Such involvement frequently reduces a soldier's resistance to acknowledging his own mistakes, thereby further increasing learning and retention of tactical skills.

The AAR is Broad in Scope.

In a critique, the leader is limited by the type and amount of information he and perhaps a few others have gathered. In contrast, because all key players participate in an AAR, each is a source of information. Thus, the AAR inherently provides a much richer "data base" from which teaching points can be drawn. This is especially critical at command levels because much important information is essentially private. For example, the commander's assessment of the situation and the bases for his tactical decisions are available only to him. In a critique, this kind of information is most often not taken into account. In the AAR, however, such information is an important part of the discussion and forms the context for discussing alternative courses of action.

The AAR Structure is Easy to Follow.

The AAR is structured around sequential exercise events. This helps: (a) examination of chains of events, (b) determination of how and why specific actions were undertaken, (c) active discussion of alternatives, and (d) examination of how certain events determined or

influenced subsequent outcomes. The exercise event-oriented AAR structure is based on the recognition that unit leaders and soldiers need to learn that: (a) no matter what the situation may be, alternative courses of action exist, and (b) leaders and soldiers should select from among these alternatives after evaluating what the probable consequences of each would be. This is distinctly different from a critique in which "failures" are often pointed out, but actions that influenced or determined failure are rarely explored in detail. In a critique the actions needed to avoid "failure" are frequently not clear to unit leaders or soldiers. Because the specific topics discussed within the context of a particular scenario are directly determined by a unit's tactical behavior, the AAR is a highly flexible teaching vehicle. A wide variety of tactical actions and training objectives can be explored and evaluated depending upon the unit's particular training needs. The AAR structure provides a sequential, easy to follow framework and helps soldiers to explore important training issues.

The AAR Increases the Accuracy of Interpretation.

Points made during a critique will often be based solely on the analysis of the leader conducting it. His analysis will often be based on limited information on the local tactical situation, guesses regarding the unit's intention, and limited knowledge regarding information available to the element or leader at the time of the action or decision. In

an AAR, these limitations are overcome through direct player participation. Important players are asked about what they knew at specific points in the exercise, their situation assessments, why certain tactical decisions were made, and so on. These kinds of questions and answers lead to more accurate interpretation of exercise events, better training diagnosis and more fruitful discussions of alternative courses of action. (A detailed example is given in Table 2.)

The AAR Avoids Negativism.

In contrast to the lecture format of a critique, the AAR leader guides the discussion by asking leading questions. Except for making periodic summaries, the AAR leader rarely makes a declarative statement. Key information is brought out by questioning as many of the relevant soldiers and leaders (on both sides) as needed to make a point. Once a critical action (or decision) is identified, further questions explore why the action was taken, its consequences, and what alternatives existed. This questioning technique involves participants in the examination of the problem and avoids difficulties of resentment and resistance usually generated by direct criticism. By asking questions rather than lecturing, the AAR leader sets the tone of the AAR as a group problem solving session among fellow professional soldiers. Even though the AAR leader knows the unit's mistakes, he guides the participants to identify errors themselves and to seek solutions. Because the information comes from within the group, hostility and defensiveness

usually directed towards the critique leader are minimized. In the critique, the central theme is "What you did wrong." In the AAR, the key thrust is "How can we do it better?" The latter orientation is by far the most preferable. By involving appropriate commanders, leaders, and troops in a professional discussion of "How can we do better?", the cohesiveness of the unit and the chain of command are simultaneously reinforced.

II. TRAINING DIAGNOSIS

Accurate and meaningful training diagnosis is at the heart of the AAR. Such diagnosis is an art--there are no absolute rules to guide the trainer. Yet, there are some general principles that can help the trainer structure his enquiry into the "whys" of tactical performance. The trainer is a detective and a large part of his activity is concerned with finding out why important events occurred. The first requirement is to sort out what is important from what is not. Unfortunately, much of what is important only becomes apparent long after the causal events have occurred. For that reason, the trainer needs to become an expert at tracing chains of events back to their sources. One event will cause another which will in turn cause another and so on. Frequently, several such chains of events come together to influence the outcome at some critical point in the exercise. Being able to trace these kinds of chains of events lies at the center of the art of diagnosis.

In later chapters on preparation and conduct of AARs for specific echelons, the trainer's detective work is broken down into several sequential steps: the trainer first determines what happened, then how it happened, and finally why it happened. At the same time, the trainer should make assessments of the unit's tactical options; that is, what could have been done differently to improve the outcome of the event or exercise. These determinations are mostly made during the course of the controller debriefing held shortly after the end of the exercise. During the controller debriefing the trainer receives information and evaluations from his subordinate controllers. Clearly the higher the echelon being trained, the more the trainer will have to depend on other controllers for reliable information on the exercise, and for evaluations of subordinate unit performance. Also other factors such as type of unit being trained, terrain, mission, etc. will affect level of detail covered in controller debriefing. For example, in a dismounted rifle squad hasty attack, the trainer can often see and hear most of the action in the exercise. Therefore, the controller debrief can be rather short, primarily focusing on filling-in and confirming details. In contrast, consider a full, combined arms, company-team delay mission. The size of the unit, the amount of terrain involved, the complexity of the required maneuvers, etc. will combine to make an extensive, detailed controller debrief necessary. Usually, the trainer will only be able to observe a part of the action. Other controllers (and often key OPFOR participants) must supply the information necessary to determine the reasons why key events occurred. It cannot be emphasized too strongly:

the purpose of the controller debriefing is to provide the trainer (AAR leader) accurate, detailed information on not only what happened but also how and why events occurred, and most importantly on what could have been done differently to improve outcomes. Because the training diagnosis steps are so critical to good training, a discussion of each step is discussed in the following paragraphs.

What Happened

The trainer's first job is to select an important event for analysis. Important events in MILES exercises are most often associated in one way or another with casualties; the more casualties a unit inflicts or sustains, the more important that event is likely to be. The importance of casualty-related events depends on the echelon in question. For a platoon, the loss of an APC is likely to be important. But, at the company level, such a loss is likely to be of lesser importance.

There are three major reasons why casualty events are likely to be good starting points for the trainer's detective work. First, they are often the end of a series of actions that were unusually well or unusually poorly done. Second, casualties inflicted or sustained often have a bearing on mission outcome because they alter the relative firepower available to the two forces. Finally, casualties are clearly understood common denominators of warfare. Every commander or leader wishes to maximize casualties inflicted while minimizing those sustained. This

orientation will provide a basis for discussion and understanding during the AAR.

Naturally, other types of events may be selected as important even though they may not result in casualties inflicted or sustained. A unit may, for example, be responsible for a major security breach which goes undetected or is not taken advantage of by the enemy. Another example would be a unit's failure to provide good indirect fire support for its subordinate elements, but, because of an outstanding performance by its smaller units, the unit may achieve an overwhelming victory. There are a great many events that do not result in casualties but are nonetheless important. On the whole, however, the trainer will find that casualty-related events generally provide the best ground for meaningful diagnosis and have the greatest impact on AAR participants.

Having selected an important event, the trainer's next job is to define the event's characteristics. The trainer should seek information on the identities of the element(s) involved, and the time and location of the event. Most of this is relatively simple for casualty-related events. The relevant information is usually available from the element's controller or from opposing force (OPFOR). Controllers should be encouraged strongly to make written notes during the exercise as this will greatly help in reconstructing the sequence of important events during the controller debriefing that follows the exercise.

How It Happened

It is during this step that the trainer's true detective work begins. Having determined what happened, the trainer now tries to increase his understanding by gathering facts about actions preceding and following the event. He must develop a relatively complete understanding of both the event in question as well as closely related actions and events. For a casualty event, the trainer would try to find out what the casualties (i.e., targets) were doing just prior to being engaged, what adjacent elements were doing, how the targets were acquired, etc. Most of this kind of information will have to be obtained from the other controllers and from the OPFOR.

The key to this step is the trainer's ability to ask the right questions. At the lower echelons, the right questions are most frequently related to what a given unit did, that is, to execution. But at higher echelons, important questions are more often related to what command elements knew about the situation and what decisions they made. For example, suppose that a lead company is moving forward when it is engaged by the OPFOR who pins down two of the company's platoons. Suppose also that the third platoon was not close enough to the OPFOR to deliver effective fire. At the lower echelon (platoon), the trainer will be primarily interested in questions related to platoon fire and maneuver: How did the engagement begin? What were the platoons' reactions to receipt of fire? Did platoon leaders report the engagement?

Was the available cover used effectively? Did platoons return OPFOR fire as effectively as possible? Etc.

At the company level, the trainer would need to ask different types of questions: Did the commander realize that two of his platoons had become heavily engaged? Did he have accurate information on all platoon locations? Did he attempt to get information on OPFOR locations and strength? What decision did he make about moving the third platoon into a position where it could provide support to the two which were pinned down? Did he request indirect fire support? Etc.

In summary, the how-it-happened step is geared toward gathering as many facts as possible about important tactical exercise events. Exactly what facts should be gathered depends on echelon, mission, scenario, disposition of forces, friendly and enemy situations, and so on. As noted earlier, many of the important facts will not be obvious: very careful debriefing of the controllers and sometimes of the OPFOR will be necessary to get the needed information.

Why It Happened

This is the final and perhaps most difficult step of the diagnostic process. Here the trainer's job is to organize the facts he has gathered and make inferences about the causes of the events in question. He must bring his tactical expertise, analytic ability, and frequently a

considerable amount of intuition to bear on the problem of finding the fundamental causes of events he has chosen to analyze.

Every trainer will have his own style for organizing information and making inferences. The somewhat formal method described here tends to yield a more structured and complete evaluation than do less formal methods. Yet, recognizing the considerable individuality of styles, it is probably good that a trainer develops the method which suits him best.

The trainer first needs to organize the facts related to the event of interest. As shown in Table 1, key words and phrases indicating relevant actions and events should be listed in their order of occurrence. It is also useful to indicate the approximate time of the event. Most often, some of these events will be prior to the one of interest while others will occur later. This is the basic "chain of events" mentioned earlier. Next, draw two lines separating "before" and "after" items from the "key event." Those in the "before" section are potential causal items while events in the "after" section are potential consequences. The trainer then examines each item in the "before" section and asks, "How much did this item determine the event in question?" Assign a "1" to those that were major causes, a "2" to those that were minor or only possible causes, and a "3" to those that do not seem causally related to the event. Carry out the same kind of procedure with the items in the "after" section, asking "How closely related was

Table 1

Sample Chain of Events and Their Relative Importance

		EVENT	RANK	NOTES
BEFORE	1330	OPFOR detects B Company lead elements	2	
	1345	B Company receives fire from OPFOR	2	
	1345	1st Platoon (overwatch) returns fire	2	
	1345	Co Commander orders TOW section to advance	3	
	1350	1st Platoon reports contact	2	Engagement reported to Battalion?
	1355	Co Commander orders 2d & 3d Plt to assault	1	Suppressive fire?
	1405	2d and 3d Platoon begin assault	1	Coordination of indirect fire and maneuver? Report to Battalion?
KEY EVENT	1410-1420	BLUEFOR: Tanks 31, 67, 42 killed Tanks 34, 46 hit OPFOR: Tanks 91, 92 killed		Good performance by 3d Platoon. Most casualties from 2d Platoon.
AFTER	1425	Company requests indirect fire	2	Timing of indirect fire & maneuver? Earlier would have been better.
	1427	Company Commander reports to Battalion	1	Timing of report--late.
	1430	Indirect fire on OPFOR position	2	Were fires shifted in time?
	1430	2d Platoon reports tank not operational (mechanical)	3	
	1435	OPFOR begins withdrawal	2	
	1440	2d Platoon reports OPFOR withdrawal	2	Good timing on report.
	1455	3d Platoon arrives at position	2	
	1455	Company consolidates position with 70% available firepower intact	1	

the key event to the item?" Assign a 1, 2, or 3 to the items just as in the preceding section. If we look at the result we find an outlined chain of events or items which are causally linked. In addition, we have some notion of the relative importance of various causes and consequences of the key event. This method is intended to help the trainer organize and structure his observations and is in no way a substitute for either tactical expertise or analytic ability.

Those items in the "before" section that are labeled "1" are probably the major causes of the key event and are likely to be suitable for coverage in the AAR. Items in the "after" section labeled "1" are probably the major items emerging from the key event and are useful in two ways. First, most key events should cause some responses by the unit. The high priority "after" items should give the trainer some ideas about whether the unit has recognized the significance of the key event and about how appropriately it has reacted. Secondly, one key event often causes another later in the exercise segment. The "after" items in that case are most useful in identifying later cause and effect relationships.

During and immediately following the controller debriefing, the exercise analysis is prepared for presentation in the AAR. During the exercise, the trainer will need to identify as many potential key events as possible and possibly some of the "before" and "after" items. The longer the interval between the first major "before" item and the final major "after" item, the greater the number of "before" or "after" events

that will probably need to be identified. The trainer should also note the data source(s) for each major item. This can be done on the same sheet of paper as the original analysis outline. Also, it is often a good idea to make notes on questions to be asked during the AAR.

In addition, the trainer should try to identify, in so far as possible, some alternative courses of action which might have improved unit performance. These can stimulate discussion during the AAR and shift the focus from discussions of "mistakes" to discussions of how to improve performance. This procedure can also help teach AAR participants to search among alternative courses of action, and to identify better what was learned.

Following the controller debriefing, final selection is made of topics for inclusion in the AAR. At this point, the trainer will often have quite a few key events from which to choose. In selecting the final topics, the highest priority should be given to those items which bear directly on the training objectives which have been previously established for the exercise. (These training objectives usually should be ones that can be at least partially corrected during subsequent exercises.) The remaining time should be devoted to exploring training objectives "of opportunity." Training objectives to be covered should usually be limited to those: (a) in which the unit performed extremely well or extremely poorly, and (b) for which the trainer has a relatively complete, clear understanding of causes and consequences. Overall, it

is best to choose only a few objectives for the AAR: it is much better to discuss a few issues in depth than to cover many superficially. To the extent that objectives are covered in depth, both learning and retention will be enhanced.

III. AAR TECHNIQUE AND STYLE

Tactical Engagement Simulation training often fosters a high degree of enthusiasm among the troops. In most ways the enthusiasm is good, but it can make it difficult to lead a good AAR. A reasonable amount of order and discipline must be maintained. The following suggestions may be helpful.

1. Encourage the troops to talk among themselves during the Controller Debriefing. It may help to eliminate some of the chatter later.

2. Inform the troops that the basic AAR rules are that:

   a. Only one person talks at a time;

   b. Only the individual designated by the AAR leader talks;

   c. Soldiers who want to make comments should raise their hands and wait to be called upon;

d. Keep on track: comments will only be accepted on the topic being discussed.

The point was made earlier that one avoids lecturing in an AAR and instead asks leading questions. The questioning technique avoids the problems of resentment and resistance, fosters positive motivation, and allows in-depth exploration of training-objective-related issues. The AAR leader's questions are most often those to which he already knows the answer. Asking questions is simply a device for drawing those answers from the group. That way, information and comments come directly from participants rather than being criticism from the AAR leader.

In a sequence of questions on a given point, the first few questions are intended to help the group identify an important event or problem. The next questions serve to elaborate and clarify the circumstances and causes of the event. Final questions help the group explore alternative courses of action. Clearly, this technique requires considerable skill (not to mention restraint) on the part of the leader. The AAR leader should almost always know the answer to the question he is asking. Indeed, if he does not have a fairly accurate idea of what the answer to his question should be, the chances are good that he does not have a clear idea of a teaching point.

The following example illustrates the application of the AAR questioning technique (Table 2). In this example the trainer is

Table 2

Sample of AAR Questioning Technique

Comments	AAR Dialogue
AAR leader starts to identify "what happened."	AAR LEADER: WHAT WAS THE FIRST THING YOU SAW?
	1ST SQUAD LEADER: WELL SIR, WE SAW ONE OF THE BMPs COME OUT OF THE WOODLINE. I COULD SEE MY DRAGON GUNNER WAS ABOUT TO FIRE HIM UP WHEN, ALL OF A SUDDEN, A SECOND BMP CAME OUT RIGHT ON THE FIRST ONE'S TAIL.
AAR leader asks for more detail.	AAR LEADER: THEN WHAT HAPPENED?
Participant relates his plan.	1ST SQUAD LEADER: WELL, I FIGURED THAT IF WE GOT THE TRAIL BMP FIRST WE'D TRAP THE LEAD BMP BECAUSE HE WOULDN"T HAVE ROOM TO BACK UP. THEY WERE OUT OF RANGE FOR EVERYTHING EXCEPT THE DRAGON AND THE 60.
AAR leader begins to isolate error.	AAR LEADER: GOOD THINKING, BUT WHAT HAPPENED?
Participant has identified a probable error.	1ST SQUAD LEADER: WELL SIR, MY TWO VIPER GUNNERS GOT NERVOUS AND FIGURED THEY COULDN'T PASS UP SUCH A GOOD TARGET.
AAR leader enlarges scope of discussion by involving key participants in the discussion.	AAR LEADER: OK, HOLD ON A MINUTE--VIPER GUNNERS, WHERE ARE YOU?--WHAT HAPPENED?
	1ST VIPER GUNNER: WE FIRED BUT DIDN'T GET ANY HITS.

Table 2 continued

Comments	AAR Dialogue
AAR leader attempts to have participant diagnose the error. This is "Why it happened?"	AAR LEADER: DO YOU KNOW WHY?
Participant diagnoses error.	1ST VIPER GUNNER: WELL SIR--THEY WERE OUT OF RANGE. AFTER EVERYTHING WAS ALL OVER, WE LOOKED AT A MAP AND THEY WERE AT LEAST 400 METERS AWAY. I GUESS WE JUST GOT EXCITED SEEING THOSE TRACKS.
AAR leader tries to get participant to identify another error.	AAR LEADER: WHAT ELSE DID YOU LEARN?
	2D VIPER GUNNER: WELL SIR, AFTER THE SQUAD LEADER GAVE US A COUNSELLING SESSION WE FOUND OUT WE WEREN'T SUPPOSED TO FIRE 'TILL HE TOLD US TO. HE SURE MADE THAT CLEAR.
AAR leader starts to explore alternatives.	AAR LEADER: SQUAD LEADER, HOW COULD YOU HAVE CONTROLLED THEIR FIRES?
Participant gives one alternative.	1ST SQUAD LEADER: HOW 'BOUT HAND OR ARM SIGNALS SIR?

Table 2 continued

Comments	AAR Dialogue
AAR leader presses group for another alternative. Fosters group problem solving.	AAR LEADER: YEAH, THAT'S ONE WAY, CAN YOU THINK OF ANOTHER?
	1ST SQUAD LEADER: AH--NOT RIGHT NOW SIR.
AAR leader involves more participants.	AAR LEADER: ANYBODY ELSE GOT ANY IDEAS?
Participant notes another alternative. "How can we do it better?"	SOLDIER FROM 2D SQUAD: SIR--HOW ABOUT FIGURING OUT WHERE THE MAX RANGE IS AHEAD OF TIME AND SAYING ANYTHING CLOSER THAN THAT SHOULD BE FIRED UP.
	AAR LEADER: DO I HEAR YOU SAYING YOU WOULD MAKE RANGE CARDS?
	SOLDIER FROM 2D SQUAD: YES SIR.
AAR leader has the squad leader summarize the discussion and restate the teaching points.	AAR LEADER: OK SQUAD LEADER, CAN YOU TELL US WHAT WE LEARNED ABOUT FIRE CONTROL?
	SQUAD LEADER: YES SIR. FIRE DISCIPLINE IS VERY IMPORTANT AND YOU DON'T WANT TO GIVE AWAY YOUR POSITIONS BECAUSE OF A SIGNATURE IF YOU CAN'T GET A KILL. I'VE GOTTA MAKE SURE THAT MY SQUAD HAS A FIRE CONTROL SOP AND THAT EVERYONE UNDERSTANDS THE PROCEDURES.

leading a platoon AAR and has covered key events up to initial contact. Suppose the AAR leader was aware that one of the platoon's squads had tried to engage OPFOR vehicles with VIPERS beyond their maximum effective range. **Table 2 illustrates how the AAR leader might guide the discussion of the teaching point.**

The questioning technique in the example is equally applicable at squad, platoon, company and battalion levels. The AAR leader first has participants define the situation, then identify its causes, and finally explore how performance could have been improved.

The timing of the AAR is important. The AAR should be conducted as soon as possible after the exercise. If delayed, controllers, leaders and troops will tend to forget the details of engagements, critical events, FRAGOs, spatial relationships, etc. The more time and events between the end of the exercise and the AAR, the more will be forgotten, and the less useful the AAR will be. An AAR can be delayed a few hours if necessary with little adverse effect; but if delayed a day or more, the AAR may be of little value. By that time many details will have been forgotten or confused with other events. The trainer should conduct the AAR while the exercise is still fresh in everyone's minds. Another situation which should be avoided is to conduct two (or more) exercises followed by a comprehensive AAR. Experience has shown clearly, that events in the two exercises tend to become confused, making the AAR both difficult to organize and conduct, and not very

beneficial. The two principles of AAR timing are: (a) conduct the AAR as soon as possible after the exercise, and (b) conduct an AAR for each exercise separately.

Visual aids should be used in the AAR. They help everyone to picture the terrain and tactical situation, and they increase learning. The kinds of aids that are desirable depend on the echelon, and on the location of the AAR. In most cases, AARs should be conducted where all participants have a view of the actual terrain on which most of the action occurred. Usually, the defensive position or objective provide a good location, especially if the route of advance of the attacking unit can be seen. Also, the following suggestions, though not exhaustive, may be helpful.

Squad and platoon AARs are most often held in the field. At the most simple level, the AAR leader can sketch the necessary information on the ground, using sticks and stones to indicate weapon systems, units, objectives and so on. This is particularly good for squad exercises and may be improved upon by using miniature weapon system models available in many toy and variety stores. Another alternative is to use a tripod mounted briefing chart and felt pens. This has the advantage of being more easily visible to more of the participants than is the "ground sketch."

For company and higher level AARs conducted in the field, the briefing chart approach is probably best. Also, the terrain can be

sketched on target cloth prior to the exercise, and later natural objects can be used to indicate vehicles, objectives, etc. If it is absolutely necessary, AARs can be conducted in garrison. Some posts have scaled terrain models of training areas available, often equipped with various weapon system models. These are generally excellent for AARs. Another alternative is a standard classroom or meeting room which usually comes equipped with blackboards.

Finally, the soldiers and other AAR participants should be asked to indicate their positions or routes, rather than having it done by the AAR leader. This increases the sense of participation and eliminates possible misinterpretation of the soldiers' comments.

The mechanics of preparing and conducting AARs for squads and platoons, and for companies are presented in Chapters 2 and 3, respectively. These chapters are in lesson plan outline format and each is intended to be used independently. Chapters 2 and 3 can be photo-reduced, put into hard covers, and provided to the appropriate training personnel as a pocket guide and reference for preparation and conduct of AARs in the field.

CHAPTER 2

SQUAD AND PLATOON AFTER ACTION REVIEW (AAR) GUIDE

I. INTRODUCTION TO THE AAR

II. STAGE 1: PREPARING THE AAR

III. STAGE 2: CONDUCTING THE AAR

IV. CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD AAR

SQUAD AND PLATOON AFTER ACTION REVIEWS

I. INTRODUCTION TO THE AAR

In Tactical Engagement Simulation exercises with the Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement System (MILES), the AAR replaces the "critique" commonly used after nonengagement simulation training. The AAR is preferred since it provides a sound method for diagnosing unit training needs and is a more effective teaching technique.

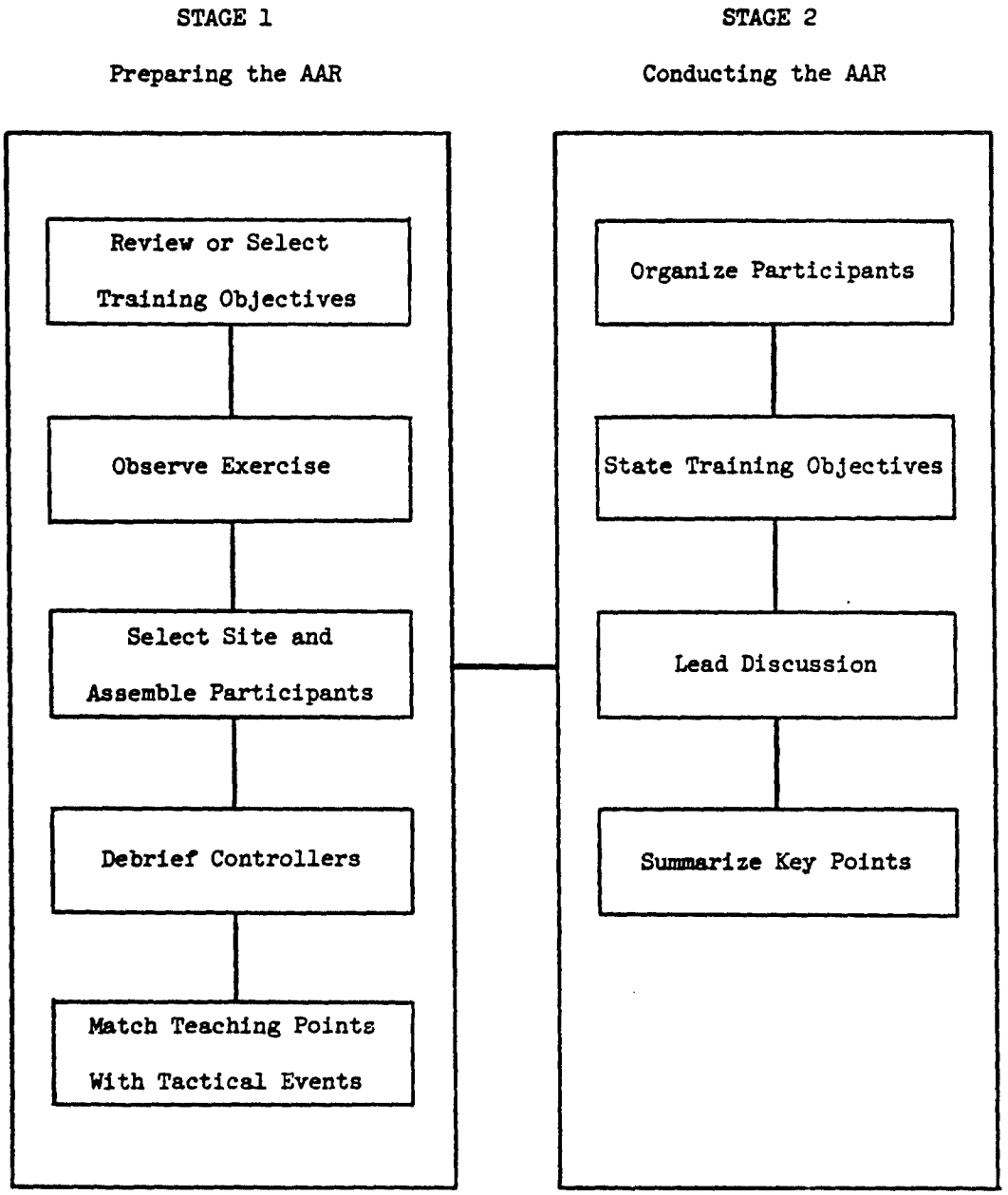


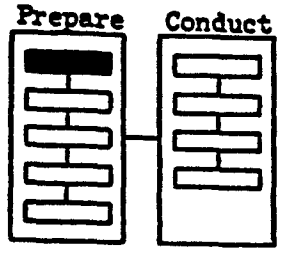
Figure 1

Stages and Steps in the Platoon AAR

II. STAGE 1: PREPARING THE AAR

A. Preparation for an AAR requires five steps:

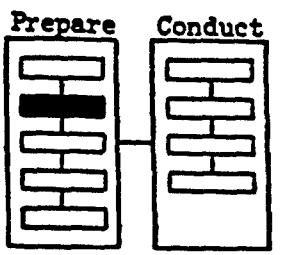
- Step 1: Review or Select Training Objectives.
- Step 2: Observe Exercise.
- Step 3: Select Site and Assemble Participants.
- Step 4: Debrief Controllers.
- Step 5: Match Teaching Points With Tactical Events.



Preparing - Step 1: Review or Select Training Objectives

B. Training Objectives, each consisting of an ARTEP Task, Condition and Standard, are the basic elements of tactical exercise structure. They make the purposes of the exercise understandable by all, provide a guide for designing exercises, and provide focus for discussions of exercise results. Training Objectives need to be selected in advance of the actual exercise, and most often should incorporate the

suggestions of subordinate unit leaders. The Training Objectives selected should reflect the trainer's knowledge of the units most important weaknesses. When the trainer is not sure of what training objectives should be selected initially, he should select ones which are common unit problems for the echelon in question. Early training exercise results should be evaluated carefully to identify other training needs. If several exercises are to be run, objectives should be selected partly on the basis of performance in the preceding exercise.



Preparing - Step 2: Observe Exercise

C. The trainer should observe as much of the platoon's activities as possible without compromising locations, firing positions, or movement routes of the unit or of the OPFOR. The primary emphasis is on those actions which will make the difference between the platoon's success and failure. It is necessary to anticipate where major exercise events are likely to occur and to get into a good viewing position early. Some general suggestions on observation may be helpful.

1. The trainer need not remain overly close to his assigned squad or platoon. More can often be seen from high

ground near the unit's location or along its route of advance. The unit's order may identify important activities, checkpoints, etc. The trainer should know the unit's order and select his movement routes and locations accordingly.

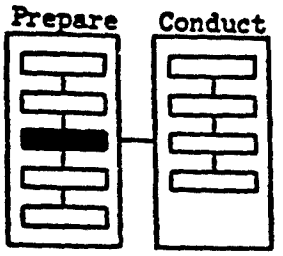
2. The OPFOR's position or route often determines the location of significant engagements. Therefore, the trainer should know OPFOR locations or routes that are most likely to be affected by his unit. Coordination with other controllers is important.

3. Forward deployed or lead elements are the most likely to encounter the OPFOR or to become misoriented. These are usually the most critical elements to keep under observation.

4. Make written notes on major tactical events to include what, when, who, and how. Notes should be organized in the order in which the events occurred.

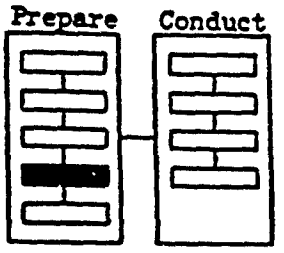
5. If tactical radio communications are played in the exercise, the trainer should monitor the radio net.

Preparing - Step 3: Select Site and Assemble Participants



D. After the exercise, a site needs to be selected for the AAR. If possible, the AAR should be held where the majority of action occurred, where the most critical events took place (normally where the OPFOR was positioned), or where this terrain can be observed. All participants should be included in the AAR (i.e., unit members, OPFOR, and controllers).

Preparing - Step 4: Debrief Controllers



E. The trainer must have a complete understanding of what happened in the exercise, from the unit entering its initial positions through termination of the exercise. Therefore, the fourth step in AAR preparation is to obtain a detailed description of the exercise's major tactical events in the order in which they occurred. Following conduct of post-exercise troop leading procedures, the trainer should assemble the controllers for a debriefing session. Beginning at the start of the exercise, the trainer should lead a discussion of the major

events of the exercise. All controllers should be encouraged to contribute their observations regarding the elements for which they were responsible. During the controller debriefing the following factors should be considered:

1. Important aspects of mission planning and preparation (e.g., whether orders were fully disseminated),

2. Initial disposition of forces,

3. FRAGOs requiring major changes in plans,

4. Deviation from planned routes,

5. Initial detection and reaction to it,

6. Engagements and their results,

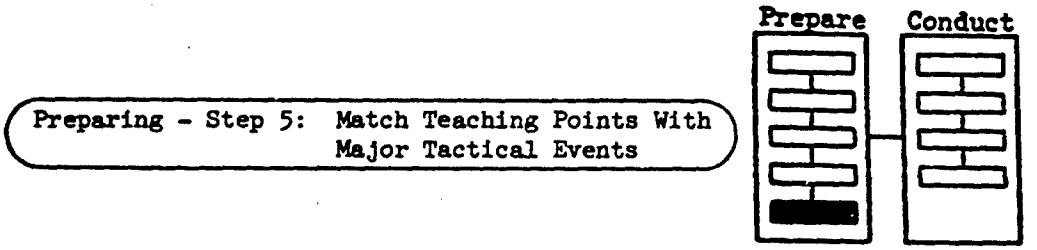
7. Coordination and communications.

F. In addition to his own observations and those of the platoon controllers, the trainer has two other sources of information:

1. The tactical vehicle MILES Control Console indicates the number of rounds remaining for the tank main gun.

If any tactical MILES-equipped vehicle was killed during the exercise, the MILES Control Console indicates the type of weapon system which caused the kill. Both pieces of information can be useful in the debriefing. Controllers should come to the debriefing with notes and observations on each major weapon system casualty in their assigned unit.

2. The OPFOR Controller, Leader, or the Players are often able to observe key unit performance problems and can be excellent sources of information for detection and engagement related events.



G. A Training Objective is an ARTEP task, condition, and standard. Because these are often too broad to assist in focusing the AAR discussion adequately, we refer to Teaching Points. A teaching point is a single, relatively unified topic. For example, suppose we are considering platoon level training. An example of a training objective is shown in Table 3 below. This training objective is rather too broad and complex to be of much help in focusing an AAR discussion.

Table 3

Example of an ARTEP 71-2 Training Objective

ARTEP 71-2

TRAINING AND EVALUATION OUTLINE

UNIT: Mechanized Infantry Platoon (Mounted, or Dismounted with Carriers)

MISSION: Attack (3-IV-7)

TASK	CONDITIONS	STANDARDS	REFERENCES
	Alternate routes of advance to bypass the OPFOR position exist.	c. The platoon continues to engage the OPFOR position and requests permission to bypass.	
3-IV-7-7 Conduct Fire and Maneuver.	The platoon has gained contact and must continue to move under OPFOR direct fire.	1. The platoon designates a section to support by fire and a section to maneuver. A subsequent overwatch position is designated.	FM 7-7, chap 3; FM 71-1, chap 4.
		2. The platoon remains mounted. One or more vehicles are assigned to each element. Support-by-fire vehicles may dismount personnel to increase the effectiveness of their supporting fires.	

However, a teaching point is relatively simple and direct: for example, "Effective use of direct suppressive fire." Teaching points are often better than training objectives for organizing the AAR and for communicating important lessons to troops and leaders.

H. A critical tactical event is often related to a major loss or gain that impairs or enhances a unit's ability to perform. In

MILES exercises, critical events are usually associated, one way or another, with casualties inflicted or sustained. After the AAR leader has filled in any gaps in his knowledge of the exercise, he matches teaching points to be made with the sequence of critical tactical events. Tactical events can provide teaching points "of opportunity" and these may be included if important. However, discussions unrelated to important teaching points should be avoided.

I. At this point, the AAR leader should have a list of key words as reminders of teaching points and their relevant tactical events. This includes the following for each event.

1. Summary of a Critical Event:

- What Happened - description of the critical event,
- How It Happened - key facts surrounding the critical event,
- Why It Happened - inferences about probable causes,
- Alternative Courses of Action.

2. The following is an example of a critical event summary. Some of the summarized information might only emerge during the AAR.

Table 4

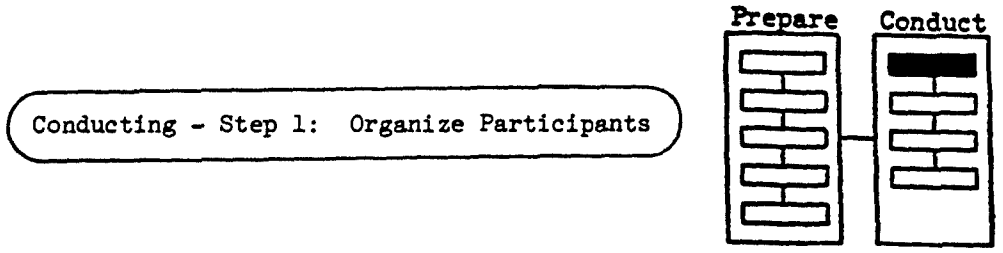
A Platoon Engagement Event

PLATOON CRITICAL ENGAGEMENT EVENT	EXAMPLES
What Happened	Sagger 29 killed APCs 41 and 43
How It Happened	Sagger 29 acquired two APCs in partial defilade, waited until APCs began movement across open area, and opened fire
Why It Happened	OPFOR sagger detected reflection from APC position
	APCs had route with cover but chose to cross open area
	APCs moved out at low rate of speed
	No platoon element was in overwatch
	When lead APC was hit, second APC did not return fire nor seek available cover
	Second APC took ineffective evasive action
Alternative Courses of Action	APC crews could have better camouflaged reflective surfaces while in assembly area
	A route of advance with terrain cover could have been selected
	APCs could have moved out at faster rate of speed
	OPFOR sagger firing signature could have been detected and fire brought to bear immediately upon receipt of fire
	Indirect fire could have been called
	Cover could have been sought immediately upon receipt of fire
	Overwatch element could have been designated and effectively employed

III. STAGE 2: CONDUCTING THE AAR

A. This activity consists of four steps:

- Step 1: Organize Participants,
- Step 2: State Training Objectives,
- Step 3: Lead Discussion,
- Step 4: Summarize Key Points.



B. When the trainer/AAR leader assembles the participants for the AAR, he should group them according to their organization in the exercise. Each subordinate element leader and controller should be with the unit for which he was responsible. The following diagram (Figure 2) shows an example. The squad or platoon should be seated so that they can see the training area from the OPFORs point of view, and vice versa. Everyone except the AAR leader should be seated: this helps the AAR leader maintain control. No one should be behind the AAR leader.

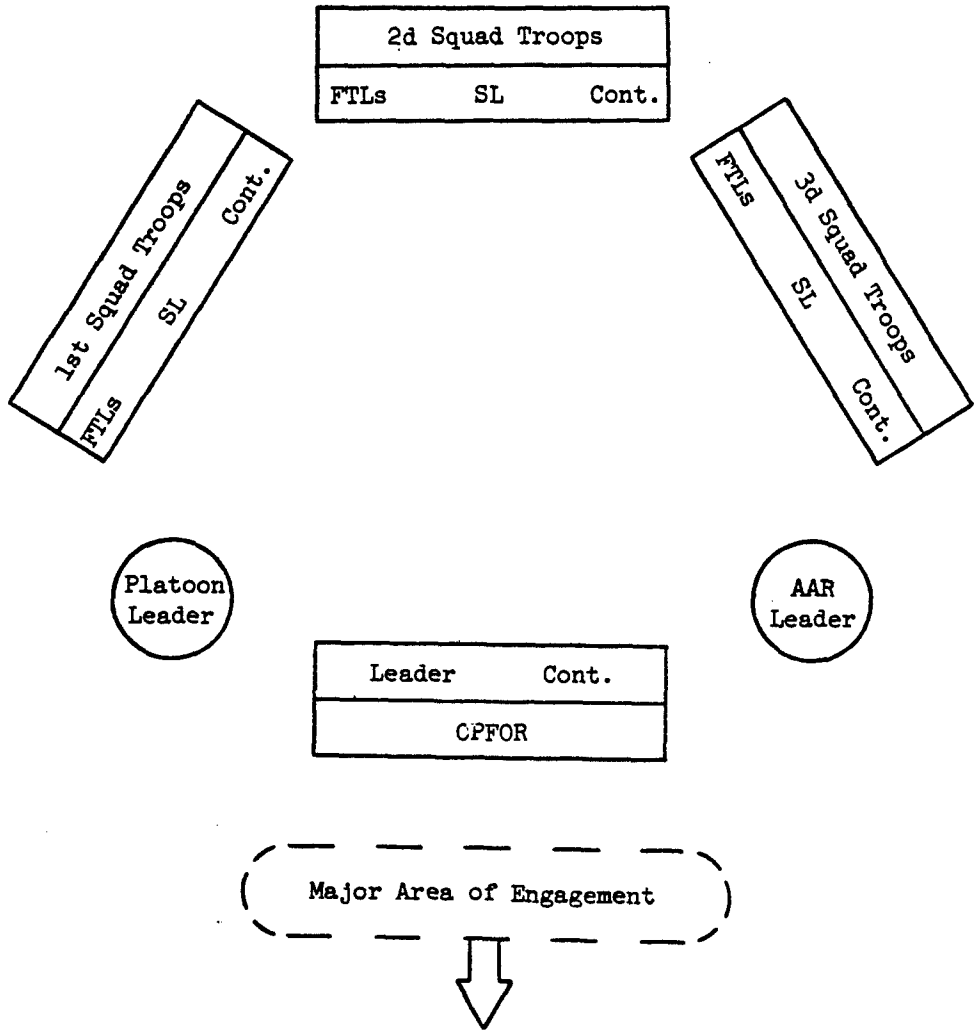
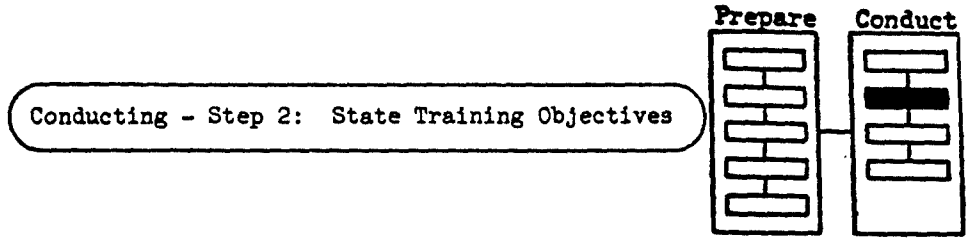


Figure 2

Arrangement for Infantry Platoon Level AAR

(FTL = Fire Team Leader, SL = Squad Leader, Cont. = Controller, PL = Platoon Leader)



C. The AAR leader should ask the platoon leader to make a brief restatement of the exercise segment's training objectives. These should be described as specifically as possible. The AAR leader should also state any additional teaching points but should limit these topics to two or three key ones to keep the AAR focused and prevent it from becoming excessively long.

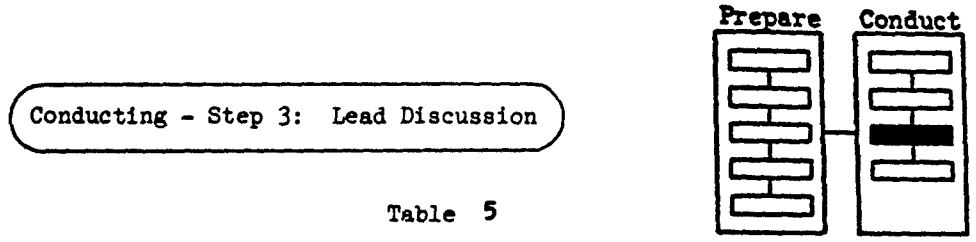


Table 5

Sample General Scenario for a Platoon AAR

	Event	Responsibility
1.	State Training Objectives or Teaching Points	Unit Leader and AAR Leader
2.	OPFOR Plan	OPFOR Leader
3.	Unit's Plan	Plt Leader
4.	Events Before Detection/Contact	Plt Leader, Tm/Sec Leaders
5.	First Detection/Contact	Detector/Firer and Target
6.	Report of Detection/Contact	Plt Leader, Tm/Sec Leader, Detector
7.	Reaction to Detection/Contact	All Players
8.	Events During Engagement	All Players
9.	Final Result	All Players
10.	Summary	AAR Leader

D. A tactical exercise could consist of either a series of related actions or of a number of distinct, unrelated episodes of activity. The sample AAR scenario (Table 5) is applied to the entire chain of events if the unit's actions were related. When unrelated episodes of activity occur portions of the AAR scenario can be repeated as required.

E. The AAR leader should guide a discussion of the major tactical events in their sequence of occurrence. Diagrams should be employed to help players visualize the exercise's development. Start by sketching the major terrain features and, as the AAR proceeds, have the participants draw routes of advance, objectives, locations of engagements, etc.

1. The general scenario for a platoon AAR is shown in Table 5.

2. Each major event should be discussed in detail to make teaching points about the unit's performance. The AAR leader does the following in an effective AAR:

   a. Avoids giving a critique or a lecture,

   b. Guides the discussion by asking leading questions,

   c. Has players describe what happened in their own terms,

d. Has players discuss not only what happened but how it happened, why it happened, and how it could have been done better,

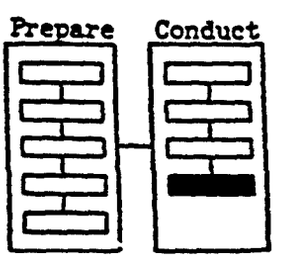
e. Focuses the discussion so that important tactical lessons are made explicit,

f. Relates tactical events to subsequent results,

g. Avoids detailed examination of events not directly related to major training objectives,

h. Encourages the participants to use diagrams to illustrate teaching points and to show routes, phase lines, objectives, etc.

i. Does not allow players to offer self-serving excuses for inappropriate tactical actions.



Conducting - Step 4: Summarize Key Points

F. The AAR leader briefly summarizes teaching points and training objectives. At the squad and platoon levels, teaching points will usually be concerned with the following areas:

1. Communication - Insufficient information passes up and down the chain of command,

2. Land Navigation - Inability to read and/or follow a map,

3. Movement Techniques - Inappropriate exposure of individuals or elements,

4. Suppression - Failure to suppress enemy prior to maneuver,

5. Location of Weapon Systems - Selection of positions where fire on probable enemy locations cannot be effectively delivered,

6. Tactical Decisions - Premature decisions to engage, selection of inappropriate routes of advance, etc.,

7. Detection of Enemy - Failure to detect enemy elements or activities.

G. At the end of the AAR, the AAR leader should clearly state the training objectives for the next exercise. If the unit has completed its current series of MILES exercises, the AAR leader should spend a little extra time to go over the unit's more important training needs.

H. After the summary, the AAR leader should have a private conversation with the squad or platoon leader regarding his strengths and weaknesses and what he needs to do to further improve his performance.

I. Whenever possible, an opportunity should be provided for the squad or platoon leader to discuss the points raised in the AAR, as well as his own observations, with the members of his unit.

IV. CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD AAR

A. Order and discipline are maintained.

B. Training objectives are reviewed.

C. The AAR leader guides the platoon's discussion to the important events, reasons why these occurred, and most importantly how the unit could have done better (i.e., what was learned).

D. The AAR leader traces chains of events so that the results of mistakes are understood by the troops. (One mistake is often a partial cause of another.)

E. The AAR leader shows relationships between actions of the unit and the success/failure of other unit elements.

F. Tactical events are clearly related to teaching points.

G. Attention of the troops is held and they are involved in the discussion.

H. Sketches or diagrams are used to reinforce points made in the AAR.

I. The summary and new training objectives are clear and concise.

CHAPTER 3

COMPANY AFTER ACTION REVIEW (AAR) GUIDE

COMPANY AFTER ACTION REVIEWS

I. INTRODUCTION TO THE AAR

In Tactical Engagement Simulation exercises with the Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement System (MILES), the AAR replaces the "critique" commonly used after nonengagement simulation training. The AAR is preferred because it provides a sound method for diagnosing unit training needs and is a more effective teaching technique.

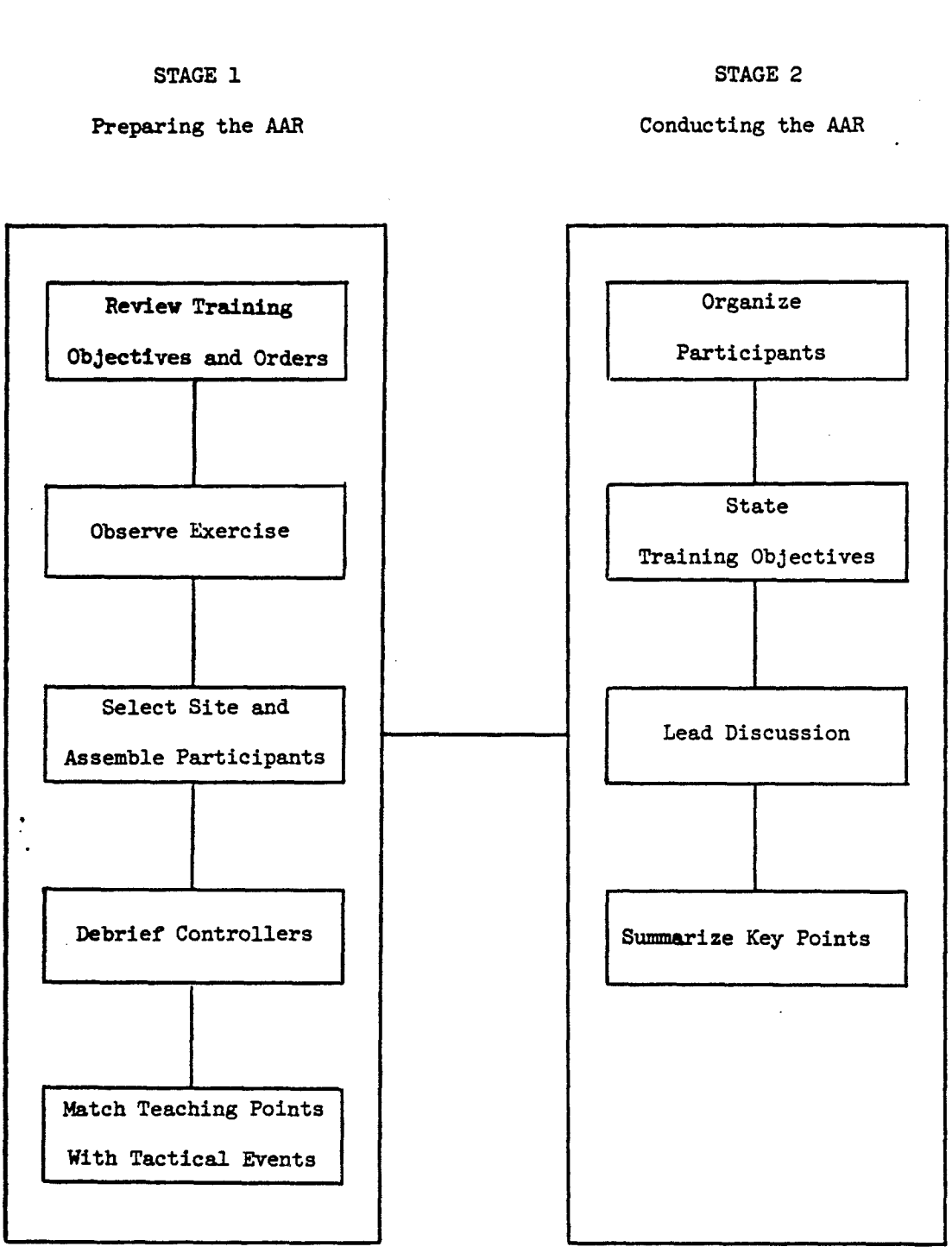


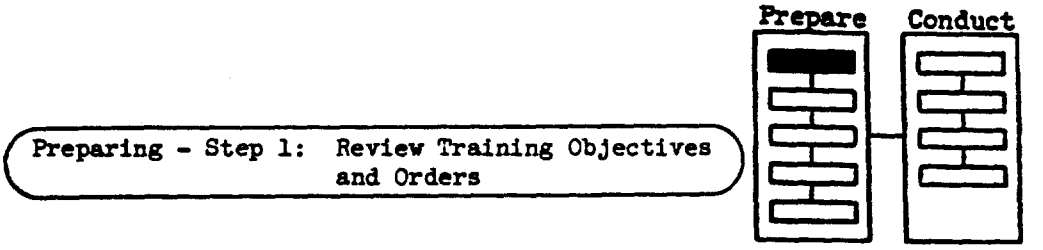
Figure 3

Stages and Steps in the Company AAR

II. STAGE 1: PREPARING THE AAR

A. Preparation for an AAR requires five steps:

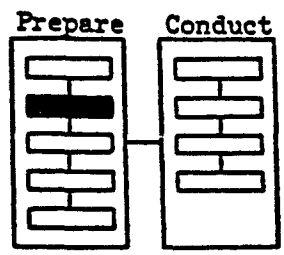
- Step 1: Review Training Objectives and Orders,
- Step 2: Observe Exercise,
- Step 3: Select Site and Assemble Participants,
- Step 4: Debrief Controllers,
- Step 5: Match Teaching Points With Tactical Events.



B. Training Objectives, each consisting of an ARTEP Task, Condition and Standard, are the basic elements of tactical exercise structure. They make the purposes of the exercise understandable by all, provide a guide for designing exercises, and provide focus for discussions of exercise results. Training Objectives need to be selected well in advance of the actual exercise, and most often should incorporate the suggestions of the subordinate unit leaders. The Training

Objectives selected should reflect the trainer's knowledge of the units most important weaknesses. When the trainer is not sure of what training objectives should be selected initially, he should select ones which are common unit problems for the echelon in question. Early training exercise results should be evaluated carefully to identify other training needs.

C. Prior to the exercise, the trainer should review the company's OPORD (if an operations order from the battalion has been issued for the exercise). The trainer should also listen to the company commander's orders and note the key aspects, especially deviations from the OPORD. Often tactical errors result from unclear or incomplete orders.



Preparing - Step 2: Observe Exercise

D. Observing is an active process and the emphasis is on noting those actions that make the difference between the company's success or failure. The following suggestions may be helpful.

1. The trainer need not remain overly close to the company commander. More can often be seen from high ground near the lead element's location or along its route of advance.

Since unit orders may identify important activities, checkpoints, etc., the trainer should be familiar with these in order to select his movement routes and locations.

2. The OPFOR's position or route often determines the location of significant engagements. Therefore, the trainer should know specific OPFOR locations and routes that are most likely to be affected by the company. Coordination with the platoon controllers is essential.

3. Forward deployed or lead elements are the most likely to encounter the OPFOR or to become misoriented. These are usually the most critical elements to keep under observation.

4. If a platoon or other major subordinate unit stops for an extended period of time, every effort should be made to find out why they stopped. Their halt may increase the platoon's vulnerability and can result in a significant reduction of the company's firepower. The halt may be important for the AAR.

5. The trainer should attempt to anticipate events about to occur (e.g., as the lead or forward deployed elements become near the OPFOR).

6. The trainer should watch closely how the platoons maneuver in relation to adjacent platoons. Uncoordinated movements by platoons are frequent problems in company-level exercises.

7. The trainer should keep in close contact with primary sources of information: the platoon and OPFOR controllers.

8. The trainer should monitor the company command radio net as well as the MILES control net.

E. The trainer should make written notes on potential critical tactical events. A critical event is often related to a major gain or loss that greatly enhances or impairs a company's ability to perform. Several examples are listed below:

1. Major loss of weapon systems,

2. Major breach of security,

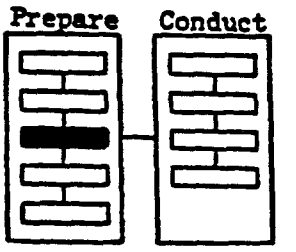
3. Major command and control failures,

4. Acquisition of important intelligence,

5. Successful deceptive maneuver,

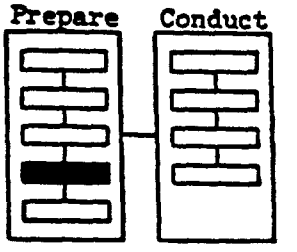
6. Occupation or control of major terrain features,

7. Neutralization and/or destruction of major OPFOR capabilities, elements or weapons.



Preparing - Step 3: Select Site and Assemble Participants

F. After the exercise, a site needs to be selected for the AAR. If possible, the AAR should be held where the majority of action occurred, where the most critical events took place (normally where the OPFOR was positioned), or where this terrain can be observed. Most often the OPFOR or unit objective will be suitable for assembling the players and conducting the AAR.



Preparing - Step 4: Debrief Controllers

G. After the exercise, and the necessary troop leading procedures, the trainer should review his knowledge about the critical

events and determine the nature of major information gaps. The trainer must have a complete understanding of what happened in the exercise, from the unit entering its initial positions through termination of the exercise. Therefore, the fourth step in AAR preparation is to obtain a detailed description of the exercise's major tactical events in the order in which they occurred. Descriptions should emerge from the debriefing of the subordinate unit controllers and of the OPFOR controller(s) or OPFOR leader. Beginning at the start of the exercise, the trainer should lead a discussion of the major events of the exercise. All controllers should be encouraged to contribute their observations regarding the elements for which they were responsible. The following examples of topics about which the trainer should have relatively detailed information may be helpful.

1. Important aspects of mission planning and preparation,

2. Disposition of forces,

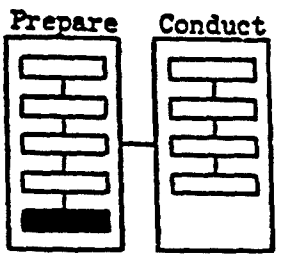
3. FRAGO's involving major changes in plans,

4. Deviations from planned routes and/or actions,

5. Major engagements and their results,

6. Coordination and communications.

H. After the trainer has a sound understanding of what happened during the exercise, he should review the critical events and rank them in terms of their relevance to the exercise training objectives and their contribution to the exercise outcome. He should then select as many critical events as can be covered in detail during the time allowed for the AAR and places them in chronological order. Writing key words on an index card may help the trainer to guide the AAR and keep the discussion focused.



Preparing - Step 5: Match Teaching Points With Tactical Events

I. A Training Objective is an ARTEP task, condition, and standard. Because these are often too broad to assist in focusing the AAR discussion adequately, we refer to Teaching Points. A teaching point is a single, relatively unified topic. For example, consider a company training objective from ARTEP 71-2 (Table 6). This training objective is rather too broad and complex to be of much help in focusing an AAR discussion. However, a teaching point is relatively simple and direct; for example, "maintaining effective control of subordinate elements." Teaching points are often better than training objectives for organizing the AAR and for communicating important lessons to troops and leaders.

Table 6

ARTEP 71-2 Example of an ARTEP 71-2 Training Objective

TRAINING AND EVALUATION OUTLINE

UNIT: Mechanized Infantry Company (Dismounted without Carriers)

MISSION: Attack (3-V-5)

TASK	CONDITIONS	STANDARDS	REFERENCES
3-V-5-7 Take Action on Contact.	During tactical movement, the company is engaged by direct fire weapons (rifle/machine-gun).	1. The platoon in contact: a. Returns fire immediately. b. Takes cover. c. Calls for and adjusts indirect fire support. d. Deploys to positions from which it can shoot well-aimed fire. e. Develops the situation. f. Reports to the company commander. 2. The overwatching platoon immediately fires at OPFOR positions. 3. Platoons not able to fire take cover and wait for orders. 4. The company: a. Makes quick estimate of situation and makes plans. b. Issues FRAGO as needed to carry out plans. c. Deploys remaining platoons and weapons as situation dictates. d. Reports to the battalion commander.	FM 7-10, chap 3, sec VIII.

J. A critical tactical event is often related to a major loss or gain that impairs or enhances a unit's ability to perform. In MILES exercises, critical events are usually associated, one way or another, with casualties inflicted or sustained. After the AAR leader has filled in any gaps in his knowledge of the

exercise, he matches teaching points to be made with the sequence of critical tactical events. Tactical events can provide teaching points "of opportunity" and these may be included if important. However, discussions unrelated to important teaching points should be avoided.

K. At this point, the AAR leader should have a list of key words as reminders of teaching points and their relevant tactical events. This includes the following for each event.

1. Summary of a Critical Event:

- What Happened - description of the critical event,
- How It Happened - key facts surrounding the critical event,
- Why It Happened - inferences about probable causes,
- Alternative Courses of Action.

2. The following is an example (Table 7) of a critical event summary. Some of the summarized information might only emerge during the AAR.

Table 7

Example: A Company Critical Event

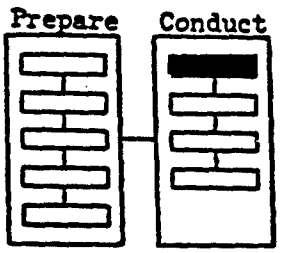
COMPANY CRITICAL ENGAGEMENT EVENT	EXAMPLES
What Happened	One platoon suffered 60% casualties from friendly indirect fire.
How It Happened	1430 hrs Co commander calls FIST, requests indirect fire on key terrain 1432 Indirect fire splash area entered by 1st and 2d Plt 1433 Indirect fire splash time Plt controller noted little vehicle dispersion at splash location.
Why It Happened	Co commander did not coordinate with Plt leaders. Plt leader did not keep Co commander accurately informed of their locations. Plt leader did not keep squads dispersed.
Alternative Courses of Action	Co commander could have waited on indirect fire request until determining location of subordinate elements. All units could have improved coordination. Plt leader could have minimized loss by insuring adequate dispersion of squads.

L. Formal training objectives should receive priority. Teaching points "of opportunity" should be ranked and included based on their impact on the company's ability to perform.

III. STAGE 3: CONDUCTING THE AAR

A. Conducting the AAR requires four steps:

- Step 1: Organize Participants,
- Step 2: State Training Objectives,
- Step 3: Lead Discussion,
- Step 4: Summarize Key Points.



Conducting - Step 1: Organize Participants

B. When the trainer/AAR leader assembles the participants for the AAR he should organize them according to their organization in the exercise. Each subordinate element controller should be with the unit for which he was responible. Figure 4 shows the physical layout for an AAR. Note that in a company-level exercise not all players should be present. The company AAR is directed toward the leaders. In an armor unit, players from the tank commanders up should be present. For an infantry unit, players from the squad leaders up should be present. Other key players should be present as needed. For example,

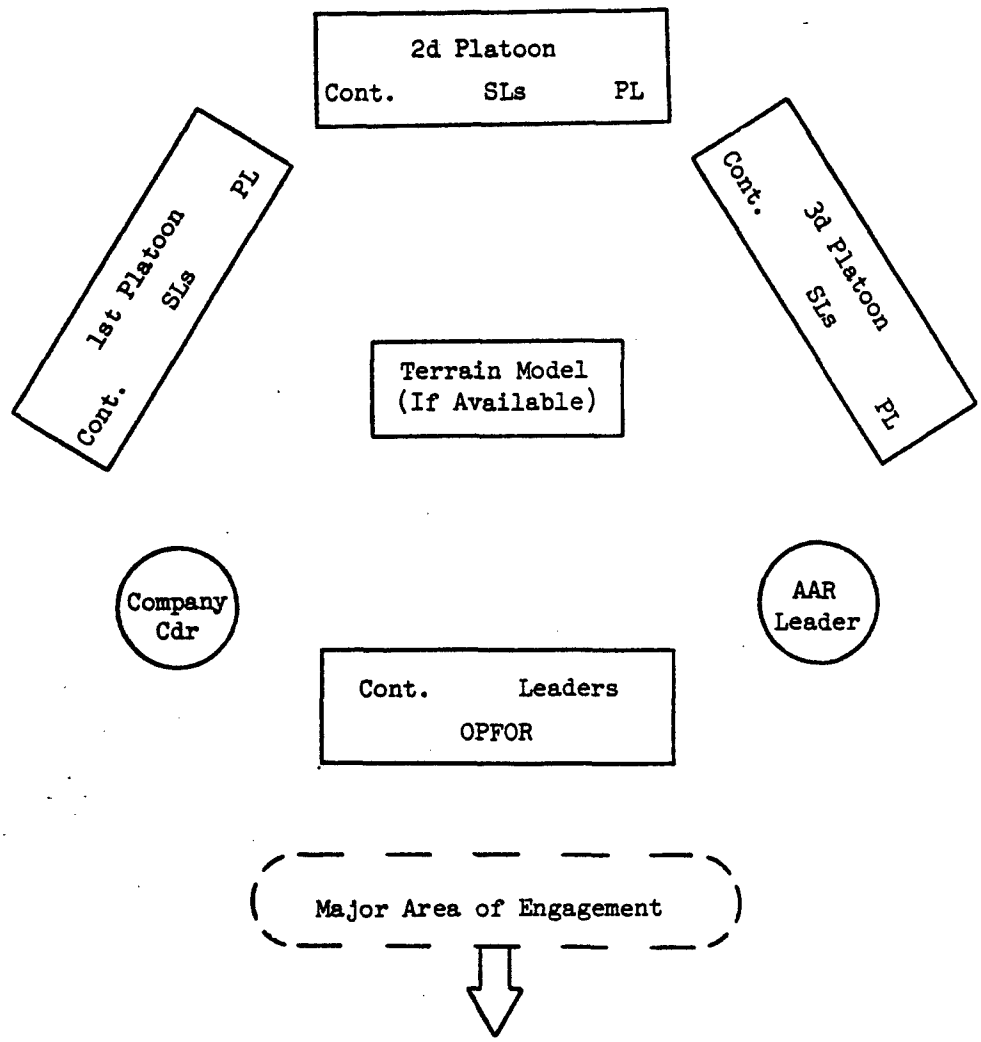
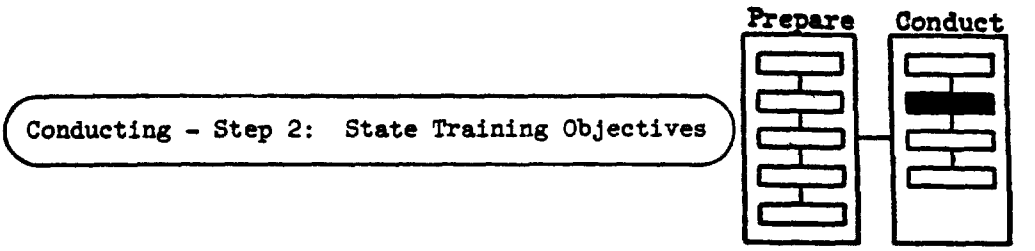


Figure 4

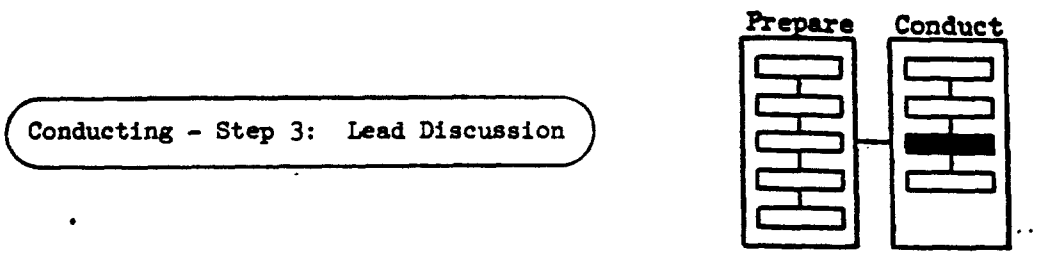
Arrangement for Infantry Company AAR

(SL = Squad Leader, PL = Platoon Leader, Cont. = Controller)

the FIST leader should be present if friendly indirect fire was included in the exercise scenario. The remaining troops should be released back to their vehicles for maintenance, preparation for the next exercise, etc.



C. The AAR leader should ask the Company Commander to make a brief statement of the training objectives for the exercise. These should be described as specifically as possible. The AAR leader should also state any additional teaching points that he intends to cover during the AAR. The number of these should be limited to three or four key ones to keep the AAR focused and prevent it from becoming excessively long.



D. A tactical exercise could consist of either a series of related actions or a number of distinct, unrelated events. The sample AAR scenario (Table 8) is applied to the entire chain of events if the units were related. When unrelated

chains of events occur, portions of the AAR scenario can be repeated as required.

E. The AAR leader guides a discussion of the major tactical events, in their order of occurrence. Diagrams should be employed to help players visualize the exercise development. The AAR leader should start by sketching the main terrain features and, as the AAR proceeds, have the participants draw in routes of advance, objectives, locations of engagements, etc.

1. The general scenario for an AAR is shown in Table 8.

Table 8

General Scenario for a Company AAR

Event	Responsibility
State Training Objectives or Teaching Points	Company Commander and AAR Leader
OPFOR Plan	OPFOR Leader
Company's Plan	Company Commander
Events Before Detection/Contact	Company Commmander/Platoon Leaders
First Detection/Contact	Participants
Report of Detection/Contact	Company Commander/Platoon Leaders
Reaction to Detection/Contact	All Participants
Frag Orders	Company Commander
Events During Engagement	All Participants
Final Results	All Participants
Summary	AAR Leader

2. Each major event should be discussed in detail to make teaching points about the company's performance during the event. The AAR leader does the following in an effective AAR.

a. Avoids giving a critique or a lecture.

b. Guides the discussion by asking leading questions.

c. Has players describe what happened in their own terms.

d. Has players discuss not only what happened but how it happened, why it happened, and how it could have been done better.

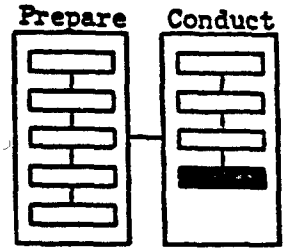
e. Focuses the discussion so that important tactical lessons are made explicit.

f. Relates tactical events to subsequent results.

g. Avoids detailed examination of events not directly related to major training objectives.

h. Encourages the participants to use diagrams to illustrate teaching points and to show routes, phase lines, objectives, etc.

1. Does not allow players to offer self-serving excuses for inappropriate tactical actions.



Conducting - Step 4: Summarize Key Points

E. The AAR leader briefly summarizes teaching points in terms of the training objectives covered in the AAR. After the summary, the AAR leader can have a private conversation with the company commander regarding his strengths and weaknesses and what he can do to further improve his performance, and that of his unit.

F. At the end of the exercise, the AAR leader should clearly state the training objectives for the next exercise. If the company has completed its current series of MILES exercises, the AAR leader should spend a little extra time to go over the unit's more important training needs.

G. Whenever possible, an opportunity should be provided for the company commander to discuss the points raised in the AAR, as well as his own observations, with the members of his company.

IV. CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD AAR

A. Order and discipline are maintained.

B. Training objectives are reviewed.

C. The AAR leader guides company's discussion to the important events, reasons why these occurred, and how the company could have done better. Avoids detailed exam of events not directly related to training objectives.

D. The AAR leader traces chains of events so that the results of mistakes are understood by participants (one mistake is often a partial cause of another).

E. Tactical events are clearly related to teaching points.

F. Attention of the participants is held and they are involved in the discussion.

G. The summary and new training objectives are clear and concise.

H. Sketches or diagrams are used to reinforce points made in the AAR.

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