

# READ ME FIRST

## The Korean War Exportable Virtual Staff Rides (VSRs)

1. Combat Action Korea - The Lost Patrol: Platoon/Company VSR
2. The Battle of Chipyong-ni: Regimental/Brigade Combat Team VSR
3. The 2d Infantry Division at the Battles of Wonju and Chipyong-ni: Division VSR

### I. Introduction/Background.

- a. Since 2004, the Combat Studies Institute (CSI) has fulfilled the Army's need to conduct leader training and education utilizing staff rides with computer driven terrain in the classroom. During this time CSI, utilizing emerging 3D technology, developed multiple Virtual Staff Rides (VSRs) that allowed CSI to bring the battlefield terrain to the unit and tailor the staff ride to the needs of the unit. Also during this time, CSI (now part of the Army University Press) had taken a further step by creating an Exportable VSR. This version of the VSR contains all the material necessary for a unit to execute the VSR on its own, without CSI personnel to assist.
- b. The exportable VSR—like all staff rides, whether on the ground or virtual—follow the same principles laid out in CSI's 'doctrinal' publication, *The Staff Ride* by Dr. William G. Robertson (a pdf version of this is available on the Army University Press website in the staff ride section, <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Educational-Services/Staff-Ride-Team-Offerings>)
- c. In its essentials, the Exportable VSR contains all the elements of a 'ground' staff ride, but with the terrain being presented with a computer in a classroom environment.
- d. The three Korean War VSRs have these characteristics that make them particularly powerful tools for leader development and education.
  - i. First, the three Korean War VSRs allow commanders and staffs to tailor the staff rides to meet the leadership development needs of corps and division as well as junior leaders at the tactical level, and all levels in between.
  - ii. Second, like all VSRs, they allow for free movement within the terrain so that instructors and participants can choose to go to varied locations and look at the views as the combatants would have seen them.

- iii. Third, the VSRs are not only exportable (like some VSRs of the past), they are also downloadable, and thus more accessible to the Army and other services.

**II. Korean War Staff Rides Overview:** The staff ride should be tailored to fit the audience. Below is an overview of the level of discussions in the three Korean War VSRs.

**a. Combat Action Korea - the Lost Patrol VSR:**

- i. This staff ride was initially designed for a ROTC audience. It deals primarily with the tactical actions at platoon and company level.
- ii. However, a battalion audience could easily focus the discussion to fit their leadership development requirements.

**b. The Battle of Chipyong-ni VSR:**

- i. This staff ride primarily focuses on the actions of the 23d Regimental Combat Team (RCT) at the Battle of Chipyong-ni. (the equivalent to a Brigade Combat Team)
- ii. The 23d RCT was fulfilling a United Nations Eight Army mission to guard the right flank of an adjacent corps. This guard mission allows the discussion to be focused to meet the leadership development requirements for a division level staff.

**c. The 2d Infantry Division at the Battles of Wonju and Chipyong-ni:**

- i. This staff ride focuses on the actions of the 2d US Infantry Division at Chipyong-ni and Wonju.
- ii. The discussion can be focused to meet the leadership development requirements for a corps level staff.

**d. Each of three Korean War folders contains the following material:**

- i. Instructor and student material
  - 1. Fact Sheet: A brief description of the staff ride
  - 2. Student Readings (Student instructions and preliminary study material)
  - 3. The Walk-Book (Instructor notes)
  - 4. Visuals (PPT Slides)
- ii. VBS3 Terrain Instructions

### III. VSR basics.

#### a. Definitions.

- i. **Virtual Terrain.** The 3D terrain projected to the front of the classroom. This is the primary tool used to bring the battlefield into the classroom.
- ii. **Stand.** The field study phase of a VSR is divided into stands. Stands represent a point (or a route) on the ground where a significant event occurred. The stands are usually discreet chronological or thematic breaks in the course of the ride. At each stand the instructor facilitates a discussion of the significant event specific to that stand.
- iii. **Virtual View.** A point on the ‘ground’ in the virtual terrain used to stop and discuss the battle. There can be many virtual views within a single stand in a VSR. The term is used in the instructor notes to help synchronize the movements and views in the terrain with the historical material being discussed.
- iv. **Instructor Notes / Walk-Book:** The Walk-Book is the lesson plan or instructor notes for the conduct of the staff ride. The instructor utilizes the Walk-Book as a guide through each stands. This book contains a description of the terrain, the significant events and analysis questions, which are broken up by stand.

#### b. Classroom Setup.

- i. With the need to show the participants the virtual terrain and the visuals simultaneously, the classroom requirement is to have two screen views. Thus, it is also necessary to have two computer-projector combinations, with the virtual terrain projected in the center and on the biggest screen if possible, and the visuals projected off to the right or left.
- ii. The recommended typical class size is about 30 participants or less (optimal is about 15). The smaller class size allows for increased participation and a better view of the virtual terrain for all the participants. Larger groups are possible but the staff ride instructor should understand that it will likely result in a significant decrease of discussion among the broader group of participants.



**Typical classroom set up and orientation**

- c. Personnel.
  - i. Staff Ride Instructor(s). You need at least one instructor for the Stalingrad Exportable VSR. If you want, you can have two instructors who can divide up the stands and lighten the teaching load. The instructor must be the expert on the campaign and know the workbook in depth in order to be able to conduct all phases of the staff ride. Rehearsals between the instructor and the computer operator are essential.
  - ii. VSR computer operator. This is the person who does the ‘flying’ to navigate from one view to the next. This person must be somewhat familiar with VBS3 and must practice the movements with the instructor so that the two can work together.
- IV. **Staff Ride Methodology:** A staff ride, whether it is “*Virtual*” or the more traditional “*Ground*” exercise consists of three phases: the (1) Preliminary Study Phase; the (2) Field Study Phase; and the (3) Integration Phase.
  - a. **How To Use The Preliminary Study Phase Material (Student Instructions)**
    - i. The first phase of the staff ride is the preliminary study. The preliminary study phase is the research and learning conducted by the staff ride participants to prepare themselves for the “*virtual*” visit to the battlefield. The preliminary study phase is critical to the success of the follow-on field study phase and therefore equally critical to the success of the staff ride as

a whole. If the staff ride students do not participate in the study process, then the exercise becomes more a historical battlefield tour or presentation than a staff ride.

- ii. The optimum preliminary study phase combines individual study, lecture, and group discussion. The study instructions provide specific guidance on how to divide the staff ride participants into groups, and what they should read and study. The goal is to create mini-experts on particular subtopics within the staff ride. This will promote lively discussion and divergent viewpoints among participants.

**b. How To Use The Field Study Phase Material** [The Walk-Book (Instructor Notes) and Visuals]

- i. The second phase of the staff ride is the field study and it is this phase that most readily distinguishes the staff ride from other forms of systematic historical study. The field study phase is the visit to the “*virtual*” battlefield and the discussion of key events on the “*virtual*” terrain where those actions took place. An integral part of the discussion is how the terrain effected the actions and decisions in the battle. The purpose of the field study phase is to gain an understanding of selected historical events, to analyze the significance of those events, and to derive relevant lessons for professional development.
- ii. The Walk-Book is the instructor’s primary document for the conduct of each of the staff ride stands. The stand descriptions or discussions are the core the Staff Ride field phase. Each stand is set up in a standard format to assist the instructor in the conduct of the virtual field study. There are the directions for movements in the virtual terrain, which are highlighted in yellow, and instructions for the use of the visual aids, which are highlighted in blue.
- iii. **Visuals:** This introductory portion of the stand overview the visuals used during the stand. It may also identify if the stand has any handouts.
  - 1. The remainder of the stand follows an *Orientation, Description, Analysis* format (ODA).
    - a. **Orientation:** The orientation provides specific information for the stand. It helps the instructor ensure that the students understand where they are on the ground, and where they are chronologically in the discussion.

- b. **Description**: The description provides guidance on how to facilitate a discussion of the key events associated with the ground that is being stood upon or observed.
- c. **Analysis**: The analysis offers questions or issues to consider related to the stand's discussion. The instructor and unit leadership should feel free to add additional analysis questions that are specific to their unit. The key is strive for critical thinking and get the students to look at the 'how' and 'why' of the events being discussed.

**Note:** The ODA format is a flexible model. There may be more than one orientation in a single stand, as well as multiple descriptions and analysis points.

iv. **How to conduct the Orientation:**The Virtual Staff Ride *Virtual Orientation* is broken into two parts:

1. ***Orientation to the Situation***: Usually the first visual of the stand is used to present the background events/information needed to focus the students on the stand.
2. ***Orientation to the Terrain*** (using the Virtual Terrain) which presents all the relevant terrain and should be tied to the Maps that are provided. The ***Terrain Orientation*** occurs when the Virtual Terrain is first presented, and can also be executed anywhere the instructor feels he/she needs to keep the student oriented.

v. **How to conduct the Description:**

1. A key element of the Description is the utilization of "***Visuals***" for each stand.
  - a. These maps, pictures, and diagrams are used to guide or enhance the discussion. These PowerPoint "***Visuals***" are animated, to present the events in a chronological order, and assist both the instructor and student in movement/placement of units/vehicles/personnel.
  - b. The PowerPoint "***Buils***" or "***Actions***" on the animated slides are IAW the stands narrative and help the instructor to facilitate the discussion in an organized manner. These actions are either important bullets or represent the

movement of units/vehicles/personnel, and need to be carefully studied prior to the conduct of the staff ride.

2. One of the most important part of the Description is the “**Virtual View**” or the movement through the virtual terrain. As stated earlier, an integral part of the discussion is how the terrain effected the actions and decisions in the battle.
  - a. Whenever possible, first show terrain and movement on the “*Visuals*” and then switch the discussion to the virtual terrain.
  - b. The Walk-Book provides basic instructions for the “**Virtual View**” and “**Virtual Movement.**” This sometimes includes a visual representation of the movements that must be made through the Virtual Terrain and a screen shot to help the instructor and computer operator to identify the correct stand location.
  - c. These movements are recommended as the best/quickest way to navigate the terrain, but instructors are free to adjust these movements to their teaching style. It is also encouraged to move around each virtual view as the discussion warrants. (the students may ask questions that can be best answered by looking at different views)
  - d. It is important that the instructor and computer operator establish commands that can be used between the instructor and the controller. The intent of these movements are to create smooth moves in the Virtual Terrain and give the students a clear picture of the events. Attempt to avoid either choppy or extreme (leaving the focus of the event) movements that will distract from the presentation.
  
3. **Vignettes:** Most Description discussions also includes vignettes: The vignettes are usually human interest stories that may be used to illustrate the face of battle, show the humor or the pathos of warfare, or elicit some other reaction from the students. The vignette can be interspersed at various locations within the stand as appropriate (or sometimes at the end for a more powerful effect). Vignettes usually come from a primary account (letters, diaries, memoirs, etc.). There is no requirement to use all the vignettes provided. The instructor can pick and choose those that seem most appropriate for supporting the direction of the group’s discussion.

c. **How to conduct the Integration**

- i. No matter how detailed the preliminary study or how carefully crafted the “*virtual*” field study, a truly successful staff ride requires a third and final phase. This integration phase is a formal or informal opportunity for students and instructors to reflect jointly upon their staff ride experience. It is important to keep in mind that the integration phase is *not* an AAR of the ride itself (i.e., ways to improve the ride). Instead, the integration phase is the closing discussion of the staff ride and the opportunity for the students to integrate their preliminary study with the fieldwork to gain insights that are relevant to their current duties and enhance their overall professional development.
- ii. One method that often produces a fruitful integration phase is to conduct the session in three parts based on three broad questions. Sometimes, the leader need only present the general question and let others carry the conversation, or the leader may have to ask more follow-up questions to prod the discussion. Each of the three questions is discussed below.
  1. **What aspects of the campaign and battle had you developed in the preliminary study phase that changed or were strongly reinforced because of your study of the ground?**
  2. **What aspects of warfare have changed and what aspects have remained the same since the Korean War battles at Chipyong-ni?**
  3. **What insights can the modern military professional gain from the study of the battles at Chipyong-ni?**

V. **Exportable VSR contents.**

- a. There are links on the Korean War VSRs page of the Army University Press website that contain the products (materials) needed to conduct the staff ride.
- b. Korean War VSRs Introduction. This link contains the document you are currently reading. Please finish this entire introduction before accessing other materials. This will help you better understand the products.
- c. Virtual Battlespace 3 Instructions. The Korean War VSRs run off the Army’s games-for-training platform, VBS3. Only a government employee on a CAC enabled computer can download the program. Linked are step-by-step instructions on how to access the Army’s Milgaming site and how to complete the necessary steps to download VBS3. Also included are instructions on how to download the Korean War VSRs terrain and model files from the Milgaming VBS repository for upload into VBS3.