COMMAND CLIMATE: THE RISE AND THE DECLINE OF A MILITARY CONCEPT

BY

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Command climate is one of the most observed and least understood concepts in the military. A goal of every commander today is a healthy command climate and a cohesive unit. The key to a positive command climate is credibility of the commander, communication, trust, and confidence. Keeping this in mind, command climate is a state or condition existing from shared feelings and perceptions among soldiers about their unit, about their leaders, and about their unit's programs and policies. This condition is created by the commander and his

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USAWC MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM PAPER

COMMAND CLIMATE: THE RISE AND THE DECLINE OF A MILITARY CONCEPT

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

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ABSTRACT

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Command climate is one of the most observed and least understood concepts in the military. A goal of every commander today is a healthy command climate and a cohesive unit. The key to a positive command climate is credibility of the commander, communication, trust and confidence. Keeping this in mind, command climate is a state or condition existing from shared feelings and perceptions among soldiers about their unit, about their leaders, and about their unit's programs and policies. This condition is created by the commander and his chain of command from the commander's vision and leadership style, and influenced and perpetuated by their communication and their leadership. The objectives of this study are to provide an "audit trail" of the rise of the command climate concept in hopes of arriving at an understanding of the idea; discuss its recognition, controversial nature, purpose, application and linkage; review the awareness and acceptance problem; identify existing means of evaluating the concept; suggest ways of improving a unit's command climate; and last, make several conclusions and recommendations about command climate in order to prevent it from becoming an "endangered species." It is recommended that this study be reviewed by DCSPER, TRADOC, and MACOM Leadership Divisions; shared with future commanders at the Precommand Course; and considered for publication

PREFACE

This Military Study Project was produced under the sponsorship of the U.S. Army War College Directorate for Communications, Leadership, and Management (DCLM). The objectives and methodology were determined by the author with the cooperation and guidance of DCLM. This project is not and was not intended to be a research paper of significant magnitude. Projects of this nature are willingly left up to the Army Research Institute. This project is considered to be the most ambitious and detailed stud of the command climate concept to date. It is an overview, covering the development, scope, complexity, problems and value of the climate concept. It contains leadership, research, doctrine, commander, soldier, and unit perspectives. The author of this study elected to pursue this subject based upon his prior experience as a commander from battery through battalion and his first exposure to the subject as an Inspector General in the 82d Airborne Division. I am grateful to my faculty advisor, COL Hugh F. Boyd, III; LTC Cecil B Calloway at the Center for Army Leadership; the commanders of the 5th Infantry Division, Mechanized, for their Command Philosophy letters; LTG John W. Woodmansee, Jr., commander of V Corps; the Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks; Nora K. Stewart at the Army Research Institute; and last, the magnificent Thunderbolts of the 2d Battalion, 83d Field Artillery, who made my command experience so positive and rewarding.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

COMMAND CLIMATE: THE RISE AND THE DECLINE OF A MILITARY CONCEPT

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"By the work one knows the workman."
- Jean de la Fontaine

Intangible, often referred to, sometimes not defined, often defined in various ways, and yet a most important dimension of any organization ... these statements are all descriptive of command climate. But what is command climate? What is meant by such expressions as "I intend to establish a positive command climate" or "that unit has trouble doing things exceptionally well because it has a lousy climate." Different commanders and soldiers using these same expressions have attached different meanings, as was the case with morale and esprit de corps in the 1960s, morale and cohesion in the 1970s, and now cohesion and command climate in the 1980s. These concepts frequently get interchanged and misquoted because they are too often misunderstood.

What then is the purpose of this intangible concept called command climate? Is it true that many leaders and writers have heralded organizational or command climate as an element essential in developing competent, bold, risk-taking leadership for successful battlefield operations in today's Army? Has the Army overrated or underestimated the value of command climate? What has led to its popularity and rise, and what factors are leading to its decline? These are just a few questions that identify one of the Army's newest and most controversial military leadership concepts.

The purpose of this study is to provide an "audit trail" of the command climate concept in hopes of arriving at an understanding and working definition; discuss its purpose, application, and linkage; review the awareness and acceptance problem; identify existing means of evaluating the concept; suggest ways of improving a unit's command climate; and last, make several conclusions and recommendations about command climate in order to prevent it from becoming an "endangered species."

CHAPTER II

THE GENESIS OF COMMAND CLIMATE

> "An individual, as a member of a military team, can achieve maximum proficiency only when his willingness to perform has been brought to its maximum; that is, when he is adequately motivated."
> (USA CGSC)1

The genesis for the term "climate" or "organizational climate" was an escalation of the idea in 1980. The Military Review published two visionary leadership articles that introduced the United States Army to the climate concept. The first commentary was by the Army's Chief of Staff, General Edward C. Meyer, and it capitalized on a familiar phrase at a time when the Army needed an urgent restoration. General Meyer entitled the article "Leadership, A Return To Basics," and he stated after becoming the Army's top leader he set two personal goals for himself. "The first was to ensure that the Army was continually prepared to go to war, and the second was to create a climate in which each individual member could find personal meaning and fulfillment."2 He then concluded, "It is my belief that only by attainment of the second goal will we ensure the first."3

The second article was by Major General Walter F. Ulmer, Jr., and it was appropriately entitled "Notes on Leadership for the 1980s." In his article MG Ulmer gives redirection and "breakthrough" material for leader behavior and the leadership process. He stated, "we may have to spend more of our teaching efforts on the analysis of climate in which we lead than on the individual leadership methods."4 His analysis identified four basic elements of concern: "These are relatively scarce material resources; an increasingly complex battlefield -- even down to the rifle squad; a growing percentage of soldiers who have difficulty

learning and adjusting; and some lingering doubts with the officer corps regarding its operative value system."5

Truer words have not been spoken and in today's Army they seem to have taken on an even larger meaning. MG Ulmer indicated, "the leader must earn a heavier percentage of the necessary respect than his predecessors of 30 years ago, and he must be supported by a credible organization."6 He concluded his article by discussing the challenges and value judgments within the officer corps that future leaders in the 1980s would need to cope with "the willingness to make sacrifices, to take risks in the interest of the mission and the soldiers, to look deeply inside and figure out what really motivates us are simply key to building a climate of special trust and confidence."7 MG Ulmer left the Third Armor Division in Europe in February 1982 and became the standard bearer and spokesman for "organizational climate."

In December 1981, the U.S. Army identified seven goals as guidelines for achieving the Army's mission. Early in 1982 the Chief of Staff of the Army, General E.C. Meyer, gave the newly promoted LTG Ulmer the mission emphasizing the Human Goal and the Leadership Goal, in III Corps at Fort Hood As the Human and Leadership Goals (HLG) were planned and executed at Fort Hood, the analysis of command climate began. Efforts were made to create the right leadership and organizational climate at all levels for the implementation of the Airland Battle doctrine. Out of the Fort Hood experience came activities in units which led to cultivating leaders, establishing a new approach to climate, and tapping the potential inherent in soldiers. This was done to promote commitment and bolster morale. As the implementation of command climate developed, the following elements were stressed: leadership, motivation, communication, decision-making, goals and objectives, and control. It was discovered that to build a positive command climate it was necessary the unit environment contain:

- command trust -- "allowing individuals to make common sense decisions and learn from their mistakes."8

- organizational consistency -- "not to let behavior, communications and measurements conflict with announced priorities."9

- organizational simplicity -- "efforts to reduce the effects of the bureaucratic structure in simplifying or eliminating regulations, meetings, records and reports, statistics, inspections, procedures, and feedback mechanisms."10

- command stress -- "reducing inconsistent and overstated priorities and practices that produce dysfunction, uncertainty, and anxiety."11

The study concluded by saying commitment, morale and readiness all benefit when a unit's command climate facilitates the restructuring of power relationships. This restructuring is known as "power down," a philosophy espoused and skillfully implemented by LTG Ulmer and units in III Corp. Four years later in 1986, BG John C. Holdstab, commander of the Combined Arms Training Activity, wrote in his introductory letter for the newly published Fort Hood Leadership Study "the thrust of the power down philosophy was twofold: first, to delegate responsibility to the lowest possible level of capable leadership; and second, to hold leaders accountable for that which had been delegated."12 If properly executed, the process would cultivate the kind of "bold, dynamic, and risk-taking" leaders needed for the Airland Battlefield.

The growth of command climate in the early 1980s was also being tested and evaluated by Inspector General sections and separate groups at other major installations. In 1982 the 82d Airborne Division IG section, with the approval of then MG James J. Lindsay, administered a command climate survey during battalion command inspections to enlisted soldiers, junior NCOs and junior officers at company level to determine their perceptions and feelings about their unit, leaders, programs, and mission.

The term "leadership climate" first appeared in official Army publications in October, 1983, when the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth published for TRADOC FM 22-100, Military

Leadership. It was the first time the climate concept appeared in an Army Field Manual. The term is used in a section entitled, "Create A Climate Conductive To Feedback," which is part of the Leadership Lessons Learned section in Chapter 3, Application of the Leadership Concept. In three short paragraphs FM 22-100 tells leaders their job is to create a climate in which the soldier feels safe. This cannot be accomplished if soldiers who go to the inspector general or chaplain or write to their congressmen are threatened or punished. Complaints of this nature, if valid, are indicators of perceived or actual injustices. If the complaints about the chain of command are frequent, they may indicate a healthy leadership climate may not exist. Leaders need to create a climate in which soldiers feel free to go to and use their chain of command for valid complaints or perceived injustices. In this manner, leaders can "get soldier assistance on developing a healthy leadership climate that is conducive to feedback."13

What FM 22-100 told us is leadership and climate should not and cannot be separated. They are linked by communication within the unit. Leadership and communication bring soldiers, doctrine, organizations, equipment, and weapons together, resulting in a perceived identity and purpose by all members of the unit, which manifests itself in command climate. If properly implemented, a healthy leadership climate will prevail, drawing from morale, cohesion, and teamwork, and impacting on combat readiness.

The first official United States Army definition of command climate was published in December 1983. It was in Reference Book (RB) 22-5, Command Climate Case Study, and was part of The Center for Leadership and Ethics series Leader Development Program (LDP). The LDP concept is "to provide an umbrella program for the production of specific leadership-related products which augment and functionalize doctrine and respond to requests for leader development materials from the field."14 RB 22-5 provided a division level case study on command climate. It offered a broader, more long range, effective method of dealing with contemporary

leadership issues such as sexual harassment, drug and alcohol abuse, and racial disharmony. Specifically, the case study stated "command climate is defined as the atmosphere or environment created within an organization by a commander and his chain of command through their exercise of leadership."15 Suggestively, this is a definition targeted at an organization's leaders, and it encompasses virtually every aspect of leadership in unit day to day functions, training, and caring for soldiers. This is a position that in recent years has made the climate concept controversial.

The introductory letter in RB 22-5 further stated, "command climate sets the tone in an organization and either enhances or impedes its ability to perform at its maximum potential. A healthy, positive command climate is characterized by the visible commitment of all organizational members to established standards. The essence of this commitment lies in the fostering of an atmosphere of mutual respect and human dignity which is observable throughout the unit."16 From a conceptual perspective, this is an excellent explanation of how command climate works. Unfortunately, RB 22-5 was not well emphasized in the field by commanders and it fell short of its potential. Additionally, the reference book singled out a commanding general wrestling with contemporary administrative issues that usually get resolved at a lower leadership level. For these reasons this book missed its mark and apparently lost it's usefulness during a period when stacks of leadership rhetoric were produced in the Army's 1985 Year of Leadership.

In December 1984, three Army officers, Major Jerry A. Simonsen (AR), Captain Herbert L. Frandsen (IN), and Captain David A. Hoopengardner (FA), completed a unique study entitled, "Excellence In Combat Arms." They interviewed over forty-five senior leaders (including fifteen general officers) asking them how they determined the best units. The authors identified "Eight Pillars of Excellence," including LTG Ulmer's "Power Down" philosophy. In the Power Down chapter there is a paragraph on command climate. The paragraph stated, "Power Down meant an excellent command climate all

the way up and down the chain, and it meant that subordinates were trusted and allowed to grow professionally."17 The writers observed "particularly outstanding command climates in the units we visited. It occurs because battalion commanders make it happen."18 Unfortunately, this excellent document was published by the Department of Administrative Sciences at the Naval Postgraduate School and has not received Armywide distribution.

In late 1984, the Department of the Army completed, and in early 1985 published, the Professional Development of Officers Study (PDOS). This was the largest survey of the Army's officer corps in over a decade covering leadership and officer development. The results were not encouraging for command climate in that a finding stated the individual officer "considers himself (herself) to be 'professional' in a 'climate' that needs improvement."19 Approximately half of the officers surveyed selected leadership and communication as the most important skill in their current position; however, leadership skills were reported as the second greatest weakness in officer development just below operational skills. The response that drew considerable attention in the Army's senior leadership was a key point stressed under "Challenges Facing The Army." Specifically, this point was "Climate needs work!"20 For a significant number of senior officers, this finding caught them looking at each other with blank faces asking -- "What's climate?"

In 1985 a high-water mark for leadership was reached and occurred in the United States Army thanks to General John A. Wickham Jr., the Army Chief of Staff. GEN Wickham was carrying on a tradition that GEN Meyer had started in 1981 by declaring an annual major topic for the Army to be emphasized in the remainder of the year. Previous years had included Winning Spirit (1981), Physical Fitness (1982), Excellence (1983), and the Family (1984). In his February 1985 White Paper on "Leadership", GEN Wickham outlined the challenge for Army leadership by committing the Army to create and sustain a leadership climate where innovation, competence, and caring were rewarded. In a framework for individual action, GEN

Wickham challenged every leader to "create a climate in which you can teach subordinates how to take responsibility for their actions. Be responsible for the good, the bad, the right, and the wrong. Be accountable."21 In a framework for organizational action, he asked "each leader to examine ten elements in his organization to determine how and where each can be improved to develop better leaders and foster a healthier leadership climate."22 GEN Wickham concluded the White Paper by discussing the role and importance of caring. He said "caring means fostering a command climate where people are challenged, where they feel their contributions make a difference, and where they feel good about themselves and the Army they serve."23

ENDNOTES

1. U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, "C&GSC Instructional Booklet No. 1850/8, Military Psychology and Leadership," 1958, p.50.
2. GEN Edward C. Meyer, "Leadership: A Return to Basics," Military Review, July 1980, p. 4.
3. IBID.
4. MG W.F. Ulmer Jr., "Notes On Leadership For The 1980s," Military Review, July 1980, p. 10.
5. IBID., p. 11
6. IBID.
7. IBID., p. 12.
8. U.S. Army Combined Arms Training Activity, "Leadership Lessons Learned," Fort Hood Leadership Study, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, p. 8.
9. IBID., p. 9.
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13. U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 22-100, p. 70.
14. U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Reference Book 22-5, Command Climate Case Study, Leadership Development Program, December 1983, (back cover).
15. IBID., p. ii.
16. IBID., front cover.
17. Jerry A. Simonsen, MAJ, Herbert L. Frandsen, CPT, David A. Hoopengardner, CPT, Excellence in the Combat Arms, p. 29.
18. IBID.
19. U.S. Department of the Army, Professional Development of Officers Study, Volume VI-Survey, p. JJ-6-A-1, (hereafter referred to as PDOS).
20. IBID., p. JJ-6-A-4.
21. U.S. Department of the Army, Pamphlet 600-50, White Paper 1985, Leadership, p. 3.
22. IBID.
23. IBID., p. 20.

CHAPTER III

THE ARMY RESPONDS

"We need credible standard methods for
measuring and improving command climate."
- Lt.Gen. Walter F. Ulmer, USA-Ret.

In September 1985, the strongest TRADOC response and endorsement for the command climate concept came in the form of Field Circular 25-100. Like FM 22-100 published two years prior, it was prepared by the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth. FC 25-100 provided Army commanders a standardized system for training soldiers, units, and their leaders; and it described the structure for training a force or a unit to actively and effectively execute its mission and win the AirLand Battle.

Additionally, this circular discussed a winning training philosophy as one of six distinguishable training components of a successful training system. For the first time training was linked with command climate. Specifically, FC 25-100 stated "a critical component of a winning philosophy is the establishment of a healthy command climate based on fixing responsibility while underwriting honest mistakes of commission. Accentuating the positive and learning from mistakes must be the spirit inculcated throughout the organization. This organizational attribute will foster a positive training environment and provide the latitude required for a total team effort from sergeant to general. A positive command environment is established when there is a climate of trust and confidence shared by competent leaders."1

Precepts like fixing responsibility, underwriting honest mistakes, and trust and confidence between soldiers and leaders became a part of command climate as stated earlier by LTG Ulmer and lessons learned from the Fort Hood Leadership study. For the

commander a training philosophy is mandatory, and the model available to him in FC 25-100 included nine elements of a winning training philosophy, one of which is a positive command climate.

It was up to LTG Robert M. Elton, the Army's Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel in 1985, to elevate the concept of command climate to significant proportions. In the 1985 Army's Green Book, his article entitled, "Catalyst for Improvement of Unit Command Climate" was a milestone for climate. Not only did he use the definition of command climate spelled out in RB 22-5, he made one of the strongest, simplest, and yet profound remarks. He stated "a new commander brings three unique aspects of leadership to a unit: vision, communication, and climate. These aspects are unique because they represent the commander. They are a reflection of his or her style and purpose; they 'are' the commander."2 Taking it a step further, LTG Elton made this comparison and revealing conclusion, "By assessing climate, the commander charts his progress on the map or 'vision'. Like an artist who shapes a picture to convey a specific feeling, a commander who understands the component parts and nuances of command climate can change the tone of the climate through guidance and direction. Clearly, of the three aspects of leadership outlined previously, climate is the most dynamic but often receives the least attention."3 LTG Elton's article would support a proposition that the commander is the catalyst in developing his unit's command climate; and the organization, the chain of command, the leaders, the soldiers, and the existing programs and policies make up the unit's components, which when stimulated, bring about a resulting condition called command climate.

On a parallel note, GEN Glenn K. Otis became the first major commander to extend a climate challenge when he wrote in the same 1985 Green Book that US Army, Europe, offered the "most challenging leadership climate in the Army today."4 This is a challenge that would be difficult to disagree with even in 1988. Unfortunately, there have been no unit studies comparing stateside unit climate and

excellence against units in Europe. The point is the challenges presented to the commander in command today take a maximum commitment, patience, and an understanding of command climate and how it effects his organization.

In 1986 while a good portion of the Army was wondering how to implement a "Year of Values," a staff at the US Army Combined Arms Center, TRADOC, was putting the finishing touches on TC 22-9-2, a Military Professionalism circular targeted for company/battery "values" instruction; and TC 22-9-3, a similar circular intended for battalion "values" instruction. The instruction covered how to teach and conduct classes on ethics, ethical reasoning, ethical behavior, loyalty, integrity, institutional pressures, and command climate.

TC 22-9-2's last chapter discussed the impact of leadership on command climate and gets participating students to examine policies and procedures within a unit to determine if these practices have a negative or positive impact on the command climate. The key points discussed earlier in Chapter II of this study pertaining to the Fort Hood Leadership Study are used as the model to explain command climate (command trust, organizational consistency, and organizational simplicity). Perhaps it was an oversight, but there was no mention of "command stress" as one of the key elements in their climate-building model. Of particular note in this chapter of the circular was the attempt at defining command climate and answering the question "What do I mean by command climate?" The reply was "It's the atmosphere or the environment of a unit in which things go on."5 This rather vague definition is not clarified and is a departure from the previously discussed concept in RB 22-5. Further in this same TC 22-9-2 paragraph, it stated command climate involved the amount of trust and confidence that soldiers have in each other. Finally in this circular, no attempt was made to link leadership with command climate.

TC 22-9-3's last chapter used the Fort Hood Leadership Study from a different approach in discussing five suggested elements

impacting on command climate. Indicators used to reflect a healthy climate were leadership, communication, trust and confidence, rewards and punishments, and shared unit values. In the portion devoted to analyzing command climate another inconsistency appeared. Specifically it stated, "Let's begin our discussion with a simple definition of what constitutes a command climate. TRADOC Pam 525-28 (never published) states: Command Climate is the atmosphere of leadership in the organization."6 It would appear doctrinally inconsistent to avoid including leadership and command climate in a definition for company level, and at battalion level state they are interrelated. Further discussion in this chapter asked the question "Why is command climate important?" The circular's response looked at the organization from the soldier's perspective. "Unit members' perceptions of what the climate requires of them affects how they behave."7 For the first time perceptions, cohesion, and a shared sense of purpose are terms introduced as sharing a relationship with command climate. Linkage is used to arrive at this conclusion, "a good command climate provides the foundation upon which military cohesion is built."8

Another product to receive final approval in 1986 was a project that spanned four years in the making, the Unit Climate Profile (UCP). The UCP originated in Headquarters, III Corps, and was developed in conjunction with the US Army Forces Command and the US Army Research Institute. Its purpose was "to provide a valid, reliable, and standardized method for company-level commanders to identify unit strengths and weaknesses associated with unit climate factors."9 The UCP is designed to overcome the major shortcomings found in the traditional ways of obtaining sensings and indicators of command climate information; i.e., open-door policies, "rap" sessions, suggestion boxes, the recording of complaints, and casual observation. The eighty-two question survey scored responses in twenty-one climate areas and provided the commander unit perceptions and feelings from his soldiers in such areas as cohesiveness, moral attitude toward training, and eighteen other areas. Published by

the Department of the Army as DA Pam 600-69 in October 1986, the UCP is a valuable tool for the commander and is available for field use.

In May 1986, four US Army War College students, COL Nicholas J. Turchiano (IN), LTC Huey B. Scott (AR), LTC James M. Gass (FA), and LTC Lawson W. Magruder III (IN), put together a military study entitled "Excellence In Brigades." The objectives of this study were to "identify the organizational characteristics that differentiate the excellent brigades from other units and to determine if the characteristics of the excellent brigades differ from those in the excellent battalions in the study 'Excellence In Combat Arms."10 The study concluded there were eight common characteristics or "pillars of excellence" in the excellent brigades. The brigade pillars of excellence were the same as those found in the excellent battalions study in six basic areas (focus on combat, power down, caring, high standards, teamwork, and consistent excellent performance). The Excellence In Combat Arms authors included "commander's influence" (leading by example) and "strong unit identity" in their eight pillars; and the Excellence In Brigades group added "a winning spirit" and "a positive command climate" as pillars. The latter group stated both commander's influence and strong unit identity were found in excellent brigades; however, their effect on excellence was less than that found in excellent battalions. A positive command climate was included because, in the words of the authors, "based upon input from our classmates and members of the brigades we visited (as well as corps and division commanders), so much of that intangible called 'climate' results from the influence of the brigade commander."11 The brigade commander sets the example in counseling and teaching, communicating, deciding how to maintain a balance between work and quality of life, and providing an atmosphere of trust which existed in the brigades originated by him. His exposure was a "positive learning experience."12

One of the more productive efforts during the Year of Leadership was the development of ExcelNet, "a computer-based

teleconference supervised from the Office of the Chief of Staff, Army, and is our Army's unofficial multi-disciplinary 'think-tank' on leadership. The minds of ExcelNet have focused on more than 300 separate discussions on leader development, command climate, and values."13 The discussions became part of an after-action review of the 1985 Army theme in April 1986 when the question was asked "What Did We Learn During The Year Of Leadership?" The responses were compiled into ten lessons addressed in Volume II of the ExcelNet Concept Papers. Lesson No.6 is entitled "Setting Command Climate Must Be A Conscious, Rational Act." In this lesson the text stated "leaders develop leaders, and staff reinforce, or destroy, command climate. Command climate can just happen, if you let it. Or, you can design it before you reach out and affect it."14 What is suggested is first, a message to commanders and leaders to design their climate before they take command; and second, the staff has an effect on command climate, which like the chain of command can stifle poorly managed goals and priorities and impede the development of a healthy climate. The method suggested for designing and measuring command climate is the FORSCOM Command Climate Survey Guide to Aggregate Analysis, C-24-R, 1 Apr 87, a one page, two-sided form. The system is a relatively easy and helpful way of annotating the status of ten organizational dimensions and ten interpersonal dimensions which when viewed collectively can constitute a proposed command climate. When identified, the strengths and weaknesses of these dimensions can be incorporated into a command philosophy letter. Unfortunately, this process is the only formal battalion-level model to evaluate command climate in the Army's system.

By the end of 1986, a second US Army field manual mentioned climate, or "leadership climate." It was FM 22-600-20, The Army Noncommissioned Officer Guide, published in November 1986. In a list of skills, knowledge, and attributes NCOs will need to perform their duties, NCOs are reminded, "leaders must create and sustain a leadership climate where fighting skills, innovations, competence,

character development, and caring are rewarded -- a climate where young people can grow to the fullest of their natural talents, and where young people can make mistakes and still survive."15 The message is relatively simple and instructive and needs to be practiced. Certainly NCOs play a significant day to day role in developing the trust and confidence needed to achieve a positive command climate.

In July 1986, retired LTG Walter F. Ulmer wrote an article in the Armed Forces Journal International entitled "Leaders, Managers, and Command Climate." In the article he sent an "SOS" message to the leadership of the Army about devising "Credible standard methods for measuring and improving the command climate."16 He reminded the reader, "we are far from capitalizing on the human potential in our Army."17 "We are not uniformly as good as we can and must be, because we have imprecise, unstudied, and randomly supervised concepts for building and sustaining a climate."18 LTG Ulmer indicated the essence of a good climate promotes esprit and generates high performance and is probably easier to feel or sense than to describe. Make no mistake he stated "it doesn't take long for most experienced people to take its (climates) measure."19 He listed eight contributing elements, when practiced, would lead to a healthy command climate. He then summarized this point by saying "the key to the climate is leadership in general, and senior leadership in particular."20 Further in the article he became one of the first general officers, if not the first, to advocate input from subordinates and peers for use in selecting senior officers for command positions in the grade of colonel. He suggested the process can be a relatively unemotional form and provided as constructive feedback for command selection boards. Referring to the PDOS finding mentioned in Chapter II, LTG Ulmer stressed "Climate Needs Work." Referring to results from the Essex study on Fort Hood leadership, he stated, "it is time to decide that one type of climate is conceptually better than another, and then take steps to teach, coach, test, measure, and construct that type, and demand

that commanders deliver the goods."21

LTC Cecil B. Calloway, assigned to the Center for Army Leadership, wrote an article in the November 1986 Military Review on seven "key leadership imperatives" and ten "enabling tasks" frequently discussed in Pre-Command Courses. One of the critical task groups identified is "develop a climate of trust and confidence," which parallels the previous discussion on command trust identified in the Fort Hood Leadership study and given significant importance by LTG Ulmer's article on "Leaders, Managers, and Command Climate."22 LTG Ulmer wrote "trust is built and sustained by combining effective direct leadership with a sense of the totality of operating values and systems."23 LTC Calloway suggested there is a leadership message that is easier said than done, a powerful message about creating a climate and atmosphere necessary to develop the full potential of our rising soldiers, NCO's, and junior officers. From material reviewed in this chapter, command climate needs to be recognized as a dynamic phenomenon occurring naturally in units, in need of direction, and controlled and managed with the appropriate tools.

ENDNOTES

1. U.S. Department of the Army, Field Circular 25-100, pp. 1-5 & 1-6.
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CHAPTER IV

CLIMATE RECOGNITION

"Leadership is the most essential
element of combat power."
- FM 22-103

In 1787 our founding fathers experienced difficulty drafting and gaining a consensus on another intangible concept called democracy. And yet, they persevered and collectively put together a Constitution that charters an Army, protects rights, and shares values. In 1987, 200 years later, the leadership of the Army was still working to sustain those same values, restore the vagueness of the Constitution, change leadership, and decide what to do with a military concept called command climate.

The first indication to the field that the command climate concept had lost supporters and acceptance was in March 1987 when the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center published Field Manual 22-999, a draft manual on "Leadership and Command at Senior Levels." The draft FM established "a doctrinal framework for leadership and command at senior levels within the context of the tactical and operational levels of war discussed in the updated FM 100-5 (Operations)."1 The manual stated, "it builds on the premise of FM 100-5 -- leadership is the most essential element of combat power."2 FM 22-999 was not meant to be a substitute for an aging FM 22-100 (Military Leadership), which dealt with developing direct leadership skills, but rather a document that flowed "directly from FM 100-1 (The Army) and AirLand Battle doctrine."3 Yet, the FM 22-999 authors recognized the need to explore new initiatives in leadership and stated, "this manual recognizes the complexity of leadership and command at senior levels and the separate need to address indirect leadership concepts and fundamentals critical to building organizational teams."4

After five years of study and numerous comments in articles and publications recognizing command climate as a legitimate indirect leadership concept, the climate concept mysteriously received "lip service" in the draft manual. The need for addressing climate as a major leadership concept in organizational development had disappeared. Only the term "command climate" was listed with six other terms for "Establishing The Conditions" under "Building The Team" in the chapter on "The Organization." The only climate dialogue appeared in this chapter's summary where it stated "in a positive command climate, soldiers feel they are treated fairly and are challenged to do their best."5

This direct effort to avoid command climate recognition, discussion of its role, and its development signaled a decline in its popularity and supporters. There was strong skepticism concerning the concept's usefulness at senior levels of command,i.e., at brigade and division. As this study has indicated, it had not been appropriately defined. In some publications the concept was not linked to leaders or directly to leadership. Conjecture indicated it had limited application to FM 22-100, FM100-5, and AirLand Battle doctrine. And last, and perhaps even more difficult to understand, its promoters had become controversial.

For as much as FM 22-999 was bad news for command climate advocates, the good news in May 1987 was the third annual Leadership Research Conference sponsored by the Center for Army Leadership. The conference theme was "Command Climate: Focus for Leadership Research." In attendance were over 120 military and civilian personnel representing leadership components from over 60 organizations, which included all branches of the U.S. Armed Forces, TRADOC, FORSCOM, Reserve Components, four service academies, and foreign participation. In a cover memorandum the Director of the Center for Army Leadership summarized the agenda and concluded, "while there appears to be some disagreement as to exactly what is meant by the concept 'command climate', there was virtually

unanimity as to the importance of leaders establishing a positive command climate in order to develop the utmost confidence, innovativeness and risk-taking necessary to fight and win the AirLand Battle."6 This statement verified the difficulty in defining command climate and strongly supported the concept's usefulness.

The Center for Army Leadership (CAL) assembled the proceedings from the conference in Volumes I and II for distribution. In Volume I there are eight excellent articles pertaining to measuring and developing command climate, a section on international leadership research, and a section attempting to link command climate with AirLand Battle. Suffice it to say, the conference, the preparation that went into it, the proceedings, and the rhetoric and articles that evolved from it were the most ambitious undertaking to date in support of developing the climate concept.

In June 1987, four events occurred that had a positive and negative impact on the command climate concept. Three were related to publications and the last was the change in leadership of the Army as GEN Carl E. Vuono became the new Chief of Staff. Also related to the latter event is the fact LTG Robert M. Elton, the DCSPER of the Army and a published advocate of command climate, retired.

The first event occurred in the June 1987 issue of Army magazine when Maj (P) William A. Knowlton Jr. published an article entitled, "In Rating the Leaders, Ask the Led." The paper was also presented at the 1987 Leadership Research Conference under the title "Changing Command Climate Through Subordinate Input." The article related the importance of subordinates and actions related to them, and subordinate impact on command climate. Maj Knowlton used for the first time in a study the findings of the National Training Center (NTC) Leadership Lessons Learned to link command climate to combat effectiveness. What is significant here is "the results of these studies clearly show that positive command climate increases unit readiness, encourages initiative, preserves discipline, and

creates excellent units."7 Not all units have good command climates and it has affected their performance said the research from the NTC. This verified similar findings in the Fort Hood Leadership Study.

To remedy this problem, Maj Knowlton offered a recommendation: "Subordinate ratings for commanders could be used to improve command climate where improvement is needed and to provide an additional perspective on the performance of commanders."8 A similar recommendation had been initially proposed by LTG Ulmer in his July 1986 article "Leaders, Managers and Command Climate." Maj Knowlton's suggestion is an initiative of revolutionary proportions in light of the fact the current selection process has been highly praised and appears to be working. The current centralized selection process is providing "the best qualified" senior officers for command according to statistics and the senior leadership of the Army.

The next event in June 1987 was the publishing of DA Pamphlet 600-80, entitled "Executive Leadership," from the Human Resources and Leadership office of the DCSPER of the Army. "Executive Leadership" was written for senior flag officers commanding at corps, MACOM or above. A better understanding of the pamphlet's approach to leadership is gained by visualizing "The Leadership System" model. The model discusses the three different levels of leadership indicated below:

- Indirect Executive Leadership (for HQ Dept Army/Field Army/Corps/MACOM commands)
- Indirect Organizational Leadership (for Divs/Sep Bdes/Bdes/Schools/ Staff Directorates)
- Direct Leadership (for Bns/Cor/School Div/Staff Sections)

In The Leadership System there are relationships between each leadership level that apply, integrate, and interact with lower and higher levels of command and leadership skills. For example,

"Organizational leadership involves a mixture of direct, staff-aided, delegated output,"9 but indirect leadership replaces direct leadership with subordinate units, even though there is a direct leadership relationship between the organizational commander and his subordinate leaders. At this point DA Pam 600-80 described command climate as an intangible phenomenon, like intelligence and understanding of the senior leader's intent, needing to be processed and integrated to create combat power and productivity.

Taking it to the "Executive Leadership" level, leadership skills are built on a foundation of eight direct and indirect organizational skills. The fifth indirect skill is "creating policies and principles of operation so positive command climate and cohesion can be created at lower echelons."10 Interestingly in this model is the presumption that at the executive level of military leadership culture replaces command climate. It is culture and values that share a relationship and impact on subordinate organizations. The pamphlet defined Army culture as "the body of beliefs members have about the organization and what it stands for, and their expectations of one another as members."11 If one replaces the "body of beliefs" as shared feelings and perceptions, this definition comes very close to ideas associated with command climate. This definition of culture does not substantiate a substitution for command climate on its own merit and needs further explanation.

Worth mentioning in DA Pam 600-80 at this point are effects impacting on a unit's structure. There are first and second order effects in an organizational structure. The pamphlet stated "first order effects are direct effects on effectiveness and efficiency and the extent to which accountability has been properly implemented by structure. Indirect, second order effects occur primarily in the areas of climate and socialization processes (acceptance of organizational values and norms), which collectively impact on organizational stability." When referring to organizational stability from personnel stability effects, the pamphlet concluded

"over time, the climate of the organization will not only strongly influence the composition of its membership, but also its potential capabilities." This point is reinforced by the performance findings in Maj Knowlton's article about the National Training Center.

One has to wonder why separate organizations operating within the Army and dealing with leadership cannot agree on the same meaning. Case in point is the way leadership is defined in DA Pam 600-80 and in FM 22-103. DA Pam 600-80 stated the concept of leadership means "to achieve understanding and commitment of subordinates for the accomplishment of purposes, goals, and objectives envisioned by the leader, beyond that which is possible through the use of authority alone."12 When FM 22-103, "Leadership and Command at Senior Levels," was published in June 1987, it defined leadership as "the art of direct and indirect influence and the skill of creating the condition for sustained organizational success to achieve the desired result."13 Equally as puzzling is the fact no mention is made in FM 22-103 of "The Leadership System" model used in DA Pam 600-80. FM 22-103 does acknowledge direct leadership skills, indirect leadership concepts, and fundamentals critical to building organizational teams; however, organizational teams never get defined.

Unlike the draft FM 22-999, the command climate concept in FM 22-103 is expanded and discussed. Command climate is still listed as one of the six conditions needed to "build teams" in the organization. Quite strange is why the climate concept appeared in FM 22-103; and in FM 22-102, Soldier Team Development, published three months earlier in March 1987, there is no mention of command climate in the entire manual. In FM 22-102, team building is emphasized and sustained with teamwork and cohesion.

More important to this study is the definition of command climate which appeared in FM 22-103. The manual stated command climate is "a shared feeling, a perception among the members of a unit about what life is like."14 FM 22-103 goes on to say this perception is based on the soldiers' understanding of how they will

be treated, whether the leadership cares about them personally and professionally, and what professional opportunities they see within the command. Additionally, the manual stated "senior leaders and commanders have a responsibility to establish a command climate that is fair and challenges the organization to do its best."15 From the manual's comments one senses the importance of the leader role in command climate, but the authors failed to include leaders in the definition. They also failed to develop the relationship between leadership and command climate sufficiently. Most difficult of all to understand is why FM 22-103 addressed the members or soldiers as the only component of command climate -- a key point previously discussed in other military publications and in this study.

In the December 1987 issue of Parameters, retired LTG Walter F. Ulmer, Jr. reviewed FM 22-103 and DA Pam 600-80 in an excellent and challenging article entitled "The Army's New Senior Leadership Doctrine." As stated in this study, LTG Ulmer is considered one of the most qualified individuals to conduct such a critique. It was fitting he should be one of the first to write on the new leadership doctrine. In matters as important as doctrine, biases and controversy should not become the overriding factor in decision making. The reputation of the Army's leadership program is at stake when this occurs.

Several of LTG Ulmer's critique comments are direct and penetrating and apply directly to this study. They are:

- "It is strange that although our Army has devoted enormous efforts toward leadership development, it remains unable or unwilling to articulate and adopt a meaningful leadership model."16

- "If there is one thing in need of repair within the crucial human domain of the Army, it is that decisive but murky element known as 'organizational climate.' Climate like leadership, is more easily felt than defined. Climate represents the collective impact of policies, expectations, priorities, operating values, management techniques, and leadership styles on motivation to get the job done right."17

- "As proximate causes of the persistent phenomenon of erratic, uneven leadership, there are three possibilities".18

+"We have a perennial crop of colonels and generals who don't really care about creating organizational climates that focus on combat readiness."19

+"Our senior leadership, while mostly solid, has a good share of well-intentioned non-leaders who cannot -- by virtue of their personality, limited capacity for trust, lack of self-confidence, or improper definition of success -- perform at the executive level."20

+"The lack of finely honed skills among senior officers in diagnosing, creating, and maintaining the necessary climate for sustained excellence."21

- "We also need to address directly in the manual (FM22-103) a major obstacle to developing universally healthy command climates: the fact that the senior leadership of our Army does not share a common vision of what a good organization looks like and feels like over time."22

- "A number of today's senior officers are coming to grips with the business of command climate and how senior leaders make it good or bad. The basic challenge rather is in developing senior leaders who know the correct organizational climate when they see it, and now how to build and sustain such climates -- those in which leader development and real tactical effectiveness can routinely flourish."23

- "Our senior leadership needs to take a hard look at our uneven command climates and devise major revisions to the way we do business."24

Whether LTG Ulmer's critique and suggestions on DA Pam 600-80 and FM 22-103 will generate revision and be taken seriously remains to be determined. It is too early to tell, especially at a time when the senior leadership of the Army is seeking either new leadership direction or a more definitive approach for its leadership concepts. The question is how much do they want to capture from the past. If

there is a future for the command climate concept, it will take recognition and support -- the kind of support expressed by GEN Vuono in the Chief of Staff's initial article to the Army in the October 1987 Army Green Book. He wrote, "We build on the past because much great work has gone before us. This is the recognition that men of reason, skill, and integrity have been the architects of our Army. Our programs are not born of whim or fancy. Understanding the basic intent of the key factors that were in play can explain and help predict the current and future effectiveness of a doctrine or program. In this sense, our vision cautions us to avoid change for the sake of change. It prompts us to take the time to determine how a particular challenge was addressed in the past, to look at the facts affecting the problem as we face it in the present, and to assess the applicability of all or a part of the past to the present."25 GEN Vuono concluded: "We must maintain the momentum already gained in ensuring the combat readiness of the Total Army."26

ENDNOTES

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8. IBID., p. 25.
9. U.S. Department of the Army, Pamphlet 600-80, June 1987, p. 5.
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11. IBID., p. 17.
12. IBID., p. 2.
13. U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 22-103, June 1987, p. 3.
14. IBID., p. 63.
15. IBID.
16. Walter J. Ulmer, LTG, USA-Ret., "The Army's New Senior Leadership Doctrine," Parameters, December 1987, p. 10.
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19. IBID.
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22. IBID., p. 16.
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25. GEN Carl E. Vuono, "The Dynamics of Combat Readiness," Army, October 1987, p. 21.
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CHAPTER V

UNDERSTANDING THE CLIMATE CONCEPT

> "You have to be able to understand what is making environmental changes before you can chart your own objectives, do your own planning, set your long-term goals. Everything is connected in inter-related systems."
>
> Joint Staff (***) and DA Pam 600-80

Webster defined climate as "any prevailing conditions affecting life, activity, etc."1 He defined environment as "all the conditions, circumstances, and influences surrounding and affecting the development of, an organism."2 And last, he defined atmosphere as "a prevailing or surrounding influence or spirit; general mood or social environment."3 As seen from these similar, often used terms, the first problem with the command climate concept is coming to an agreement that climate is in fact the appropriate term to be used in labeling this condition. The first official military definition of command climate appeared in RB 22-5 in 1983 and contained all three of the above terms. Obviously, all three terms can be used when referring to the concept, but this can lead to confusion. In short, the point to be made from the above definition of terms is the climate concept deals with a condition that affects or influences an activity and generates or develops force.

The next obstacle to be overcome in understanding command climate is determining which kind of climate is appropriate. The term "organizational" climate is approximately twenty-five years old, since behavioral research was done in this area in the early sixties and later documented in 1974 by Hellriegel and Slocum. As this study has stated, the climate concept in the military is relatively new. The Army was not introduced to "organizational climate" until 1980 by retired LTG Walter F. Ulmer, Jr.

Over the last decade, different types of climate have emerged,

depending on the functional purpose of the author. What started as "organizational climate" became "command climate" with military association and the influence and linkage of leadership. Because "command climate" is a condition involving all of a unit's components (the organization, the commander, the chain of command, the leaders, the members, and the programs and policies), it is considered more appropriate for use than "organizational climate." By 1985 the terms "leadership climate" and "command climate" were used by GEN John A. Wickham, Jr., in his White Paper on Leadership. GEN Otis, commander of United States Army forces in Europe, has also referred to the "leadership climate" in Europe. These references are further indications of the relationship between leadership and command climate.

The term "ethical climate" is used in FM 22-103 as a concept with characteristics closely associated with those found in a healthy "command climate." FM 22-103 stated "a healthy ethical climate has a direct bearing on readiness."4 Unfortunately, as true as this statement is, a similar assertion is not made for "command climate" when it is discussed later in the manual. Certainly a healthy command climate, with shared and sustained ethical values, also contributes to improved readiness. In recent years "social climate" has been used by civilians doing military research in leadership. Retired LTG Ulmer, in his 1987 Parameters article, used both organizational and command climate terms synonymously. The point here is the choice of terms can be confusing, detract from a unified acceptance of the concept, and present a distorted image.

If the Army had stuck with one climate and adopted it, the idea and consistency in its use would have perpetuated the term and the concept. Failing to arrive at Armywide term acceptance has prevented universal recognition. One cannot dispute that units may have a leadership, an ethical, and/or even a training climate. This is another facet of the climate complexity. Until a doctrinal decision is made, leaders will have to sort out the term that best serves their purpose. For purposes of this study, the term command

climate will continue to be used when referring to the climate concept.

The next major obstacle in understanding command climate is defining the concept. As observed in the proceeding chapters, this task is much more difficult and complex than imagined. If coming to an agreement on what to call the concept was tough, imagine the difficulty in explaining what the concept is or means. It is not a matter of "fact." Like leadership, defining and managing this phenomenon is more art than science. Behavioral scientists have not been very helpful. They have not found or used a common definition and their efforts have gone into measuring the concept. After researching existing articles and publications, eleven different definitions were discovered, and they appear below. They are listed in an attempt to arrive at a common "thread" or "denominator."

1. "A set of attributes which can be perceived about a particular organization and/or its subsystems, and that may be induced from the way the organization and/or its subsystems deal with the members and environments."5 (Hellriegel and Slocum, 1974)

2. "Organizational climate is the combined perceptions of the individuals that are useful in differentiating organizations according to their procedures and practices."6 (Muchinsky, 1983)

3. 'Command climate is defined as the atmosphere or environment created within an organization by a commander or his chain of command through their exercise of leadership."7 (RB 22-5, 1983)

4. "Climate is the sum total of what an experienced soldier feels or senses when he goes into a new unit, listens and looks around awhile, and then judges whether the unit is worth a damn, can do its job, and will take care of its people."8 (Malone, 1985)

5. "Command climate is the atmosphere or the environment of a unit in which things go on."9 (TC 22-9-2, 1986)

6. "Command climate is the atmosphere of leadership in the organization."10 (TC 22-9-3, 1986)

7. "Forces Command defines command climate as command trust,

organizational consistency, organizational simplicity, stress management, and discipline."11 (Hoopengardner, 1986)

8. "A command climate is defined by the shared perceptions of unit members about the quality of leadership within their units. Such quality includes both affective or expressive and effective or instrumental components."12 (Viatkus, 1987)

9. "Command climate is a shared feeling, a perception among the members of a unit about what life is like."13 (FM 22-103, 1987)

10. "Command climate is considered to be the corporate culture set by an Army leader in charge of a unit at any level."14 (Siebold and Kelly, 1987)

11. "Climate represents the collective impact of policies, expectations, priorities, operating values, management techniques, and leadership styles on motivation to get the job done right."15 (Ulmer 1987)

Even with this definable ambiguity and complexity, it is possible to piece together a conceptual framework. Consensus can be focused in three areas. First, there are attributes or shared feelings and perceptions that prevail in the organization and they collectively exist among members of the unit. Second, this collective expression of feelings and perceptions is affected and influenced significantly by the commander and his leaders. Third, the feelings are expressed in support and actions for the unit. Keeping these points in mind, this study defines the concept as follows:

"Command climate is a state or condition existing from shared feelings and perceptions among soldiers about their unit, about their leaders, and about their unit's programs and policies. This condition is created by the commander and his chain of command from the commander's vision and leadership style, and influenced and perpetuated by their communication and their leadership."

There are some commanders and authors that feel it is not

always necessary to have an absolute definition of an idea to make the concept work for you. Such was the case with retired LTG Ulmer, who spoke of the "essence of a 'good climate."16 He listed numerous indicators of command climate which included:

- pervasive sense of mission
- common agreement on what are top priorities
- clear standards
- competence is prized and appreciated
- willingness to share information
- sense of fair play
- joy in teamwork
- quick and convenient ways to attack nonsense and fix aberrations in the system
- sense of rationality and trust

With the above definitions and Ulmer's points in mind, an attempt will be made to construct a developmental model that explains the command climate concept. Climate is the result of what the members of the organization believe. It is soldiers' feelings and their perceptions about the components in the unit reinforced by their identity, understanding and approval. A pervasive acceptance of membership is formed and reciprocally impacts for the unit to "get the job done." This "collective impact" is motivation stemming from respect, trust, and confidence and is measured in terms of negative, indefinite or neutral and positive climate.

All units want and strive to attain a positive climate; however, as evaluators have discovered at the National Training Center, this is not always the case. The major contributors which break down climate are factors associated with interpersonal communication, unit membership, and goals. When the soldier's ability to know and understand each other is impaired and there is no communication or a break down in exchanging information takes place, the expressed feelings become negative and contradictory. When team and unit membership is not united and strong differences exist, the emotional, cohesive bonds in the unit get broken. When goals are inconsistent and disagreement and friction set in, the teams and unit become counter productive. Consequently, a commander needs to know how to react to these factors and this friction in

order to overcome it. To conquer negative elements, there are constructive processes, effective elements and supportive indicators that, when collectively used, lead to a favorable change in command climate.

For example, every unit has programs and policies that get emphasized and prioritized through what FM 22-103 called the four processes of command, control, management, and leadership. If the programs and policies are simplistic and consistent over time, the soldiers respond and comply. The result will be an indicator called commitment, which is a function of the eventual condition called compliance or non-compliance (see figure 1). This developmental product is an example of a direct system at work.

An example of the same sequence of events occurs with command climate. As shown in the developmental model below, when the unit's components are integrated with the four processes existing in the unit, and then interact with the varying elements inherent in the military organization, they create indicators, which result in the states or conditions called command climate and combat readiness.

Figure 1: Developmental Model for Command Climate

Components	Processes	Elements	Indicators	State/Condition
-Organization	Command	Environment	Values	
		Culture		Command
-Commander	Control	Leadership	Morale	Climate
		Style	Cohesion	
-Chain of	Management	Vision	Teamwork	
Command		Communica-		Combat
-Leaders	Leadership	tions	Trust	Readiness
		Standards	Confidence	
-Members/		Discipline		
Soldiers		Mission	Performance	
		Training	Proficiency	
-Programs/		Simplicity		
Policies		Consistency	Commitment	Compliance

No transformation is complete without a catalyst. In the military unit, the stimulus that creates a reaction, brings all the components together and hastens a result is the commander. It is his leadership style, vision and communication that instills purpose, direction, intensity, and motivation. It is the commander who, upon taking command plants the proverbial seed of common purpose and intent. Just as a seed planted in soil of the proper composition and given the right amount of sustenance, will grow into a healthy tree, likewise, the commander's visionary seed planted in an organization and nourished will produce a positive, healthy command climate.

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CHAPTER VI

PURPOSE, APPLICATION, AND LINKAGE

> "You need an understanding that the nature of leadership is creating an environment for your organization. People have to share the goals, from the top to the bottom."
>
> MACOM (***) and DA Pam 600-80

PURPOSE:

When the command climate is determined, there is purpose in its use. The object of its existence is to be improved until it is healthy. Like another indirect system called intelligence, climate needs to be evaluated and used to gain purpose. Based upon the intelligence he receives on the situation, a commander makes decisions about an operation to accomplish his mission.

Today, a commander needs to use command climate to improve his unit's ability to attain its goals, and to make decisions about what component changes need to be made to carry out its mission. If this is not done a unit's command climate will remain an quiescent condition in the organization as it has historically been for years, or become a nonproductive factor. With the new training doctrine in FC 25-100, the climate concept is a critical component of a winning philosophy needed to train the force. If a commander is fortunate enough to inherit a good organization with sound programs, policies, excellent leaders, and effective leadership, the climate will probably be healthy. However, not all commands or new commanders are that fortunate.

APPLICATION:

Creating a positive command climate is not easy. For example,

what is positive, and how is healthy defined? This remains a problem with the climate concept; however, there are two approaches that can be used and have been discussed earlier in this study. First, by identifying favorable characteristics found in excellent units and then implementing or enforcing them appropriately in your unit. Second, by utilizing an available evaluation system like the FORSCOM Command Climate Survey Guide or DA Pamphlet 600-69, the Unit Climate Profile. Listed below are the characteristics found in the first method from two studies mentioned previously in this study. The authors of these studies identified the following attributes, or what can also be called characteristics, as "the best descriptors" of excellent units:

Excellence in Combat Arms Study (Dec 84)1	Brigade Pillars of Excellence (Apr 86)2
1. The Commander's Influence	1. Focus on Combat
2. Focus on Combat	2. Power Down
3. Power Down	3. Teamwork
4. Strong Unit Identity	4. High Standards and Discipline
5. Caring	5. Caring
6. High Standards	6. Positive Command Climate
7. Teamwork	7. Consistent Excellent Performance
8. Consistent Excellent Performance	8. The Winning Spirit

Note first, the characteristics listed above are closely aligned with the elements and indicators in the developmental model in this study. Most of the "descriptors" are emphasized with appropriate adjectives of intended purpose. More importantly, note that a positive command climate is a pillar in the excellence in brigades list. The authors of this study stated, "we debated long and hard whether to include this characteristic as a separate pillar of excellence since so much of what we discovered about command

climate is discussed in our other chapters. However, based on input from our classmates and many of the members of the brigades we visited, so much of that intangible called 'command climate' results directly from the influence of the brigade commander. So we decided to devote a separate chapter discussing his impact on the environment of the brigade."3 What the authors have listed above is a recommended formula for achieving a positive command climate. To reemphasize a point, the individual charged with the responsibility of putting the unit formula together and ensuring the variables get enforced is the commander. In short, if these attributes are initiated, practiced, and enforced, the results can lead to operational success and an improved climate.

The Unit Climate Profile (UCP), DA Pam 600-69, is an excellent tool and example of how a questionnaire can provide an evaluation of a unit's climate at company level. The "climate factors"4 assessed in this survey are:

1. Officer Leadership
2. NCO Leadership
3. Immediate Leaders
4. Leader Accessibility
5. Promotion Policy
6. Rewards & Corrective Actions
7. Quality of Training
8. Tools, Equipment, & Supplies
9. Job Satisfaction
10. Freedom from Harassment
11. Military Courtesy & Discipline
12. Human Relations
13. Unit Cohesiveness
14. Sports Activities
15. Social Activities
16. Freedom from Substance Abuse
17. Food
18. Soldier Attitude toward Unit
19. Morale
20. Reenlistment Potential
21. Commander's Use of the UCP

Though oriented toward leadership and administrative areas, this list is still thorough enough to cover the majority of the areas commanders need to be paying attention to in order to achieve a healthy climate. The pamphlet provides several "suggested applications and typical uses for the UCP."5 They are:

- Assess unit climate on assuming command.
- Check trends in climate factors over a period of time.
- Evaluate effects of programs or policies you implement.
- Evaluate effects of programs or policies that originate at higher headquarters.
- Pinpoint potential climate problems in your unit.
- Obtain unbiased information about a known climate problem.
- Assist in establishing or modifying standards for your unit.

With the Army's elimination of the Organizational Effectiveness (OE) program and the Inspector General's compliance-oriented inspection program, there are less alternatives for providing commanders a means of evaluating attitudes about programs and policies, standards, trends and behavioral problems. In most instances, the Command Inspection Program (CIP) conducted by division, brigade, and battalion has done a good job evaluating major unit programs in training, maintenance, supply and some 35 to 45 subareas; however, the CIP program does not do well in evaluating the leadership process, attitudes of soldiers, and trends in the twenty-[illegible] climate areas listed above. High marks on an inspection does not always tell how a unit will perform in training or in combat. As was said about some units, they were "all show and no go."

This is why the need exists for timely, periodic use of the UCP or an equivalent system. When the UCP is used and administered by brigade or battalion personnel (such as the Equal Opportunity NCO), the results should be given to the company commander without him feeling threatened by his immediate superiors. The results should not be used for comparison or rating the company commander. This method of climate evaluation does not imply that the company commander could [illegible] or should not administer the UCP if higher less bias personnel are not available. The point is the UCP is a creditable means for getting a climate evaluation, and it is not receiving the attention from the major commands and the field that

it was designed to accomplish.

LINKAGE:

Determining command climate can close the gap of uncertainty left by doubt and confusion, before feelings get expressed into negative actions, poor performance and relief. The case in point becomes critical with the transition from peace to war and from readiness to combat. One unique research study in this area was accomplished by Dr. Reuven Gal, for five years the Chief Psychologist of the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF). His book, A Portrait of the Israeli Soldier, and a 1986 article in the Journal of Applied Social Psychology focus on the human factors that have contributed to the development and success of the IDF. His chapter on "The Fighting Spirit"is quite pertinent to linking command climate with motivation in combat.

The "fighting spirit is the secret weapon of the IDF,"6 much the same as cohesion has long been associated with soldiers and success in the British Army and sought by units in the American Army. Dr Gal stated the Israeli spirit is comprised of "root sources" stemming from strong traditional characteristics and values, reenforced by the fact that from 1948 to 1973 the Israeli soldier "was fighting for the defense of his own home and family."7 Additionally, there are three "acute and immediate sources of combat motivation which will drive the combatant to fight in the face of battle."8 These sources are "first and foremost, self-preservation. Second, there is the soldier's small unit which is a forceful motivating factor. And last, there is the leadership factor, which maximizes the effectiveness of these sources of motivation."9 Leadership manifests itself by gaining the soldier's trust: a trust built from the commanders's proficiency, his credibility as a source of information, and the amount of care and attention he pays to his men.

Dr. Gal selected what he called "the components of the fighting

spirit, major variables related strongly to morale."10 Looking for relationships, he questioned a large sampling of Israeli combat troops about the importance of these factors. The eight factors were:

(1) confidence in senior commanders
(2) confidence in one's self, team, and weapons
(3) unit cohesion and morale
(4) familiarity with missions and frontage
(5) confidence in immediate commanders
(6) enemy evaluation
(7) legitimacy of war
(8) worries and concerns

Dr. Gal determined, "the highest correlations existed between the soldiers and confidence in their immediate and senior commanders; second, confidence in one's self, team and weapons; and third, morale."11 In his summary, Dr. Gal concluded that his "analysis may suggest the existence of a higher order concept--perhaps 'unit climate'--of which all of the found factors, including morale, are but forming components, the essential ingredients for an effective fighting unit."12

As the leadership of the Army struggles with the issue of an operational application for command climate in today's Army, they could learn much from the findings of Dr. Gal and the Israeli soldiers. Certainly the results of his studies reinforce the emphasis placed on trust and confidence between commander, leaders, and soldiers up and down the chain. Finally, command climate and leadership are inseparable and interrelated , and steps need to be taken to continue researching those factors linked with producing combat effectiveness through a positive command climate.

ENDNOTES

1. Nicholas J. Turchiano, COL; James M. Gass, LTC; Lawson W. Magruder, III, LTC; Huey B. Scott, LTC; Excellence In Brigades, p. 8.
2. IBID.
3. IBID., p. 45.
4. U.S. Department of the Army, Pamphlet 600-69, 1 October 1986, p.ii.
5. IBID.
6. Reuven Gal, A Portrait of the Israeli Soldier, p. 143.
7. IBID., p. 146.
8. IBID., p. 148.
9. IBID., p. 148-149.
10. COL (Res'.) Reuven Gal, Ph. D., "Unit Morale: From a Theoretical Puzzle to an Empirical Illustration-An Israeli Example," Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 1986, p. 549.
11. IBID., p. 563.
12. IBID.

CHAPTER VII

THE AWARENESS AND ACCEPTANCE PROBLEM

"Knowledge itself is power"
- Francis Bacon

The two biggest problems with the command climate concept are the lack of awareness and acceptance by commanders and senior level officers. There are not only "many barriers and obstacles along the axis of advance to the healthy command climate,"1 but the first step is getting across the "line of departure" and recognizing the potential in the concept. Since FC 25-100 accepts a healthy command climate as a critical component of a winning philosophy and FM 22-103 states a healthy ethical climate has a direct bearing on readiness, the next step is determining if commanders believe it and have expressed this in their philosophies. The problems implied in the above statements will be pursued in this chapter; first, by looking at command philosophies; second, by reviewing division command lessons learned; and last, by summarizing the results of an Army War College survey on variables affecting high combat effectiveness.

"Vision is a senior leader's source of effectiveness."2 Today more battalion, brigade, and division commanders are utilizing the "command philosophy" memorandum or letter as a means of identifying and translating their vision on paper to their commands. To determine the awareness and emphasis being placed on command climate by commanders in their command philosophies, a review was conducted of twenty-seven 1987 command philosophy memorandums and letters from the 5th Infantry Division, Fort Polk, Louisiana. It was felt this unit was a good example of a representative division, and it exemplifies attitudes and visions that are prevalent in most commands today in CONUS, Germany, and Korea. These commanders are graduates of the Army's Pre-Command Course (PCC) and have commanded

or been assigned to Army units during a period of command climate emphasis in the 1980s.

Fifty-two percent (14 out of 27) of the commanders used the term command climate or an associated term in their command philosophy correspondence. The fourteen commanders who did were the division commander, five out of eight 06 commanders, and eight out of eighteen 05 commanders. Six out of fifteen (40%) commanders using the climate term were combat arms officers; three out of five (60%) were combat support officers; and five out of seven (71%) were combat service support commanders. Additionally, a point raised in Chapter V on expressing the term command climate versus other associated terms was reviewed. The fourteen commanders who included command climate in their correspondence used the following terms to the frequency indicated:

- command climate: ten times
- leadership climate: three times
- climate: three times
- environment: four times
- unit climate: once
- atmosphere: once
- organizational climate: none

By comparison, three other concepts of the 1980s were also reviewed, Mission Essential Task List (METL), "power-down", and the Command Inspection Program (CIP). Somewhat surprising, the term Mission Essential Task List (METL) as referred to in FC 25-100 was only used by six out of twenty-seven (22%) commanders. The "power-down" concept and closely associated ideas were used by six of twenty-seven commanders. Emphasis on Command Inspection Programs (CIPs) and similar inspection programs was only addressed by two (7%) out of twenty-seven commanders.

Several memorandums and letters articulated and emphasized the climate concept as follows:

- "The enclosed command philosophy is a formal statement of how I view the world in terms of the command climate."3 (Div Cdr)

- "The major contribution of a senior headquarters toward building a healthy and productive leadership climate at unit level is to provide a coherent, predictable, and non-hectic environment within which the unit commander has time and energy to be a leader."4 (Div Cdr)

- "Readiness ... Level of attainment is dependent upon the unit climate and leadership provided."5 (Bn Cdr)

- "The most fundamental premise that underlies the ability to become technically and tactically proficient or to sustain that proficiency is the environment in which one works--it can be positive which is generally conducive to learning and work output or it can be negative which normally has the opposite effect."6 (Bn Cdr)

- "It is my intent to cultivate a command climate which is consistent and predictable and allows subordinate leaders to focus energy on the things which are important. Once established this climate will do much for the ability of leaders to think, decide, and act independently."7 (Bn Cdr)

- "Inherent in this mission is the responsibility of leaders throughout the chain of command to create a command climate that will identify and develop those traits and skills that soldiers and leaders will need to survive on the battlefield and accomplish the mission."8 (Bde Cdr)

- "To perform our reconnaissance and security missions to the highest standards, within a safe, healthy command climate; people first, mission always."9 (Bn Cdr)

- "My job as your commander is to provide you an environment where you feel comfortable in practicing your chosen profession. I will provide an atmosphere for you to grow--use it wisely."10 (Bn Cdr)

- "Our command climate must be one which fosters professional integrity."11 (PM)

- "The command climate I wish to foster is one that allows individuals to fail as they learn, but eventually holds them to

meeting the standards of competence dictated by their position, experience, and training."12 (Bn Cdr)

- "I expect us to foster and maintain a climate of wellness, enthusiasm, and pride in our unit, community, and families."13 (Cdr, DC)

- "The command philosophy is to create an environment in which we:

  * Establish goals and objectives to provide the best quality health care.
  * Use our creative energies to improve communications.
  * Create organizational consistency through sound systems of measurement, reward, and punishment which are in line with our stated goals, priorities and objectives."12 (Dept Cdr)

The above quotes are excellent examples of how commanders envision creating and using command climate. However, keep in mind only two out of every five combat arms commanders referred to the climate concept after the division commander had set the tone in his philosophy memorandum. The key question is why only forty percent or fifty-two percent for the division's commanders? Certainly these are sincere commanders and in practically all cases they addressed the training, maintaining, leading, and caring issues and missions General Wickham established for the Army in 1985. These requirements and more were covered relatively well by the 5th Division commanders in one form or another. The answer lies between a lack of awareness and uncertainty with the climate concept, the setting of priorities, and deficiencies in officer and commander development. Viewed another way, the twenty-seven command philosophy letter. re examples of what LTG Ulmer referred to as "our uneven command climates."15 This is especially true because commanders are not thinking the same leadership and training doctrine. As we continue to meet the leadership challenges in our units today, and either "come to grips" or "loose our grip" on the business of command climate, the basic challenge is developing

commanders who know the correct climate when they see it, know how to evaluate and change it if needed, and know how to build and sustain such climates for the future. Based on the command philosophy letters in this division, there is some skepticism whether this is taking place.

If battalion and brigade commanders are uncertain about using command climate, what have the division commanders said about the concept? The answer is mixed from two available sources. Authors of the "Excellence in Brigades" study talked with four division commanders from the 82d Airborne, 101st Air Assault, 2d Armored, and the 1st Cavalry divisions. They concluded a "positive command climate" was one of the ten most frequently identified "pillars" supporting or producing excellence.

The second source is less supportive. Each year the U.S. Army Military History Institute publishes "Experiences in Division Command" as part of the Division Command Lessons Learned Program. The Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans commented in the forward of the 1986 and 1987 documents that they are not a "recipe for success, but rather the fruits of years of experience ... they represent a valuable point of departure of both practitioners and students of the art of command."16 There are fourteen major areas covered in the documents to include leadership, ethics, organization, professional development, and doctrine. Out of sixty-four comments on leadership by fifteen division commanders over the two years, only one commander made an observation about command climate or an associated term.

> "I think a division commander only does two things that really count. One is to provide the division a sense of direction that has everybody pulling together. And then, secondly, provide the climate that promotes the gaining of those goals. You must provide the motivation and the command climate that encourage and motivate everyone to pull together. If you do that, if you tell the division where its supposed to go, and you create the atmosphere

that makes everyone want to go there, you can't fail. I don't know what else a division commander really does that counts."17

Seventy-one comments were made about ethics, organization, professional development, and doctrinal lessons learned; but none referred to any aspect of what a healthy, positive command climate did for their divisions. Although the comments selected for the two pamphlets are not all conclusive of what was written by these fifteen division commanders, the single remark underscores the difficulty the command climate concept has experienced in becoming a frequently used "household" idea.

In September 1987, the Army Research Institute conducted a survey of 90 U.S. Army combat arms officers at the Army War College. The questionnaire consisted of 24 items taken from a survey of literature on cohesion and dealt with variables affecting high combat effectiveness. The officers were asked to review the 24 variables and rank order them on a seven-point scale (0 to 6) ranging from "not at all important" to "extremely important." Ninety-five percent of the officers were lieutenant colonels and five percent were colonels. Ninety-four percent indicated that they had served in a combat zone.

The results of the survey are listed below in rank order:

	Variable	Mean	Category
1.	Sense of mission	5.62	Peer Bonding
2.	Leader's concern for men	5.53	Vertical Bonding
3.	Leader's example	5.40	Vertical Bonding
4.	Training	5.36	Structural Factors
5.	Technical & tactical proficiency	5.32	Peer Bonding
6.	Trust & respect for leaders	5.30	Vertical Bonding
7.	Teamwork	5.22	Peer Bonding
8.	Logistics and supply	5.05	Structural Factors
9.	Command, control, communications and intelligence	4.99	Structural Factors

10.	Trust, respect, & friendship	4.79	Peer Bonding
11.	Tactics	4.69	Structural Factors
12.	Sharing of discomfort	4.42	Vertical Bonding
13.	Shared training	4.30	Vertical Bonding
14.	Loyalty to nation & values	3.99	Organ. Bonding
15.	Lack of personnel turbulence	3.97	Structural Factors
16.	Open organizational climate	3.91	Vertical Bonding
17.	Doctrine	3.84	Structural Factors
18.	Patriotism	3.67	Organ. Bonding
19.	Culture, norms, values and organization of the military	3.63	Societal Factors
20.	Defense budget	3.24	Societal Factors
21.	Concept of valor or heroism	3.06	Societal Factors
22.	Military tradition & history	3.02	Societal Factors
23.	Appropriate level of social	2.71	Societal Factors
24.	Strong religious belief	2.39	Societal Factors

It is acknowledged the above list of variables is not conclusive; however, several of the variables affecting combat that were left out were medical care and facilities, physical fitness, maintenance, winning spirit, and public opinion and support.

What does one learn about command climate from this survey? With a mean score if 3.91, "open organizational climate" was considered "quite" important for combat effectiveness as opposed to "very" and "extremely important" for the higher ranking variables. If the variable had been defined as "a positive command climate" consisting of morale, cohesion, trust and confidence, as indicated in this study's developmental model and in Dr. Gal's research, the concept probably would have been scored among the top six variables. Unfortunately, the "open organizational" adjectives distracted from the more definitive meaning of the climate concept.

What have the three studies in this chapter told us? First, there is a lack of awareness of and uncertainty to use command climate. Second, commanders need to include command climate as part

of their vision and commander's intent in their command philosophy letters. Third, not enough lessons have been learned about "a positive command climate" to warrant special consideration and entry into the written historical reflections of our division commanders. And last, there are good intentions and potential for command climate not getting practiced. Command philosophy as well as a winning philosophy are like a good plan, they amount to the first five percent of mission accomplishment. It is execution that achieves goals and objectives, orchestrated by a willing and risk-taking commander. This study determined commanders need to include command climate when they put together their "good plans," faithfully execute a program of determining it's status, and learn ways of improving command climate throughout their organizations.

ENDNOTES

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4. IBID, p. 4 of enclosure.
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6. L. P. Wright, LTC, Memorandum dated 19 August 1987, Subject: Command Philosophy, p. 1 (p. 24).
7. George T. Housley, LTC, Command Letter, AFZX-JF-C, dated 1 September 1987, Subject: Command Philosophy, p. 1 (p. 44)
8. John C. Parrish, COL, Memorandum dated 20 August 1987, Subject: Command Philosophy, p. 1 (p. 51).
9. Albert F. Leister, LTC, Command Letter, dated 2 July 1987, Subject: Command Philosophy, p. 1 (p. 55).
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12. Walter C. Neitzke, LTC, Memorandum dated 15 October 1987, Subject: Command Philosophy, p. 2 (p. 78).
13. Julian M. Dismukis III, Expectations For Excellence paper, undated, p. 1, (p. 69).
14. Garland E. McCarty, COL, Memorandum dated 16 September 1987, Subject: Command Philosophy, p. 1 (p. 70).
15. Walter F. Ulmer, Jr., "The Army's New Senior Leadership Doctrine," Parameters, December 1987, p. 17.
16. U.S. Army Military History Institute, Experiences In Division Command, 1987, Forward.
17. IBID., p. 4.

CHAPTER VIII

IMPROVING A UNIT'S COMMAND CLIMATE

"Cleave to a 'Paratrooper's Faith,'
and the Ideals of the Airborne."
-GEN Matthew B. Ridgway,
28 May 1982, Retired

The above advice from General Ridgway was given to me in 1982, when he was 87 years old and I was a senior major and the Inspector General of the 82d Airborne Division. For a soldier, there are always words that he never forgets. For me, these words are permanently etched in my mind. They are quite simple, very profound, and everlasting. They are the epitome of another Airborne expression every paratrooper uses when he salutes and greets a superior..."All The Way...Sir!" This is a slogan that implies intent, feelings, and pride. This is an example of the role pride plays in a positive command climate. In this chapter, the effort will concentrate on developing "how-to" procedures for creating and sustaining a positive command climate.

In Chapter II, LTG Elton was quoted on his observation that "a new commander brings three unique aspects of leadership to a unit; vision, communication and climate. These aspects are unique because they represent the commander. They are reflections of his or her leadership style and purpose; they are the commander."1 Getting to a healthy climate starts at the top with the leader. The commander creates and then communicates his vision in a multitude of ways in order to produce the feelings, shared values and experiences that lead to a "common cultural community" and a productive military family of leaders and soldiers.

In Chapter 2 of FM 22-103 on Leadership Vision, the word communicate is mentioned only twice. Both times in relation to the commander's ability to communicate the intent of his vision.

Specifically, the first paragraph relates to operations and warfighting, but it can also apply to establishing a climate. "Only if they (commanders) understand the ends they seek can they prepare and communicate clear statements of intent from which can flow the concepts and actions needed to ensure success."2 The sentence sounds like it belongs more in FM 100-5 than in a field manual on leadership, yet it is operational as well as implying stewardship. In the "Implementing the Vision" section of this FM 22-103 chapter, it stated "senior-level leaders make their vision a reality by synchronizing the training and operational efforts of soldiers and units. The means are tasks, conditions and standards they establish."3 Contrary to what FM 22-103 stated, senior leaders make their vision a reality by "communicating," spelling out their goals, objectives, tasks and standards verbally and in writing.

The Written Word:

When written down, the most frequent means used to implement the commander's vision is the command philosophy letter discussed in Chapter VII. Additionally, most commanders will include specific goals and objectives in the annual and quarterly training guidance. Several other ways also exist to achieve this purpose of articulating those qualities a commander feels are most important to him. Three of them are discussed below:

Goals and Objectives List: After a "blood-letting" day of Organizational Effectiveness (OE), the brigade commander was quick to publish the official list of brigade goals and objectives which found it's way to every bulletin board in the unit. Not a bad idea, but what got it ignored were the 25 items on the list. "Overkill!" Nobody knew which goal was more important -- No. 4 or No. 24; and leaders and NCOs soon lost interest. The argument against prioritizing a list of goals and objectives is that, if not careful, leaders will concentrate on the top four or five goals and never attempt to achieve fourteen or fifteen, and in this case

twenty-five. Though Organizational Effectiveness sessions are no longer being conducted, there are still some Battalion Training Management System (BTMS) and quarterly Training Management Review sessions that produce a similar list as described above. It is recommended these measurable goals and objectives be incorporated into the training guidance letters where they can be updated and not presented to the command in an "overkill" effort. These objectives are the unit's standards and they need to be high, attainable, and capable of being achieved in the next three-to six-month time frame.

Goals and Compass: Another approach to communicating a commander's vision was used by Lieutenant General John W. Woodmansee, Jr., when he commanded the 2d Armored Division. He published a booklet entitled "Goals and Compass of Hell On Wheels." The booklet contained his goals, compass points, and an interview with the division public relations officer discussing why he established the set of goals. LTG Woodmansee stated "The goals tell all the soldiers in the division what we are striving for in a broad sense. Most of the goals will be difficult to measure, but we should know when we're getting closer. The compass relates to the goals and points out those things we must achieve if we are to be successful in reaching our goals.....Like a compass is supposed to do, it shows the direction."4 His goals and points were:

Goals

-Disciplined soldiers in cohesive units:
  Motivated to do their duty
  Convinced of their tactical excellence
  Physically and mentally ready for war
-Trained to accomplish tactical missions:
  Under all battlefield conditions
  With well-maintained equipment
  While accepting modernized systems
  And supporting reserve components

-Environment:

Trust and confidence
Development of soldiers to their potential
Pride in unit and service to country

Compass

-Duty first! With integrity and discipline
-Training for combat--Our top priority
-Night operations--Our specialty
-Marksmanship--The most important skill
-Mentally ready for war--"Battleproofed"
-Strength and stamina to outlast any enemy
-Maintenance services--By the book
-Leader development--The key to cohesion
-Plan ahead--Discuss next week's schedule
-Take CARE of the soldier who works for you

Note LTG Woodmansee's basic goals included discipline, training, and the environment; and his compass points complimented these areas and reinforced their importance. The goals and points impacted directly on mission and they were broad enough that updating was not required during his command tour. They covered many of the basics for a sound method of operation as well as contributing to a healthy command climate.

Thunderbolt Creed: There are times when a commander can take the priorities of the Chief of Staff and work them into a format that embodies his vision. Such was the case with the 2d Battalion, 83d Field Artillery's Thunderbolt Creed when it was created in 1984. The Creed stated:

A "THUNDERBOLT"....

-TRAINS to accomplish his mission.
-Knows his job.
-MAINTAINS his equipment.
-Sets high standards.
-LEADS by example.
-Is in top notch physical condition.
-Never surrenders leadership.
-CARES for his soldiers and family.
-Takes charge.
-Knows patience.
-Is a winner.
-Enjoys Germany and life.
-Is a dedicated American.
-Is a member of the best battalion in Corps.

Unlike the ten commandments which spelled out what "thou shall not do", the Thunderbolt Creed stated qualities and guidance for what a soldier would be, know, and do. These qualities are similar to the characteristics for combat-ready teams found in FM 22-102, Soldier Team Development. The Creed sent a message to the unit and suitably accomplished several important functions:

-Met the Army's guidance.
-Emphasized excellence, family and leadership, the Army themes from 1983 to 1985.
-Provided a clear sense of responsibility and mission priorities.
-Became a common rallying point.
-Was printed in card form and issued to every soldier in the battalion.
-Was issued by his commander or first sergeant to every new soldier when he arrived in the battalion.
-Was specifically discussed during the battalion commander's orientation for new personnel.

-Became a list to teach from during professional development instruction for officers and NCOs.

Perhaps most important, the Creed created a sense of pride that permeated the battalion and enabled soldiers to feel good about themselves, their team, and their unit. This is the essence of a positive command climate.

There are times when a commander wants to emphasize a particular aspect of his vision, share his feelings and perceptions about the climate he senses, and still keep his soldiers informed about upcoming events. Two examples of how to accomplish this task come to mind. Like the quarterly training guidance, they have a way of complimenting and reenforcing the commander's original philosophy.

Newsletters: The unit newsletter is usually found at division level because of the cost and time factors. However, on occasions an ambitious brigade or battalion commander will take the time and set aside the assets to publish his own newsletter. When this is done, it adds a personal touch which is creative, positive, and informative. For the commander, it is a means of getting a written message emphasized and providing feedback to the soldiers. Three problems with the newsletter are timeliness and becoming outdated, size limitations, and quantity restrictions. However, when it is accomplished, the newsletter becomes a unique part of the unit's character.

LES Supplement: Many times the newsletter does not get home and in the hands of dependents. To overcome this difficulty, some commanders have attached a one page personal message to the soldier's Leave and Earning Statement (LES). The supplement can be personalized, contain recognition, or a schedule of upcoming events.

Goals, objectives, tasks, conditions, and standards are collectively the foundation for a commander to build his programs and policies. When the vision and philosophy are well thought out, easily understood, and conveniently available, the soldier becomes aware of his role and responsibilities. This contributes to the

success of the unit. As a result, the soldier's perceptions of himself, his team, and his unit, as well as the climate, are categorically and collectively enhanced.

The Spoken Word:

Up to this point, this chapter has stressed the written side of a leader's communications. Certainly even more important is the commander's ability to speak to his leaders and soldiers. FM 22-103's section on communications is helpful in this respect and offers the reader far more insight than could be covered in this study; however, a couple of points need to be made in regard to using this skill.

The potential for ambiguity, confusion, and anxiety (three contributors to a negative climate) is created by change. This is change caused by the variable pace of operations, inconsistencies, prejudice, or even a new commander. These situations present special communication challenges to senior leaders, especially if the change in command is the result of a relief action. A new commander will quickly learn to lead, command, and train the organization; however, "what they (commanders) know may not be as important as how they know and how they communicate this fact to all who have an impact on the organization's ability to implement the vision."5

For battalion and company level commanders the opportunity to frequently speak to their soldiers offers distinct advantages and needs to be proactively pursued. Apart from timely "pep" talks before training exercises, utilizing monthly paydays, daily and special formations, periodic "rap" (grievance) sessions, and scheduled professional development periods are all ways for the commander to stress recognition, proficiency, deficiencies, and the multitude of topics of interest to a unit's soldiers. By talking to soldiers, a commander has a wide range of opportunities and avenues to chose from to establish his credibility, trust, confidence, and in this case improve his climate methodology.

This is the case with "rap" sessions, which several years ago were required to be conducted by most company level commanders on a monthly basis. In recent years, it appears fewer commanders are taking the opportunity to conduct complaint sessions with only their soldiers present. The trend is to allow the chain of command to "buffer" their positions and only use occasional unit formations to say what the commander wants to say. Consequently, there is no feedback, except what is passed up through the chain of NCOs and officers. In a study conducted by an 82d Airborne Division Inspector General a few year's ago, only sixty-six percent, or two of three company level commanders, were conducting periodic complaint meetings. Consequently, when opportunities of this nature are missed, a commander places his reputation in doubt, misses an occasion to gain mutual respect and confidence, and loses a chance to directly correct false perceptions and improve the unit's climate.

Up to this point the discussion of improving command climate has centered around the commander and the ways of communicating goals and objectives to soldiers. This is what is called building identification with the team and organization. Identification in this sense "is the psychological process whereby an individual makes something outside of himself a part of himself."6 When a soldier has identified with an organization, that unit is a part of him, and he feels better about contributing to its success.

Symbolism: Another method of building identification and improving the command climate in a unit is with symbolism. Symbols may have an indirect relationship with climate, but they point to common membership in the unit and reinforce the growth of morale and cohesion. Several popular types of symbolism are worth mentioning.

-Nicknames and slogans represent tradition and customs in an organization. They can refer to a soldier, a group or unit, or their motto. The following example illustrates a point: In the 2d

Bn, 83d FA, a salute is accompanied by "Thunderbolt, Sir." The officer returns the salute and answers "Proud to be One." Prior to adopting this nickname and slogan, the unit had no common nickname and its motto was "Zero Mils." When the unit fired out twice and it's commander was relieved, it was time to change the motto and develop a new identity. It was much easier to take pride in being a "Thunderbolt" than "Zero Mils," since not all soldiers in the battalion were gunners! The nickname was also reflected in the brigade patch worn by every soldier, which was a reminder of who they were and what unit they were assigned.

-Coins are an excellent, but expensive, form of increasing identification, improving expectations and providing a reward. When awarded for excellence in soldier and team skills, rather than for sports and reenlistment, the pursuit of a coin's ownership increases its value and stresses the importance of military proficiency.

-Battalion certificates for achievement and appreciation are personalized, illustrated ways of adding to the Army's awards system. Like all awards, the timely presentation is the key to positive feelings and perceptions of being recognized and supported.

-Other symbols that have distinguished one unit or team from another are mascots, flags, decals and bumper-stickers. These items, like the above symbols, increase the soldier's sense of pride and become displayed loyalty.

Shared Experiences: One of the goals in pursuing a healthy command climate is a team building axis of advance in the organization FM 22-103 calls "shared values and experiences." Shared experiences occur in all units from training to sports programs with three basic functions. First and foremost, training demonstrates combat readiness. Second, experiences allow for the development of soldiers to their potential. Third, it is desirable that these experiences be successful. Consequently, these experiences breed confidence and the growth of morale and cohesion. The emotional ties and bonding gained from successful training takes

precedence, as well it should, over all forms of special events. However, in successful units there are benefits and enjoyment from overcoming the "all work and no play" syndrome. In these units, time is set aside for special functions. Though a complete list would far exceed this page, it is worthwhile to list the more significant special events that provide shared experiences and improve soldiers' feelings about their unit. Commanders need to ask themselves, "When was the last time we conducted this event?"

Unit:
- -Organization Day
- -Battalion Run
- -Sponsorship Activity

NCOs:
- -NCO Dining-In
- -NCO FTX
- -NCO of the Month & Year

Officers:
- -Officer Run
- -Officer Dining-In
- -Officer Call
- -Right Arm Night

Soldiers:
- -Soldier of the Month & Year
- -Soldier Lead the Bn Day
- -Soldier Led Ceremonies

Conducted with a flair and touch of class, these shared experiences require and generate close association, teamwork, and pride. Another opportunity to reward shared experiences is after the unit has taken its annual battalion Common Tasks Test (CTT), semi-annual physical fitness (PT) test, and periodic marksmanship qualification. The commander who takes advantage of these situations and presents a symbol of recognition for outstanding results to the soldier immediately after the event (or no later than 24 hours), in front of his peers, can achieve several climate improvement-related functions at one time. Given, most units reward their soldiers, some take too long, but an ambitious and wise commander will "capture the moment" with timely presentations for basic superb accomplishments. Not every award needs to be an "impact" medal, because the Army has an excellent badge system that

can be and needs to be exploited.

This chapter has discussed several "how-to" activities for improving a command's climate. It has stressed the importance of the commander and his ability to articulate and project his vision through communications. With the use of meaningful training, productive symbols and special events, the unit is enriched, the soldier gains increased identity, and the unit improves its morale and cohesiveness. Perhaps what every commander seeks in a positive command climate is found in an old, but excellent, definition once related to esprit de corps. It stated, "esprit is the loyalty to, pride in, and enthusiasm for a unit shown by its members."7 Certainty, these qualities are the ideals General Ridgway referred to in his quote at the beginning of this chapter. Successful units with healthy climates have them and share them.

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2. U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 22-103, June 1987, p. 8.

3. IBID., p. 15.

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6. United States Military Academy, Volume II, Military Leadership, Part III, Management of Men, 1963, p. 105.

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CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

> "Our successful American leaders, through their gifts of understanding people, have demonstrated the art of welding individuals into units, where their separate strengths are multipled as parts of a greater whole."
>
> - General Maxwell D. Taylor

Ten years ago the term "command climate" did not appear in the Army's manuals or publications. As a concept, it is younger than the All Volunteer Army, about the same age as the Centralized Command Selection Process, and slightly older than the AirLand Battle doctrine it was created to support. However, all three of these initiatives continue to impact on the status of command climate in units today. Recent "status of the service" studies have concluded the combined high quality of soldiers being led by the very best commanders are producing outstanding battalions and brigades in today's Army. With superb soldiers, capable leaders, modernized equipment, and a dynamic operational doctrine, the Army is in great shape. The prognosis is it will get better.

So why the great concern for command climate? Is it being overly dramatic to declare this decade-old military concept an "endangered species"? This study has traced the roots of the command climate concept. The research indicated it was not its sudden escalation in 1980 that created the idea. Climates had existed in military units for centuries, either under another name or dormant in behavioral relationships. It gained its notability when circumstances existed which caused new directions to be taken in leadership research: directions caused by a new operational doctrine requiring responsibility to be "powered down," and new leadership to open up the human dimension. The new AirLand Battle

doctrine needed this kind of climate to enhance cohesion, combat effectiveness and ensure decentralized success on the battlefield. The Army's leadership under General Meyer and General Wickham caused commanders to start caring for their soldiers and dependents with greater concern for their personal meaning, fulfillment, values, trust, and welfare.

As this study has attempted to prove, the relationships brought forth by command climate and the components making up a military unit are considerably more complex than previously imagined. The rise of command climate was in step with leadership philosophy and doctrine until 1987, but the demotion the climate concept received in the Army's leadership manuals that year caused considerable doubt to form over its future and application. Whether the leadership of the Army will recognize this and correct it is what is in question.

This study reaffirms what has been stated by numerous senior officers. The relationship between the commander, his soldiers, and command climate is not revocable. They are inseparable. Command climate is not "one more ball" the leader has to juggle. Commanders have their hands full training, maintaining, leading and caring about soldiers. This study concludes a healthy command climate results from and contributes to a meaningful training environment, a productive leadership climate, and an atmosphere of caring. Command climate is a condition that, when healthy, causes things to get done. This implies combat readiness is higher, missions get performed, commanders succeed, leaders supervise better, programs and policies get carried out, and soldiers feel good about themselves and all of the above. It is more than morale, cohesion, trust, confidence, and performance; it is a "synergistic" condition. This means it is the simultaneous action of all these separate indicators which has a greater total effect on the unit than the sum of their individual effects. Together, they can create either a positive or negative climate. For this reason it is essential it be understood and used appropriately. A positive command climate will develop the competent, bold, risk-taking leadership needed between

leaders and soldiers if it receives acceptance and encouragement.

This study has found there are four major issues impeding the progress of the climate concept. They are not considered an achilles heel; however, if efforts are not made to resolve the problems, the concept will eventually lose its usefulness and just fade away. Ironically, it could go the way of its original advocates now that they have retired. The four issues are:

1. Correcting the inconsistencies and role of command climate in current leadership doctrine.

TRADOC is in the best position to correct the "murky" element referred to too often as "organizational climate." The Army would be better served calling this concept "command climate," get it redefined, and refer to it consistently in all its publications. The definition used in this study is workable and well within the parameters of existing knowledge in the field and leadership doctrine.

The inconsistency between TRADOC leadership field manuals, circulars and reference books, and Department of the Army leadership pamphlets, specifically FM 22-103 and DA Pamphlet 600-80, has complicated acceptance and understanding of the doctrine in the field. This has prevented these publications from benefiting from those qualities associated with standardization. Additionally, references in new publications to existing leadership concepts in similar manuals and publications was found to need improvement. Department of the Army circulars and pamphlets are rarely mentioned in new field manuals.

Field Manual 22-103 is a good document with wide application and growing acceptance. However, there are command climate inconsistencies between ethical climate, environment, and command climate roles that should be corrected. The section "Building Teams" needs to be replaced with a section called "Creating A Positive Command Climate," since the characteristics and the components previously mentioned in the chapter interact with command

climate, and the conditions mentioned to be established in the organization and this chapter are ways of achieving a positive command climate. Results from the Army War College "Excellence In Brigades" study referred to in this study supports this conclusion and recommended change.

2. Overcoming command climate's awareness, application, and acceptance problems.

Unfortunately in recent years, command climate has been one of the most observed and least understood phenomena in the military. This is no reason to discard and disregard the valuable work that has been accomplished to understand its application for future use. Looking ahead, neither the soldier nor his team will survive the new challenges of the 1990s and the battlefield outside a climate of active and concerned leadership. To meet these needs the senior leadership of the Army has to overcome the leadership split associated with the climate concept.

It appears there has developed two schools of applied leadership among the senior leadership in the Army and the field commanders. First, there are those senior commanders who successfully commanded battalions and brigades in the 1980s without using decentralization, power-down and command climate techniques. This "read my lips" brand of leadership was and will continue to be basic, direct and productive. Second, there are those successful commanders that were exposed to the Fort Hood Leadership Study and are now the disciples of using innovative techniques with acceptance of command climate and a power-down philosophy.

The major problem with command climate is there are those members of the first group that want to relate it to the "touchy-feelie" approach that existed with organizational effectiveness. These critics of the climate concept think of it in terms of a "recipe mentality" and the "son" of management-related programs out of the past. This is not true and current command climate advocates are not attempting to have it replace the essence

and focus of leadership. If doctrinally accepted and developed and widely promoted and used in the field, a positive command climate concept will reenforce efforts to achieve the "cohesive units" desired for the future.

In recent years, as pointed out by the review of command philosophy letters and lessons learned in this study, there exists an awareness problem in the field about command climate and its use and acceptance. This degree of uncertainty by leaders about the role command climate should play in their units can be overcome with academic and field emphasis on existing tools, publications, and lessons learned from the developing training centers. This study suggests that approaches to the climate concept like those being used by MG James R. Taylor in the 5th Infantry Division, Mechanized, and LTG John W. Woodmansee in V Corps in Germany are excellent examples of commanders of the second group that are using innovative command climate techniques as one of the means to achieve their success.

3. Improving command climate through research, lessons learned, and performance reviews.

Climate "still" needs work. No matter what the 1988 Leadership Development Study will indicate, there are still military institutions, schools, and units in the field that will benefit from further research, timely lessons learned, and annual performance reviews. But make no mistake, it does not need to be done at the expense of priority training, modernization, and leadership development projects. In this regard the DCSPER of the Army and TRADOC need to share the responsibility of leadership priority and project assessment.

Further research into command climate is necessary to learn its full potential. The developmental model for command climate in this study is a new approach that needs to be reviewed and is made up of an existing framework of concepts found in FM 22-103. Research between the climate concept and its relationship with cohesion in

units has also been promising and needs to continue. Dr. Guy Siebold and Dennis Kelly from the Army Research Institute presented an excellent paper entitled "Cohesion as an Indicator of Command Climate" at the Third Annual Leadership Research Conference. As the Army continues its efforts toward improving combined and joint operations, the time is right to further investigate the addition of what Dr. Siebold calls adhesion into the climate and cohesion equation. He defined adhesion as "the ability of unlike units, units outside an immediate common chain of command, or allied (multi-service, multi-national) units to pull together to get the job done."1

In the application area, a study to determine the usage factor of the Unit Climate Profile (UCP) in the Army would be helpful. The study should determine which MACOMs are making the best use of the climate tool, and at the same time receive feedback from the company level as to the effectiveness of the UCPs. If the feedback is favorable, as several previous commanders have indicated at the Army War College, a program of increased exposure for the UCP in TRADOC's advance courses and schools would be beneficial to future company commanders.

The leadership lessons learned from the National Training Center appear to be the most productive example of command climate in an operational environment. With the opening of similar training and evaluation facilities in Germany and Fort Chaffee, Arkansas, command climate results and other leadership trends can be compared with NTC, European, light infantry division, and COHORT units.

To pull the research and lessons learned together, it is proposed that DCSPER take the lead in conducting a command climate performance review. Such a conference could be held at the same time as the CAL annual leadership research conference or six months after to follow up on key areas of interests and project coordination. Of particular interest to DCSPER should be the interest taken by commanders in the Unit Climate Profile and systemic leadership problems associated with command climate.

Battalion and brigade commanders need to be encouraged to make the UCP a part of their available support to company-level commanders and not part of the Command Inspection Program.

4. Determining the role of command climate in the leadership development and operational doctrine of the 1990s.

This study has determined that, like definitions of leadership, definitions of command climate appear limitless. They are all similar, but each slightly different. This is why both leadership and command climate will remain an art and not a science as behavioralists would like to make them. By synthesizing the foregoing, I conclude some may take command climate out of leadership doctrinally, but you can't take leadership away from command climate realistically. One should never forget that with command climate we are dealing with the feelings, perceptions, hearts and minds of our most productive resource: soldiers.

The future of command climate and the role it will contribute to combat effectiveness and better units is largely dependent on the leadership of the Army, TRADOC, and the commanders in the field. The vision for the Army of the 1990's is: "sound, caring leadership exhibited and rewarded at all levels; quality soldiers; cohesive units; Army family wellness, an Army fully manned (with) proper skills and grades; and operations in the joint environment."2 Effective use and acceptance of command climate techniques can help achieve these goals. However, it will take more than what TC 25-100 asks in "creating just a climate conducive to feedback." Not that this is not important, it is!

It will take more than trust and confidence, which is a cornerstone to a healthy command climate. Needed is a climate in units which:

- is conducive and supportive of realistic, meaningful training.
- encourages active and concerned leadership.
- develops unit cohesiveness through challenging programs.

- instills a sense of responsibility.
- cultivates feelings by the leaders for the attitudes, needs, desires, ambitions, and disappointments of their soldiers.

Without these initiatives, no real communication can exist. This is the essence of a positive command climate. If command climate becomes understood by the officer and NCO corps, and commanders in particular, the survivability of this dynamic concept will sustain and enrich units that make an effort to keep it healthy.

Recommendations: Some recommendations are in order for those who are kind enough to review this study. A few questions have been raised that will go unanswered until the leaders of the Army look into them. First, the four issues discussed earlier in this chapter are the key to the survival of the command climate concept. In order to "maintain the momentum" command climate has gained in our leadership development, it is recommended we avoid change for the sake of change and sustain command climate as an integral part of our future Army leadership doctrine. Second, it is recommended that research be continued and conducted as discussed in issue number three, and that a survey be developed to determine the value of the Unit Climate Profile. Third, it is recommended that the authors of FM 22-103 review this paper and integrate the findings in the manual. Fourth it is recommended that this paper be distributed to battalion and brigade command designates at the Pre-Command Course, and if appropriate, to company grade officers in advance courses. Finally, if it is determined this study has merit, recommend publication in its entirety or in part in a future Army-wide leadership publication. I have found this experience, like command, a great challenge which to be successful must be shared.

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APPENDIX 1
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