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19. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number) This paper describes a series of field visits with (COHORT) small units (squad to battalion), by a military analyst, during the period June 1984 through February 1988. The purpose of this "natural state" research was to develop recommendations for (1) increasing the degree of cohesion both within and between Army units; and (2) applying the effects of this increased cohesion to better teamwork on the battlefield. Some 60 group interviews were conducted with approximately 300 COHORT small unit leaders and were directed to the dynamics of teamwork (e.g., cooperation and competition, coordination, and communications) at times when the leaders felt their squads, platoons, or companies were operating "at their best" in field or garrison situations. From these small unit "anchor points of excellence" were developed observations, implications, opportunities, and applications that provide a basis for policy recommendations, as well as for actions that can be taken at all levels to systematically or directly enhance collective performance within and between Army units. <i>Keywords:</i>			
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Research Report 1482

With the Mountain Men: Co-operation and Competition Within the Context of Cohort

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Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences

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With the Mountain Men: Co-operation and Competition Within the Context of Cohort

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FOREWORD

The Leadership and Management Technical Area conducts research to enhance leadership, cohesion, and personnel practices in the Army. A major focus of this research is developing the technologies to help unit leaders build and maintain cohesion and commitment in their units. To this end, the Army has established the COHORT (cohesion, operational readiness and training) program, which is designed to stabilize personnel at the small unit level, thereby allowing unit leaders to build on the skills and abilities of their personnel in a progressive and sequential fashion.

This report examines the extent to which small unit leaders of U.S. Army light infantry units that are part of the COHORT program implement programs designed to enhance cooperation between their units.

The author is a former U.S. Army Colonel with extensive experience in the areas of leadership and training of small units. The report is based on a series of observations and unstructured interviews with leaders (officers and noncommissioned officers) and enlisted soldiers over a 1-year period. The results of these observations and insights should help military analysts, personnel planners, and training and doctrine developers who are interested in ways to enhance the performance effectiveness of U.S. Army units. The basis for this effort comes from requests from the Center for Army Leadership (CAL) Command and General Staff College to the U.S. Army Research Institute for research on identifying and improving the leadership and organizational skills of small unit leaders.

CAL has reviewed the report and supports its publication and distribution as a basis for generating further research and discussion on the role of leadership as a force multiplier.



EDGAR M. JOHNSON
Technical Director

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My sincere appreciation to Colonel Michael T. Plummer, Commander of the 10th Mountain Division's 2nd (Commando) Brigade, for his interest, openness, and trust during the whole course of this study; and to all those splendid small unit COHORT leaders of the 10th Mountain and 7th Infantry Divisions who taught me so much about how teams really work "on the inside."

**WITH THE MOUNTAIN MEN: CO-OPERATION AND COMPETITION
WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF COHORT**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Requirement:

The purpose of this research was to study small unit teamwork in operational Army COHORT (cohesion, operational readiness, and training) units, and from this study to then develop observations, implications, opportunities, and applications that would provide a basis for policy recommendations and actions (applicable at all levels from Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA) to unit commanders) that could be taken to (1) enhance the degree of cohesion within and among Army units; and (2) apply the effects of this increased cohesion to better performance on the battlefield.

Procedure:

The ultimate goal of any Army program or policy must be to enhance Army combat effectiveness, either directly or indirectly. The same applies to the study and research upon which those policies and programs are based. For that reason, the following definition of combat effectiveness governed this research from beginning to end.

**COMBAT EFFECTIVENESS IS THE BATTLEFIELD MANIFESTATION
OF THE INTERACTION OF TECHNOLOGY, INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIOR,
AND THE GROUP AND ORGANIZATIONAL DYNAMICS OF THE
COMBATANT FORCES.**

The study methodology was directed almost entirely toward the third variable--group and organizational dynamics--with small unit teamwork representing group dynamics and the COHORT program representing organizational dynamics. The task was to study not only teamwork in small units, but also to study the larger organizational context established to enhance and capitalize on the effects of teamwork, i.e., the COHORT program.

To gather information on teamwork per se, some 60 interviews were conducted, over a period of a year and a half, with approximately 300 COHORT small unit leaders (from fire-team leaders up to company commanders) from units of the 10th Mountain Division (Light) at Fort Benning, Georgia, and the 7th Infantry Division (Light) at Fort Ord, California. These interviews were directed to the dynamics of teamwork (e.g., communication, coordination, cooperation, and competition) at specific points in time when the leaders felt that their squads, platoons, or companies seemed to

be performing "at their very best" in some field or garrison situation, whether competitive or otherwise.

Information regarding the larger organizational context (the COHORT program) came primarily from three sources: (1) close association with Army COHORT planners during the time when the COHORT concept was first being developed and implemented; (2) continuing liaison with the scientists from the Army Research Institute and the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research who were studying COHORT from a scientific perspective; and (3) discussions over time with the "users" of the COHORT program, namely, the battalion, brigade, and division commanders of the small unit leaders participating in the interviews noted earlier.

In analyzing the data from the interviews and other sources noted above, the only analytical procedure used was careful, common-sense consideration of the group and organizational phenomena observed and noted at different times, in different units, under different commanders, at different stages in the COHORT life-cycle.

Findings:

The two principal findings of this research, broadly stated, are as follows:

1. Working together, as a team, is the "natural state" at small unit level. Given a problem, and left alone, the squad will work to get the problem solved "right." How right depends mainly on how clearly the criteria for the solution are stated when the problem is given. And how well the collective problem-solving process itself goes is more than anything else a function of communications within the squad, which is a function of how well the squad members (to include the leaders) "know each other," which is a function of personnel turbulence and turnover, which is a function, half and half, of the policies of local commanders and HQDA.

The natural potential for teamwork, while readily observable at squad level, seems to decrease at each successively higher level. One determinant of this decrease is the increasing complexity of communication requirements and communication content. Another is the appearance on the scene of interpersonal competition among the component leaders, which seems to increase at each higher level, and which, when not intentionally, carefully, and thoughtfully controlled, works counter to the natural tendency for cooperative effort, not only because of the power of "Set the Example" with respect to how the leader works with other leaders at the same level, but also because of the degradation of the leader-mediated interunit communications critical to the integrated performance of the next higher unit. When this adverse impact on communication within the interpersonal "command and control systems" of small units (and of larger units as well) is

considered across the Army as a whole, an estimated 20% loss of existing combat effectiveness potential is not improbable.

2. While "bonding," both vertical and horizontal, is a central concept of the COHORT program, the strength or degree of bonding cannot be judged as good or bad without consideration of the question of "bonded together for what purpose?" Mission accomplishment, commitment, and survival define the purpose of bonding on the battlefield, but, short of that environment, the purpose of bonding with others is to enable an individual to better meet his expectations.

Today's splendid young soldiers believe the business of "BE...ALL THAT YOU CAN BE." If that's true, then it follows that, bonded together, a unit of these fine soldiers would also expect to "be all that WE can be, as a unit"...and that's exactly right. When, in the enlistment term of the individual COHORT soldier or the life cycle of the COHORT unit, next week and next month clearly no longer offer the challenge and the opportunity to be even more of a soldier or more of a squad, then the Army has defaulted on the informal contract implied in "BE...ALL THAT YOU CAN BE."

My observations lead me to believe that this is the case with respect to the organizational dynamics of the COHORT program. It seems that, after a year or so, a part of the COHORT life cycle commonly called "The Sustainment Phase" cuts in, and, shortly thereafter, the fires die down and the internal and human problems of soldiers and units increase as next week and next month offer only variations on the same old, worn-out challenges. Not "burn-out," by breakdown in "vertical cohesion," attributable in part to the same sort of "vertical turbulence" that in Vietnam led to 6-month command tours, is a contributing factor. The principal problem, however, appears to be the number and particularly the scheduling of training and operational requirements--a factor the COHORT small unit leaders refer to as, "Old Pace."

It is a systemic problem. At the end of a year or so, COHORT soldiers and COHORT units have already "done it all" in terms of training and operational requirements or challenges, which, for the larger system, are by and large driven by an annual schedule. And yet, at least in the COHORT battalions, the unit life-cycle is 3 years. After "doing it all," out ahead lies the long Sustainment Phase. Colloquially, "Sustainment" means, "to prop up," or "to provide support to," or "to keep alive." None of these are congruent with being all that "you" or "we" can be. In systemic terms, it is difficult to integrate a unit that has a 3-year life cycle into an Army that has largely annual operational and training requirements, and at the same time maintain the continuing challenge and opportunity for the COHORT soldier and the COHORT unit to grow.

Utilization of Findings:

Throughout this study, there are numerous recommendations, stated or implied, for building teamwork directly at the small unit level, as well as for building it indirectly through the larger organizational context called COHORT. The following are representative of these suggestions for direct action and policy formulation:

1. At company level, extend formal and informal leadership development to include every individual soldier.

2. At battalion level, form a unique sort of team called, "The Battle Staff," consisting of the commander, executive officer, primary staff, and company commanders. During exercises, through after-action reviews and coaching, adjunctively train this collective to work as a team to process information flow using a training technology called "Battle Staff Integration," which has proven to be directly and positively related to combat effectiveness.

3. At brigade and division level, analyze the existing "climate of competition" and, focusing largely on the total measurement "system" used within the organization, develop policies and techniques designed to reduce or eliminate counterproductive impacts of interpersonal competition.

4. At major command level, recognize the uniqueness of the COHORT unit, and seek ways of adjusting the training and operational requirements so that they are congruent with the dynamics of the COHORT life cycle.

5. At HQDA level, view the COHORT program in a systemic fashion, and recognize that COHORT cannot be simply transplanted into the larger system, but that, additionally, the larger system must itself adapt and adjust to accommodate COHORT.

WITH THE MOUNTAIN MEN: CO-OPERATION AND COMPETITION WITHIN THE
CONTEXT OF COHORT

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WITH THE MOUNTAIN MEN: CO-OPERATION AND COMPETITION WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF COHORT

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to begin to lay out a series of COHORT-related actions and policy recommendations, applicable at all levels from unit commanders to HQDA, which have potential for: (1), increasing the degree of cohesion both within and between Army units of any size; and (2), applying the effects of this increased cohesion to better performance on the battlefield.

Data Sources

Most of the observations, implications, opportunities and applications (used herein to express actions and policy recommendations) come from a series of quarterly visits with the 2d (Commando) Brigade, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry), during the course of its activation and growth through the COHORT Life-Cycle. These visits began a year ago in May '86 as the unit was receiving its cadre, and continue to the present. Frequent contact with COHORT researchers at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research and the Army Research Institute are used as adjunctive sources, and visits to other COHORT units, beginning in 1984 and continuing to the present, serve to cross-validate and flesh-out many of the concepts and recommendations expressed herein. It is the Commando Brigade, however, that, as a living, growing thing, has provided for this research the baseline, the continuity, and the overall experimental control.

Methodology

The primary methodology used in the conduct of this research was a combination of the "participant observer" method and the method of "naturalistic observation" (Festinger & Katz, 1966.) Structured and unstructured interviews were used, notes taken, documents reviewed, related research studied, and then all this information was then run through 30 years of research, study, writing, and teaching in the field of social psychology--primarily in the areas of leadership, group dynamics, communications, and organizational behavior. In many interviews, a variant of Flanagan's "critical incident analysis" (Dunnette, 1966) was used, the variation lying mainly in collecting oral rather than written accounts of critical incidents, and in collecting only "exceptionally good" critical incidents, in much the same way that learning psychologists search for "exemplar performers" in the conduct of individual job and task analyses.

The choice of an informal/anecdotal/conversational presentation style is deliberate, in that the Statement of Work under which this research is conducted calls for a

product that will communicate at appropriate levels in the Army from HQDA down to unit commanders.

Analyst's Frame of Reference

My association with the COHORT concept began in the mid-70s, when General Meyer, then a Division Commander, first began putting the concept together in his head. I was present when, as Chief of Staff, he implemented the concept with a major study group effort at HQDA. I watched the difficulties in getting the concept communicated, understood, and implemented by the ARSTAFF. As implementation progressed, I had discussions and interviews with responsible members of the DCSPER and MILPERCEN staffs, commanders, research scientists, troops and leaders in the first COHORT companies, and program evaluators. I visited various COHORT units from time to time, and on one occasion, lived with the Army's first COHORT battalion for a week during the early stages of its life-cycle. I have read the excellent WRAIR study (Marlowe, 1987) pointing out significant problems found within COHORT units, and am aware of the "packet" and "packet-company-battalion" COHORT personnel replacement programs now being tried by DCSPER.

This chronology of experience with COHORT is not intended to establish my "expertise"; however, this long association and these many experiences with the COHORT concept have given rise, over time, to certain very strong beliefs (which I will term "assertions"), and they are presented here to identify possible biases underlying the implications, applications, and opportunities discussed throughout this report.

Assertions

1. The ultimate goal of the COHORT program is to enhance Army combat effectiveness. That "sense of purpose" runs throughout this paper, and all the work and thought upon which it is based. And, in this paper, here is how combat effectiveness is defined:

COMBAT EFFECTIVENESS IS THE BATTLEFIELD MANIFESTATION
OF THE INTERACTION OF:

TECHNOLOGY,

INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIOR,

AND THE GROUP AND ORGANIZATIONAL DYNAMICS OF
THE COMBATANT FORCES.

(Adapted from Guilmartin and Jacobowitz, 1984)

COHORT enhances combat effectiveness almost entirely through its impact on the third variable.

2. The combat effectiveness "value added" by COHORT lies in two factors: first, the speed and accuracy with which the COHORT unit can communicate internally, both formally and informally, cognitively and affectively, verbally and non-verbally; and second, the speed and accuracy with which individuals and component elements within the COHORT unit can predict each other's intent and actions. "Trust" is a major determinant of speed and accuracy in both cases.

3. The COHORT company is the largest true COHORT unit that can exist, the maximum size being a factor of the "Rule of 200", derived from marketing research establishing the average individual's "circle of friends", i.e., the number of people the average individual can get to "know" well. Within the COHORT battalion, other cohesive or "bonded" functional aggregates exist and are determined largely by the number and nature of task interdependencies they share and the frequency with which these interdependencies are exercised. The COHORT battalion staff would be an example. So would the chain of command and the NCO support channel. And the guys down in the Motor Pool. And "habitual attachments".

In peacetime, the COHORT battalion cannot be a truly "Cohorted" unit. It is simply too large. But it serves a vital function. What the COHORT battalion does is provide an organizational context in which the COHORT company can survive--an "organizational placenta", of a sort. The Army learned the need for the COHORT battalion when it tried first to field COHORT companies...and failed. This side of combat, the COHORT battalion serves primarily as a means to protect, sustain, and manage its COHORT companies.

On the battlefield, the COHORT battalion will become a true COHORT unit. Factors such as extreme stress; shared sense of purpose (survival); operational planning which uses the battalion as the basic combat unit; the criticality of task interdependencies on the battlefield; the absence of combat non-essential managerial and administrative requirements; and the required honesty of communications on the battlefield will create the demand, and provide the opportunity, for the speed and accuracy of internal communications noted in Assertion #2, above. The challenge will be for the COHORT battalion, particularly its staff, to communicate well enough to exploit the communications capabilities of its companies.

4. By Year 2000, when, according to the former DCSPER of the Army, 72% of the Army's divisional combat arms will be "Cohorted", the COHORT unit, faced with any operational requirement, familiar or unique, will display two clearly distinguishing characteristics:

1. The "naturalness" of its teamwork.
2. The excellence of its small unit leaders.

5. Between here and Year 2000, at policy-maker level, when major problems arise with respect to the COHORT program, they will be solved only by a systemic approach. Quite simply, given the major plus-up in combat effectiveness achievable through "group and organizational dynamics", the question is not "How can the COHORT concept be changed so it will fit into the larger system?", but rather, "What changes must be made in the larger system in order to accomodate the COHORT concept?" The short (10-year) evolutionary history of the COHORT concept shows that planning and trouble-shooting the COHORT program through the first approach inevitably results in failure, wasted resources, and start-overs.

6. Achieving the communication potential noted earlier in Assertion #2 will be difficult--not just in COHORT units, but in all Army units--because of our careless and unstudied overuse of...competition. Improperly engineered and thoughtlessly used, interpersonal and inter-unit competition impacts directly and negatively on the speed and accuracy of communications among the leaders of the components within a larger unit dependent, for mission accomplishment, almost entirely upon the degree to which leaders of its component parts can act in concert. There are four general role prescriptions which can be readily observed and which seem to characterize the vital relationships existing among component leaders who are peers, working as immediate subordinates for the same superior:

ACQUAINTANCE (1-2). Be civil, but not really "friendly". Know what's going on inside his unit...what he concentrates on, how he's doing on the boss's hot items, what's going good and not so good. Don't offer help or important information, except when directed. When you see trouble ahead for him, let him find out for himself. In general, don't pay a lot of attention to him, outwardly, but be courteous.

CO-WORKER (3-4). Be friendly, and recon inner workings of his unit as noted above. Give help/critical info without being directed by "higher"...but only what he asks for and no more...and only if he asks.

FRIEND (5-6). Be friendly, and recon as above, but more actively and openly. When you see he might need help, in terms of resources or information, offer it to him, without him asking...but only if you can spare it. Your own unit must come first.

BROTHER (7-8). Be friendly, and recon as above, but also help him with his recon of your unit and how it's doing on the "inside"...problems, goods, bads, etc. Help him with resources/information whenever you can. When you see him about to run into a REAL problem, or in the middle of one, then give him, without him asking, resources and/or

information that are critical to you, but vital (life or death) to him.

Competition, thoughtlessly used, constrains directly against the development of component leader relationships toward the upper end of the scale just described, and, in some cases, develops a set of four negative role prescriptions not discussed. Competition, thoughtlessly used, is at present costing the Army 20% of its existing--existing--combat effectiveness.

* * *

The Chemistry of COHORT

In June, 1984, after the plan for implementing COHORT by company had failed and been replaced by a battalion-based plan, I spent a week with the 7th Infantry Division at Ft. Ord. The Division was in the process of converting to Light Infantry, and COHORT manning, with divisional combat arms built of COHORT battalions. During the week, I met with approximately 35 small groups of leaders from all levels and from all sorts of units within the Division--combat, combat support, and combat service support. The subject of our discussions was COHORT and Light Infantry and the implications for leadership within that combined context. The "point" battalion, in terms of both COHORT and Light Infantry, had only recently received its COHORT troops and was just beginning its first field training. On my visits with its leaders, I learned that 50% of its fireteam leader positions had been filled with selected, but brand new, OSUT graduates. PFCs. An hour's discussion under an afternoon oak tree with a group of these "rookie" leaders--after they had been up all night on their first-ever "raid"--left me deeply impressed with their confidence, their eagerness, and their excitement at being selected, perhaps for the first time ever, as...a leader of men.

About 6 months later, at the CG's request, I returned to this "point" battalion to simply live with it, night and day for a week, to see if I could figure out, (as I told whoever asked), "How this sumbitchin' outfit works inside". This "participant observer" methodology was helped by two factors. Most importantly, the CSM was a close and personal friend from the Battle of Dak To, which we had shared in Vietnam, and he very quickly became my unofficial sponsor and "validator". Second, for the first day and a half, I simply just "hung around" and didn't ask any questions. By the end of the second day, somehow, they all knew who I was, what I was doing there, where I could be found at about any given time...and they started asking ME questions and telling me things. As the third day began, I could see and listen to the unit in its "natural state", and ask all the questions I wanted. As the third day ended, I could sense the COHORT

"trust" factor beginning to operate when some privates invited me to come see their "platoon museum". Never having seen one of those before, I went. It was on top of a row of wall lockers...simply a board with little things stuck on it...objects from the special places the platoon had been and the special times it had experienced. The story that went with the rattlesnake rattles was unbelievable.

Of all the things I watched and listened to during that week, one stands out beyond all others. It was, for me, a highly unusual phenomenon, so I checked it out at different times and different places and under different situations. No matter. It was always there. It was most obvious at formations, but occurred any time any leader was "passing out the poop" to the troops, whether it was orders or general information. I was watching how they were...listening.

What I was seeing in virtually every single trooper, six months out on the "real Army" side of OSUT, was the will, enthusiasm, and optimism of a brand-new soldier 2 days out of AIT or OSUT, combined, somehow, with the smoothed-down, well-worn, fitted-together battlefield skills of the combat-ready soldier. It was unusual because three decades of watching soldiers' days and reading scientists' research had shown quite conclusively that the curve representing the soldier's will, enthusiasm, and optimism about soldiering reaches its peak around the time of OSUT graduation, stays high for a month or so, then begins a general and ragged decline, never again reaching the high-point of a freshly-trained, brand-new soldier. The unusual phenomenon I was watching inside that battalion was a motivational curve that wasn't beginning the traditional decline or even leveling off, but instead, was continuing to rise, even six months after the Drill Sergeant broke his face when he smiled at the Graduation Ceremony.

The important thing, to me, was not so much that the curve was continuing to rise, but rather, WHY was it doing so? This question became central during the rest of my time "hanging around" with the point battalion. From pondering the WHY of that curve, and all the previous association with the COHORT concept, I can offer what I think is the essence of the chemistry of COHORT.

The term "bonding" is the one commonly used in describing the central and essential dynamic that occurs in the COHORT unit. It is a proper term; it has been operationally defined by the very capable ARI and WRAIR scientists studying COHORT units; and it exists therein and can be measured. It is a phenomenon of interpersonal relationships, describing a condition wherein individuals "stick together", particularly so under conditions of extreme stress, such as the battlefield. Bonding can occur horizontally, between peers, and vertically between levels of leadership--the combination of vertical and horizontal bonding resulting in a well stuck-together unit.

For me, "bonding" is not enough to adequately describe the true chemistry of COHORT. For me, "bonding" alone lacks a sense of aim and direction. A unit could be bonded, thoroughly and tightly, vertically and horizontally, but whether the bonding was good or bad could not be judged without answering the question: "Bonded all to hell, but aimed at what purpose?" The infamous "Company C" in Vietnam, the story of THE CAINE MUTINY from WWII, and MUTINY ON THE BOUNTY a 100 years before are cases of small units, bonded well, horizontally and vertically, but definitely not what you would generally call "good".

Bonding, in my view, is an intervening variable, a conduit through which an independent variable acts to cause change in the dependent variable. Bonding is, for certain, a "group and organizational dynamic", but, without the answer to the question of bonded for what purpose, its contribution to the combat effectiveness "formula" laid out in Assertion #1 could be good, or bad.

There is a single word that answers the question of "bonded for what purpose?" That word is "expectations". It is, to me, the central independent variable, which, mediated through "bonding", gets to the very essence of the chemistry of COHORT and answers the question, "How does this sumbitchin' outfit run, inside?"

Expectations drive, and aim, behavior. Individual behavior as well as group behavior. Expectations come in many forms. Laws are statements of expectations. So are rules, and regulations, and policies. So are orders. So is the "intent of the commander". So are job descriptions, and "taskers", and MBO programs, and the "Dash-1" of the OER system, and the SQTs and ARTEPS, and all manner of contracts formal and informal. And so are customs, and traditions, and culture, and history, and reputation. And so are the "spooky" expectations that the sociologists talk about--the ones that aren't written down or even put into words. The ones they call mores, folkways, and norms.

The power of expectations to drive and aim behavior is rather obvious when you're considering things like laws, and rules, and orders. But the spooky ones that are never written down are also powerful, and in some cases, even more so. Why do we wear neckties? Even in the summer? For that matter, why clothes when the temperature is in the 90's? The "simple" aborigines of the Central Amazon have probably the best functional solution for how to dress in hot weather...so how come you never see G-strings on the E-ring in mid-July, when Gramm and Rudman have been adjusting the air-conditioner switch?

These unwritten, unspoken, but commonly adhered-to expecta-

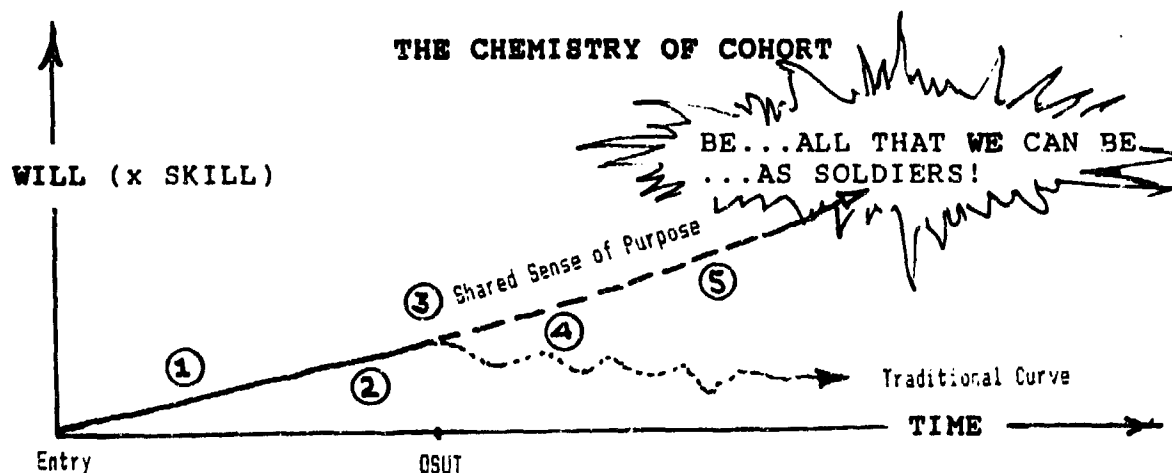
tions not only shape behavior, but also are powerful enough and sufficiently ubiquitous to enable us to predict, at times with nearly 100% accuracy, the behavior of individuals, and even groups of individuals, whom we have never even seen before. A simple and crude experiment will prove this point. The next time you visit the Mens' room at the Atlanta airport, you can predict, with close to 100% accuracy, that the group in there at the urinals, and all of its individuals, will, as they do their business, stare straight to the front, up or down in the vertical plane, but with no looking around to the right or left. Further, to test the strength of the power of this expectation on behavior, try, yourself, to look to the left or the right.

Now, on the walls, there are no signs that say, "Eyes Front". Fathers do not teach this lesson in the toilet training of their sons. Nor is there any book or etiquette manual that describes the proper protocol for this particular group and individual activity. And yet somehow, although unspoken, and not written down, and never even consciously thought of by most of us, this whole program of expectations has been clearly communicated to the appropriate half of the total population of this country, is commonly understood, and is powerful enough in directing and shaping behavior to enable us to predict individual and group behavior with nearly complete accuracy...except, perhaps, for the fat little barefooted guy with the funny haircut and the G-string. And with this crude but intentionally chosen example, the power of expectations--of all types--to shape and direct behavior should be clear. Little wonder that some good work by the Office of Naval Research some years back showed that as much as 85% of the on-the-job behavior of a sample of naval officers was determined by...the expectations of others.

From an understanding of the dynamics of expectations, however crudely illustrated, it is possible to put together a model to help understand how the chemistry of COHORT works within a unit. If there is a "formula" for how the COHORT unit works inside, it may well be that, with its exceptional ability to communicate internally, the unit is constantly moving all sorts of expectations in and around the "inside" of the unit, searching for contradiction and conflict among these expectations, then resolving those instances wherever possible, in a search for consistency, congruence, and balance among the many things that are expected of the unit. The greater the consistency and congruence among the many expectations, both formal and informal, internal and external, to which the individuals and groups must respond; then the greater the predictability of the intent and actions of its individuals and groups, the greater the return on horizontal and vertical investments of trust...and the more effectively and efficiently the unit can integrate its effort.

Back to that point battalion, six months beyond OSUT, full of soldiers whose motivation curve continued to climb steadily upward. It wasn't because of the excellence of the leadership of the battalion, although that was damn good. Nor was it because of the fact that this was the Army's first COHORT Light Infantry battalion, although being "first" was also a factor. I think I can best explain what had happened within that battalion in terms of...expectations.

"BE...ALL THAT YOU CAN BE", originally conceived of by Gen Thurman and Col Bob Phillips as a recruiting theme, is far more than that. It is, to me at least, one of the most powerful expectations underlying the behavior of today's soldiers and the units which are built of today's soldiers. Whether by accident or by design, and I suspect the latter, that theme appeals to the highest level of Maslow's classic motivational theory, "The Hierarchy of Needs". It offers the opportunity for...self-actualization. Further, it offers the opportunity for fulfillment of what numerous surveys of high school-age youngsters show to be one of their leading choices as they look beyond high school and consider what they want to do next. Somewhere up within the two or three most frequent responses is this one: "I want to do, and be, something worthwhile...". What was originally intended as a recruiting theme thus becomes a promise of opportunity, and, with that, a contractual obligation of the Army as one of the two parties to the "informal contract" entered into by the individual and the Army, when the youngster signs, right by the recruiter's little "x". The essence of what was happening to the motivational curve in that point battalion was determined primarily by the degree to which the Army was "walking what it was talking" with respect to all that "BE...ALL THAT YOU CAN BE" stuff. Underlying that were complex interactions between "bonding", stress, and the whole range of expectations previously discussed. A simple diagram may help to explain.



1. The training (OSUT) bonded and turned on the youngsters, as always has. But, three additional factors were operative: (1), greater equity in one's "reputation" because of the impending three years together; (2), greater and more careful effort by the training cadre (Drill Sergeants)--already expert because of selection criteria, narrow range of required skills, and repetitive practice of those skills--because they knew they would be evaluated, face-to-face, by their brother NCOs (from the COHORT battalion) on how well they had done their job; and, (3), probably, amongst the youngsters, some degree of regional culture (and derivative expectations) because of MILPERCEN assignment criteria applicable to COHORT trainees.

2. Prior to picking up troops, the cadre of the COHORT battalion started becoming a single thing: "the leadership" of the battalion...an "Us" and a "We". COHORT cadre selection criteria and the stress of tough, pre-pick-up training at "home post" and Ft. Benning (Light Leaders' Course) actually "bonded" the leadership of the battalion.

3. At link-up, the strong and positive expectations of the youngsters, created by OSUT Drill Sergeants who showed them that "BE...ALL THAT YOU CAN BE" was for real, created even more stress for the leadership of the battalion. They had to be at least as good as the OSUT Drill Sergeants, but in a far greater range of skills. Operative also was the same sort of "expectation pressure" that a father feels the first time he takes his son out to show him how to catch a fish. As this stress occurred, strong, informal norms developed within the COHORT Battalion's leadership to meet the stress, e.g., "Do the right things, and do them right!"

Additionally, the leadership began to learn, many for the first time, the dynamics and challenges of leading a long-term "Us" (the youngsters), rather than the usual aggregate of "eaches" provided by an individual replacement system. They began to learn that with bonded troopers, "You don't just turn one soldier on (or off)...you turn on (or off) whole bunches at a time, because they're all stuck together, and the whole bunch expects to see in us the same sort of "exemplar" NCOs they saw in the Drills."

Also operative within the leadership of the battalion at the time of link-up was the shared sense of responsibility, and of potential achievement, made possible by the "tabla rosa" state of the youngsters, and the certain knowledge, on the part of each leader, that whatever his youngsters turned out to be at the end of the 2-3 years of the life-cycle, it would be his doings, his responsibility, and a measure of his worth as a professional NCO. As one squad leader said, "Whatever they turn out to be, it will be me, and no one else, that did it..."

4. Fired-up, full-strength, long-term leaders, working together (as "the leadership"), began to validate the youngsters' expectations as the link-up was completed. Expectations of the two "bonded" groups coalesced and began to focus, albeit without words, on the same goal--"BE...ALL THAT YOU CAN BE"--and this became their shared sense of purpose.

5. Upon return to home post, a period of hard and stressful individual and basic small unit training, coupled together with a heavy infusion of history, ceremonies, traditions, and sensible, SOLDIERLY rituals (e.g., "Rites of Passage") fused together the two bonded groups (the youngsters and their leadership) into a single thing with a common sense of purpose. Finally, an extended three-week period in the field, with the squad on their own and the squad leader totally responsible, showed the squad three critical truths: where their "family" was; who was going to run it and how; and what their "natural state" was supposed to be.

This was the stage of development of that COHORT point battalion when I left it. Where it was, and what it was, and how it ran inside had been, in my view, shaped mainly by the power and chemistry of expectations, operating vertically and horizontally within units, but moreso within two larger collectives: the soldiers of the battalion and the leadership of the battalion. However, as good as the battalion was, and with all its potential, it was obvious to me that if the time ever came when tomorrow didn't offer a challenge to keep on moving upward toward "BE...ALL THAT YOU CAN BE", then shortly thereafter, the old motivation curve would reappear and slowly begin its ragged decline.

So much for the chemistry of, perhaps, the first third of the COHORT unit's life. For policy-makers in the personnel business, the principal implication, from my perspective, is not how to put one of these lash-ups together. That's being done well, at least when the "battalion" model drives the personnel function. The greater problem is what to do when, as a living thing, the COHORT unit dies. What the unit is is determined not by its numbers, but by its human chemistry. If we want the plus-up in combat effectiveness (as defined in Assertion #1) that the COHORT unit provides, then I don't believe we can "manage" its dying, and its rebirth, with numbers and formulas.

Present COHORT "Reconstitution" policy is based on numbers of troopers, and numbers of leaders, and numbers of months. If the true human chemistry of expectations, and bonding, and response to stress, is anywhere close to what I observed, and felt, in that point battalion, then it seems to me that the main approach to "Reconstitution" must be based on affect, with count in a secondary and supporting role. While I do not know what changes must be made in the larger system to

accommodate COHORT reconstitution (see Assertion #5), I strongly suggest that "Reconstitution" be a three or four month "downtime" period, and a planned "transition model", designed to replicate a human chemistry somewhat along the lines of that just described. In my view, the combat effectiveness pay-off of this chemistry will be greatest when the battalion model is used, least with the packet model, with the company model somewhere in between.

In terms of other implications and opportunities, research scientists may wish to pursue expectancy theory and its impact on, and relationship to, already-observed COHORT phenomena. Leaders in COHORT units and the larger units of which they are a part, assuming the chemistry outlined makes sense, might want to review principal policies, procedures, and SOPs; make a check by those that could have possible direct or second-order effects on the chemistry for creating a COHORT unit; and then make changes to provide an overall "climate" in which the chemistry can best occur.

Commando Baseline

Some time after the stay with that COHORT point battalion, I began the series of 2 or 3-day quarterly visits which have made the 10th Mountain Division's 2d (Commando) Brigade my baseline unit for studies of the COHORT concept and related teamwork phenomena. Most of the assertions stated at the outset of this paper were developed while working with the Commando Brigade. The continuing series of visits with the Commando Brigade were conducted as a normal adjunct to the Brigade's leadership development program, and additionally, provided an opportunity for passing on to the Brigade some of the "lessons learned" on earlier visits with other COHORT units. Furthermore, it also gave me a chance to see if earlier observations and tentative conclusions reached in COHORT Light Infantry units at Ft. Ord would be substantiated by the same kind of units going through the same "life-cycle" process in another Division, under another commander, at Ft. Benning. (Many of them were, and those that were most clearly "cross-validated" in this manner constitute the basis for the earlier noted "assertions".)

The first visit to the Commando Brigade was basically a reconnaissance mission. They were just getting started. I got to know some of the key leaders, and watched the brigade commander's philosophy starting to take hold. But the units were just getting born. The older battalion had just gotten its troopers from OSUT, and the younger one was still in the NCO preparation stage. The "chemistry" appeared to be tracking with that discussed earlier, but there weren't enough troopers around to get a handle on it, and individuals didn't know each other well. But I left knowing something damn well: the right definition of combat effectiveness to use when thinking about COHORT units...and this became Assertion #1.

On the third afternoon of the second visit, I was in the woods with the troops, at the tail-end of a three-week period of continuous field training that, essentially, belonged totally to the squad leader. In terms of the chemistry discussed earlier, this would be at just about the end of Step 5...where the fusing together is just about over, and the squad knows the three critical truths about where their "family" is; who's going to run it and how; and what its "natural state" is supposed to be. The chemistry was working the same way it had before. Each of the squads I was looking at was a solid, lashed-together "Us". Only about three or four months old, but already "grewed up", and eager to do, and to be..."something worthwhile".

At this point, specifically, there are obvious implications for personnel planners working the "Reconstitution" problem, and, as for those early COHORT trainers, they should know that whatever they did to design Light Fighter II was brilliant. It is, to me, the central event of all the "chemistry" following the OSUT link-up, and, to make the chemistry work even better, what the trainers need to do now is to figure out a "LF III"... for the platoon. What I saw at squad level that afternoon in the Commando Brigade was so significant it's worth a whole story...

THE ORCHESTRATORS

It was a platoon-sized operation. In the field, at Benning. It ran up a shallow draw about 100 meters wide with low, gentle rises on each side. The objective was up at the head of the draw. Little piece of high ground, maybe 50 feet across. The troopers were COHORT light infantry, from the 10th Mountain's "Commando" brigade. The units were, maybe, three months old.

The operation was complex. One squad had to move forward, have a wire team cut the enemy wire, then a mine clearing team clear and mark a lane through a minefield, while artillery and the other squads engaged two bunkers dug in on the objective. As that was completed, the other squads were to move through and bust the bunkers in sequence. The attack on each bunker required use of a demolition team. After the bunkers were destroyed, the squads were to then withdraw rapidly and by bounds, each covering the other as they fell back to the cleared lane in the minefield and to the gap in the wire, and, from there, covering each other, back to friendly lines.

I was watching this operation from a rise off to one flank, back in the trees. And I was watching the place where the communication, coordination, and co-operation challenge would probably be greatest--at the wire and the minefield.

The exercise began. At first, it was nothin' special. Just like a thousand other exercises, in a hundred different places, stretching back across thirty years of Infantry. Then, shortly after the firing began, I noticed something. One trooper, NOT A LEADER, was yelling at a buddy, correcting him for something he was doing wrong, or at least not right. A few minutes later, when I'd seen this same thing happen about three times, and without the troopers gettin' mad at each other, I went on alert, and moved quickly to where I could best see all the squads working together.

What I saw, as I watched the firefight proceed, was hustle, total involvement, and everybody playing the game to the hilt--trying their best to do the right things, and to do those the right way, and to keep an eye on each other, and to help each other not make mistakes.

As much as the hustle, I noticed...the timing, the "clockwork". Not just once or twice or with one squad, but all over the place. Between squads and within squads. Even with all the noise, and yelling, and smoke, and the artillery simulators, and the OPFOR's pneumatic machine guns. About the time one squad or fire team would be in mid-air, diving to take cover and give supporting fire, the other squad or fire team would be in mid-air, rising up off the ground and darting to that next rock or tree. All the way into the bunkers, and all the way back out again. Smooth. Oiled. Slick.

I didn't take notes, but I know what I saw, because I'd seen it before. What I saw, in that outfit, and among those troopers, and amongst those leaders, for that brief period of time, was the beginning of what the scientists call the "criteria of high performing systems"...scattered here and there like new green sprouts in an early springtime garden.

One criterion stood out in particular. It came from the combination of something I could see, and something I could hear. It could not have occurred by chance. It's not something that an individual can do. Damned if I know how you could measure it. It's not taught as a specific subject anywhere in the training system, even though it's essential to real combat effectiveness, anywhere above the individual level. The only way it can occur is when the individuals involved, at some level in their minds, key their individual actions to the actions of each other, and to the needs of the larger whole (in this case, the platoon) of which they are a part. Call it "orchestrating". Each individual and each unit works at "orchestrating" with all the others. Orchestrating.

Communicating, coordinating, co-operating. CO-operating...not as in "getting along with each other, but as in..."operating together".

I could see them "orchestrating" by watching how they moved. Smooth. Forward progress (of the whole platoon) maximized; and, at the same time, exposure (of the whole platoon) minimized. And I could hear them "orchestrating" by listening to their fire. Steady, no lulls. No jagged silence with no one firing. Constant small-arms pressure on the enemy. Movement keyed to firing. Within squads, and between squads. In what I saw, combined with what I heard, there was ...rhythm.

The scientists would describe it this way: "The unit will at times exhibit a 'rhythm' of operations that is felt by its soldiers and is obvious to observers. Phrases used by outsiders to describe this rhythm, like 'They've got it all together,' or 'It seems they can't do anything wrong,' will be common. Once the unit gets the rhythm going, operations are conducted smoothly, with far less effort than before the rhythm was achieved. Everything 'clicks.' The outfit 'orchestrates.' 'Miracles happen'."

Everyone of us knows this rhythm. Think of a high stakes football or basketball game you've played in or watched on television. Can you recall a particular time when one team seemed to "orchestrate", and, even though it was the underdog, kept scoring time and time again? Time and time again, beyond all the possibility of being simply "luck"? Orchestrating. Communicating, coordinating, co-operating.

Whatever this rhythm is, you can't just order it to happen. Long hours of practice together won't guarantee it; and it won't happen just because everyone wants it to. It only occurs when all the individuals are "orchestrating," each thinking of himself not as an individual, but as one of the critical parts of the fire team; and of his fire team not as the fire team, but as one of the critical parts of the squad; and of the squad not as the squad, but as one of the critical parts of the platoon. It's some sort of organizational magic, derived perhaps from "selfless service", not just on the part of individuals, but on the part of whole units as well. Its explanation and whatever derivative "how-to's" might turn it on, will, inevitably, lie somewhere in the domain of communication, but whatever this rhythm is, and however it occurs, it was there, in that platoon, that afternoon, in those Georgia hills.

They were back in the assembly area when I caught up with them. Sittin' on rocks, and stumps, and on the ground. Sweaty, dirty, nasty, red-in-the-face, and a few still breathing hard. But you could see and feel the pride...see it in the troopers, and in their leaders. They knew they had

done what it is that soldiers are supposed to be able to do. And they knew that for a time there, both as individuals and as units, they had been all they could be.

The after-action review began. It went about like any good critique of any good small unit operation. While different people were making their comments, I looked around at the troopers on the ground, and on the stumps, and on the rocks. Every one of 'em was totally "into" that critique, listening to every word. No dozin', no whispered comments on the side, no jokin' around--nothin' but watching and listening, intensely, to the account of what they had done...as soldiers. The four main orchestrators were standing in the rear of the group, watching their squads.

Then something happened that rang my bell, again. The squad leaders began describing the action, from their point of view. A lieutenant asked them what it was that probably accounted for the smoothness of the operation. And in the simple and straightforward words of one of the squad leaders, there was, as is so often the case, for me at least, a whole world of understanding, and the answers to a thousand complex questions and challenges. He said:

"WE WATCHED EACH OTHER. WE KNEW OUR TROOPERS KNEW WHAT TO DO, SO WE DIDN'T WORRY ABOUT OUR SQUADS. WE WATCHED EACH OTHER."

The squad leaders KNEW that the troopers knew what to do. They themselves had taught their troopers everything they had learned since graduation from OSUT, three or four months before. They knew what their squads could do because they had been given the direct and personal responsibility for training them. And they knew what the individuals could do because the soldiers they had in their squads were the same people that they had always had in their squads, ever since the squads were first born.

They KNEW the individuals...strengths, weaknesses, attitudes, education, family backgrounds, "character," reputation, status, and hopes and dreams for the future. They knew this because of the constancy of the membership of the squad. And, because of this constancy, they also knew the informal pairings and groupings within the squad, and how these worked, under what conditions, and for what purposes. From all this, each of the squad leaders could predict for his squad--as individuals, as informal groupings, and as a small unit.

(Maybe "intent of the subordinates" is just as important as "intent of the commander". Both make for greater predictability. Maybe that's how come, in small unit troop-leading procedure, good briefbacks are just as important as good ops orders. Maybe our battle doctrine should more

clearly recognize that effective communications is a two-way street, and be changed to read: "reciprocal understanding of commander-subordinate intent". Wouldn't hurt essential authority relationships one bit, would it?)

The orchestrators didn't worry about their squads because they could predict for them. They had confidence in their squad, trusted it, and knew they could depend on it. Predict for it. This being the case, they could then put damn near all of their energy, and attention, and thinking, and problem-solving ability not on the performance of their own squad, but on the performance of the platoon--the larger unit of which they were a part--with their common objective being to do all they could to make sure the platoon did the right things. (How common is that? Primary concern for the performance of the next higher unit, rather than the one the leader leads himself? How often have you heard it mentioned in after-action reviews and read it in lessons learned? Does it hold true also at successively higher echelons above platoon? If not, where does it begin to peter out, and why?)

As the critique continued, I could see two more reasons why the orchestrators didn't worry about their squads. Again, both things related to increasing predictability. First, while personal knowledge of the men in his squad was important, of equal importance was the squad leader having time to actually do all those things that he had been taught to do as "troop leading procedure". This time, out there in the tall pines and kudzu vines, squad leaders had that time. Time to give a good order, to explain and repeat critical points, to get briefbacks from the team leaders and troops. Time to run rehearsals on the ground, and to hunker down around simple drawings made in the dirt, and ask questions. And time for the orchestrators to talk with each other, and to clear up confusion, and to compromise, and to get all the agreements worked out about who does what when, and what happens after that.

(How often, down there where the true frontline leader lives, do we give him the time to do the things that we have told him that not just his mission, but his life, and his troopers' lives, will depend on? Time...time to do right the communicating and coordinating so essential to the co-operating that must follow when the action begins. Why do we always say how wrong it is that the higher echelons rob all the squad leader's preparation time...then turn around and knowingly rob a handful ourselves? Why do we say in our speeches and articles how important the squad leader's prep time is...then make the same old sad, cruel, thoughtless joke about a squad leader giving an ops order on the run as the troops are moving up to contact. Isn't this final little piece of time for leader-follower communicating and coordinating a precious and fundamental right of the frontline leader that every leader at every level above him

ought to fight not just to protect, but to insure? Their mission and their lives depend heavily on the "1/3-2/3 Rule". Do we teach that at Leavenworth? The War College? Do you know what it says?)

The second factor making for greater predictability was, in their words: "Sticking to the game plan...DOING the things we had been told to do, the things we had coordinated, and the things we had rehearsed with each other and with our squads." (This theme of "sticking with the game plan" was brought out time and time again during the critique and during the discussions that followed. It is critical to orchestrating, and to teaching people how to orchestrate. But, maybe we better not talk about that until we can get the true lock-in time on the average company training schedule up to about five days.)

Now all these how-to's for orchestrating are important, but I've saved for last what was "the golden screw" to the success of the whole operation. Go back to the critique...back to the first four words of that squad leader explaining why the operation went so well...back to where he said, "We watched each other...". He wasn't talking about "watching each other" in terms of worrying about whether another leader might somehow be doing "better" than he was. He was talking about how to orchestrate...on the battlefield. In those four words can be found the essence of communicating, coordinating, and co-operating. In much windier and less elegant terms than the squad leader used, those four words say this:

"We four squad leaders tried to stay in constant communications with each other. We used some hollerin' and hand-and-arm signals, but I'm not talking about that kind of 'staying in communication with each other.' We communicated by each of us knowing what it was each of the other three of us was trying to get done, and how he was trying to do it. We watched each other's 'situation,' to find out each other's progress and problems--partly so we could quickly give each other some help, and partly so each of us could key the effort of our own squad to what was happening in the other three squads, all in terms of, and aimed at, gettin' our platoon's mission accomplished like the platoon leader wanted.

"As one of the four squad leaders, I had to have a damn good idea of how each of the other squads was doing, and where they were, at any point in time. If I couldn't see or talk with the other squad leaders, I still, somehow, had to know how they were doing, and what they were probably going to do next. And I did. I did it by knowing, in detail, what the platoon leader meant by mission accomplishment. I did it by knowing clearly what it was each of the other squad leaders was trying to get done; and finally, I did it by

knowing each of the other squad leaders, and what kind of person he was, and how he operated, and what we had agreed to in our prep, and what he was likely to do in various situations.

"And that's what I mean by 'we watched each other.' Now, we didn't ignore the platoon leader, or delegate the running of our squads to the senior fire team leader, and then lay back into the "supervising" mode. We tried our damndest to stay in touch constantly, predicting, when we had to, if we couldn't actually see or hear how the other squad leaders were doing. If any one of us ran into a problem or found an opportunity, we sort of automatically estimated whether and how it was going to effect the other squad leaders. And for certain, lettin' them know our own situation at the moment was just as important as lettin' the platoon leader know. A lot of times, it was more important. We watched each other, so we could key on each other, so we could keep the platoon working together like a machine, like a damn clock, to get the platoon's mission DONE! We watched each other..."

Now think about this for a minute. Think. Think about a platoon wherein "orchestrating" among the squad leaders is normal and natural. Given that, couldn't the platoon leaders then also become "orchestrators"? And with that, then the company commanders? And then the battalion commanders? And how far up could all that go?

Part of all this "watchin' each other" may bother some folks, that is, the fact that the immediate subordinates' attention doesn't stay glued on the "boss" all the time. But, maybe the importance of the need for immediate subordinates to "orchestrate" with one another is part of the "institutional memory" of any Army...part of the "natural state" that already exists, not just among the vast majority of squad leaders, but among the vast majority of immediate subordinate leaders at any level, from squad to Joint Chiefs of Staff. Maybe we learned that from natural experience, and natural law, and natural selection, a million years ago on the plains of Africa. Sure, immediate subordinates watch you some of the time over the course of any operation, but maybe, particularly during the execution stage, they need to give a lot--maybe even most--of their attention to each other's status and each other's situation and each other's intent...in order to best integrate their collective effort.

Maybe immediate subordinates are pretty much self-regulating, and will automatically search for the rhythm, and then begin to "orchestrate" on their own. Maybe...if you give them the chance...and if from your orders, they can understand clearly what it is you want to see that will constitute accomplishment of the mission...and if among themselves, they share this understanding...and if you take

the time to insure that their intent is boresighted with yours.

Would you gamble on this sort of natural capacity of immediate subordinates for "orchestrating", not just in training, but in any aggregate effort? In combat? At each of the levels up above platoon? Would you be gambling...or would you be...trusting? Or training? How could you get it going? Sustain it? Keep it growing until it became part of the Army culture, part of the "natural way" the whole Army does its business? Would it routinely make the whole more than the sum of its parts?

So...those troopers, and those four orchestrators, and that platoon did some good work that afternoon. The whole operation was just like an Infantry School demonstration of "Platoon in the Attack", with students in the bleachers, watching a platoon that had drilled and rehearsed the operation together a hundred times. As a platoon operation, it would have scored high. ARTEP, NTC, on the battlefield.

Now, here's the hooker. That platoon wasn't a platoon. What it was, was two squads from one platoon and two squads from another. It looked like a platoon, smelled like a platoon, functioned like a platoon, but it wasn't. It was a composite. The troopers and the leaders all came from the same company, and probably all knew one another, and probably may have worked together before...but not as a platoon.

And there's something else I haven't told you, either. Another hooker. Not only were these orchestrators not from the same platoon, but they were also at a stage in their training where this was the first time, ever, that any of these squads had participated in a platoon-sized operation in the field. Now how the hell was it then, that they were able to "orchestrate", so thoroughly and so effectively, for that brief period of "battlefield time"?

More than anything else, it was because of those four "orchestrators"...the squad leaders. Or, from a platoon leader's perspective, the "immediate subordinates". Their boss had given them the time and responsibility to build and develop their own troopers and their own unit to the point where they could predict for their squad with accuracy. With this uncertainty removed, they could then focus on the performance of the larger whole of which their units were a part. They knew, instinctively, that the performance of the whole depended on how well the performance of the parts was put together. They knew the "boss" was ultimately responsible for this, but that they were the ones who did the actual work of "orchestrating"--of communicating, coordinating, and co-operating to get done what the boss wanted done. The boss, somewhere, somehow, MADE adequate time available for them to begin this orchestrating as they started preparing for the

operation. And finally, in the execution of the boss's order, as the critical dynamics of battlefield teamwork (described by the one word "tactics") unfolded, the orchestrators kept their eyes on the boss, and stuck to the plan, but more importantly...they watched each other.

Teamwork

The story of "The Orchestrators" defines, for me, what could be called the end of the first phase in the life-cycle of the COHORT unit..the end of how to put one together and fire up its engine. The story and its lessons have also figured centrally in the conclusions leading to Assertions #2 and #4, but, best of all, the story explained, good enough for me at least, just how it was that the "group and organizational dynamic" called COHORT will bring a major combat effectiveness plus-up to the battlefield. From that point on, while remaining alert for the significant larger events and processes in the unfolding of the COHORT life-cycle, my primary area of interest and inquiry has become: (1), the technology of small unit teamwork, and (2), the development of the small unit leadership needed to put that technology to work...on the battlefield. We set the stage for this with the third visit to the Commando Brigade.

The third visit was built around a normal Brigade activity--formal leadership development. It was a two-day workshop, the central theme of which was "teamwork". Approximately 25 people attended...chain of command and NCO support channel down to and including company commanders and first sergeants, and members of brigade and battalion primary staffs. A half-dozen heterogeneous work groups were formed and proceeded to address a variety of teamwork-related issues. At the end of the workshop, these groups "reported out" their findings to each other and to the brigade commander. Discussions followed from these reports, and where it seemed appropriate, task groups were formed to work various problems and to brief results at a follow-on leadership development workshop at a later date.

My principal contributions to the workshop were some short introductory remarks about teamwork, the mechanics of teamwork, and a discussion of the degree to which effective teamwork depended on the nature of the relationship existing among the leaders of the smaller teams within the larger team. I further explained that my principal role in the future would be to collect information within the brigade about teamwork, analyze that data and provide suggestions to them for a full-bore effort to make teamwork at small unit level the hallmark of the Commando Brigade. Finally, I

presented a straightforward layout of the kind of information needed for my future data collection efforts within the brigade. I explained first that the structure for the data collection would be a simple "level x environment" matrix, as illustrated below:

	GARRISON	FIELD
BN CDRS		
BN STAFF		
CO CMDRS		
FSGS		
PLT LDRS		
PLT SGTS		
SQD LDRS		
FIRE TEAM LDRS		

For the matrix cell entries, I told them that I needed "exceptional examples and incidents of good teamwork and good leadership development techniques" at any of those levels in either of those two environments. I asked them to please be alert for such incidents so that I could talk with the participants in detail on my next scheduled visit.

What this initial workshop was intended to do was to develop brigade expectations about teamwork; and to build, hopefully, a degree of "perceptual set" within the leadership of the brigade for teamwork-related phenomena; and finally, to begin to create a "climate" in which teamwork could grow. The brigade commander, whenever possible, "legitimated" the notion of teamwork by relating the teamwork discussions to the brigade's "Commando Creed" and his own stated philosophy of command. There were the discussions and reports from the groups. And there were my limited remarks. But, the MAJOR workshop contribution to teamwork within the brigade was made indirectly, and not with words. It was made by the two battalion commanders who, working together as a team, planned, coordinated, and conducted the whole two-day workshop. Their lesson by example, of two competing battalion commanders working together as a team, did not go unnoticed by the rest of the group.

The workshop ended with heterogeneous teams assigned team tasks to do "homework" on teamwork topics in preparation for

the next leadership development workshop which would be on the subject of teamwork.

* * *

(During the course of these discussions, two subjects came up, which, although not treated in depth, rang my bells. One dealt with "pace", referring to the schedule of events, activities, and requirements. The other dealt with competition among peers. Both have profound implications for the COHORT concept, for teamwork, and for small-unit leadership development--at policy-maker and command level--and will be discussed at length later in this research.

Further, with the brigade commander's full concurrence, a three-man team headed by Ft. Knox's Chief of Professional Development attended this workshop...the idea being to begin a Ft. Benning--Ft. Knox cooperative arrangement in pursuit of "the technology of teamwork", with the Commando Brigade looking at field applications (in its own units), and the Armor School looking at teamwork research (through its Advance Course students' research paper requirements). The purpose of this arrangement is, in general, to improve Army collective training, and in particular, to better realize the combat effectiveness potential inherent in the COHORT concept (see Assertion #4).

* * *

At the time of the fourth visit, the brigade was about a year and a half old. As I drove by the Motor Pool on my way to the Brigade Hq, I noticed the HUMMVs. I had been there when they had arrived a year before...brand-new, clean, neat. They didn't look that way now. They looked...well, "broke-in". Strong, powerful, combat-ready, but with the paint peeling off the wood rails back on the cargo compartment, and a dent or two on fenders and body, and snagged places on the canvas, and the ubiquitous old "green tape" holding things together here and there. The Brigade Hq looked the same way...a twenty foot-long rolled-up tent from a recent FTX laid out in the downstairs hall with a guy patchin' something on one end...in the Conference Room, not much polish on the tabletop, but a sandtable off to one side with marks of a recent battle that had raged there. Poopsheets on the bulletin board weren't neat. Every single one was current (I checked), but there were finger marks on 'em, and pencil notes, and they weren't lined up worth a damn, and there weren't near as many of them as there had been before. It was the same way with the charts as I walked by the staff offices. And the same way with the staff folks I spoke to, and the brigade commander, and all the troopers, and their rucksacks and equipment, and the whole outfit. Broke-in, shook-out, and ready. Everything just seemed to fit with everything else, like a tough pair of

worked-in, well-worn bluejeans. And, in listening to them, I noticed that the older officers and NCOs no longer used the term, "these kids".

The point of all this is that I think I arrived there at just about the time when the Commando brigade was approaching the end of the second phase of the COHORT life-cycle, at least in the older battalion. I do not know the official terms for the phases of the life-cycle, nor what criteria mark the end of each phase, but I'm sure someone has figured out names and criteria both. My operational definition of this second phase would be from the time of the "Orchestrators" at the end of Light Fighter II to the time of the peeling paint on the wood rails of the HUMMVs. During that time, the brigade had, in a sense, done "the whole nine yards"...squad, platoon, company, and battalion ARTEPS...FTXs and CPXs at all levels...field exercises in the mountains and in the jungles...major force-on-force operations against their COHORT cohorts out on the West Coast at Fort Ord...DRF deployments to Central America. In short, they had "done it all". Matured.

The workshop, this time scheduled for a single afternoon, went exceptionally well. The same 25 people attended. It was designed basically as a report-out on what the work teams had accomplished since the last workshop. One group had developed a mathematically-based technique for providing a general measure of teamwork within the brigade. It showed considerable progress since the last meeting. Another group had worked at teamwork between commanders and staff and some major hang-ups had been resolved. Again, the brigade commander related the reports and discussion to the brigade mission, and creed, and his philosophy of command. And again, the workshop was planned, organized, and conducted by the two battalion commanders, working as a team. One of them, the commander of the younger battalion, gave a particularly good presentation on the opportunities for further teamwork. What I noticed most was the freer, more open, more relaxed, less guarded, less garbaged-up-with-innuendos-and-little-games communications...horizontally and vertically.

For the next two days, I buried up with the troops and did about 2 dozen interviews, ranging in length from 15 minutes to an hour, and conducted in training rooms, in XO's offices, in the Mess Hall, in conference rooms, in the billets on bunks, and once in a stairwell. The COs had pointed me in the right general direction--folks who could tell me about exceptionally good incidents of teamwork and small unit leadership development--and the "interviewees" (troops) had a general, general idea of what I was looking for.

Data Collection

I was thoroughly familiar with the structured interview

technique, and, previously, had prepared and reproduced a 2-page, 12-item structured interview worksheet, and programmed my office computer to manipulate the worksheet data. At the end of the first interview, I threw the worksheet out. I knew that pre-testing of a structured interview is critical, but there hadn't been time ("pace" problems), and I tried to "wing" it. I failed. The structure didn't dig out what I needed to know, so, by the end of the third session, working hard, I had designed what is, as far as I know, a whole new kind of interview. It will perplex my scientific colleagues, but it worked like hell and must be explained to understand the basis of the conclusions and recommendations that will follow later.

For want of a better term, I have named the methodology the "Critical Incidents of Excellence" technique. Conceptually, about half of it comes from a combination of Flanagan's "critical incident" technique, S.L.A. Marshall's combat after-action interview technique, and the REALTRAIN after-action review methodology developed by ARI and termed by Gen Gorman, "One of the best things ARI has ever turned out." The other half of the methodology comes from the "exemplar" technique of the training psychologists and my own view that, while people do learn from the mistakes of others, they learn more, and learn better from the significant achievements of others, which is precisely what the data base of this paper is built upon.

In putting this methodology to work in the rest of the interviews, I retained only the 2 x 8 "levels x environment" matrix previously discussed and did so simply to provide a means of organizing the interview protocols for subsequent retrieval and analysis. The normal group interviewed consisted of 3-4 people representing the leadership structure of a small unit...a squad ldr and two fire team ldrs...a platoon ldr, plt sgt, and a squad leader...a company commander and three platoon leaders...a trooper, his squad leader, and their platoon leader. In short, a small-unit "leadergroup".

I would first explain what I was looking for ("exceptional incidents of...etc."), and then ask them to think back into the history of their unit (e.g., squad) to a time, in the field or in garrison, when everything just seemed to click...when things continued to work out just right, time and time again...when they had done something that they were all proud of, and that they still talked about...and that was one of the highlights of their history. At first, I'd give them five minutes to decide, then I'd step out. After a couple times, what I found out was that they didn't need five minutes. Among the 100s of things they had done together, they already knew their times of excellence, and further, they shared this knowledge. I'd lay the pre-amble on them, then they'd look around at each other a few seconds with no one talking, then

a couple of guys would name a couple of times, and the rest would nod affirmatively.

* * *

(These "times" were their anchor points of excellence...i.e., commonly-experienced, much-talked-about times which serve as built-in, instantly available references for future squad performance. Only a COHORT unit is likely to have this kind of commonly-experienced operational history. It is far more than just a history. It is a major source of power. Its more significant combat effectiveness implications lie not so much in the variable of "unit pride" (although that platoon noted earlier did have a "platoon museum"), but rather in the speed, accuracy, and detail with which the "what to do nows?" not covered by orders and SOPs can be communicated almost instantly within the unit.

Policy makers working the Reconstitution issue or arguing the cost of COHORT would do well to consider the combat power inherent in the shared composite "knowledge base", represented by ALL the "critical incidents of excellence" in a COHORT unit that has been together for, say, three years. Research scientists, starting with the concepts and research of "organizational memory", could do worthwhile work exploring the combat effectiveness potential lying in short-term, operational "small unit memory". And commanders considering internal reassignments should maybe put "unit memory loss" in the "disadvantages" column.

If this seems to be a somewhat trivial issue, try something. Go find a COHORT squad. Sit 'em down and get 'em talking a while, then ask them about the "informal duty positions" in the squad. You will find that they will have a "paperwork man" who knows the forms and procedures; a "family man" who takes care of things on the dependent side; a "front man" that they send when some senior officer wants to "talk to the soldiers"; a "mechanic" who keeps the cars and motorcycles working, a "shitgetter" (their term) who can "find" things they need; and, at least in three of the four squads I've asked, a man that they point to and say, "He's our storyteller." These informal duty positions will form in any unit, and the less the personnel stability within the unit, the less the expertise these duty positions will have. There are no number codes in the computer programs to represent any of these, nor spaces on the 201 forms. You be the judge of how trivial they are in terms of the human chemistry of a unit, especially the role of the "story teller".)

Back to the methodology. When they had decided on the incident, event, or the "our own system" they wanted to talk about, I would authorize them an official 10% lying right and then simply ask them to tell me the story. A couple of questions as they got started would suffice to get them from

general to specific with respect to names and details, and a couple of requests for verification/corroboration from those not doing the talking would enforce the lying limit, and then, right at that point, they would "get into it" (their term). It was their story, they'd talked about it a hundred times, they were proud of it, and they wanted to tell it. A couple of times, I tried to "steer" them specifically toward certain aspects of teamwork and leader development, but that sort of structuring didn't work. I found it far better to use questions mainly to keep up the momentum and detail of the story, and then listen for teamwork/leader development in what they were saying. Finally, I tried to end each interview with a discussion of their ideas as to what things had CAUSED their exceptionally good performance. So much for the "Critical Incidents of Excellence" technique. Now let me outline briefly the data obtained.

Interview Abstracts

Each group had the opportunity to select their "critical incident of excellence" from either the field or garrison environment. Over 90% chose "Field". This could mean that that's their idea of where true excellence is supposed to happen. Or, it could mean that the "organizational climate" within the brigade validates the often-heard, "Training is our Number One priority", that always rattles down through the chain of command. Or...it could mean also that their experience for "time in Garrison" is somewhat limited.

There were, in all, far more incidents identified than there were interviews. Some of the interviews contained stories within stories, and even stories within those. A number of individuals came to me on their own with stories they wanted to talk about. There were several stories that other people told me about that I ran down and checked out. There were a couple of cases where, out of time, I gave some leader a requirement to "write me a 1-2 page war-story about it" as a homework assignment. Then, there were a considerable number of times when I held not interviews, but discussions, with "targets of opportunity" I came upon.

In all of this, I managed to cover all 16 cells of the "levels x environment" matrix except for the battalion staff level. The heaviest concentration was at the squad leader and fire team level, which is just fine, since that's where about 80 % of the brigade's leadership lives. (I know it's 80% for the Army as a whole, and it's probably more than that for a line brigade).

Geographically, the incidents covered E-W from Ft. Benning to Ft. Ord; and N-S from Alaska to Panama. ARTEPs were the most frequent context within which the incidents of excellence occurred, although several covered post-support and rifle

range missions and one dealt with Central American international relations. In time-span, the incidents reached back almost a year, with three groups, even though they had by this time "done it all", identifying their critical incident of excellence as having occurred all the way back in Light Fighter II.

I will not recount all of these several hundred incidents, nor will I describe any one in detail. Nor will I attempt to give individual credit to the fine people who gave me their precious time. That time is sincerely appreciated, but the credit, in every case, more properly belongs not to the individuals, but to the larger unit of which they are a part. From two days of hard listening within the living memory banks of the Commando Brigade, here is the essence of only a small fraction of their "stories"...their "anchor points of excellence". In these stories lie the "secrets" of what makes the COHORT concept the combat multiplier that it is. Listen to what these youngsters say. Let them teach you. For leaders who lead at these levels, there are countless lessons of teamwork and how to build it and use it. For the commanders of these leaders, there are clear implications of how to design an "organizational climate" in which teamwork can thrive. And for those policy-makers at the top, this "COHORT Anthology" suggests the adaptations that "the larger system" must make in order for the COHORT concept to achieve its purpose.

BROTHERS AT THE TOP

A "brother" relationship among commanders, discussed previously as perhaps the most vital factor in teamwork, had occurred at our workshop, only two days before. Very few people knew about it, and probably still don't. The commander of the younger battalion had been at Ft. Drum the day before the workshop, working on something, and was scheduled to leave for somewhere within a day or so after he returned to Ft. Benning. Old "Pace" had him by the short hair. He had a presentation to give at the workshop that he and the other battalion commander were responsible for. He called his partner from Ft. Drum, and the older battalion's commander said, "Look, don't worry about it. I'll get your part ready for you and you don't have to do a thing." And he did, even to the point of preparing the outline briefing for the pitch and the charts to go with it. It was the pitch noted earlier as "particularly outstanding", and I'm certain that who got the "credit" made no difference to either commander.

BROTHERS AT THE BOTTOM

The "brother" relationship--and a whole lot more--was there in those memory banks in the words of a young PFC whom I asked to write a 1-2 page story about a time in his outfit when "everything clicked". His story was about a 12-man patrol during a Battalion ARTEP, and a long, cross-country "hump" on a cold, wet night. His pencilled account of that critical incident of excellence ended like this: "We were unbelievably tired and fatigued from the hump, not counting incredibly cold and wet. The only thing that kept us together during the whole thing was COHORT. Every one of us was out of the same platoon in Basic. We trained together, and we were brothers of one mind and body. We could trust each other with our lives. We knew each other's weaknesses and strengths and we were correctly positioned to compliment each other in battle. We were a team." A PFC wrote that, and the cornpone elegance suggests that he was some squad's "story-teller", but I looked in his eyes when he gave me the paper and he meant every word.

OFFICER BROTHERS

The platoon leaders and I were sitting around a table talking about teamwork. There wasn't any tension, and they were obviously a pretty tight-knit group, so I flat-out asked 'em: "How do y'all feel about each other...how do you get along, I mean bein' competitors and all?" A big, tall, Ranger-patched lieutenant looked around at the others for a minute and said, "Well, we been through a lot together as new lieutenants, and now we'll all PCS within the next few months. It's not going to be easy..." And he turned his head away, and his eyes were wet.

NCO BROTHERS

It was just me and a squad leader, one-on-one. We were talking about the difference between squad leaders who are acquaintances, co-workers, friends, and brothers. He said he'd worked with all those kinds in the places he'd been, and so I asked him to describe the relationship that existed between him and another squad leader he'd consider to be a "brother:

"We had spent a lot of time together, including our free time. We could predict for each other (his words)...

"I policed his troops as well as my own...

"I always tried to get assigned to work with him on operations...

"Sometimes, I was more concerned with his problems than my own...

"I trusted him never to use me, or take advantage of me...

"Our fire team leaders knew we were tight, and this brought us all together...

BATTLE BROTHERS

The brother relationship among leaders, which, strangely, is the natural norm for the battlefield but not for peacetime, was clearly evident in an incident of excellence that described a company-sized MOUT operation. The lead platoon leader in the attack had just lost two machine-gun teams and the platoon was pinned down. Without being asked or told, the next platoon leader, at the risk of a company commander-sized ass-chewing, just flat up and gave the lead platoon leader two of his gun teams, knowing that he would soon need them badly himself. Why did he do this?

"Above anything else, we're oriented toward making the mission GO...

"Among all us platoon leaders, we have confidence in each other, concern for each other, and, there ain't no "glory" platoon...

A "WAD" IS A MILITARY UNIT SOMETHING LIKE A SQUAD, BUT BIGGER

There was the night in August '86 when, sometime around 2300 hours, a small mixed bag of commo folks, a recon patrol, a rifle squad, and three guys from Company headquarters, all of a sudden surprised by an OPFOR company that was moving up into position for a night attack, "automatically" coalesced, got their act together, and, as a "wad", maneuvered, attacked, drove back, and defeated the OPFOR company. Other than blind-ass luck, what factors accounted for the teamwork (communication, coordination, co-operation) necessary to pull off this achievement?

"Up in our area, everybody had talked a lot about the operations, what with the recon patrol going out and all, and everybody knew what everybody else was doing...

"Our company's pretty good at 'starting off with whatever's around'...

"Regardless of what happens, we squad leaders always try to know the overall game plan, at least up to company level. Lot of times, we make decisions based on that alone...just the overall game plan...

EVERY MISSION'S A COMPANY MISSION

There was the time when the company commander was gone to Alaska. XO in charge, company with a mission to run a rifle range, which he'd never done before. Called in the other lieutenants, and asked them for their ideas. One, who had never done it before either, volunteered to take the job, and run it with his platoon. He started the planning, and the others war-gamed the plans for possible problems. Following that, each platoon leader, already responsible for other CTT missions, gave NCOs to help run the range, and privates for the detail work. Why did they do all this without having to be told, especially when they had their own work to worry about?

"We saw it as a COMPANY mission, Sir. No sweat...

THE FIRST SHIRT TEAM

There was the time of the First Sergeants and the Post-Support mission. Post Headquarters had provided a whole BOOK full of requirements, details, times, schedules, charts, report forms, missions, and special instructions. When the mission was handed off to the brigade from an external unit, the coordination and help was limited to someone coming by and dropping off the book at Battalion Headquarters. First Sergeants took the requirements as a Battalion mission. All had limited experience as First Sergeants and none with this particular detail (FSGs get put on detail, too...). They set up a system of DAILY coordination meetings among themselves. Worked out the details of primary, back-up and alternate roles and responsibilities. As hand-off from one company to

the next occurred, outgoing FSG would come to the next unit going "on line" and give a complete briefing, with charts and a Q&A session, to the FSG and his NCOs. What caused this kind of teamwork among FSGs to happen?

"I guess it's magic. In 15 years, I never saw teamwork 'til here...

"We see teamwork not just as a "good thing". To us, it's a need...

"It works not just between the FSGs in this battalion, but between this battalion and the other battalion. One of their companies was assigned to deploy with us to Panama. When the prep stage for all that started, we got with their FSG and gave him the same kind of "total briefing treatment" we'd used on Post-Support...

"Funny...but when Brigade handed off the Post-support detail to the outfit that was scheduled to get it next, I went down there, charts and all, to brief their First Sergeant. When I got through, he looked at me, with a funny look on his face, and said, 'How come you tellin' me all this?'...

THE NIGHT OF THE TWO CLICK CPR

There was the time of true emergency one night on a field exercise, when a young trooper could have died. Cold. Wet. Hypothermia time. One man went down and out, and the platoon medic, who happened to be with the squad, diagnosed hypothermia. They built a litter, then med-evacked the trooper 2 kilometers cross-country, working out their own system of relays for carrying the litter and working the radio. While they carried the trooper, the medic was walking alongside, giving CPR, for the whole two clicks. All on a cold, wet night, cross-country. The degree of just plain, physical teamwork required, particularly with a trooper's life at stake, is difficult to picture. Why were they able to pull it off successfully?

"Because we're dedicated to each other, Sir...

THE LIEUTENANT ALWAYS GETS HIS WAY

There was the time at Hunter-Liggett and the case of

exceptional teamwork between line and support units. In the field, Med Plt Sgt working hard to keep his evac station and evac procedures functioning. One line company XO, in particular, "got with the program". Paid close and careful attention to all those little things (maintenance, fuel, etc.) that too often put ambulances and evac NCO out of action for too-long periods of time. XO, already up to his hips with a million things to do for his own company, spent EXTRA time working out better procedures with Med Plt Sgt. Later, spent more EXTRA time giving classes during downtime at Hunter-Liggett to teach the troops in the company how to do their share to help for better med-evac.

The end result was the best-working system the Med Plt Sgt had seen in 15 years, with evac time cut down by as much as 50%. Upon return to Ft. Benning, the Sgt researched the techniques they had developed and then AUTOVONed another 1/2 dozen he knew and discussed it with them. He then spelled it all out in a paper he was sending to Health Services Command. (I saw the paper. In addition to everything else, he had managed to work in something about the "family doctor" concept for COHORT units.) What made the lieutenant go to all the trouble, and give up all that EXTRA time?

"Well, Sir...the lieutenant always wanted to get his own way...and his own way was taking care of the troops...

THE ALL-PFC SQUAD

It happened in Panama...JOTC...and the Jungle Olympics for 10-man squads. The PFCs in the recon platoon wanted to enter an "All-PFC" squad, and their NCOs figured out a way to make that happen. Squad leader was selected by short straw from among the three who had had some time as acting fire team leader. The "All-PFC" team, led by a straw boss, finished 5th out of 20, with a new record in the poncho-raft event. What factors enabled the "rookies" to do so well all by themselves and without their NCOs?

"Co-operation was our secret, and it was the NCOs that had taught us how to co-operate...

"They often let us run the show, field and garrison, both. They rotate leadership among us from time to time. If they hadn't done this, we wouldn't have done what we did at JOTC...

"They tell us what they want done, and that's that. They know it's going to get done. They check on us, but only once in a while, and we're always straight...

"Other guys are always sayin', 'Where's your NCOs?'..."

"Before we go on any kind of operation, we all know EXACTLY what we're going to do, and what every other man is going to do..."

THE INSIDE OUTSIDER

There was the time of Operation SLEDGEHAMMER I at Ft. Benning when an "outsider" (a Dragon gunner) to a rifle platoon got an inside view of the whole platoon and how it worked, because he was moved all around according to the threat. What did teamwork within and among the squads look like to the Dragon gunner?

"In all the squads I was with, whenever the word would come down, the whole squad would have the word in fifteen minutes..."

"They'd always huddle or check out with each other every time the situation changed..."

"The squads automatically shared rations, ammo, personnel..."

"When they were putting in a roadblock one time, I saw one squad dig positions for the other squad when the other squad was putting in the concertina. Lot of times, they'd even carry double rucks for each other..."

"Their pay-off was in seeing their plan and the mission WORK..."

"They trusted the squad leader not to waste their time and effort, and he trusted them to get done what he wanted done..."

THE FINAL ASSAULT

There was the time of the private, and his buddy (another private), who were the only survivors during an attack phase of their squad ARTEP. They were moving up to attack a bunker when, halfway through a wire obstacle, they came under heavy fire. All other squad members were casualties, except for the two privates. No leaders or assistant leaders of any kind left. They immediately made a quick recon of the bunker

objective, maneuvered a little to the left, and assaulted, just as the OPFOR withdrew. Why did they do that with no one at all in charge?

"One of the main things our squad leader was always telling us was to be ready for contingencies (his word) at any time. We were...

"He trusted us to do what he had trained us to do, even when he wasn't around...

THE WARRIOR

Back in the time of The War Between the Benning Brigades, a squad leader, after spotting a 197th recon patrol about 200 meters outside the perimeter, took his squad and low-crawled out to within assault range, personally led his squad as they assaulted the patrol, overran it completely, then regrouped and returned quietly back to their position. How does a small unit leader develop this sort of built-in, "controlled violence" spirit, in a rifle squad?

"First, I make them think their unit is the best...

"Then, I make 'em the best...

"Then, I give 'em someone to fight...

"Then, they can SEE who's the best...

JOHN WAYNE IN THE JUNGLE

There was the time in Panama in December '86. The squad, on a jungle exercise, was maneuvering toward the objective when the team leader was knocked out by a booby trap. Without being told, one of the privates, who had never been even an assistant fire team leader before, immediately jumped up, then just took over the fire team, then coordinated its maneuver to coincide with that of the B team, and "John Wayned" on into the objective. I asked the squad leader how it was that this "non-leader" private could do this almost by instinct?

"He knew the elements of the plan and he knew how to coordinate...

"As a routine part of the prep stage before the operation, I always question the squad on who does what in case I get knocked out...

"Finally, I stress the hell out of teamwork in training my fire team leaders...

"And you know, he'd have taken over that whole squad and led their assault if I'd've let him...

COMMUNICATE, COORDINATE, AND CO-OPERATE

There was the time in Light Fighter II when two team leaders learned how good "all this teamwork stuff" really works. Squad had been sent to destroy comms site. Site not at coordinates given..separated into fire teams to search. B team made contact and automatically went into support, while A maneuvered. Squad leader already knew what they would do and how they would operate, so he concentrated on shifting and lifting fires. Squad overran objective. Too big to hold with a perimeter, so they continued on across the objective, set up a reverse slope defense on the other side, then nailed the OPFOR counterattack when it came. Why did coordination work so well?

"Squad leader had trained us so much on initial contact that we reacted by pure reflex when it came...

"Our hand and arm signals mean a hell of a lot more than just those few words in the book. When I give one, the B team leader knows what I'm going to do and I know what he's going to do. One signal, and we both know what to expect...

"There was plenty of time for the platoon leader to give us all the intell for the mission...

OJLT

There was the time when the squad leader used the Jungle Olympics course to build leaders. Ten-man squad and nine different stations, and everybody excited and keyed up to go. Squad leader put a PFC fire team leader in charge for the whole prep phase, then just left until the squad was ready to move out. After that, the fire team leader ran the squad, with the squad leader checking on him, on the safety, and on the details of the tasks at each station. Irrespective of how

they finished, the squad remembers this time as an incident of excellence. It was obvious that the squad leader was using the Jungle Olympics for on-the-job-leadership training. What sort of coaching did he provide as he bird-dogged his "rookies" through the course?

"He kept on us about the first team that finished moving out quickly to help the other. When we were helping, he expected us to work harder, and faster, than when we were doing our own task...

"He told us clearly what he expected...

"He made a lot of use of initiative just as soon as anyone showed it...

"He knew how to get on each man's level. With the fire team leaders, he'd "talk things over", and compromise. With the privates, he was THE BOSS...

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

There was the time when a company from the younger battalion had been attached to the older battalion for deployment to Panama. Then, when they arrived, a platoon from the Panamanian Army had been attached to the attached company. The Panamanian platoon showed up missing much equipment, particularly radios needed for safety. This had happened numerous times before. Equipment that had been loaned had disappeared, and in time the issue had reached US Embassy attention. The Panamanian platoon was about to be sent back home. All the company commanders got together and figured out a "better way" to make sure the Panamanian platoon had the equipment it needed. The companies "chipped in" radios and US NCOs, then, the NCOs signed for the radios, stayed close by them all the time, and maintained the CEOIs...by serving as "translators" for each of the Panamanian squads and their platoon leader. End result was a trouble-free training exchange, total accountability for equipment and security of CEOIs, and a boost in US-Panamanian relations. Why did the attached company commander feel this worked out so well?

"Mutual goodwill and helpfulness among the company commanders, who considered the attached company commander's problem to also be THEIR problem...

"There was a shared attitude and understanding that it was in the best interests of everyone to be "team players" when working with the Panamanians...

"An innovative approach to figuring out how to make the Panamanian platoon "part of the team", without losing radios...

THE INVISIBLE BADGE

There was the story of "The Invisible Badge" and the "new man" who had joined the unit only two three months before. At the interview: platoon leader, squad leader, fire team leader, and a new trooper. A little way into the interview, the squad leader noted that the new trooper had only been with the platoon for a couple of months. He was a sharp, neat, intelligent young soldier, and I asked him if he felt he was part of the unit yet. "Not yet," he said, "but I'm trying hard. I have to bust my ass just to learn all the stuff they already know." The leaders grinned. I said to the youngster, "How do you know you're not really part of the outfit yet?" He said, "I just know...", and he grinned. Then I asked the leaders how they would know when he was fully qualified for "The Invisible Badge". "We'll just know", they said, "but he ain't ready yet. Close, but not yet." And they all grinned.

(In this final case--the last of the Commando Brigade incidents--the platoon leader was a young lieutenant who, earlier, along with a brother platoon leader and their NCOs, had helped me understand the dynamics of "The Orchestrators", who were, in actuality, four squad leaders from among their platoons. Over the course of a year, he and I talked many times and at length about this "Invisible Badge" phenomena, and finally I think we got a good handle on it... which I'll explain in a minute.

The "Invisible Badge" phenomena was of particular significance to me because this was the third time I'd run into it in visits with COHORT units. First time was with another "FNG" (their term, which I think means, "Fairly New Guy"), 2-3 months into the unit (the Heavy Mortar Platoon, 2/32 Infantry, at Ft. Ord) in November, 1984. The situation was identical to the story above in almost every respect: good new man...2-3 months into the unit...knew he was not yet "in"...criteria indefinite...a process not spelled out or written down but clearly and commonly understood by the rest of the unit, and handled with easy humor. There was no time to investigate the third incident (in another 7th Div unit), in any detail, but it, too, was virtually the same.

Because of the striking similarity in all three cases, particularly in the time length of 2-3 months, and the fact that the same "socialization" or initiation phenomenon occurred in different units, at two different COHORT posts, and was recurrent over a three-year period of time, this phenomenon, even with an "n" of only 3, may have strong implications for the whole "Reconstitution" issue. Some degree of exploratory research on this "Invisible Badge" assimilation process would be useful in helping policy-makers better understand and better support the human chemistry of COHORT. Stouffer's classic research in The American Soldier (Stouffer, et.al., 1949) is a good place to start.

The effectiveness of any "reconstitution" model--battalion, company, packet--seems to rest heavily on just how this "Invisible Badge" process works, and on what the criteria are for winning it. Until the scientific approach can be brought to bear to define and describe the process, my lieutenant friend and I have an answer.

On my last visit with the Commando Brigade in the field, I tracked down the lieutenant and his platoon. They were taking a noon break in between Battle Drills, and he said, "Sir, I got three FNG's we can talk with if you want." So we did, and from that discussion, coupled with the earlier ones, came the best non-scientific explanation of the COHORT "socialization" process that I can offer at this time.

1. The process takes about 3-4 months, even for "squared away" FNGs.
2. The criteria are determined, and assessed, not so much by the NCOs, but rather by the troops.
3. The criteria are based about 90% on "war-fighting" performance in the field, and only to a limited degree on garrison performance and off-duty behavior.
4. Award of "The Badge" consists mainly of a significant number of "attaboys", from other troopers, with respect to performance in the field, during squad and platoon-level missions.
5. The teaching part of the socialization process consists mostly of "how-to's" described and demonstrated by peers. Punishment is administered, first (in the old-timers' words), by "We keep gettin' on him when he messes up...". If that fails, "We just don't have nothin' to do with him and leave him for the NCOs to take care of...". Virtually all of this (teaching, reward, punishment, award) occurs within the context of small unit exercises in the field.
6. Irrespective of how good a soldier the FNG is, the

process of "winning the Invisible Badge" takes considerable time because of two factors, both based heavily on battlefield skills:

(1) the need to develop advanced, expert-level skills so they can be judged as able to do their full share in the field. In the words of an FNG: "I was with these guys in OSUT until I got medically recycled, and now they just seem to know so much more about so many more things than I do. But I'm catchin' up..."

(2) the need for training calendar opportunities to take the "qualifying exams". In the words of a 20-year old "old-timer": "We don't really accept a guy as 'one of us' until we've seen how he does on a couple tough operations, like California or Panama..."

Target of Opportunity

By circumstance, about a month after these interviews with the Commando Brigade, the opportunity arose to once again spend a week with the COHORT units of the 7th Infantry Division. In this instance, I structured the data collection almost entirely around the "critical incidents of excellence" technique that had worked so well in the Commando Brigade, and was thus able to extend it to include not just infantry units, but engineer and artillery units as well, cross-sampling all of the principal combat arms units of an entire division. This "target of opportunity", then, provided a means of extending, clarifying, cross-validating and generalizing the tentative conclusions and assertions reached earlier in the Commando Brigade. The "stories" of the small COHORT units of the 7th Division follow.

BY THE BOOK

A sapper squad one morning was getting ready to move out on their squad ARTEP when, for some legitimate emergency, both the squad leader and one of the fire team leaders couldn't make it. The one remaining fire team leader took over the 5-man squad, ran it through the ARTEP, and he did well. The evaluators knew the situation, but intentionally gave him no breaks at all.

"I was stunned when those two guys didn't show up. Last thing in the world I ever expected on the ARTEP..."

"Well, what'd you do?..."

"First thing, I appointed two of the guys as fire team leaders--I knew I had to do that--and from then on out I did things like it said in the book...

"But you weren't carrying "the book" on the ARTEP, were you?...

"Hell, yes, Sir. All the way through the whole thing. I had the book in one hand, and the squad in the other...

SUPER SAPPERS

The sapper squad had won the Super Squad Stakes. I was talking with the squad leader and his fire team leaders:

"How'd you go about it?...

"Well, first thing we did was make sure everyone knew all the tasks, THEN we broke out task assignments...

"Why do you think you won?...

"We were just fired up. The Stakes were our mission, and it was us who had figured out our plans for how to run it...(FTL)

"Our pride in ourselves...(FTL)

"I think it was reputation. We'd done so well on our squad ARTEP that we had a reputation to maintain...(SL)

GILMORE

It was a COHORT artillery unit, and I was talking with the crew who had won the "Gilmore Battery" contest:

"Well, you say teamwork was what made you win the Gilmore. Can you tell me more about that?...

"Communication is the key, Sir, plus, whatever we do, we always start our planning EARLY...

"Lot of trust in this outfit. And the NCO'S spend time together, even off-duty...

"Down in the motor pool, they'll even share tires among

each other to keep any one guy from having too much tread-wear...

"The part I liked best was when the eliminations were going on, and the crews we'd already beat would bust their butts helping us get ready for the next level of competition...

"We're always checking each other, but when things get moving fast, we check even more...

THE WINNER

The battery commanders were talking. One nodded at a brother battery commander and said, "John, there, seems to win just about every competition there is...

"Doesn't that sort of demoralize the troopers in the other batteries?...

"No, because we other battery commanders figure that's OUR problem, not the troops', and we keep it that way. Besides, John never makes a big deal out of it. We got this under control...

THE TREASURES

A battery commander gave me 2 treasures. Trust, and his troopers. Battery area wasn't spruced up for a "visitor". Sort of rough, and beat-up looking, but running smooth on the inside, and combat ready. The Battery Commander was the same way. Took me down to the motor pool, where, under a tree, sat 20 or so troopers, not an NCO among them. "Sir, here's the best thing in this battery. They're yours for an hour. Ask 'em anything you want." And with that, he walked off and left us alone. After a few minutes of us getting used to each other, they had some awful things to say about the BC:

"He ALWAYS walks what he talks. Beat us all on the PT test. When the new one was starting to come out, we thought we'd have a chance to beat him, but he took it first and maxed the damn thing...

"When we got some kind of new procedure or equipment to learn, he always teaches and drills the officers and NCO'S before he turns 'em loose to teach us...

"One time when we were first getting organized, he had the officers and NCO'S do our work for a day. He's always teaching them something...

"In the field, somehow he's always the first one through diggin' his hole...

"Jones fell off the top of a five-ton one day and cracked his head on the way down. Sittin' there bleeding somethin' awful. We just knew he was hurt real bad, and so did Jones, and he was startin' to panic. The BC held him in his arms 'til we got the medics there...

They didn't like the Chief of Smoke either:

"He will always talk eyeball to eyeball to you, without his rank making any difference...

"He takes time to explain the really tough stuff...

"Sometime he'll gather just the EMS together and talk to us about what's happening and what he expects all the EMS to do...

"One of our guys had a real sick kid, but we had a EDRE or something going on where we couldn't turn anybody loose. Smoke sent his wife to stay with the guy's wife and baby...

And they didn't care much for their NCOs:

"One weekend, my car was broke down about three hours up the road in _____, and I didn't have any money. I called Sergeant _____, told him what had happened and where I was, and just about 3 hours later, here he came, along with Sergeant _____, who knows about cars. On the week-end, Man!...

BASE GUN

There was a gun section that had won the much-coveted and much-competed-for designation as "Base Gun" on the battery's first qualification test. They had then continued to win it every quarter ever since. How had the section chief achieved the exceptional teamwork required, and how had he kept it going?

One crew member: "It was our discipline; he didn't even have to give orders most of the time...

Another crew member: "I think it was our motivation--our pride in ourselves and our crew...

Third crew member: "Well, I'll tell you exactly what it was for me; it was when he got us together right after we'd worked so hard, and so many extra hours, and had won "Base Gun" the first time, and then he looked around at each one of us and said, 'Now, after this, if anybody ever beats us, I'll work your asses to death...

ARMY EDISONS

I asked the same "Base Gun" folks what were the "highlights" (other than the quarterly qualifications) that stood out in their minds as the times when the crew had done it's best work. They were split. Half said, "Our ARTEPs", and the other half said, "When we invent things". I chose the latter.

"I'm an Infantryman, and I thought artillery work was mostly drills and standardized procedures...

"Well, most of it is, but we find room to work out our own better ways of doing things...

"Like what?...

"OK, we invented a better way of "safing" the howitzer, a better way to use the net "butterflies", and a ground display technique that makes things work faster...

"You did these, even though they weren't in the SOP?...

"Yes, Sir, we did 'em, and they weren't in the SOP... but they are now, and that's what we like about inventing things. You know, little things...

BUDDY TEAM

Two Rangers had entered into the competition for the Division's Best Ranger team that would go to Benning for the Army "Best Ranger" contest. They had worked through the eliminations all the way up to the final cut stage. At the end of the three-day (24-hour days) competition, near the last several hundred yards of the final 3-mile run with weapons and LCE, one Ranger started giving out. The rules

precluded physically helping another Ranger in this event, but the Ranger's buddy slowed his pace to run alongside and keep urging him on. That's how they finished--side by side--and they didn't make the cut.

"Could you have still made the Division team if you hadn't dropped out to run beside your buddy?...

"Yes, Sir...

"Why did you do that?...

"Well, 'way back when we first started in the competition, me and him made a vow to always stick together, no matter what, right to the very end...

(These two, knowing they wouldn't make the trip to Benning, nevertheless asked to stay with the Division's team to keep training with them and provide some extra challenge. If you've seen what those three days look like, it obviously wasn't a boondoggle, and these two guys' only rewards would be blisters, and calluses, and an occasional throw-up. Up the channels went the request, and the usual "policy" and "precedent" arguments came front-and-center. The General let them stay.)

TESTFIRE

Two brand-new 2d LT platoon leaders, 4-5 days in the company, and still in the semi-official "don't do anything but just watch and listen for a few days" status. Company in the field...unexpected change in the schedule, and the CO designated the rest of the afternoon as "platoon leader time". The two "watch and listen" lieutenants, who hadn't known each other before, got to talking, and decided they wanted to "testfire" a real platoon for the first time ever. Two hours later, by themselves, they had reconned an area, established boundaries and two objectives, worked out some basic rules, and agreed upon a "lane" they would both start out on to guarantee initial contact. Both had then moved back to their assembly areas, briefed their platoons, launched out in "movement to contact", and "test-fired" their first real platoon for the rest of the afternoon. I asked what was the biggest problem they had encountered in all this.

"Well, Sir, when we first started out, we kept moving and moving, and even though we kept talking to each other on the radio, we still hadn't made contact. Then, all of a sudden, it started down in the draw, and things went great from there on out".

THE PLANNERS

There was a time in '86 when the company was just starting the prep stage for Best Rifle Company contest. I was talking to the squad leader and fire team leaders of the squad that had eventually won, asking them for their ideas about what role "teamwork" had played.

"The company had worked out a training plan for everybody that told the best way to do everything. We worked on that a few days and then it got boring. That's when we figured we could work out a better way on our own...

"The whole squad worked on the plan. We'd have skull drills on it in the dayroom, and work on it during CTTs details...

"After all the squads had run the course a bunch of times, Joe went to each of the graders and got him to give him the best time that had been scored on each event. We already had timed ourselves on each event, so then we could tell which ones we had to work hardest on...

"We worked out our own plan for each obstacle, based on who was good at doing what...plus, we had a game plan for the whole thing. We even worked out some events of our own and threw 'em in now and then just to break the monotony...

"That's how we won, Sir...

(This squad also had designed what they called a "leader support system" for movement through the course--squad leader in the front, one fire team leader in the middle, and one at the end. Squad leader kept calling back "time hacks" to keep the fire team leaders "on schedule". As I was about to leave, I asked, "who's your FNG? They all looked at one man, who raised his hand. "How long you been with the squad?", I said. "Eight months, Sir". The rest of the "Planners" had been together more than a year and a half--the "prototype" squad that the originators of the COHORT concept had probably had in mind.)

THE TALENT BANKERS

This was another squad that had won the Division "Best Squad"

competition the year previously, and this year, had finished close to the top. I asked them the "secret" of their success.

"We have a good working relationship. We know each other's abilities...

"Well, there's our pride in our squad and it's reputation. We've never done anything poorly, and we got a history of doing everything right...

"A lot of what we do is because of what other people expect us to do...

This squad had it's own "talent bank" of special informal roles...individuals with extra-curricular MOS's. When I asked them who had what "special talents", they identified and described the jobs of their:

Musician	Frontman
Paperwork Man	Shitgetter
Artist	Linguist
Family Support Man	Argument-Settler

THE ACTORS

NCO leadership structure of a platoon--platoon sergeant, squad leaders, fire team leaders. Had reputation of being best platoon in the company. I asked them what made the platoon work so well on the inside.

"Well, we do a lot of communicating. Everyone always knows what's happening...

"I'm the platoon sergeant, and I've been giving them as much power as I could, mainly because I'm leaving soon...

"The platoon sergeant gives us a lot of "squad leader time" and lets us develop our own SOPs...

"In this platoon, it's the squad leaders who decide about who gets promoted from PFC to SP4...

"Our squad leaders aren't "nagging" you all the time...

(Of the 7 members of the platoon's leadership that were represented, 4 were in "acting" positions (2 S/Ls, 1 FTL, and the PSG), and the platoon leader had been assigned only 2 weeks before.)

SET ON AUTOMATIC

An exceptionally "tight" unit. This scout platoon had performed some tactical "miracles" in field exercises, (a platoon ARTEP at Camp Roberts was one of their critical incidents of excellence) and using those credits, had finagled an informal policy requiring a "selection board" to get into the platoon, and a probationary period before final acceptance. They had a reputation for almost instant and "automatic teamwork", even with little or no time to plan. I asked them why teamwork worked so well in their platoon. (As they talked, I noticed the platoon sergeant (SFC) let the SGTs do all the talking).

"It's each man's own desire, inside, plus, it's what we expect of each other..."

"Each guy knows, and BELIEVES in the importance and significance of his job..."

"The platoon sergeant always keeps after us to 'teach your people to be able to take your job'..."

"We think on a whole platoon level, not squad or team or individual..."

THE PROFESSIONAL

The SFC had been serving as platoon leader for more than nine months. His excellence in that position was recognized throughout the brigade, and he had a reputation for building fine NCOs. At the interview were his platoon sergeant (SSG), two squad leaders (SSG's), and 4 fire team leaders (2 SGTs, 2 CPLs). Expecting some unique "program", I asked him about his "overall strategy" for developing NCOs. In a quiet, certain, straightforward way, he laid it out:

"I identify each one's potential, then try to give him responsibility just beyond that..."

"I prepare them for the responsibility before I give it to them. We get a lot of range details, so tomorrow I'm taking SSG _____ with me up to the Range Conference..."

"I do a lot of counseling, plus and minus, just like the book says... and I make them do it, too..."

"All this is nothing special. I just try to do what the manuals say an NCO is supposed to do. I do my planning for this in my notebook, and just work from that every day--whatever we're doing...

I picked a fire team leader (SGT) at random and asked him to tell me about the counseling he got from his squad leader (SSG):

"He gives me a written counseling report and a verbal counseling session both. The feedback sessions are more frequent than the reports, and they last about 30 minutes. Plus, he gives me a lot of counseling on the job--things I do well, and things I don't do well...

Next, I asked the platoon sergeant (SSG) what the platoon leader (SFC) was doing to develop his leadership ability:

"He gave me the whole platoon to run once, on a major exercise...

"How'd you do?...

"Well, I won an Army Achievement Medal for it, Sir...

THE MAGIC WORD

It was part of the leadership structure of a platoon...the platoon sergeant, three squad leaders, and a brand new 2d LT platoon leader. I asked them how they went about developing subordinate leaders, and they said, "We got our own way of doing it, maybe a little different, a little special". "How 'bout laying it out? I asked.

"We lean a lot on the experience of the platoon sergeant. He was a drill sergeant...

"Commo...we've worked together 14-15 months... we cover for each other, and we correct each other...

"If we got a problem, we get on it early. That's one of our main rules...

"When we get a mission, we have long talks, and then we decide what we're going to do...

"Discipline...that's a major thing with us, so we "all discipline all"...we each discipline each other's troops if they need it...

"And counseling...we do it after every mission, not just

monthly. After every mission, we personally counsel each and every soldier, both on good things and bad things...

Then I asked the new lieutenant what was the first thing he noticed about the NCOs when he joined the platoon a couple weeks earlier...

"The large number of pow-wows they were always having, and, the fluid level of communication in the platoon...

It was time to leave, and I looked down a minute at my notes. There was something special about this platoon and I wasn't sure just what. Then, there on my notes, I saw what it was. On just the first page, where I had tried to capture their most significant comments, they had used the word "we" 13 times.

(Note: In all of these interviews in both divisions, I listened to somewhere around 300 COHORT leaders in approximately 60 sessions, ranging from a half hour to an hour and a half. In virtually all cases, the small units represented were selected by their leaders because of some "critical incident of excellence" involving teamwork or subordinate leader development. The interviews just summarized were not selected as the "best" of the lot. They represent simply a rough cross-section of stories small unit leaders and their soldiers told about exceptionally good things that happened in their units, and how and why they had happened. ALL the stories have contributed to this paper, and I thank all those troopers for every minute of their time.)

(Final Note on Data Collection: In cases where there are inconsistencies, incongruities, and incredulities in the data presented above, please recall the official 10% lying allowance authorized for soldiers in the telling of their stories, war and otherwise, and remember that I, too, was once a soldier...and a "story-teller".)

Analytical Methodology

The interview and discussion "protocols" from which the critical incidents of excellence above are described are simply my notes, written mostly on yellow pads, the backs of the structured interview forms that proved inadequate, and on a few napkins and placemats. None are suitable for word-count analysis, recurring theme analysis, the "Q-sort" technique, or other more sophisticated methods of subjective content analysis.

The analytical method, in essence, was to: tap into the collective human memory banks of the COHORT small units' "knowledge bases"...then listen intently to a collection of their critical incidents of excellence as seen by a roughly representative sample of their leadership structure in their two principal environments...and then, over a period of time, sort and study my notes from policy-maker, commander, and scientific perspectives, all the time thinking of all those troops and all that they had tried to tell me in their many different ways. All that, I mixed with experience and continuous overwatch of the COHORT concept since it was born, (Malone, 1984) plus, whatever I learned from ten years of teaching leadership, communications, and group and organizational dynamics at the Army War College. From that process came a long list of tentative conclusions with respect to COHORT--observations, implications, opportunities and applications that might be of value to policy-makers, commanders, and scientists studying the group and organizational dynamic called "COHORT".

Findings and Discussion

At this point in my own continuing work over time with the COHORT concept, and at a general, overall, more abstract level, there are three things that are beginning to stand out. These interviews have made them stand out even more clearly. They are offered as background for the policy-making governing the application of the COHORT concept, as suggestions for those who must engineer the sort of "organizational climates" needed to realize the COHORT combat effectiveness potential, and as a means of helping those who lead COHORT units to better understand "the big picture".

Sense of Purpose

First, there is the matter of the soldier's sense of purpose within COHORT units. "Become the finest light infantry in the world." That was the charge given, five years before COHORT was born, by General Abrams when, out of the blue and on his own, and using spaces from a major headquarters in Hawaii, he brought into being the first of today's ranger battalions and stationed it at Ft. Stewart. He may have done this on the basis of an operational need, or, as a means of beginning to rebuild the "warrior ethic" in the US Army, at that time at an all-time low. I don't know. I suspect the latter. Four thousand years ago, or thereabouts, Ghengis Kahn had used not Rangers, but the Mangoday, to fire up the warrior ethic in the Golden Horde. It worked back then.

At any rate, ten years after "Abe" built that first ranger battalion, when we began to field our first COHORT light infantry battalions at Ft. Ord, many folks still knew of

General Abram's charge to the ranger battalions, and there was widespread confusion within the light infantry battalions, about themselves, and what they were. They knew they were to be light infantry...a new (for today's Army) and different kind of unit, but...it seemed that another kind of battalion--a ranger battalion--had been given their sense of purpose, ten years before, along with resourcing and personnel quality procedures far beyond what any conventional light infantry unit could ever hope for. There is little inspiration in trying to become...the second best light infantry in the world.

Initially, because of this oversight as the COHORT concept was attached to the Light Infantry Division concept, there was, around '84 and '85, much arguing and bickering about "light infantry" as opposed to "ranger", and who's supposed to do what, and be what, and wear what kind of hat, and badge, and who was going to be the "elite", and who, therefore, by default, the "un-elite".

All that confusion no longer exists. The ranger battalions, through doctrine, actual commitment to combat, and present organizational niche, are now specialized units...far different from "light infantry". Today, the challenge to become "the finest light infantry in the world" now belongs, and rightfully so, to the Light Infantry divisions. In my view, they have accepted that challenge, and, in the case of some of the older battalions, they have met it fully. (How many "LIDs" we need, and how well the LID concept works, are other questions, far beyond my expertise.)

Furthermore, the initial confusion between "ranger" and "light infantry" has, somehow, been turned from a problem into an asset. The heavy infusion of Ranger-qualified individuals, scattered throughout the combat arms of the each of the Light Infantry divisions, has brought the warrior ethic to the whole division. And the thing that keeps that alive, and growing, within the division, is the nature of the expectations, and the power of those expectations, created by...the chemistry of COHORT. That chemistry is now beginning to represent an intentional, studied, and successful application of how to enhance combat effectiveness through the third factor of the combat effectiveness definition laid out at the very beginning of this paper--the group and organizational dynamics of the combatant forces. But...

The Army, as big as it is, is also a system. And, within a system, particularly a system "closed" by statute and external resource control, when you stabilize one thing, then, sure as hell, you're going to de-stabilize something else. Somewhere within the system, the "price" for the plus-up in combat effectiveness that lies in the COHORT unit must be paid. Further, in a strategic sense, there are two other down-side things to think about: (1), the danger of over-

dosing on this good thing called COHORT and thereby creating critical destabilization elsewhere, and (2), trying to buy this good thing called COHORT on the cheap, and thereby losing the effects of its critical human chemistry.

Reconstitution

The second big thing that stands out is the matter of "Reconstitution" of COHORT units. While we recently put new policies and procedures in place, I still sense strongly the problem noted in (2) above. The instant coffee of the standard field ration is OK when you have little else, but it won't compare with that made from new, freshly-ground coffee beans, cooked and perked and brewed, in the right kind of pot, over just the right heat, for just the right amount of time. As I think of all the complex human processes occurring in the "chemistry of COHORT" sketched out earlier in this paper; and of "The Orchestrators" and the frequency with which that time (Light Fighter II) appears among the anchor points of excellence; and of the "FNGs" three months in pursuit of the Invisible Badge, I am more convinced than ever that the "Reconstitution" process cannot be "managed", automatically, by reports based on formulas, and thresholds, and windows, which are themselves built of numbers of troops, and numbers of leaders, and numbers of months, in numbers of units. That is all arithmetic, not chemistry. It's things that go in "packets". Soldiers aren't things. They go in teams, and groups, and units.

Reconstitution must be a time, not a condition. It must be a time during which the complex but necessary group and organizational dynamics can be re-created, not reconstituted. We need not a set of numerical criteria to drive a "flush and fill" phase (as some witless personnel pissant called it), but a transition phase, and a transition model, built within the context of a battalion-sized downtime period of 3-4 months...a time during which the chemistry and the catalysts can begin to "work"...a time when a hundred thousand expectations, formal and informal, spoken and unspoken, can be developed, and learned, and exchanged...a time when a few of the "story-tellers" who were with the battalion "before" can tell of "the times" of that battalion, and pass on its anchor points of excellence...a time when the "old-timers" can work their special magic on the FNGs. Whatever it is that happens during those first three or four months as a COHORT battalion, it is the "secret" of the additional combat effectiveness; it is a human thing; and I do not believe we can ever do it on the run, by the numbers, on the cheap.

Sustainment

The third big thing that stands out for me has to do with

time, and cycles of time, and phases within those cycles, and what happens within those phases. It also has to do with flowers. Flowers. Find an Army post someplace, and drive through the housing areas. Look at the bushes and flowers around each house. The bushes, most likely, were put in by the contractor who built the houses, or the Post Engineer. The flowers were put in by the people who live in those houses. Army people. Just what this might have to do with COHORT and enhancement of combat effectiveness through "group and organizational dynamics of the combatant forces" will become clear a little further on.

Some sort of official cycling and phasing model has assuredly been developed to help organize and manage the activities and status of the COHORT units. I do not know what they are, but, since the COHORT unit is a living thing, and the term, "unit life-cycle" is in common use among our personnel managers, that at least implies that the unit must, first, be born; then mature; then do something worthwhile; then die. Hopefully, those who use the term "life-cycle", and those who developed the cycling and phasing model for the COHORT unit have taken this into account.

There is another "homemade" phasing model which I would like to suggest, which, while by no means official, is the one I have used in this paper and will continue to use as this discussion proceeds. The phases in this model are operationally defined as follows. Phase One is the time, up to and including Light Fighter II, that was described in detail in the "Chemistry of COHORT" sketch near the beginning of this paper. Phase Two is from that time, all the way up through Bn ARTEPs, a couple of major FTXs, and an OCONUS deployment--in other words, up to the point where the unit has just about "done it all"...at least once. Phase Three is the time period when, in general terms, the principal activities, events, and requirements of Phase Two are replicated in different geographical and tactical contexts, and which continues on out until the time when the unit dies or is "reconstituted". (Phase Three is commonly referred to as the "Sustainment" phase, and, I sense significant problems with respect to that designation, stemming from the mind-sets created at all levels by that designation, and the activities and expectations created by those mind-sets).

Now, using the three "homemade" phases just defined, let's follow the steadily-rising motivation curve which is the central dynamic of the "Chemistry of COHORT" model mentioned much earlier. In Phase One, the motivation curve (after the Drill Sergeants get it moving) begins and continues its steady upward climb through OSUT, then overcomes the traditional post-OSUT ragged decline, and continues on out to the end of Light Fighter II, where Phase One also ends. Then, as Phase Two begins, "pace" increases rapidly, and the curve begins to drive upward, at a much steeper slope, for all of

Phase Two, reaching almost to the top limit of the SKILL X WILL dimension...about as high as the motivation curve could go. At that point, Phase Three, or "Sustainment", cuts in, and, with a horizontal drift or barely perceptible rise in motivation, "Sustainment" carries the curve on out until the unit dies or someone puts some packets in it and pours on the hot water.

The human chemistry upon which COHORT rides just won't work that way, simply because Phase Three, or "Sustainment", becomes a time when the challenge is gone...when each tomorrow is "more of the same", rather than another chance to learn even more about how to "BE...ALL THAT YOU CAN BE", as a soldier. Because of expectations and experience, the COHORT unit will still be fine light infantry. But not the finest. The fires, individual and collective, have all started to go out, somewhere back around the end of Phase Two, when they had "done it all", and when, although in a superficial way, they had "been all that they could be", as soldiers. "Burn-out", for certain, but not in the usual sense most people mean.

(Excellent research by the WRAIR scientists (Marlowe, 1987) identifies a degrading of "vertical cohesion" as a major source of problems during the back half of the COHORT life-cycle. Although I have no evidence, I'm suggesting here that the problems with vertical cohesion may stem more from inadequate "motivational engineering" of the Sustainment phase than from discord in leader-led relationships.)

Good evidence of what happens in a COHORT-like unit when the challenge dies, even one wherein the "warrior ethic" abounds, comes from research done by Dr. Charlie Moskos and Col. Charlie Brown, (Moskos & Brown, 1976) about the time that very first ranger battalion was nearing the end of its "life-cycle". They measured "willingness to fight" (with a well-designed scale) in that battalion and found that they were more willing and more ready to fight than any other kind of battalion in the whole US Army. Then, they measured "willingness to re-enlist" and found the ranger battalion was the lowest. Moskos' and Brown's interpretation was that the rangers felt they had "done it all", and the challenge was gone, and they were looking for somewhere else to "BE...ALL THAT YOU CAN BE."

Conceptually, the solution to getting the phases and the motivation curve in synch lies in adjusting the activities and status (and the "pace" that derives therefrom) in such a way that the motivation curve becomes one steady, upward-moving slope from the beginning of Phase One to the end of Phase Three, so that, from the individual and unit perspective, every tomorrow, out to the very last one, clearly offers every soldier, and his unit, still another opportunity to be all that they can be.

The reasons for the problem lie, first, in Assertion #5 (re: changes in the "larger system"); and second, in those damn flowers. In our Army's housing areas the flowers you see will be: zinnias, petunias, and marigolds. They are all...annuals. No delphiniums, no holyhocks, none of all those other splendid living things that take more than a year to be all that they can be. The sharp up-slope of Phase Two, which is what's mainly responsible for dorking up the motivation curve, reflects the same Army mindset that grew the damn petunias. It is a mindset developed by decades of ANNUAL training programs, ANNUAL training requirements, and ANNUAL training budgets. The "annual" mindset, which is not "bad", but normal, came from the time before COHORT when "Get everything done in a year" (particularly with respect to training) was fully consistent with, and supportive of, an individual replacement system that often brought near-total turnover of personnel every year.

The COHORT battalion and the human chemistry that drives it is not an annual thing. Its life-cycle is THREE years. It's built to live, and to keep on GROWING, and getting better and better, long after the petunias are gone.

So much for the "three big things". In summary, the first one says that we are at last beginning to learn how to increase combat effectiveness through the studied application of group and organizational dynamics. The second ("Reconstitution") says, to me at least, that Assertion #5 is operative, and that the instant coffee policies and procedures now being locked into place will soon be unlocked and replaced. The third ("Sustainment") says Assertion #5 is operative there also, but, until "the larger system" figures out how to adapt to the COHORT unit, there is much that can be done to straighten out the motivational curve, because it is commanders--commanders--who have control over, and a major influence on, most of the activities that constitute the "everyday life" of the COHORT unit as it lives through its life-cycle. The remainder of this paper will be directed, therefore, to what commanders can do to make that third "Sustainment" phase a time of challenge for COHORT troopers and their units...a time when they can "BE...ALL THAT THEY CAN BE."

Depth, Adaptability, Versatility

For starters, and as a general concept of operation, consider replacing "Sustainment" with "Depth, Adaptability, and Versatility". With that done, then call the middle phase (from Light Fighter II through the first OCONUS deployment) the "Maturation" phase. These two changes provide the means and logic for moving certain major activities from the middle phase to the last phase, and that will do two things: (1), it will begin to better align the total life-cycle motivation

curve; and (2), it will reduce, or at least spread out better, the "pace" factor which is beginning to show up in the COHORT research curves and cause problems within the leadership structure, particularly with respect to the "vertical cohesion" noted earlier, particularly at small unit level, particularly for the NCOs, and particularly for their families.

The overall purpose of this final phase is to use development of depth, adaptability, and versatility in fighting capability as a means to provide continuing growth and challenge, for individuals and units...not through means like "personal growth" and "adventure training", but through things clearly related to greater battlefield effectiveness. Some discussion of depth, adaptability, and versatility will begin to suggest means of achieving this purpose, as well as provide a logic for "re-phasing" certain activities so as to better align the motivation curve.

"Depth" obviously refers to cross-training of individuals, but, in this case, depth refers to far more than that. It also refers to depth in units: depth in their capacity for teamwork that is natural, normal, expected, reflex-based...to a degree far beyond that obtainable through drills and practice. Depth also refers to depth in the excellence of small unit leadership, to the degree that any man in the squad can run the squad through the basic Troop-Leading Process.

"Adaptability" refers to the speed and effectiveness with which COHORT units can respond to unexpected, unpredicted, and unusual situations which demand a unit--unit--response.

"Versatility" refers to extending the ways the unit can accomplish certain basic things, to include inventing new ways to do them. It takes basic skills to cook a basic fish. But, there are on record at least 500 different ways to do it--depending on the kind of fish, ingredients, and equipment at hand--plus many more ways yet to be invented. There is also a basic way to bust a basic bunker, plus many more ways yet to be invented.

(A moment's reflection on these three terms will show that they are all inter-related, mutually-supporting, and fitted to the needs of the AirLand Battle.)

The comments which follow are observations and suggestions which pertain to means for achieving COHORT developmental challenges, or improving those that already exist. They are suggested primarily as ways to help meet the needs of the Depth, Adaptability, and Versatility phase, although some would fit elsewhere as well. Most are directed toward building depth in teamworking skills (not "team-building", which is something else), and depth in small unit leadership,

however, several apply directly to adaptability and versatility. Most of these notions come from watching and talking with soldiers, and ALL have been thought through to the battlefield.

Hopefully, some commander will make a list of these ideas and any additional ones they generate or bring to mind, then check the list out for desirability, feasibility, and acceptability, then implement some, mark some for further study, and set the rest aside. Those marked for "study" could probably best be checked out, tried, or tested by two subordinate commanders...working together, as a team.

Solution Concepts

COHORT is bringing the Army added combat effectiveness, and, if there are any "heroes" of the COHORT concept, they are not the good generals who dreamed it up, nor the capable scientists who worked up the conceptual models, nor the hard-working staff officers who did all the planning to get it launched and underway. The heroes are the small unit leaders, from the company commander on down. And, among that group, the "realist" heroes are not among the officers, but among the NCOs. And, among that cohort of heroes, "The Man" is...the squad leader. He's the one who has the most expectations to meet, and Old Pace rides him hardest of all. More than ever, I am convinced that the squad and its leader constitute the basic living "cell" of the COHORT unit. Whatever can be done to recognize the worth and value of the Army's fundamental leader should be part of any COHORT planning. Trust, confidence, and respect are the things he most deserves.

* * *

In almost all the "critical incidents of excellence" studied thus far (somewhere around 60), the most commonly-recurring theme, and the one most filled with excitement and pride, dealt with the times of "the rookies in charge"...a time when by design or circumstance, some squad leader was gone and some fire team leader was filling in. Or all the NCOs were gone and the fire team leaders and "assistants" and privates were in command. The number of NCOs who put "rookies" in charge, not from expediency but from written-down plans in notebooks, is amazing. One FSG, for example, somewhere, had run the company for a whole week (in garrison) with the NCOs exchanging places with the privates, then coaching the privates at the end of each day.

Beyond the critical incidents, there are other examples of "rookies in charge" at other times and other places. Two times, whole battalion and brigade reviews were run from start to finish by no one higher than an Sp4, standing out there in the commander's slot. Three-day battalion FTXs, run

completely by the NCOs (and "rookie" doesn't really fit well here), from the start of the planning to the end of the last critique. In Gen Gorman's 8th Infantry Division, it was SOP that, at the end of a major exercise in the field, the NCOs took complete charge of the final "goin' home, doin' the maintenance, and puttin' things up" phase, while the CG kept all the officers in the field for a "tactical walk" back over the whole exercise.

Maybe sometime it will be said of COHORT light infantry that you can reach into a squad and pull out any man at random, and he can run the squad in the field. Maybe the trainers, working mainly with the Troop Leading Process, and the leadership materials of NCOES, could design and put together a set of on-the-job leadership requirements that worked like a job-book, with NCOs initialling each time a requirement was met, until all requirements were met, and a certificate could be awarded for completion of a leadership program, and entered into his official records, and future credentials, and civilian "resume"...with all this splendid opportunity available to any private in the unit that wanted to accept the challenge of the leadership of men.

* * *

The chemistry of COHORT has brought to the COHORT company the ability to communicate internally, formally and informally, often with no more than a look, with greater speed and accuracy than any other kind of company, and far greater speed and accuracy than the battalion as a whole. There is a way that the battalion as a whole can just about match this speed and accuracy, at least on the battlefield, and thereby exploit the information-processing capability that already exists in the companies. It's called, "Battle Staff Integration", and the "battle staff" is its operative unit--the battalion commander, the executive officer, the primary staff and the company commanders. 10 men. Battle Staff Integration, designed for the battlefield, teaches the battle staff how to process information (within a fighting battalion) through the stages of an information-handling cycle known as "The Adaptive-Coping Cycle" (Olmstead, 1973). Again, in the 8th Infantry Division, General Gorman took ten of his battle staffs to the field and ran them against the three-day PEGASUS CPM. The correlation between effectiveness in Battle Staff Integration and all principal force exchange ratios was direct and positive (Olmstead, 1978). The better the battle staff could process information through the cycle, the better the battalion did on the battlefield, and the better it could withstand severe stress. The how-to's for teaching BSI are worked out in detail, tested in the field, and waiting. Anybody want to get serious about all that "get inside the enemy's decision-making curve" stuff?

* * *

Somewhere some planner once said that a Russian TOT on a US infantry battalion in an assembly area will knock out 17% of its key personnel and key items of equipment. Why not replicate that and see just how adaptable a COHORT battalion is? Do it on a random basis with one of those Bingo contraptions, just before an exercise begins. Send the key equipment back to garrison, and let the dead key personnel join their OPFOR counterparts and, in effect, watch themselves fight, from the enemy's perspective. Do that a couple of times, and then, what sort of habits and expectations might develop in the units, particularly with respect to communications? When you've done that a couple of times in regular exercises, start doing it routinely on company ARTEPs and remove the logic for those senior raters who compare one company against another in a major training event specifically and intentionally designed to be non-evaluative.

* * *

For a variation on the Russian TOT, put the names of the unit's top 17 key personnel on 17 pieces of rolled-up paper and every duty day morning--every single one--have the CQ pick a name out of the hat at 0400, call the key individual, and kill him. Bein' dead, he can't call out to anyone, or accept calls from anyone, and he'll be dead until tomorrow morning. No exceptions, to include the commander. AGIs, ARTEPs, big meetings, calls from "higher"...makes no difference. What do you think that would cause, in time, with respect to development of subordinates? What impact would it have on the degree to which key personnel coordinate ahead of time? What would it do to the importance of "keeping everybody pooped up"--a thing key individuals are often "too busy" to do? And how closely are all these things related to performance on the battlefield? And finally, would it help a little to get Old Pace off the backs of the key individuals, which is where he likes most to ride? Maybe the dead guy deserves to just spend the day with "Momma", and cut the grass, or whatever.

* * *

"Teamwork" is totally dependent upon...communications. That's because communications is the only means of coordinating, compromising, and co-operating, which are the three processes wherein are found the fundamental how-to's for teamworking. This dynamic can be applied in many ways in the development of depth, adaptability, and versatility, but there's a specific and easy way some battalion or company commander can put it to work.

Get a piece of paper and draw a circle 3 inches in diameter. Around the circle, draw 4-5 dime-sized circles representing

each of your immediate subordinates who are also peers with the same rating chain...company commanders, for example, if you command a battalion. Now draw double-headed arrows connecting every possible pairing of immediate subordinates. Now go back in this paper to the part about CO-WORKERS, and BROTHERS, etc., and, for each subordinate, make an honest and careful estimate of how you think each subordinate feels about each of the other subordinates. By each of the arrowheads, put down one of the two numbers that goes with each of the four kinds of relationships (CO-WORKER (3-4), etc.).

Now add up all the numbers at all of the arrowheads and what you got there now is a pretty good assessment of your unit's potential for...teamwork. It's validity rests on how well you know your subordinates. Compare your measure with the maximum possible potential which would be the case if all subordinate leaders considered each other as brothers. Numerically, that "max potential" would be 8 (the highest of the two possible BROTHER ratings), times the number of arrowheads. Compare that with the total potential score you worked out earlier and you can see what the gap is, and decide whether you want (or need) to make a concerted effort to build better teamwork between your subordinate units.

If you do, there's two things you can start with to reduce the gap between your unit's score and the max teamwork potential score of "Brothers...across the board". First, and most important, is to see what YOU can do to increase the value of the relationships. Coaching would be a good way. The Dash-1 and the OER another good way. But just for a minute, look back at the diagram of your unit and those relationships and those arrows. Those arrows represent the very damn guts of the "information metabolism" of your unit. There's one thing that dorks up those vital arrows and those teamwork numbers more than anything else...the careless and unthoughtout use of competition. As noted 'way back in those initial assertions, the careless use of competition (not the thoughtout use) is costing our Army 20% of its existing combat effectiveness, mainly because of what it does to arrows like those back there in your sketch. So maybe you ought to think about that also if you want to plus-up your teamwork potential.

The second thing you can do is just give your estimate to your immediate subordinates and let them figure out what they want to do about it. And then, as a group, come tell you what they're going to do and by what observable criteria you would know that they're doing it. Even better, add your own efforts to their efforts and watch what happens at the arrowheads in a couple months. No time for all that? Well, right now, today, this technique is working well in a mech infantry battalion in Europe...not just for the company commanders, but for the battalion staff as well (McGee & Malone, 1987).

(This whole discussion has been directed to a unit commander. What about a Staff Director? What about a Chief of Staff? What about a whole JCS, looking for "jointness"?)

* * *

When you study the "technology of teamwork", you find that there are three basic kinds of teamwork, based on the nature of the interdependence that is required among the components of the team. The simplest kind is based on "pooled interdependence". Each individual by himself does the best he can, then the scores are all totalled together for a total "team" score. A bowling team represents this kind of teamwork. The next kind, based on "sequential interdependence", is like a relay team in a track meet...each individual must do his own task right before the next man can even get a chance to do his. Individual performance is important, but if just one of the hand-offs fails, then even the speed of the "World's Fastest Human" won't save the team from failure. The third kind, "reciprocal interdependence", is by far the most complex, containing both the other kinds, plus the requirement for carefully coordinated effort among a variety of individuals and sub-teams, all doing different things. It is represented by a football team, or a hockey team, or a soccer team. It is the kind of teamwork found on the battlefield, where it's called..."tactics".

All this says many things. It says the last of the three kinds should be the dominant characteristic of the activities of the depth, adaptability, and versatility phase. It says that in judging leaders and their units, a "BEST" in terms of scores on a rifle range, or number of EIBs, is good, but probably worth about a fourth as much as a "GOOD" on a MOUT attack, or a night-landed prisoner snatch. It says that BEST SQUAD (or platoon, or company) contests, if based primarily on adding together the scores of ten individuals doing the same thing, aren't really measuring what a "squad" is or the means by which it functions, as a squad, on the battlefield.

A course or contest that, by design of phases or design of events, specifically assesses (and weights) each of the three kinds of teamwork could teach an awful lot about the how-to's of teamwork technology, without a single manual or hour of classroom time. And the trainer that designed that course could join up with trainers from the other Light Infantry divisions, and, working as a team, they could put together an Expert Infantry SQUAD Test, for DA approval, and a badge that symbolizes teamworking skills, and provides another challenge for the depth, adaptability, and versatility phase. Then

maybe, after all of that, the Army would learn how to do an "interdependency analysis". And, when someone finally does that, an interdependency analysis will bring to collective training the same kind of plus-up that front-end analysis has brought to individual training. Collective training is mostly tactics, and the one best battlefield word with which to define "tactics" is...teamwork.

* * *

It used to be called, "Combat in Cities". Now, it's..."MOUT". One of the critical incidents of excellence reported earlier dealt with a MOUT operation. Half-way through the discussion, I realized that MOUT demands more teamwork--more kinds and varieties of teamwork--than any kind of combat exercise there is, for conventional forces. Teamwork between the two men of a buddy team, and between fire teams, and squads, and platoons...all going on at the same time, and somehow "orchestrated" like a symphony. Teamworking, not just in two dimensions, but three! Teamwork under conditions where the main thing teamwork depends on --communications--is severely restricted or absent. Radio, H&A, voice, visual, messenger...all reduced to a bare minimum by three-dimensional dispersion and distortion within the buildings and in the rooms within the buildings.

One MOUT exercise teaches more small unit teamwork than three "regular" exercises out in the woods. Anybody ever try to take on the challenge of MOUT operations at night? Don't laugh...Rogers, the Rangers' daddy, once ran a recon patrol on ice-skates...

Finally, when you think about it, the MOUT environment, with its demands and restrictions, creates a tightly compressed, but exact, replica of...the AirLand Battle battlefield.

* * *

In a place once, where Old Face had the battalion commanders all hollow-eyed and shaky, I found one who was laid-back, and cool, and happy. The chaplain had made him that way. Somehow, and for some reason, the chaplain had set up a "program" where he and the company commanders would meet once each week, on the same day, at the same time, to give each other feedback. Each meeting lasted exactly an hour, and three rules governed the meetings: (1), "We don't bitch about the battalion commander or his policies."; (2), "We level with each other."; and (3), "What we say here stays here." Those meetings had been going on for about six months. The chaplain, after the 4-5 weeks it took to get them on track, had turned his "program" over to the company commanders. And the battalion commander, even though he never knew a thing about what was happening in those meetings, could SEE what

was happening in the battalion.

* * *

There is some sort of "magic" in Light Fighter II. As an event, it cropped up repeatedly in the incidents of excellence, from both trooper and squad leader perspective. Whatever it was, it was more than just the good training. It was most probably some mix of the responsibility and trust given the squad leader, combined with the experience of ten people being a single "US" continuously, 24 hours a day, for three weeks. Whatever it is, the magic of Light Fighter II, even just talked about, is like a battery charger for the COHORT battalion.

There must be some way to put that magic to work in the depth, adaptability and versatility phase. Maybe the same approach, i.e., "squad leader totally in charge and responsible", but maybe this time, and as the main part of the "any soldier's leadership course" described earlier, the squad leader could put his main emphasis on teaching the Troop Leading Process to every single man in his squad. Do that out of a "Patrol Base" context, and run every different kind of patrol the Ranger Department knows about, including the artillery ambush and the saddle ambush...with the squad leader working just like a lane grader. I would strongly urge that someone try a "Light Fighter III" for the platoons, not so much for the training as for that strange "magic" that somehow charges the COHORT batteries.

* * *

And finally, somewhere near the end of the depth, adaptability, and versatility phase, there needs to be, for the COHORT battalion, a last act, a crescendo, a climax to the three-year story. There needs to be a time that will challenge not merely depth, adaptability, and versatility, but everything the battalion, and all its units, and all its people, have ever learned along the three-year upward path to being all they could be. There needs to be a final exam, with the only judges or graders or evaluators being those men who are the battalion, who, when its over, can, for one last time, all get together under the trees somewhere, so the story-tellers can tell their stories.

There was a time one night in WWII when the troop carriers for the 82nd Airborne ran into heavy anti-aircraft fire, got badly off course, and scattered troops, equipment, radios, parachutes, and gliders all over the Carentan Peninsula instead of on the carefully-selected DZ's just inland from the D-Day beachheads. People lost, or in the wrong place, or hung up in trees or on church steeples...leaders missing, along with the maps that went with those leaders...weapons, equipment, and radios scattered everywhere and lost in the

dark or in the marshes. About the only things that were half-way together were the small units, because of the way they were loaded in the planes. Somehow, out of all that chaos, and confusion and mess, those small units and their small unit leaders began to pull people and weapons and equipment together, and the 82nd, who jumped as airborne but fought as light infantry, got its act together and its mission accomplished.

What happened during that time is spelled out in minute detail in S. L. A. Marshall's book, Night Drop (Marshall, 1962). It was a time of light infantry, and small units, and their teamwork, and their leadership, and their depth, adaptability, and versatility...all tested to the limit. I know of no finer model upon which to design a HUMMAHawk "Night Drop" with which to prove to a COHORT battalion and its troopers that, at least this side of combat, they have been all they can be.

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