

Military Review

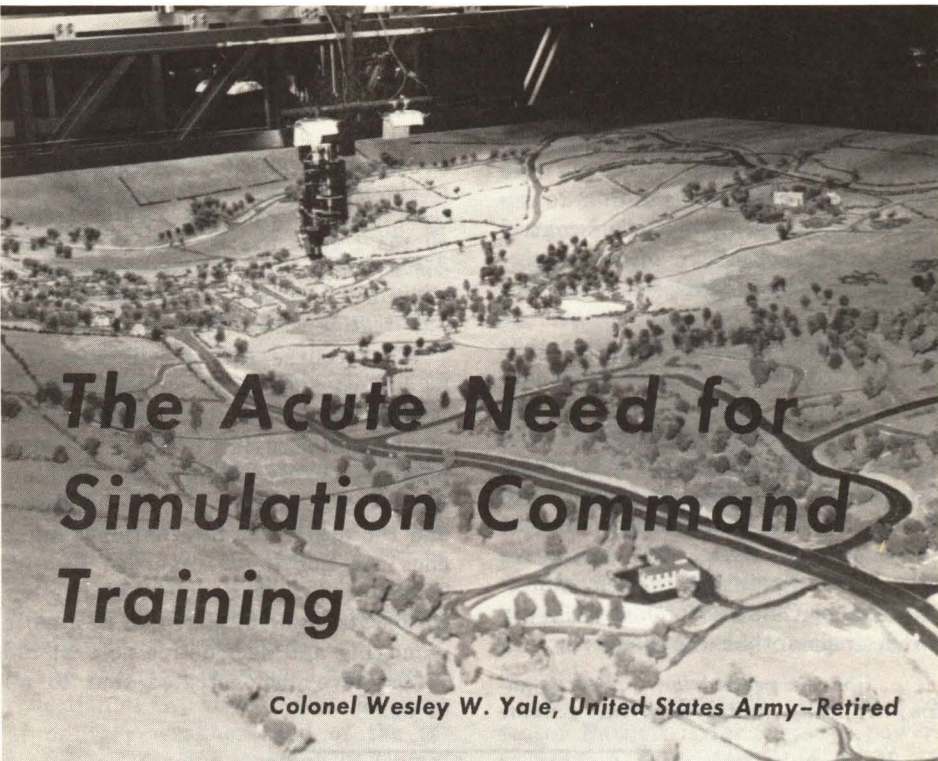
Adjutant General's Office
Washington 7. Mar. 1827.

Orders:

December 1972



1. The Military Post at
Council Bluffs, and the
6th Regiment, and the
Jefferson
2. ...
Infantry, with
will ascend
a point on
top of the
of twenty
The with
judgements
of a permanent
being chosen
the troops of his
temporary quarters
modations of four companies. This movement
will be made as early as the convenience of
the service will permit.



The Acute Need for Simulation Command Training

Colonel Wesley W. Yale, United States Army-Retired

"THE commander goes where he can best control the action." This was the advice once handed out by the training manuals. Strangely, no voices were heard to ask, "And where in the hell is that?"

As if in answer, a brigadier general, participating in a post-Korea maneuver, was charged with the leadership of a combined arms task force. He went to his close friend, the maneuver director, asking:

George, what am I supposed to do with this outfit? I've spent nearly all my service in personnel management. I don't know the first thing about commanding tactical troops!

A division commander, a brilliant graduate of the US Army War College and a firm believer in the chain of command, set his staff to developing written plans for the next phase of action during a mobile combat exer-

cise. He apparently thought of a division in terms of a field army or army group. Locked in his command post and sure that written combat orders would solve everything, he was at the end of a reporting chain that caused his every decision to be a matter of too little too late.

More remarkably, General Fritz Bayerlein, although steeped in the tactics of the blitz, more or less made Bastogne a present to the 101st Airborne Division by being in the wrong place at the wrong time and by simply sitting tight while the bad news filtered through that he also was too late with too little.

All these gentlemen had read the books and could, accurately, be called accomplished theoretical tacticians. They could be expected to receive high marks for a staff college map problem. In the field, however, when the chips

were down, they could not take the physical steps necessary to ensure prompt reaction to changing conditions.

There are, unfortunately, many examples of General Patton's quote of the ageless dictum that a poor plan well executed will usually defeat a good plan poorly executed. Patton well knew that battles are won primarily by timely execution. In that same vein, Napoleon probably lost Waterloo many weeks before the battle itself when his great Chief of Staff, Berthier, died and took the matchless Napoleonic command and control system with him. That system had done so much to bring about nearly flawless execution.

Inherent in the execution of any plan is recognition of the fact that all eventualities cannot be anticipated. Unexpected changes are normal, emphasizing the importance of careful and forceful supervision of the planned action especially during the battle itself. The great commanders of history were all supervisors. They went out, they pushed and pulled, they knew well that success is won, not by troops in prime condition, but by the debris of an organization strained and shaken by the shock of action.

The art of tactical control is, therefore, more than a study. It rests on practice. Just as an artist cannot paint a picture solely by reading books about Michelangelo, a commander cannot train himself by reading about the great captains.

The control of battle is more a matter of techniques than of tactics—the positioning of the commander at various stages of action, the organization and use of a mobile staff, the measures needed to ensure precise timing of fire support with maneuver and the

correct and timely use of ground and air command transport. In addition, perhaps obviously, there must be physical familiarity with the tools of control such as radio and computer input/output display. Less obviously, there is a vital need to understand the organization of communications and communications personnel, to the end that the commander is not snowed under by trivia, but, rather, works only with essential, decisionmaking information.

This last was the secret of the Napoleon-Berthier team. The Little Corporal got from Berthier only the salient facts. Unhappily, the way Berthier did this has never been recorded; one may imagine a commander of today saying, "any damned fool could be a Napoleon if he didn't have to contend with endless reports and mountains of hogwash!"

In any event, the great tragedy of today is the shrinking supply of tactical leadership. A recent study by the Pentagon's Systems Analysis Office showed that Vietnam casualty rates in US battalions commanded by tyros ran 20 percent higher than in those led by experienced officers. That is an unacceptable rate. Meanwhile, *Government Executive* forecasts that, in 10 years, all of our combat-experienced generals will have retired. Moreover, emphasis is now being placed on "management" rather than on success in battle as a criterion for promotion.

Naturally, the restoration or development of leadership, oriented toward the most probable type of future warfare, is a matter of gravest concern. We are emerging, hopefully, from a period of trial in Vietnam which has divided the country and has denigrated, most unfairly, the military profession. Many veterans of Vietnam have been accustomed to think in



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terms of jungle-type combat, accompanied by requirements to consider political implications at relatively low levels. They tend to think of future war being along these lines.

Most analysts agree that ground combat training should focus on combat in Europe, the mid-East or even the Continental United States, fought under conditions of nuclear threat if not actual nuclear employment. This presupposes wide deployments, requirements for rapid assembly and dispersal, very close coordination of massive fires, and, withal, unprecedented demands on mobile leadership.

Many complain that this is just a warmed over concept of World War II. They are wrong. It may be true that mobility will be restored, but the similarity ends there. Every characteristic of mobile battle will be enormously enhanced; the location of command posts in buildings with countless strands of wire running in and out will be most unwise. Control

means, like everything else, will have to be mobile.

In discussing the development of leadership, the very serious obstacles which exist cannot be discounted.

In addition to the specialized appreciation of battle environment on the part of veterans of Asiatic wars, the continuing lack of command opportunity must be recognized. There are comparatively few commands available for the host of prospective commanders who are eligible and willing, but who may have been handicapped, like the brigadier general mentioned earlier, by previous noncombat assignments.

Personnel policies have created an unacceptable degree of instability. The frequent rotation of commanders has had baleful effect. Surveys taken after the Korean War showed that morale was a function of good officer-enlisted relationships and of "pride in unit." None of this is possible with rapid personnel turnovers. The team

aspect so indispensable either in training or combat is unattainable.

Training areas are inadequate. Bases are given over mainly to target ranges. The several square miles needed for tactical exercises, even at company level, are simply not available.

Training literature is essentially blank when it comes to outlining command techniques. Just one book exists on the Napoleonic system of command, and that in French. Nathan Bedford Forrest's biographies only hint at his copying of the Napoleonic system. Patton's methods are mostly in the heads of his former associates although his yet unpublished papers may prove helpful. Moshe Dayan's diary has but a few sparse comments to suggest the Israeli system.

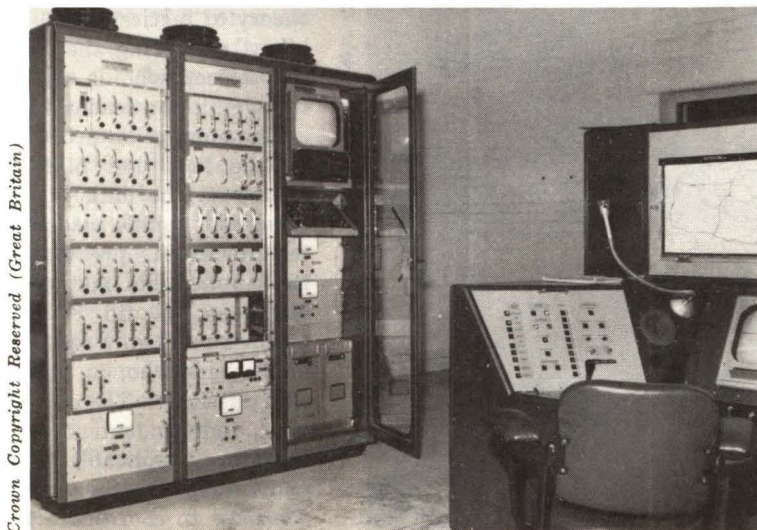
Our staff schools emphasize staff training and deal with only the inspirational aspects of leadership. It is questionable whether the student grasps the fact that "knowing the job" rests largely on techniques and

that this knowledge goes far to guarantee that troops will be inspired by the best means of all—namely, success.

Similarly, training programs are beamed at individual training. Somehow, we seldom get around to the unit training that is so important to the development of the military team.

An inexperienced commander wastes his own time and that of the unit. His mistakes cannot help but impair his reputation and his own confidence in his abilities. The most forceful character, if he is intelligent, becomes diffident in executing the unfamiliar.

Most of these obstacles to effective leadership training have been recognized in the report of the Dynamic Training Board recently convened at Fort Benning, Georgia, to revitalize training in the light of the challenge posed by possible future war. Among the recommendations made to the board, by General I. D. White, who acted as a consultant, was that greater



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consideration be given to the development of simulation techniques for training tactical commanders.

Simulation training is a proven technique, especially as it relates to inculcating correct actions and physical reactions in the trainee. The Link Trainer for aircraft pilots has been in use for many years. The astronauts trained on mockups of space and moon vehicles for hours on end. At the US Army Armor School, good results were obtained from the Miniature Armor Battlefield (MAB) developed by Dr. R. A. Baker of the Human Resources Research Organization. This device employed radio-controlled toy tanks that could be maneuvered over a very large terrain board while tank and tank-platoon commanders issued real time orders to meet realistic mo-

bile situations. Realism was accompanied by stress so that "graduates" of the MAB proved able to compete in the field with officers of many more years' experience.

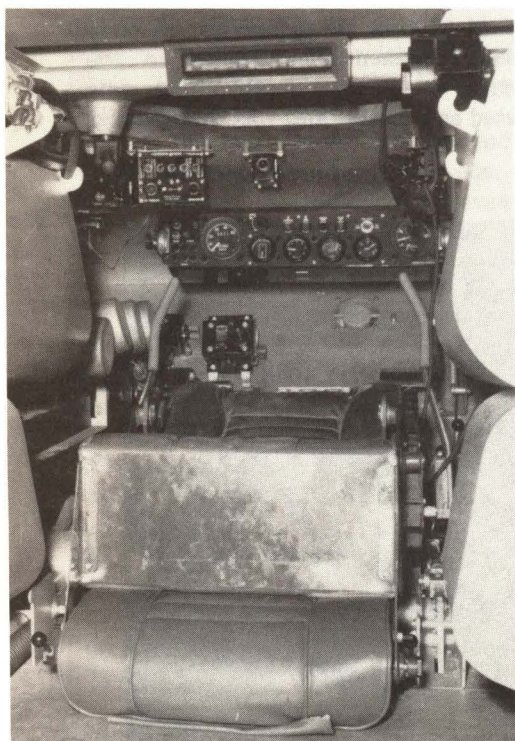
At the US Army Infantry School, the Combat Arms Tactical Training Simulator (CATTS) subjects a student to realistic tactical situations viewed from a mockup aerial command post poised over a spacious terrain board. The training is aimed at the brigade task force level and seeks to implant an appreciation of tactical requirements during a moving situation.

Both the Navy and Marine Corps have developed highly sophisticated electronic simulation devices for command training.

Valuable as these tools are, they do not get to the root of the command-control problem. To repeat, it is not so much tactical training that is neglected as it is the methods or techniques of exercising command.

Leadership requirements are greatest at the battalion and brigade task force level. Here, the prospective leader is a field officer schooled in the theory of tactics without, in all probability, mastering the techniques. It is this officer who is the prime target for simulation leadership training.

The simulation process is simplified by the fact that historical analysis, sparse as the data is, indicates that the great mobile leaders used similar techniques. As previously noted, Patton applied his methods to those of Napoleon, as did Forrest. The Emperor emulated Frederick the Great and others who, in turn, had studied Genghis Khan. The pattern is, in principle, independent of technology and, therefore, applicable to past, present and future. In other words, the methods used to coordinate a flight of ar-



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Armor



rows with the charge of chariots differ only in degree from coordinating an airmobile assault with artillery, tac-air and gunships.

To teach techniques at the battalion-brigade level, it would be necessary to duplicate a modern command post in a room or van, with the usual furnishings of radio, computer display maps and furniture. The room or van would feature mockups of a command vehicle and a command aircraft contained in cubicles for those occasions when a commander leaves his command post to reconnoiter, make staff visits or observe action at a key point.

The trainee would be given both visual and aural sensing of the progress of an engagement by closed-circuit television or movie screens. Four instructor-operators would impersonate different members of the staff or senior and junior commanders. From time to time, they would enter the plan either in person or by radio.

This setup would enable the trainee to be exposed to a series of stress situations conforming to a scenario

and running through all phases of a mobile tactical battle.

The training session visualized would include some four hours of practical instruction, preceded by individual study of background literature.

The most notable feature of the session would be the absence, with one or two exceptions, of any requirement for the trainee to make tactical decisions. The emphasis is on techniques, not tactics.

Accordingly, the scenario would be geared to two types of decisionmaking. First, what *tactical* dispositions should be made progressively and, second, what *actions* should be taken by the commander and staff to cope with changing conditions? The latter forms the training objective.

In keeping with modern simulation techniques, the trainee would be given a series of cards which contain two or more options: either what should be done tactically or what should be done procedurally. After an option was selected, the instructors would

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discuss the pros and cons of each option, but insist on an instructor-selected option or a scenario-selected option. This choice would permit the action to proceed without the proliferation of options which cause dynamic war games at the battalion level to get out of umpire control. The trainee could acquire both tactical and procedural knowledge.

Since one of the most important aspects of simulation training is the introduction of visual and aural realism, fortified with conditions of real stress, much depends upon the realistic quality of sight and sound effects. The trainee would attend a conference and see and hear it via closed-circuit television with actors portraying corps and division commanders. He could go on a command visit to a subordinate; stepping into the cubicle simulating a command vehicle while the screen shows scenes along the route, culminating in a sight and sound report from the junior commander complete with a battle scene of film clips.

Stress would be introduced by presenting some of the problems and frustrations that commonly beset a commander—staff mistakes, weather problems, lack of progress by key

units, interruptions and harassment by senior commanders, faulty intelligence, disruption of fire support timing and logistical failures. It would be a hard four-hour session.

The necessary facility would be relatively inexpensive. Much, of course, would depend upon the competence of the instructors who must keep the scenario moving by acting as person-to-person staff officers or as remote staff or command personnel addressing the trainee by radio. These would preferably be civilians or retired officers with ample experience in actual command at the level under study. Otherwise, the effort fails because of the very personnel instability it is designed to correct.

The Army is facing a critical leadership crisis. There are real and perhaps insurmountable bars to the development of commanders at senior levels. Simulation training in command methods could provide a solution under current conditions.

The concept is only in the embryonic stage. It will take careful and prolonged study by officers experienced in the command-control field for final development. But it promises great results at small cost.

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