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STUDENT ESSAY

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OBJECTIVE: NTC
SOME IDEAS FOR LEADERS ON HOW TO GET THERE FROM HERE

BY

LIEUTENANT COLONEL ALAN R. COCKS, AR

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BLOCK 20 (continued)

Next, establish "umbrella" concepts. Some examples: the NTC is World War III, effective use of MILES will be the sine qua non for success, and leader initiative will be critical. Incorporate "slice" leaders early on, both socially and for training, and update SOP's. Next, focus on leader training. Employ leader classes taught by NTC "graduates", simulation exercises, battlefield checklists, and leader tests. Concentrate on MILES proficiency, particularly among tank-killing systems, and ensure unit chemical teams are proficient. Finally, get the most out of the final pre-NTC ARTEP. Success will require more than the will to win. It will demand the will to prepare to win.

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USAWC MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM PAPER

OBJECTIVE: NTC

Some Ideas for Leaders on How to Get There From Here

AN INDIVIDUAL ESSAY

by

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ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Alan R. Cocks, LTC, AR

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Fort Irwin's National Training Center (NTC) provides our Army's most realistic battlefield ever devised in peacetime. It has virtually revolutionized our training by combining state-of-the-art instrumentation, professional observer/controllers, and a dedicated opposing force. Most importantly, it drives superb preparatory training. Here are some ideas for that training. First, study all the sources of NTC lessons learned to gain an appreciation for the common task force deficiencies, and make these guide preparatory training. Next, establish "umbrella" concepts. Some examples: the NTC is World War III, effective use of MILES will be the sine qua non for success, and leader initiative will be critical. Incorporate "slice" leaders early on, both socially and for training, and update SOP's. Next, focus on leader training. Employ leader classes taught by NTC "graduates", simulation exercises, battlefield checklists, and leader tests. Concentrate on MILES proficiency, particularly among tank-killing systems, and ensure unit chemical teams are proficient. Finally, get the most out of the final pre-NTC ARTEP. Success will require more than the will to win. It will demand the will to prepare to win.

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OBJECTIVE: NTC

SOME IDEAS FOR LEADERS ON HOW TO GET THERE FROM HERE

If you are the normal combat arms commander or leader scheduled for training at Fort Irwin's National Training Center (NTC), chances are you get that uncomfortable knot in the pit of your stomach every time you ponder your unit's probability of success on that wide expanse of Mojave high desert. If you will stay with me, I've got some ideas that should help you cover all the necessary preparatory bases. While they may not all be revolutionary, at least they are all in one place, and I am confident that they're on target. They should really help you and your unit hit the desert running. As a necessary lead in, however, let's first take a brief look at the history of Fort Irwin and the role the NTC plays in today's Army.

Where Task Forces Now Hunt the NTC's Opposing Force (OPFOR)--

Pinta Indians hunted game some 19,500 years ago. Many of their campsites can be seen today in protected areas on post. In more modern times, Fort Irwin's Bitter Springs became one of the stopovers on the Old Spanish Trail enroute to what is now Santa Fe, New Mexico. Captain John Fremont, the first member of our Army to visit the area, passed

through in 1844 accompanied by Kit Carson. The Army returned to Fort Irwin in 1860 and patrolled the area during the Indian Wars. The patrolling unit established the first small stone fort on a hill overlooking Bitter Springs.

More recently, General George Patton used the area for armored vehicle maneuvers in the 1930's. Rumor has it that some of his tank tracks are still visible in places. In 1940, President Roosevelt established a military reservation in the Fort Irwin area which in 1942 was officially designated Camp Irwin in honor of Major General George L. Irwin, World War I Commander of the 57th Field Artillery Brigade. Between its deactivation in 1944 and October 16, 1980, when the National Training Center (NTC) was established, the post endured through a series of ups and downs and ins and outs. Since its activation as an active Army installation on July 1, 1981, however, today's Fort Irwin has completely overcome its somewhat checkered history of on-again, off-again utility.¹ It is now arguably the finest, most sophisticated training facility for ground forces in the world.

The NTC Has Revolutionized our Training---

by combining a highly motivated, tactically proficient opposing force, a professional team of observers/controllers (O/C's), state-of-the-art instrumentation, realistic distances and extremely challenging terrain. The resulting

environment approximates actual combat with sometimes frightening realism and emphatically says to the training unit, "show me--don't waste my time telling me what you think you can do." Talk is cheap, and faking is painfully apparent at the NTC. Moreover, the training environment leaves no safe houses for decrepit task force systems. They are all inspected and tested. Inadequate or sloppy homework during NTC preparation will exact a very predictable toll as the weak system is exposed to the intense Mojave sunlight.

Having heard of these rigors, most leaders take very seriously the task of preparing for Fort Irwin, and this leads us to what is undoubtedly the NTC's most telling contribution. It has become the catalyst for vast improvements in home station training among CONUS-based units. In short, it drives the best training our Army has ever seen. Some might view this as an overstatement, but certainly not those of us who have witnessed the insightful discussions of barrier planning, fire support integration, dismounted infantry techniques and the like that routinely take place among company-grade officers during officer calls. In fact, if those of us who are lieutenant colonels are completely honest with ourselves, we would have to admit that as lieutenants and captains, 10-15 years ago, we could not have ante'd up in such discussions. Virtually every facet of our training has been focused and intensified by the lessons in tactics, combat support, and combat service support that flow from Fort Irwin.

In the First Days of the Next War---

We will hopefully not repeat the history of needless loss of lives due to inexperienced, unseasoned soldiers and leaders. Rotation by NTC rotation, we are gradually building a base of experienced combined arms leaders who will enter their first real battle with a level of tactical competence heretofore unattainable in peacetime. They will perform those fundamental combat imperatives whose absence in the early stages of past wars has been so costly. There are now over 46,000 officers and NCO's who have the NTC experience, and their numbers grow with each task force rotation. Their future value is certainly worth every penny invested in Fort Irwin and the National Training Center.

High Anxiety

If you are one of these 46,000 veterans, you probably understand all this. If you are not, but are anticipating an NTC mission, you should be experiencing a great sense of foreboding and anxiety. It is natural, and it is healthy, for it indicates an understanding of the NTC's training value and the absolute necessity of intense preparation. Perhaps you are wondering how your unit will do out there and how you personally will perform, or how on earth you are going to be able to accomplish all the training tasks required in the time remaining before deployment. You may also be wondering what all those training tasks should be.

There Are some Ideas in Here for You---

if you are a tank or mechanized infantry task force commander or subordinate leader. While based primarily on my experiences (both good and bad) as a tank TF commander who went through in November 1984, they have been generally accepted by many other leaders who have run the gauntlet. While there are no guarantees offered, the type of program proposed herein should really assist in getting your systems and leaders tuned up for the challenge ahead.

But First, Get Smart!

Don't start designing your preparatory program until you know what your most likely problems are going to be out there. Get an all-source NTC lessons learned collection effort going. The sources of these lessons are many, but you will find they convey consistent themes and identify the common, recurring task force weaknesses. The current consensus all-Army pitfall team is listed at Figure 1. Along with your unit specific weak areas, these should drive both the form and substance of your train up. Except for an occasional reference, their detailed discussion is not within the purview of this article. Suffice to say here that they are the hard things to do right. Not surprisingly, they demand great training emphasis and lots of practice. You will find them amply defined and discussed in the following sources.

Some Top-Rated Sources

Your best source will be your own first-hand observations of NTC action. There is no substitute for this. It is one thing to read or hear about the classic piecemeal attack, but quite another to actually see one develop. Use every opportunity to get out into the desert. One excellent medium will be the Forces Command Leaders' Training program wherein selected members of your division or brigade are invited under NTC sponsorship to observe and evaluate two or three task force operations. A member of the O/C group will coach the leaders to draw out all major strengths and weaknesses. This is the formal route, but not the only route.

If you are lucky, your higher headquarters will have a task force rotation scheduled prior to your own, and you will be able to employ the informal route. Under division or higher headquarters sponsorship, get out and spend a few days with this sister unit. If necessary, ship one of your vehicles with them to ensure you have transportation. If you are a task force commander, take as many of your subordinate leaders as you can, mission and money permitting. It is particularly important that you take company/team commanders that have never been--this breaks the ice for them and softens the edges on the imposing NTC mystique. You can easily observe task force operations without interfering (this is important--you would want this same courtesy during your rotation) and spend as much time as you can (again,

without interfering) driving the terrain. There will most assuredly be unanimous agreement within your group that this terrain driving alone made the trip worth the time and relatively small expense. You and your guys will be amazed at the number of significant features hidden by the 20 meter contour interval on Fort Irwin maps and the great difficulty accurately gauging distances on the ground. Also remember to take your logistics operators, or get them out there some other time. They need to see the terrain as well, and can really benefit from first-hand observation of draw/turn-in facilities and procedures.

The next good source is the experience of NTC graduates from other battalions of your division. Once you have weathered their accounts of great victories over the OPFOR, and they settle into more accurate recollections of events, you will probably get some hard-hitting admissions of major system breakdowns that seriously screwed up operations. While you've got them talking, pump them for the solutions that worked. These should prove invaluable in your efforts to develop a sound training program.

Listen carefully to your division's senior leaders, i.e., brigade commanders, ADC (M) and CG. While this may seem painfully obvious, it is, in fact, a valuable caution. In most CONUS divisions these leaders will have acquired a unique perspective on the NTC garnered from "out-of-the-smoke" observations, discussions with senior

leaders from other divisions, and candid exchanges with the NTC leadership and key members of the O/C group. Their observations are weighed in the context of rich combat and prior command experience. As such, they are particularly insightful and useful as foci of training.

In addition to this human intelligence, you will need to tap the vast body of NTC-related professional journal articles and the absolutely superb summations of observations published by the NTC and the Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL), Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas. The articles, of course, zero in on specific aspects of operations. When compiled over time from the entire spectrum of journals, however, they present a comprehensive and useful compendium of the major deficiencies and, more importantly, some very sound and oftentimes ingenious solutions. It is nice to be able to benefit in this way from somebody else's hard-earned lessons. The lessons-learned summations, on the other hand, provide under one cover the total NTC experience to date, and constitute the best single written source of guidance for your preparation. There is something critical in them for virtually every level of leadership in your task force, and each of your staff officers. It would be criminally negligent to bound into your training program without a solid knowledge of the most recent packet. They are readily available for the asking. In fact, it is highly likely that they are floating around your headquarters now.

These, then, are the best sources of NTC lessons learned. Now you are ready for the next important step.

Establish Your "Umbrella" Concepts

As you train, you will be wrestling with innumerable specific solutions to the challenges depicted in Figure 1. There are a few imperatives for NTC success, however, that are more general in nature and transcend the more specific requirements. They define the context for the entire training program and must remain foremost in the minds of all your leaders. We might call these "umbrella" philosophies. You may want to develop your own, but the three outlined below are indisputably critical and will serve you well.

The first is that your trip to the NTC is more than a mere training event--it's World War III. This mentality serves several purposes. It places your training program in the proper perspective; that is, you are preparing for war. It dampens the tendency to "go admin" while you are at the NTC. There is no "admin" at Fort Irwin, and your leaders need to know this up front. They should feel like they are in a hostile fire zone from the time they get off the plane. Finally, it nurtures the seed of fighting spirit you will want to sow among your soldiers during home station preparation. A former chief of the NTC Operations Group once said that the OPFOR loves a good fight on Saturday night. He was right. They are dedicated to whipping you. Your guys need to feel the same way.

Next, establish effective gunnery with MILES (Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement System) as an absolutely essential goal of all your training. Simply put, if your tanks and TOW's cannot kill the OPFOR with deadly consistency, you can excel in all aspects of the seven evaluated operating systems (maneuver, command and control, fire support, etc.) and still fail miserably. MILES gunnery is truly the sine qua non of success at the NTC. To borrow a phrase, don't leave home without it.

Finally, you will need to develop the type of command climate within your unit that encourages and rewards self-starting leaders and soldiers. One trip to observe another unit and you will be a believer. Way out in the distance you will notice a first sergeant leading his logistics pack (LOGPAC) from the trains area. To your right you will see a maintenance collection point in operation. Further to your right some leaders are performing a recon for their next operation and beyond them you see some engineers at work on a tank ditch. Way over to your left a mechanized infantry unit is setting in hasty protective minefields and beyond them you spot a tank platoon reboresighting its MILES. In short, it is one hell of a busy place with extraordinary distances between activities. These distances and the pace of events will doom the unit bred and raised in a tightly controlled, centralized environment. Each leader will need

to do the right things because he knows that is how you fight, not because he expects his boss to pop out of the wadi at any moment to supervise him. This does not speak against things like backbriefs and the personal involvement of the chain of command in making things happen. It does recognize that supervision will be limited if leaders are going to get the required hours of sleep per day, and the unit that relies solely on the boss will gradually lose its energy as the boss loses his.

Now that you have established these fundamentals and are determined to emphasize and enforce them throughout NTC preparation, take the next step.

Get Your "Slice"

At the risk of again accentuating the obvious, let me encourage you to ascertain early on your precise task organization. You will surely have a fire support officer (FSO), engineer platoon leader, air liaison officer (ALO) and one or two companies from your sister mech or tank battalion. You may also have an air defense platoon leader, an electronic warfare and intelligence platoon leader, and a smoke asset leader. Preferably a year out, but certainly as early as possible, lock these guys into your task force for training and socializing. Within tolerable constraints imposed by their organic chains of command, make them members of your team. There is no point in conducting the training

we are going to discuss without these leaders. Insist that they attend, and make it a crisis when one does not show. If you are too liberal on this one, you may fail to adequately test, train and incorporate these essential combat and combat support systems, and your learning curve on the desert floor could be embarrassingly steep. You will be glad you started early as incredible differences surface in jargon and procedure, even between your organic and attached companies. One closing caution: as you cross-attach units to task organize, make it an inviolable rule that each losing unit give up its best. It is the only way to keep peace in the task force.

Now you are ready to look at your tactical and logistics systems.

The System Tune-up

Take a close look at your unit's tactical and logistics standing operating procedures (SOP's). Do this for basically two reasons. First, you will want to avoid the criticism sometimes heard that, "Your unit doesn't follow its SOP because it doesn't know its SOP." While this may not be the most heinous crime a unit can commit, it is certainly one of the most professionally embarrassing. Secondly, and most importantly, ask yourself whether the SOP is merely a document filled with innocuous platitudes, or a resource for leaders that accurately states how you are going to conduct

the specific business of combat. Far too many fall into the former category, perhaps because they were written to fulfill the requirement to have an SOP, and before the unit had actually determined how it was going to do business. So, before you begin training in earnest, develop a draft SOP that outlines specific, workable procedures, then revise as you go. The final product should be specific and proven through trial at home station.

Such a process greatly improved the utility of our task force field SOP. While it started as an imposing volume of generalized responsibilities and requirements, it made the trip to Fort Irwin as a trimmed down series of essential procedures. To illustrate, some examples:

An NTC graduate task force commander told me how much trouble his tactical operations center (TOC) experienced getting operations overlays out on time in sufficient quantities (generally 18-20 copies). We knew from reading NTC observations summations that this was not a unique problem. Our S3 solved it by developing what became known as the "chimpanzee" method. Once the master acetate overlay was proofed and approved, one of the TOC workers copied it onto another sheet of acetate. A second worker proofed it, and began copying it onto a third sheet of acetate. Meanwhile, worker #1 was busy copying his second acetate overlay. This process continued until five workers were involved. End result: 20 acetate overlays in less than 2 hours. This seemingly ridiculous SOP worked like a charm.

An equally thorny problem on the service support side was that of "steady state" maintenance, or the challenge of ordering parts and fixing equipment as you progress through the rotation rather than waiting until you are through and flooding the system with backlogged requisitions. To solve this, our SOP dictated a very specific route for daily crew-level DA Form 2404's (depicted graphically in figure 2). Each crew's meal card for the daily Class A meal was a thorough 2404 (no one ever went unfed) which was handled without deviation per SOP. Over 2500 requisitions were processed during force-on-force and live fire training, almost twice the average up to that time. To emphasize the importance of specificity, and home station trial, our first shot at this system allowed either the first sergeant or maintenance team chief to carry the 2404's. We found that those given to team chiefs mysteriously disappeared while those corralled by first sergeants made it back to the field trains and generated the necessary requisitions. As it turned out, team chiefs were too embroiled in on-the-spot fixes and hardly ever got back to the trains. Their 2404's died in their tool boxes.

Another legendary service support challenge involved accurate and timely casualty reporting. As you probably know, NTC rules closely parallel consequences of combat performance. In casualty processing, you either execute properly or your unit slowly but surely erodes in manpower.

Our S1 developed the unit battle roster system depicted in Figure 3. These rosters, maintained by the Admin/Logistics Center (ALC) and first sergeants, allowed complete casualty identification by a simple line number, and greatly facilitated the speed and accuracy of reporting.

SOP's, of course, are designed to standardize the most efficient process for doing the routine things. The diagram in Figure 4 shows our standard LOGPAC layout. Once again, it is very specific and served to alleviate the confusion caused by changes in vehicle drivers, company/team organization, and most importantly, darkness.

One final example. Many units develop brevity codes for use on command nets. They are particularly essential at the NTC due to very effective OPFOR jamming. But if they are needed on command nets, they are twice as essential on the Admin/Log net. Tune it in for awhile if you want classic examples of lengthy banter, security violations and fundamental indiscipline. Part of our answer was an Admin/Log brevity code, a small portion of which appears in Figure 5. Beyond merely abbreviating transmissions, this system served to highlight and reinforce for each combat service support (CSS) operator (S1, S4, Battalion Maintenance Officer, etc.) his critical CSS functions, and became the "one sheet of music" everyone was supposed to get on. Please note the "NUTS" segment dealing with ALC assumption of TOC duties. Unless you are extremely fortunate, you will have an

opportunity or two to exercise this during force-on-force training. It is not easy and needs lots of home station rehearsal. Note also the ALC parking plan, a simple, specific method for a routine action.

These examples are not offered as the only, or necessarily even the best, ways to operate. They merely illustrate the need to deal specifically with all those hard little problems you will encounter at the NTC. Recommend you first review your SOP's to see if they standardize in sufficient detail all the routine, essential functions, and tune them up as necessary. Then, as you exercise the procedures at home station, get the entire team involved in critiquing their effectiveness. Revise as necessary, and take to Fort Irwin a document that actually reflects how you have trained, and how you expect to operate.

Put in terms of the offense, what we have discussed thus far are really assembly area actions. We are now ready to cross the training line of departure. As we do, ask yourself who is going to make most of the honest mistakes at the NTC.

Your Soldiers?

Probably not. They will fight valiantly because they will be up to their sweatbands in the most realistic fighting our Army has done in peacetime. The specter of the attacking OPFOR regiment will grasp the attention and imagination of even your most reticent troops. It is exactly the sort of

adventure that led them to their local recruiters. Your leaders will make most of the mistakes simply because they have the hardest things to do. As you can see from a reinspection of Figure 1, the common pitfalls are all leader-generated. So---

Train Your Leaders

Here are some ideas to weight your attack on the objective of competent leadership:

(italics) Officer and Noncommissioned Officer Professional Development (OPD/NCOPD) Programs. While you cannot devote these entirely to NTC preparation, you should be able to give NTC issues a corner on the market as early as a year out. Try to get both officer and NCO leaders who have recently returned from NTC rotations to teach. They have tremendous credibility. They should also have their "take home" packages from Fort Irwin, including excellent 8-10 minute video tapes of selected battles. These are ideal media for conveying the hard-hitting lessons learned at the NTC. Many will allow the instructor to show and recall with emotion the dire consequences that accrued to his unit from some seemingly minor leader omission. These will have particular impact, and in most cases will reinforce the things that need to be done to avoid the major, recurring pitfalls. Under brigade task force sponsorship, see if you can get some OPFOR representatives to come out. They will

discuss some of the classic blunders rotational units have committed, and some of the key elements underlying their own success. This is not only good training. It also tends to get your guys' blood boiling. One small caution: unless you are full on lieutenants, you will have NCO platoon leaders. Be sure to include them in all OPD classes.

(italics) Simulation Exercises (SIMEX). Most posts have simulation centers. I must admit to some skepticism concerning their utility before we began our leader training. I am now convinced that, rationed properly, their use has real value, particularly if they have terrain models replicating the NTC. Use these facilities to exercise both the tactical and logistics aspects of operations. Run a SIMEX with your officers, then power down and exercise your NCO's. Develop Operations Plans (OPLANS) for potential battles in the southern and central NTC corridors, and use these as the governing media for your SIMEX's. Do the same for the northern (live fire) corridor, focusing on the most probable missions. Take all of these OPLANS with you. It is not cheating. It is what OPLANS are all about. SIMEX benefits are obvious. At almost no cost, you will be able to test your tactical and logistical systems, train your first and second levels of leadership, and get everyone used to working NTC terrain. As long as it is not overdone to the point of boredom, and the focus stays on NTC lessons rather

than the occasionally frustrating and arbitrary results of game rules, the SIMEX can provide an excellent medium for leader training.

(italics) Leader Checklists. Some units at the NTC are not able to routinely execute basic Army Training and Evaluation Plan (ARTEP) tasks at the squad/tank crew and platoon levels. These, of course, are the levels that can make or break company/teams and task forces. Failure to perform these fundamental blocking and tackling tasks indicates one of two problems: lapses in discipline or inadequate training. While our ultimate goal was 24 hour/day adherence to ARTEP standards, we knew our rotation would not be a zero defect performance. We also knew, however, that we could eliminate inadequate training as a culprit, thus allowing immediate attribution of such problems to lapses in discipline, a far easier issue for the chain of command to deal with on a fast-moving battlefield.

One very key ingredient in this effort was a packet of checklists issued to the leader of each squad, crew and platoon in the task force. Each checklist dealt with an area identified by the NTC as a common weakness, and provided its holder with a quick reference outline of required actions.

Some of the more important areas were:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| -Actions on Receiving
Indirect Fire | -Actions on Receiving
Direct Fire |
| -Obstacle Breaching Sequence | -Passage of Lines |
| -Reorganization/Consolidation
Activities | -Attack |
| -Soldier Care at the NTC | -Defend |
| -Troop Leading Procedures | -Road March Fundamentals |
| -Break in the Action
Checklist | |

Figure 6 shows our "Break in the Action" checklist.

This one is used to illustrate the instrument because it was particularly effective in a seemingly minor, but actually quite consequential area. Without the training emphasis this list provides, the tendency could well be for your soldiers to use lapses in battle primarily for suntanning and smoking. Results, in order of impact: it is sloppy and unprofessional; it leaves them open to catastrophic OPFOR retribution; it moves them along the continuum from active, aggressive players to passive participants merely awaiting the next order or OPFOR move; and it gradually degrades combat strength as MILES "deboresights," casualties go untreated, roadwheels burn up for lack of lubrication, and critical supplies (particularly ammunition) become mal-distributed. A final point: The checklists do not stand

alone. They require a good measure of training in OPD/NCOPD, and the discipline that accrues from commander insistence on adherence.

(italics) Leader Tests: This is another technique that improves execution of fundamentals at the lower levels of leadership, and maintains a leader focus on your forthcoming war at the NTC. Periodically (weekly or monthly) administer written or practical tests to all task force leaders on NTC-peculiar requirements (intersection/resection, soldier care in the desert, etc.), common leader tasks, NTC imperatives (MILES boresighting), and other items on leader checklists. Have the chain of command grade and follow-up to help those not doing well. Reward those that do particularly well. At very low cost and a relatively minor investment of leader time, you can reinforce other aspects of your leader training program, and further isolate that issue of fundamentals execution.

(italics) NTC Terrain Drive: Leader training can continue even after you have arrived at the NTC. We have already talked about the terrain issues of deceptive distance and hidden features. In fact, based on the map's 20 meter contour interval, the NTC is one of the few places on this planet where you will often fight for and from terrain that does not appear on the map. You need to close the gap between your leaders' knowledge of the ground and that of the OPFOR during the 4 days of equipment draw. Your officers

should spend at least 2 of those 4 days travelling the terrain and pointing out the significant features not on the map that often turn the tide of battle. There are plenty of them, particularly in the western portion of the central corridor. I can assure you that this effort will pay extraordinary dividends in your ability to develop sound offensive and defensive orders.

These, then, have been some suggestions for preparing your leaders tactically, technically and mentally for their greatest peacetime challenge. Here now are some ideas for other important aspects of preparatory training.

MILES Stakes and Marksmanship

As we have said, if there is one sine qua non for success at the NTC it is unit effectiveness with MILES. You can do everything else right, but you will get your butt kicked every time if you cannot kill OPFOR vehicles with speed and precision. Though I cannot remember the author's name, I recall an article awhile back that described combat crews as either "killers," "fillers," or "fodder." This was merely a more graphic way of portraying the historical battlefield phenomenon of ten percent of the men doing ninety percent of the killing. You cannot afford to let this happen at Fort Irwin. What happens if your four or five "killers" become shielded from the OPFOR's main thrust, or some of them

are broken down? Even if they are perfectly sighted and ready, they will have a very difficult time servicing the entire 130 vehicle OPFOR regiment. So your goal must be to maximize your percentage of killers, both tanks and TOW's. Here's how.

(italics) Train with MILES when you train. I cannot think of too much worthwhile training you can do in the field with tanks and TOW's without MILES. In fact, maneuver training without this key resource could well be negative training. The use of MILES will become second nature to your crews only with repeated mounting, employment, and dismounting. Think twice before you schedule field training without first scheduling MILES.

(italics) MILES Stakes. Best done at task force level, this entails setting up a series of stations requiring crews (tank and TOW) to mount, test, boresight and zero, and effectively employ MILES. Don't forget the .50 caliber MILES on vehicles so equipped. It can come in real handy against the dismounted OPFOR assaults you will experience, and can also kill BMP's and the like if properly zeroed. But the primary emphasis, of course, should be on tank-killing maingun and TOW systems. Do not let crews off the course until they have demonstrated that they are no longer "fillers" or "fodder." Targets can be other MILES-equipped vehicles or, better yet, Saab's with laser detectors. Time this training to ensure that most of the crews will be with you for the NTC, and do not forget to train the trainers.

(italics) MILES Discipline. During tactical training, all levels of command must be alert for crews who are not getting kills. Treat them exactly as you would deadlined vehicles because that is what they are, and that is how they will be treated at the NTC. Do not let them slide through training without proving themselves with MILES. If you do, don't bother taking them to Fort Irwin. They will just be excess baggage. Troubleshoot the problems. If they are not mechanical, you will probably find that the crews have not checked their boresight and zeros. This brings up a critical point of discipline. All tank-killing systems absolutely must re-zero before each battle. Perhaps this should not be the case, but it is. Companies and platoons must have SOP's for this process that are ingrained during home station training, and become so disciplined that no amount of adversity preempts them. Without this, this morning's killer may become tonight's filler.

(italics) MILES Awards. If you believe, as I do, that there is a strong correlation between today's MILES killers and tomorrow's combat effective crews on a real battlefield, then it seems reasonable that we reward those MILES-effective crews for their demonstrated proficiency. Consider developing a graduated system of awards based on numbers of vehicle kills achieved both during home station training and at the NTC. For example, 25 kills earns "MILES Marksman" status (Task Force Certificate of Achievement), 50 kills

"MILES Sharpshooter" (Brigade Certificate), and 100 kills
"MILES Expert" (Army Achievement Medal). There are obviously
many other workable variations. It is the theme that counts,
for it further reinforces the importance of being good with
MILES and hopefully provides some positive motivation for
crews to excel.

Will The Real Radiological Survey Party Please Stand Up?

You may have a good handle on your chemical teams. We
surely did not. In fact, it became one of our real hard
problems. Sometimes the guys did not know they were even on
one of the team rosters. Sometimes they knew they were, but
knew next to nothing about their chemical equipment and
duties. Then, when we seemed to have the training done,
people moves devastated the system in a miraculously short
time. This all occurred, by the way, despite a superb
chemical officer and a good fill of trained company chemical
NCO's.

We finally put a fix on it, however, with a last minute
chemical team training and testing course. Organized by the
task force chemical officer, and using company chemical NCO's
as instructors, the course forced every team in the task
force (and there were alot of them) to demonstrate the
critical tasks we knew would have to be performed to avoid
disaster at the NTC. They all brought their own equipment
and made it work. First, second and third place finishers in

each team category received appropriate awards. Although far too late in the game, this last ditch effort got the guys and their equipment ready. They performed well in the war.

Your Pre-NTC ARTEP

This is undoubtedly your most important single training event as you work towards Fort Irwin, and certainly every CONUS-based division has developed a model geared to the NTC. So, while I would not presume to know the one best solution, if such a thing exists, the ideas presented below seemed to me particularly key to the value of pre-NTC ARTEP's.

You will make many trips to the field as you prepare for the NTC. Your last one should be the big one that approximates as closely as local conditions permit the NTC experience. This is the ARTEP we will be talking about here.

This exercise should occur about 30 days prior to your departure date. This ensures that the great majority of participants will be with you through Fort Irwin, and the training will be fresh in their minds. It also leaves about the right amount of time for necessary final training tune-ups (like the chemical stakes), family briefings, maintenance of stay-behind equipment, and preparation of soldiers and equipment for shipment.

The one month out timing also facilitates the next requirement; that is, your ARTEP leadership and task organization must exactly match your NTC configuration. No

exceptions! It is time for all leader leaves and passes to be cancelled. Among other things, this will really be your final opportunity to meld your team. If done right, it will be far too important an exercise to miss. Rookies may occasionally do well in sports, but they will not do your unit much good at the NTC. So, hold the line and insist that your entire team play.

Do not allow your unit to be shortchanged in its evaluator package. If you are not careful, natural forces will work to cut its corners, trim it, and reduce the number of first stringers, particularly at the platoon level. The most desirable package should include a first string evaluator for each staff section and unit in the task force down to and including the platoon level. And, while some task forces may have to be evaluated by units with no prior NTC experience, I sure would not want mine to be one of them. The tactical insights, skills and credibility NTC veterans bring to evaluator duties are practically essential to effective pre-NTC ARTEP's.

As leaders in the evaluated task force, you should demand as tough an evaluation as resources, time, and the experience of your evaluators will permit. This temporary self-inflicted pain will steel your leaders and pay extraordinary dividends in the desert.

Finally, the exercise should be about 8 days of quick-paced action. This will ensure that your systems and people are stressed like they will be at the NTC. Your guys may have been able to "gut out" the old 72 hour ARTEP. They will not be able to stay awake for 8 days, so sleep plans and second string leaders will necessarily get a workout. Evaluators must stress execution of the fundamentals (infantry dug in with overhead cover, vehicle dispersion, reaction to artillery and NBC attack, etc.) by exacting heavy tolls when they are ignored. CSS systems (personnel replacement, casualty evacuation, etc.) should be exercised as they will be at Fort Irwin, and command and control should experience NTC-level doses of jamming, smoke, and mission-oriented protective posture (MOPP) 4. In short, cause your guys to come home from Fort Irwin and say, "That was easier than our ARTEP."

OBJECTIVE: NTC

We have now talked through what I would consider the key aspects of an effective NTC preparatory process, from gathering intelligence to meeting a very capable OPFOR in the Mojave desert. Figure 7 graphically summarizes these suggestions.

Please remember above all else that the most important single contribution of the NTC has been its effect on the caliber of home station preparatory training. There is no

question that your soldiers and leaders have the competitive spirit and are dedicated to victory over the OPFOR. But, as noted by Indiana basketball coach, Bobby Knight (a fairly successful competitor against capable opponents in their home courts), it's not the will to win, but rather the will to prepare to win that counts. Nothing could be more pertinent to your unit's performance at Fort Irwin. Hopefully, you have found here some ideas and training concepts you can use in this most essential effort--I would say good luck, but that, of course, has very little to do with it.

Footnote: 1. Most recent edition of the Fort Irwin welcome packet.

MAJOR RECURRING WEAKNESSES
OBSERVED AT THE NTC

- Poor battlefield reconnaissance
- Ineffective fire support integration
- Ineffective countermobility operations
- Employment of dismounted infantry
- Inadequate terrain appreciation
- Attack helicopter employment
- Offensive operations ("piecemeal" attack)
- Command and control
 - Commander's intent not understood
 - Failure to take risk

FIGURE 1

STEADY STATE

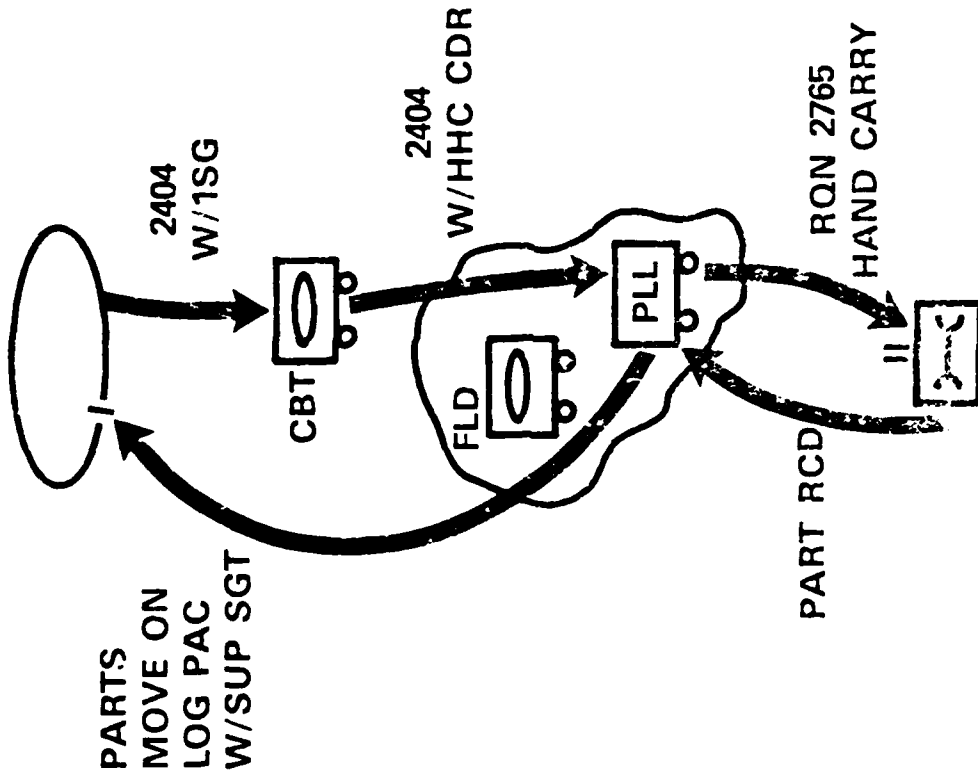


FIGURE 2

UNIT BATTLE ROSTER

TF--1

DATE ROSTER PREPARED: _____

AUTHORIZED

<u>POS #</u>	<u>TITLE</u>	<u>GRADE</u>	<u>SSI/DMOS</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>RANK</u>	<u>SSN</u>	<u>RAD DOSAGE RATE</u>	<u>REMARKS</u>
A001	CDR	0-3	11C00	SWING,B	CPT	2530	_____	_____
A002	XO	0-2	11C00	YAMASHITA,J	1LT	2531	_____	_____
A003	1SG	E-8	11B5M	CARPENTER,D	1SG	2532	_____	_____
A004	SUPPLY SGT	E-6	76Y30	VANNATTA,J	SSG	2533	_____	_____

TF 10

3RD RIFLE PLATOON

A301	PLT LDR	0-2	11C00	GUEVAS,J	2LT	2541	_____	<u>K/A 2000 15 JAN</u>
A302	PLT SGT	E-7	11M40	CARTER,W	SFC	2544	_____	_____
A303	SQD LDR	E-6	11M30	HARVEY,A	SSG	2556	_____	_____
A304	ASST SQD LDR	E-5	11M20	PRUITT,M	SGT	2566	_____	_____

FIGURE 3

LOGPAC LAYOUT

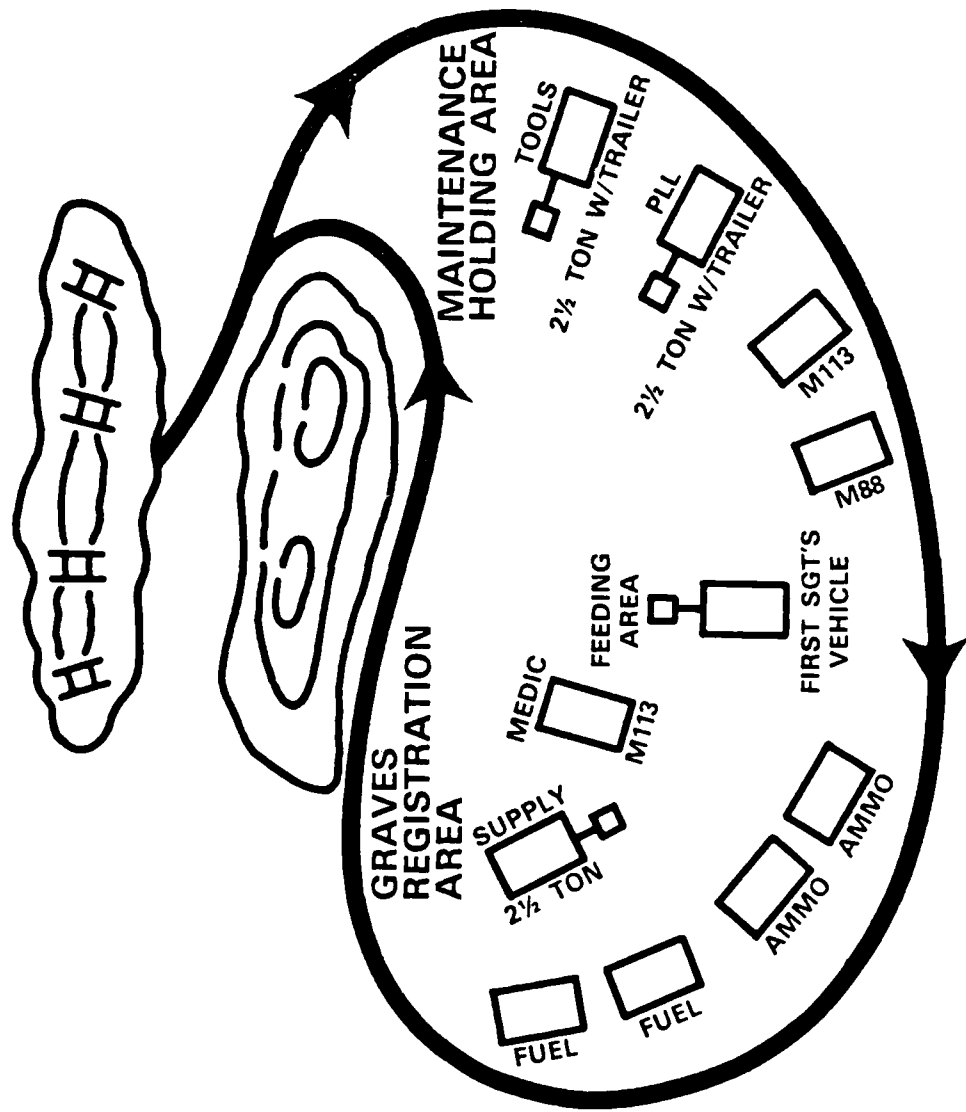


FIGURE 4

"BINGO"

S-4

AFTER LOG PAC:

1. UPDATE TOC ON LOG SIT
2. SUP STATUS TO FLD TNS
3. TAC SIT & MSR TO FLD TNS

"BEAST"

S-1

EACH OPN: ROUTINE

1. PERS DAILY SUMMARY
2. COL CAS FEEDER RPT
3. RPT TO PAC (FLD TNS)

"BOLO"

MEDICAL PLATOON

- EACH OPN: ROUTINE
1. MONITOR TAC SIT & POST MAP
 2. PREP QUARTERING PARTY
 3. PREP 577 FOR JUMP

"BOZO"

BMO

- EACH OPN: ROUTINE
1. ASSUME ALC DUTIES
 2. EXECUTE BDA
- TRIAGE
 - ASSESS
 - REPAIR
 - EVACUATE

"NUTS"

ALC ACTIONS ON ASSUMING TOC

1. EST CONTACT W/BDE
2. EST CONTACT TMS
3. EST CONTACT ARTY

"EAGLE"

ALC ACTIONS ON CONTACT

1. INFORM TOC & FLD TNS
2. INFORM OMCP
3. IF STATIONARY EXECUTE DRILL

"BLITZ"

1. QTR PARTY CLEARS NEW LOC
2. QTR ASSUMES CONTROL
3. BRIEF PERS ON ACTIONS

"K MART"

ALC PARKING PLAN

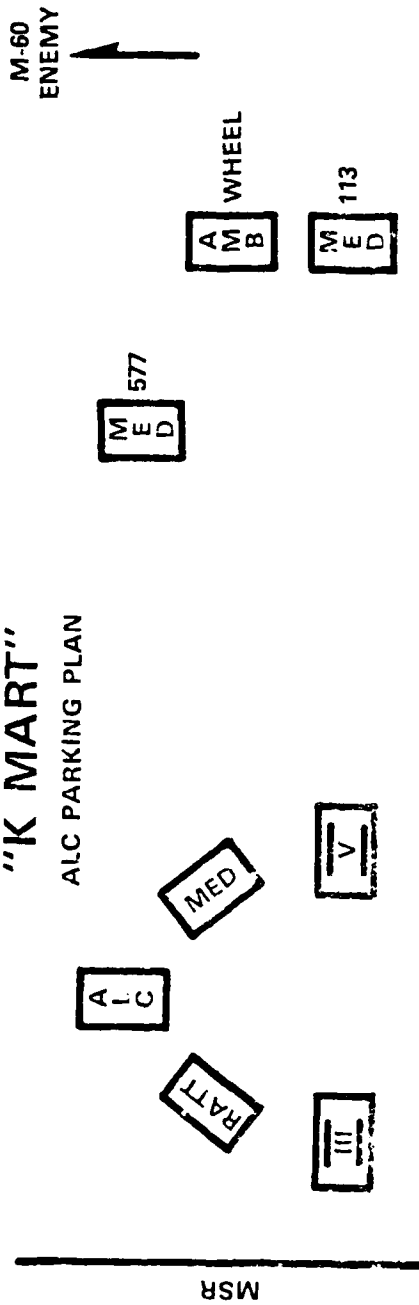


FIGURE 5

BREAK IN THE ACTION

Crew/Squad

- Update class I, III, V
- Treat/evac casualties
- Perform during operations maintenance
- Maintain air guards
- Maintain local security
- Stay on radio
- Restore load plan
- Zero MILES
- Change mask filters

Platoon

- Cross level class I, III, V
- Make hasty defense plan
- Check sensitive items
- Evac damaged vehicles
- Tie in with adjacent elements
- Cross level personnel
- Set up M-8 alarms
- Implement sleep plan
- Inspect

Figure 6

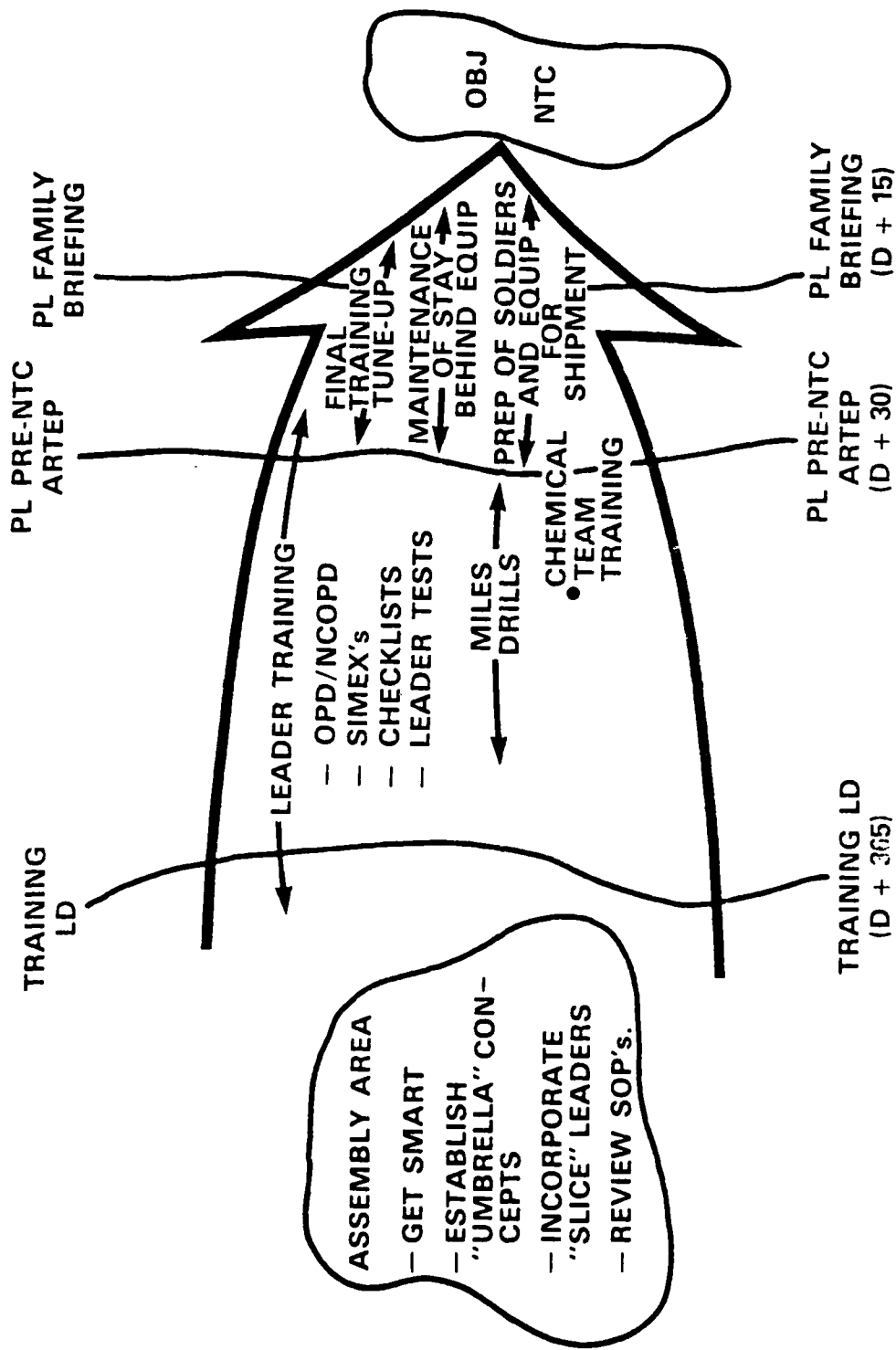


FIGURE 7

END

Dtlic

5-86