

Combat Training Centre Live

Fight to Win Papers

Enabling Army's Junior Leaders and Small Teams

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Email: <u>lavctcregistry@dpe.protected.mil.au</u> Web: <u>www.army.gov.au/</u> "To look at old facts through new glasses, then to make use of the facts in order to gain a better understanding of those glasses – that, after all is just what makes history worthwhile." – Martin Van Creveld

Foreword

To Army's teams,

At the Combat Training Centre-Live (CTC-Live) we partner with teams to improve their performance in advanced collective warfighting and inculcate a fight to win mindset. For small teams through to battle groups, fight to win relies on being able to visualise the battlespace, communicate the plan, create opportunities, and execute your decisions quicker than the enemy. While 2020 has presented all of us with many challenges, the staff at CTC-Live have pursued alternate methods to continue our partnerships and promote the fight to win mindset.

To that end, these papers have been written by the staff at Combat Training Centre-Live as a primer to aide in the professional development of Army's leaders from small team to combat team. Army's teams are at their best when they operate with trust, reliability, common understanding of capability, and clear articulation of intent. Within that system, our teams require training, preparation, and leadership to be most effective in the Ready Now context. These papers, published as an accompaniment to the annual CTC Trends Report, highlight many of the guiding principles found in our own doctrine, sometimes too easily dismissed or forgotten.

As a leader, you must be armed with the understanding of how your leadership style, tenacity, and drive can create opportunities on the battlefield for your commander 1 and 2 up. Equally, you must be aware how poor preparation, the lack of discipline, and the failure to reinforce the small things impacts the system to which you belong, ultimately handing the hard won initiative back to the enemy. We owe it to those who have gone before us, and those who will follow us, to continue to learn, develop, and be ready.

Fight to win,

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Combat Training Centre

Ready Now – Team Culture



FIGHT TO WIN

How do you improve our competitive advantage?



Fight to Win – Battle Procedure

by CAPT Dylan Shimeld

Battle procedure, a term often used interchangeably with battle preparation, is generally articulated as preliminary and concurrent actions undertaken by a force to save time and set the conditions for success. Thorough battle procedure should be conducted before, during and after an engagement to enable decision superiority and influence the outcome of battle. Due to the extensive, yet task specific nature of battle procedure, components vary in importance. It is to be acknowledged that modernisation evolves the character of war, yet the physical, technical and critical aspects of lessons learnt, reconnaissance, and rehearsals remain enduring. The Battle of Amiens in 1918,

and the fall of France in 1940 are two historical examples which support this.

The Battle of Amiens was one of the most catastrophic defeats of the German forces during WWI, morally dislocating the German Army and triggering the '100 days

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and triggering the '100 days Figure 1 Gen Sir W.H Rawlinson to victory' for the Allies in 1918.¹ (Front) with Senior 4th Army Staff

King, The Western Front Diaries, 2008, 475

Sir Henry Rawlinson of the British 4th Army and Australian Corps commander John Monash orchestrated a devastating attack on the German forces. The German forces culminated at Amiens following their massive but largely unsuccessful spring offensive, leaving them dislocated from their lines of communication, depleted, and without rest. Refusing to relent ground, the German high command reinforced Amiens with eight divisions of



Figure 2 Gen Sir J. Monash KCB VD

second line troops with little-to-no battle experience, training, or equipment.²

The Allies recognised an opportunity and launched an offensive to exploit the German vulnerabilities. Relying heavily on secrecy, the Allies pre-positioned personnel and conducted reconnaissance to identify targetable flaws in the German defences, along with the majority of their artillery positions.³ Australian and Canadian forces were experienced fighters and were well-versed in the capability and limitations of armour. The Allies leveraged their experiences gained from Hamel, creating one of the first, albeit rudimentary, virtual simulated training activities.⁴ Using makeshift armour assets, and generating a

² von Bose, The Catastrophe of 8 August 1918, 2019, 72, 98

³ Ibid., 106

⁴ Ekins, 1918 Year of Victory: The End of the Great War and the Shaping of History, 2010, 141

detailed plan to integrate artillery, the commanders and teams were able to practice effective combined arms manoeuvre. Monash and Rawlinson rehearsed different movement styles, eventually leapfrogging their infantry and armour, under artillery and air support, to the German front lines. The defeat of the German forces and the success of the Allied action can be directly attributed to the efficacy of this battle procedure.

Twenty two years later, German forces invaded Belgium in May 1940. The neutral Belgian forces were vastly underprepared for the invasion, relying on a native reserve force which was postured for defence on the basis of German WWI offensive manoeuvre.⁵ The German occupation of Belgium placed them in a strategically significant position, dominating the northern European front and within striking distance of France and Great Britain. As the Allies raced to Belgium to halt the German advance, they intercepted the initial German plan, requiring the German forces to adopt an alternate course of action. The Allies considered this an early victory and, as the newer Allied tanks outnumbered the German forces by almost two to one, the Allies were confident in their position. Yet the Germans, despite having older capabilities, out manoeuvred the Allied forces en-route to France.

The German's pre-war rehearsals proved and hardened their communications, allowing them to reconsolidate dislocated forces and maintain pressure during their offensive. They created detailed SOPs for combined arms team manoeuvre, which they rehearsed as a matter of course.⁶ The Germans

⁵ Cohen and Gooch, Military Misfortunes: The Anatomy of Failure in War, 2006, 217

⁶ Ripley, The Wehrmacht: The German Army in World War II, 1939-1945, 2003, 219

generated tempo during their advance through the use of aerial reconnaissance, identifying maintenance and resupply points, along with Allied defensive positions. Capitalising on this momentum, the Germans exploited the Allies poor understanding of the effectiveness of tanks in a combined arms environment. Having adapted from WWI, the Germans massed firepower and overwhelmed the slow-to-react Allied force.⁷ The Allied communications were archaic, often taking up to 48 hours for commands to arrive at the executive unit.⁸ The German forces, on the other hand, generated tempo through the forward positioning of their command and a common understanding of their SOPs, giving them the ability to exploit fleeting opportunities.⁹ The German combined armour, infantry, and air support flanked the Allied positions, and in just six weeks, France surrendered.¹⁰

Both these case studies reflect that battle procedure is not only an essential precursor to battle, but one which, at times, is often overlooked. The efficacy of each force's battle procedure had significant impacts on the outcome of the battles, especially noting the requirement to quickly adjust plans or exploit fleeting opportunities. Whilst the importance of various readiness or sustainability components of battle procedure vary greatly between tasks, the ability to adopt lessons learnt, prioritise reconnaissance, and conduct rehearsals is always critical.¹¹

9 Nord, France 1940, 96

⁷ Cohen and Gooch, 200, 210-211

⁸ Frieser, Blitzkriege-Legende. Der Westfeldzug 1940, 2012, 408

Blumenson, Invasion 1944: Die Landung in Frankreigh. Die Bedeutung des westeuropaischen Kriegsschauplatzes fur die amerikanische Pilitik und Kriegsfuhrung. In: Umbreit, Hans (Hrsg.), 1998, 17

¹¹ SIB Volume 2, Battalion/Company Operations. paras 14-17

The Allies at Amiens adapted their tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) following lessons learnt from previous battles, and they conducted rehearsals during the preparatory stages of the battle specifically designed for the composition of Allied forces. They conducted Rehearsal of Concept (ROC) drills, as well as small scale combined arms rehearsals, using the limited assets they had on hand. These rehearsals enabled the soldiers and commanders on the ground to anticipate and react swiftly to enemy action, gaining time and enabling decision superiority for the Allied commanders.

The ingenuity of the Allies at Amiens to integrate simulated tanks into their rehearsals when armour assets were unavailable enabled Allied soldiers to understand not only their position in relation to the armour in all stages of the battle, but also their commanders' intent. This generated momentum and allowed the exploitation of multiple fleeting opportunities at the lowest level. The addition of rehearsing small-scale movement techniques, designed to be part of a larger force, enabled the Allies to generate tempo, overwhelming and outmanoeuvring the German forces. The leapfrogging and integration of infantry and armour assets enabled the Allies to generate and maintain tempo, outpacing the German decision cycle.

Recurring maintenance problems in Allied tanks caused friction, however the Allies' rehearsals, concurrent planning, and coordination enabled them to continue the battle by adjusting their manoeuvre to fit the changing situation. Finally, early aerial surveillance enabled the Allies to identify targetable vulnerabilities, namely the majority of the German gun positions prior to the battle. The Allies then advanced under accurate H-hour fires, which targeted and suppressed the German artillery positions. These limited aspects of battle procedure enabled the Allies to achieve decision superiority over the Germans.

In 1940, early interdiction of the German battle plan made the Allies overconfident, which resulted in the Allies adopting a single course of action and neglecting to rehearse contingencies. Unaware of the German TTPs, the Allies retained their original doctrine from WWI, and, in the absence of orders, reverted to defensive techniques which handed the initiative to the German forces.¹² Although forward of their lines of communication and supply, the German reconnaissance generated tempo through the identification of resupply points, expediting the maintenance and refuelling of the tanks. The German rehearsals not only enabled them to initiate a successful alternate course of action. but also allowed them to test and prove their communications. This preparation enhanced the delivery of orders and battlefield commentary, enabling the tactical commander to visualise the battlespace and react much quicker than the Allies.¹³ The decision superiority generated by these actions enabled the German forces to mass firepower and outmanoeuvre the underprepared Allied forces.¹⁴

It was the battle procedure the Germans conducted throughout the offensive that led them to a speedy victory.¹⁵ The evolution of SOPs for combined arms teams and incorporating this into

¹² Kier, Imagining War: French and British Military Doctrine between the Wars, 2017, 111-112

¹³ Nord, 95

¹⁴ Kier, 109

¹⁵ Cohen and Gooch, 206-207

training enabled subordinate elements to take the initiative and outmanoeuvre the Allied forces, generating decision superiority for the German command. The German forces adapted their training from their lessons learnt through WWI, focussing their rehearsals on generating tempo and overwhelming Allied forces. The generation of tempo through reconnaissance was well understood by the Germans, with the Luftwaffe flying nearly double the sorties of the French forces, enabling recon pull and generating further decision superiority.¹⁶

Sources of learning and adaption in the ADF include the After Action Review, Post Activity Reporting, and Operational Analysis to name but a few. The information drawn from these sources is recorded and made readily available through publications such as the CTC Trends Report and CAL's Smart Soldier. This information is used to change or develop SOPs and TTPs, which in turn informs Reality Based Training, Mission Specific Training, and force generation training and preparation more broadly. In line with this, the ADF provides live, virtual, and constructive environments to better prepare forces for any number of contingencies. Historical events are still relevant in identifying best practice and informing new learning. Current trends, and the examples drawn from The Battle of Amiens in 1918 and the fall of France in 1940, denote for good battle procedure the effects of individual and team preparation, decentralising command and control, thorough reconnaissance, and sustainment.17

16 Nord, 96

17

Combat Training Centre, Trends Report 2018, 2018, 33. See also Combat Training Centre, Performance Trends 2019, 2019, 11

Trends Reports also highlight that ROC drills, along with rehearsals, need to be mission specific in order to be relevant and test potential friction points.¹⁸ While a well-rehearsed and tactically-sound force is able to test and adjust post-H, the effect that thorough battle procedure has on a force's ability to create opportunities in battle should not be ignored. As the historical case studies demonstrate, failure to properly implement battle procedure, both with regard to forward planning and learning and adaption, can negatively impact mission outcomes. As battle procedure incorporates numerous

actions, commanders need to weigh the importance of each action and the disparate effects it generates. A contemporary example is the frequent lack of emphasis placed on the Digital Theatre Gateway, a key element in modern battle procedure. Digital Theatre Gateways enable a force to test and prove not only their ability to communicate effectively, but also by testing and rehearsing during the grouping/re-grouping



Figure 3 ROC Drill - EX TS19

and initial entry to theatre stages, establishes a baseline for reporting, battle-tracking and the general serviceability of critical capabilities.

The Australian Army has recognised the need to modernise its approach to conflict, regardless of its character. Army in

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Australian Army, LWP-CA (MTD CBT) 3-3-1, Mounted Minor Tactics, 2019, 71

Motion encourages commands to allow processes to evolve with current and future conflict, blending into the concept of Accelerated Warfare. As the Australian Army continues modernisation efforts, there is an exponential requirement for technical competence in a digitally enhanced force. This requirement generates a training liability due to the everchanging nature of digitisation. It also adds modern complexity to historically standard preparations through the inclusion of a digital 'handshake' before a modern force commences an activity, by way of the Digital Theatre Gateway. Being Ready Now means that effective battle procedure is cyclical, increasing and decreasing in intensity to meet specific targets or outcomes. Well planned and executed battle procedure enables good decision-making. The use of simulation, reflection, and assessment can be put to good effect in terms of training for real-world outcomes, demonstrating how adaptive training and adaptive soldiering in barracks links with good battle procedure. Effective battle procedure on an exercise or on operations includes incorporating lessons learnt, thorough reconnaissance, mission-specific ROC drill and rehearsals, which in turn will enable decision superiority and set conditions for mission success.

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Fight to Win – Communicating the Plan

by CAPT James Woodcock-Smith

Operation Compass in 1940-1941 in the western desert of Egypt and Cyrenaica, as well as Operation AI-Fajr in 2004 in Fallujah, provide excellent case studies where methods of communication ensure the enemy's weakness is understood and targeted while avoiding enemy strengths. In these examples, communicating a plan effectively means conducting rehearsals, establishing mission command, and circulating on the battlefield. In doing so, commanders can exploit opportunities presented to them because effective communication of the plan enables reconnaissance pull.

By achieving this tenant of manoeuvre, warfare commanders and their teams are ready to achieve dynamistic, speedy and cooperative actions in uncertain operating environments with technology that continues to change war's character.

Operation Compass, commanded by LtGen Richard O'Connor, was one of the first offensive actions by Allied forces in WWII. The



Figure 1 LTGEN R O'Connor

operation resulted in an outnumbered mobile Allied Western Desert Force (WDF) defeating the Italian 10th Army. O'Connor's significant success in the operation was due largely to his ability to communicate his plan through rehearsals, mission command, and battlefield circulation.

Key to the WDF's success was their construction of a mockup of enemy positions, which was built using intelligence gathered from motorised and aerial reconnaissance. O'Connor's communication and reinforcement of the plan during rehearsals on these mock positions ensured that subordinate elements knew the likely disposition of the enemy in Nibeiwa and where to target weaknesses.¹ A shared understanding was also established between the combat arms as a result of the rehearsals, as armour, infantry, and artillery units manoeuvring together could ensure that the WDF was able to maintain momentum in the attack and exploit the opportunities of effective reconnaissance and combined arms.²

Mission command espoused by O'Connor facilitated the effective communication of his plans. Shared intent between him and subordinates was an ideal replicated throughout the chain of command, and mission-oriented orders were the standard often required due to limited direct communications post-H hour.³ Plus, the development of shared procedures allowed collocated RAF and WDF headquarters to employ capabilities

Latimer, Operation Compass 1940, Wavell's Whirlwind Offensive, 1 2000.29 2 Bierwirth, Beda Fomm: an Operational Analysis, 1994, 52. See also Wahlert, The Western Desert Campaign 1940-41, 2011, 169 3

Wahlert, 167 & 59

more effectively.⁴ Motorised and mechanised ground forces exercised this with direct coordination of air support against Italian forces.⁵ Commonly understood information



Figure 3 Modern Ward and Treatment

requirements ensured reconnaissance patrols from different elements identified the weakest areas for combined arms advance.⁶ Additionally, the WDF's understanding of their commander's intent to cut off and destroy allowed them to rout the Italian 10th Army in the vicinity of Beda Fomm.⁷

O'Connor's subordinate elements leading the advance against enemy positions were often briefed face-to-face before the commencement of their offensive actions. O'Connor achieved this coordination by ranging the battlefield and applying himself to the main effort to ensure support effects were coordinated and understood.⁸ His willingness and ability to push forward ensured that divisional commanders were delivered current information in order to exploit opportunities.⁹ Before attacks on Bardia and Tobruk, he issued his commander's intent and

6 Latimer, 44

⁴ Bierwirth, 84-85

⁵ Cave, Operation COMPASS: the Australian Army's first experience of manoeuvre warfare in World War 2, 2008, 63

⁷ Bierwirth, 68

⁸ Barnett, The Desert Generals 1983, 38

⁹ Bierwirth, 55

guidelines face-to-face, resulting in successful deliberate assaults against the Italians.¹⁰

Operation Al Fajr's ground manoeuvre, commanded by MajGen Richard Natonski, was a key offensive action in retaking the city of Fallujah during the Iraq war in 2003. The 1st Marine Expeditionary Force (1MEF) cleared entrenched insurgents from a well-planned



Figure 3 LTGEN R Netonski

urban defence.¹¹ Despite being physically dislocated prior to the operation, 1MEF's planning was so in-depth that they were able to conduct extensive rehearsals upon rapidly assembling.¹² The use of warning and fragmentary orders and rehearsal of concept (ROC) drills ensured a shared understanding of the plan for Fallujah's north to south clearance.¹³ Rehearsals with attached mechanised Army commanders developed a shared understanding of how to maximise combined arms capabilities in the urban environment in order to support 1MEF's plan.¹⁴ Importantly, rehearsals were conducted at all levels, but attendance was not always achieved by flanking calls signs at the lower echelons.¹⁵

¹⁰ Wahlert, 167

¹¹ McWilliams, US Marines in Battle: Fallujah, Nov-Dec 2004, 6

¹² *Ibid.*, 12. See also Matthews, Operation AL FAJR: A Study in Army and Marine Corps Joint Operations, 2006, 19

¹³ Matthews, 23

¹⁴ Ibid., 16

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 76. See also Camp, Operation Phantom Fury: The Assault and Capture of Fallujah, 2009, 196

1MEF's ability to convey clear commander's intent for the urban clearance ensured the mechanised forces leading the assault into the city avoided dislocation because they considered control measures for the sequence of manoeuvre.¹⁶ Commanders successfully coordinated offensive support largely due to their impressive shared understanding of the fight. Synchronization of offensive support between elements was effective against hard points, ultimately enabling the initial breach into, and continuous clearance through, Fallujah.¹⁷ Crucially

commander's intent, shared understanding and synchronisation were enhanced through the established digital communications on assembly, allowing distinct groupings to coordinate in unison to support the command and control function.



Figure 4 Modern Land Interoperability Graphic

Natonski and his subordinates coordinated post-H through Blue Force Tracker, tactical chat, and radio which without their rapidly established communications theatre gateway on marrying up would have fallen short of 1 MEF's requirements. Most importantly this was enhanced through battlefield circulation between divisional, regimental, and battalion headquarters.¹⁸

- 16 McWilliams, US Marines in Battle: Fallujah, Nov-Dec 2004, 26. See also Matthews, 45.
- 17 Matthews, 22. See also McWilliams, 18.
- 18 *Ibid.*, 46. See also Camp, 233-234

Through his presence, Natonski ensured senior commanders were up to date with changes to the plan despite technological issues such as communications security (COMSEC) changeover during the operation and the issuing of regimental and divisional fragmentary orders via inaccessible communication systems. The requirements of a robust communications plan, with associated standard operating procedures, realised through battle preparation and rehearsals and into execution was reticently acknowledged by commanders post the mission.¹⁹ Regimental Combat Team (RCT) commanders held face-toface discussions with their subordinates as to changes in the manoeuvre plan and opportunities to support flanking elements.²⁰ This included employment of mechanised assets to assist dismounted elements during the clearance, and included evacuation of personnel as well. Additionally, close air support allocated between flanking elements was effective in supporting the parallel clearances as a result of senior commanders coordinating efforts.²¹

Rehearsals, mission command, and battlefield circulation are essential elements of communicating a plan regardless of the means and methods used. Rehearsals ensure everyone knows what to do at points of friction. Rehearsing reveals the issues commanders may not have considered in their planning and they allow subordinates to suggest solutions to rectify them. Key to this is including amendments to control measures, how capabilities are employed and ensuring a communications plan and supporting processes are robust. Mission command

¹⁹ Matthews, 47

²⁰ Camp, 234

²¹ Matthews, 51 & 46

ensures execution post-H is effective. Commanders must have a clear understanding of the plan and what degree of freedom of action they possess in support of the higher commander's intent. Battlefield circulation allows appreciation of the terrain and for the sharing of intelligence. These methods, especially when employed in volatile and ambiguous environments, ensure the intended actions of a commander's plan become reality. Operations Compass and AI-Fajr demonstrated how communicating the plan effectively enables reconnaissance pull against an enemy because subordinate elements can determine enemy strengths and weaknesses and how the plan intends to target those weaknesses.

O'Connor and Netonski used rehearsals effectively to communicate their plans. During Operation Compass, O'Connor's rehearsals for Nibeiwa were veiled as training exercises, without troops knowing they were going to assault Nibeiwa. And yet, the rehearsals were so effective that troops were able to seamlessly apply combined arms integration onto real terrain.²² Rehearsals ensured that, when conducting combined arms actions, elements acted in concert to identify, create, and exploit gaps rapidly. The exploitation of gaps at Nibeiwa, Bardia, and Tobruk compounded the success of Allied forces, reducing losses and preserving combat power. Over 60 years later, 1MEF ensured numerous elements came together and gained an understanding of a complex task to clear an entire city in limited time. Rehearsals allowed the Marine and Army commanders to ensure mechanised employment was effective, resulting in the rapid clearance of the city. Integration of combined arms elements were more effective when they

participated in each other's rehearsals or O-Groups. Notably, tempo of the clearance was impeded when flanking call signs did not participate in rehearsals intended to provide detailed coordination²³ Rehearsals led both forces to exploit opportunities presented to them and subsequently employed reconnaissance pull to avoid defensive strengths, creating sustained success without suffering significant losses.

Both commanders applied the pre-requisites of mission command in order to more effectively communicate their plans. Because they understood O'Connor's intent, air and ground reconnaissance forces identified weaknesses in the enemy disposition, including lack of depth, mutual-support, and observation. The shared understanding gained from this reconnaissance subsequently allowed commanders to exploit these positions. O'Connor so effectively conveyed his intent to subordinate commanders that, without coordination post-H. they adapted the plan to stop the Italians from withdrawing to Tripoli. This demonstrated a mutual trust that O'Connor had placed in his subordinates and a reliability shown in them to accomplish his intent. Common tactical doctrine shared between the WDF ensured combined arms in the assaults exploited opportunities and blocking forces denied enemy manoeuvre for withdrawal. In Fallujah, the shared understanding of control measures described in orders enabled lead mechanised elements to avoid dislocation from dismounts by reliably adjusting their manoeuvre. Likewise, the mutual trust that existed between the Marine Regimental HQs and Army mechanised units allowed them to target enemy positions in depth and reduce risk to personnel by supporting dismounted

23 Matthews, 76

manoeuvre and facilitating casualty evacuation. Mission command through shared doctrine, understanding, trust, and reliability results in reconnaissance pull when the plan is effectively communicated.

In Operation Compass and Operation Al Fair, the commanders practised battlefield circulation to great effect. Battlefield circulation resulted in a plan that was well understood throughout all levels of command. O'Connor consistently travelled to subordinate positions to ensure they understood the gaps to be exploited in the enemy plans. In one particular example, captured maps recovered from enemy positions were analysed and subsequently presented by O'Connor himself in his orders groups. This led to the probing of enemy positions to identify where the combined arms assault could penetrate.²⁴ The result was that O'Connor's subordinates were often positioned to exploit opportunities when limited communications were available.²⁵ Battlefield circulation for 1MEF in Fallujah meant priority of support and weight of effort could be re-allocated when units were in need. Command and control limitations. due to the lack of investment in the communications plan prior to H-Hour, necessitated face-to-face discussions, including on rooftops during the battle, as the plan and enemy disposition changed. Natonski's personal presence, as well as RCT commanders, amongst manoeuvring units ensured opportunities were realised and friction was overcome, such as the dynamic reallocation of close air support and tactical unmanned aerial surveillance to units. Mechanised forces were redirected post-H to support other dismounted elements and assist in

24 Wahlert, 105

25 Latimer, 73-74

casualty evacuation when suggested by tactical commanders. Commanders discussing the battle in person allowed for better battlefield visualisation and inspiration, such as the clever employment of bulldozers and tanks to demolish challenging strong points and ensure momentum was maintained. This ensured opportunities were exploited with an informed chain of command achieving a high tempo throughout the overall clearance. Decisions made before, during, and after an offensive action focused on targeting the enemy's weakness and avoiding the identified strengths, taking advantage of the fleeting opportunities that presented themselves in line with employing reconnaissance pull.

Reconnaissance pull - targeting enemy weakness, avoiding strength, and exploiting available gaps – ensures commanders consider how best to employ their force with a comprehensive and common understanding of the enemy.²⁶ It emphasises a knowledge of opportunities and when to take them. Aligned to Accelerated Warfare and in the context of being Ready Now, Army's teams should apply the principles of reconnaissance pull to understand the rapidly changing character of warfare which will present as the modern battlefield. In an environment defined by hybrid threats and decisive action, leveraging the ability to effectively communicate the plan ensures Army's teams can respond appropriately in any tactical situation. Commanders must consider the opportunities our current digital communicative technologies offer in terms of communicating a plan in a broad and timely manner. The testing of those technologies during battle preparation must also be given

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Land Warfare Doctrine 3-0 Operations, 2018, 44-45

due consideration. In addition, commanders should not be constrained to a single source of distribution, and should continue to pursue parallel forms of communication including battlefield circulation and hand written messages. In a contested multi-domain environment, the means to communicating the plan are as essential in planning as they are in the execution phase. Operation Compass and Operation Al Fajr define communicating the plan in the Ready Now context. Both case studies demonstrate that orders and rehearsals, post-H decision making with the commander's intent in mind, and the ability to conduct face-to-face coordination inculcates a mindset of creating and exploiting opportunities.

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Fight to Win – Initiative

by Captain Jacob Malouf

Tactical success in any engagement will favour the side who is able to generate some form of relative advantage or superiority and use this to strike their enemy at a place of weakness. Relative advantage is underpinned by gaining and retaining the initiative in a conflict. Having the initiative enables the commander to act – as opposed to react – in a battlespace by providing time, space and information. The initiative, therefore, provides a commander with relative advantage, most often taking the form of either material or decision superiority. Material superiority is concentrating a greater mass of combat power or effect relative to the enemy, while decision superiority is concentrating a greater rate of relative action over the enemy, otherwise known as tempo. Decision superiority is usually more effective at deciding the outcome of offensive action than material superiority. A commander that possesses the initiative, and therefore decision superiority, may advance against a more powerful opponent as they are able to compel their materially superior adversary to react defensively to a greater rate of attacks, feints, or demonstrations at the expense of the opponent's battle plan. Both material superiority and decision superiority are ways to measure who can gain the initiative, but to develop a deeper understanding of how to employ initiative, a commander must understand the inherent difficulty in obtaining

it and the ease with which it can be lost. As junior leaders in 1915 and 1991, Leutnant¹ Ernest Rommel and Captain H.R. McMaster, respectively, encountered situations where they took decisive offensive action in conflict and achieved tactical success. Both commanders used an aggressive attack to gain the initiative for their forces, which enabled their decision superiority in a situation where their enemy had material superiority.

Leutnant Ernest Rommel fought multiple battles as part of the invading Imperial German Army in France during WWI. Rommel chronicled his experiences in the 1937 book "Infanterie Greift An", which was widely read by both Allied and Axis commanders before and during WWII². Rommel discusses his actions as a company commander in a battalion attack in the Argonne Woods on 29 January 1915³. His company, the 9th Company of the 2nd Battalion, 27th Division, was attacking a position of the French defensive line as part



Figure 1 Leutnant E Rommel

of a battalion offensive. The 9th Company had exploited <u>approximately a mile past their line of departure through three</u> 2 Fraser, Knights Cross: A life of Field Marshall Erwin Rommel, 1993, 117-119 3 Rommel, Attacks (Infanterie Greift An), 1979 (1937), 48-56 major wire entanglements and defensive lines with minimal enemy resistance. At each obstacle emplacement, the enemy forces saw the advancing German infantry and withdrew, allowing the 9th Company to capture each successive defensive position. The remainder of the battalion met heavier resistance and only achieved limited success through the first defensive line. Rommel identified and occupied a strong defensive position which had been developed by the French defenders, approximately half a mile ahead of the remainder of the battalion, with mostly unbreached obstacle lines between the battalion and his company.

Rommel knew he needed ammunition and reinforcements from the battalion if this position was going to be maintained and his success exploited. He sent a runner for reinforcements and supplies and began developing the bridgehead. During this time, withdrawing French forces sporadically harassed the 9th Company, ultimately surrounding and attempting to retake the position with a battalion's worth of men. The defence of this position was difficult with limited ammunition and no heavier tools to break through the icy ground. Rommel simultaneously received a contact report that the French were attempting to retake their positions from the west and the verbal message, "Battalion is in position half a mile to the north and is digging in. Rommel's company to withdraw, support not possible". He quickly identified three possible actions since maintaining the position was untenable: surrender, withdraw, or attack. Rommel determined that surrender was not an option and assessed that the encircling French forces would cause 50% casualties on his company if they withdrew across the defensive works

in their current situation. He decided the best course of action was to attack the French forces, then withdraw after successful offensive manoeuvre. Rommel quickly issued orders for the attack and used his reserve platoon to attack the right flank of the advancing French to the west, surprising and confusing the French, forcing them to withdraw. The 9th Company then withdrew through the three wire entanglements under sporadic fire from the eastern French forces and re-joined the battalion in their new position, suffering only five wounded throughout the entire withdrawal.



Figure 2. COL H.R. McMaster

Some 76 years later, the US-led coalition intervened in the Iraqi annexation of Kuwait. There was a significant concern that the Iraqi Republican Guard (IRG) would provide a determined resistance to counter the US forces. According to the intelligence reports, the planning casualty estimates for the first major conflict for the US forces since Vietnam were considerably high⁴. In late February 1991, the 2d Armoured Cavalry

Regiment (2ACR), part of a corps-sized manoeuvre, crossed the Saudi-Iraqi border and moved west to east to cut off IRG units retreating from Kuwait. On the afternoon of 26 February,

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Guardia, The Fires of Babylon: Eagle Troop and the Battle of 73 Easting, 2015

Eagle Troop⁵ of 2ACR was given a limit of advance of the 70 Easting and a task to find the IRG units, but not to engage them in combat. The 2ACR intent was to find the IRG and provide a hand-over to the armoured units of the 1st Infantry Division for destruction. Eagle Troop moved up to a small village just to the west of their boundary and received ineffective RPG and small arms fire from the village and guickly returned fire. The commander of Eagle Troop, Captain H.R. McMaster, assessed that contact with IRG T-72s was imminent and reorganised his forces with tank platoons in the lead to provide the most firepower and protection on their advance⁶. At 1618 hours, Eagle Troop crested a low rise and encountered eight T-72 tanks in a dug-in defensive position on the 70 Easting, which they engaged with 120mm HEAT and SABOT rounds, destroying all eight in four minutes as they reached the 70 Easting. After this encounter, McMaster's lead platoons identified further targets in depth and, determining that Eagle Troop was already in the close fight and wishing to exploit his success, McMaster ordered his troop to continue across their limit of advance. At the 73 Easting, they encountered 18 more T-72s in prepared positions and engaged them. By 1640 hours, Eagle Troop had destroyed these tanks and their mechanised infantry support before adopting a defensive position on the 74 Easting. In 23 minutes of combat, Eagle Troop had destroyed 28 Iraqi tanks. 16 personnel carriers and 30 trucks without a sustaining a single

⁵ A Troop in an ACR is the equivalent of an Australian Tank centric combat team, containing a HQ, two Tank Platoons (four M1A1 Abrams), two Scout Platoons (M2 Bradley Fighting Vehicles), a mechanised offensive support section (two M113 Mortar Variants), and a recovery section (M88).

⁶ Davis, How the Battle of 73 Easting was Won, 2018

casualty⁷. Once having assumed the defensive position on the 74 Easting, Eagle Troop, as part of 2ACR, then facilitated a forward passage of lines for the 1st Infantry Division before moving into reserve for subsequent operations.



Figure 3 Battle of the 73 Easting

Decision superiority is enabled by initiative through the provision of time, space or information. Both Leutnant Ernest Rommel and Captain H.R. McMaster gained time and space

for their elements as their key factors in gaining the initiative in their respective battles. Rommel bought time for his company through the fast and aggressive advance through the initial defensive positions and the subsequent occupation of a strong, previously developed defensive position. He then won space to allow the 9th Company the initiative to successfully withdraw by the conduct of limited offensive action. McMaster similarly gained time by the fast and aggressive assault through several IRG defensive positions before they could react, and space by occupying a significantly more advantageous position behind the initial IRG defensive line. In Rommel's case, operational initiative was lost by the battalion's decision to not exploit

McMaster, Eagle Troop at the Battle of 73 Easting, 2016

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the 9th Company's successful penetration of the subsequent obstacle belt, and instead the battalion consolidated in a defensive position on the first line of captured French defences. This decision was based on the information the battalion had at the time and the necessity to use time and space gained by the 9th Company to prepare for future offensive actions. For Eagle Troop, pushing significantly past their initial limit of advance was not as per the initial battle plan where Eagle Troop was ordered to halt and secure the 70 Easting. McMaster, apologising to his higher headquarters, passed through the specified limit of advance and continued his assault, retaining the initiative by denying nearby IRG forces the time to consolidate and effectively counterattack. Again, McMaster's higher headquarters lacked key information about the tactical success and situational awareness that Eagle Troop had at that time in the battle.

Rommel's decision superiority stemmed from gaining initiative through a sound understanding of his opponent's capabilities and their unwillingness to stand and fight. McMaster's decision superiority was derived through speed of action, firepower, and denying time and space to an enemy who became unable to react to the situation. Rommel was at risk of losing the decision superiority and initiative when his company was culminating, and resupplies were not being sent forward. By engaging in offensive action and forcing a commander's dilemma on the enemy he was able to create both time and space to conduct his withdrawal from an otherwise impossible situation. McMaster had passed his specified limit of advance; however, he assessed that he still retained the initiative and was well positioned to continue his assault. McMaster maintained decision superiority by denying time and space to allow the IRG to manoeuvre. The ferocity and speed of the attack resulted in the IRG being unable to comprehend their situation. If McMaster had followed his orders and remained at the 70 Easting, the IRG would have been well-positioned to counterattack and take the initiative from 2ACR.

Accelerated Warfare acknowledges that the contemporary and future battlespaces will be uncertain and highly contested across multiple domains⁸. Army needs to have decision superiority when operating across these uncertain domains in order to be successful in any mission. Future proofing Army will require initiative to be present at all levels, in all aspects of our work. This will enable us to remain competitive against any opponents, situations or environments that will impact our mission. If we do not actively plan on gaining and retaining the initiative in our routine training, we risk losing conflicts before they occur when material or decision superiority belongs to our opponent. Both the Battle in the Argonne and the Battle of 73 Easting exemplify a sub-unit commander's initiative in successful exploitative manoeuvres. Similar to these examples, in Army a superior commander's ability to empower their subordinate commanders with time, space and information will assist in enabling the decision superiority for the element. Conversely, a subordinate achieving decision superiority has the potential to create opportunities for the superior commander, but only if correctly conveyed to that commander. This is not just applicable on the battlefield, but also in barracks routine, headquarters operations and on training exercises.

⁸ Burr, Accelerated Warfare: Futures Statement for an Army in Motion, 2020.

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Fight to Win – Combat First Aid

by CAPT Peter Cherry

In the history of modern warfare, combat first aid has contributed to the survivability of combatants on the battlefield. Without effective combat first aid and subsequent responsive evacuation, the risk to personnel and mission is increased. World War One (WWI) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) highlight the changes to medical support that have saved lives and increased decision superiority. Advancements in medical procedures and technologies, as well as training, tactics and procedures, improved the survivability of casualties on the battlefield, all the while enabling decision superiority by allowing commanders to focus on the tactical situation knowing casualties were being appropriately cared for.

The battlefields of WWI bear little resemblance to modern battlefields, particularly since casualties were inflicted on a far larger scale than more recent operations. In July, 1916 during the Battle of Fromelles,



Figure 1 Casualty Evacuation WWI

the Australian Imperial Force suffered 5,533 casualties, of which almost 2000 were killed. The development of weapon technology contributed to the large number of casualties, with artillery fire alone accounting for two thirds of all casualties on the Western Front. Armies had to develop new means and methods in the conduct of casualty treatment, care, and evacuation to cope with the increase in the scale of casualties.

Prior to WWI, porters moved casualties from the battlefield. The changing characteristics of war necessitated stretcher bearers with medical training that could provide point-of-injury treatment to the casualty. These stretcher bearers were the forbearers to the modern medical technician, and they were responsible for the application of pain relief, dressings to wounds and splints.¹ Stretcher bearers provided casualty care and evacuation under constant threat of enemy fire and with limited respite. Following the initial engagement of the Battle of Passchendaele in 1917, it took three days to clear the battlefield of casualties because stretcher bearers had to conduct a three-mile round trip to move the injured to safety.²

After initial treatment, casualties were transported to the regimental aid post, which was located close to the front line and vulnerable to enemy fire. From the regimental aid post, casualties were transported down the line to a casualty clearance station to be triaged and placed into three broad categories: those who required minimal care, those who required immediate care to survive, and those who were unlikely to survive regardless of treatment.

Dubenskij, BBC: How WW1 Changed Emergency Medicine, 2014, 1 New Zealand History: Stretcher-bearers on the Western Front, 2017,

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¹ 2

Throughout WWI, medical advancements were identified and incorporated to enhance survivability of casualties. Splints were responsible for saving the lives of 80% of casualties with broken thigh bones in 1916 who, if they had suffered the injury two years prior, would have likely died.³ The development of effective local and general anesthesia prior to WWI enabled surgeons to undertake procedures previously beyond them. Debridement (the removal of dead tissue) became a standard surgical practice following the recognition of the dangerous role of bacteria in post-surgery infections. Similarly, the sterilization of all medical equipment before reuse greatly improved the confidence of surgeons.⁴ These practices enabled surgeons to improve post-surgery survival rates.

Nearly 100 years later, OIF continued advancements in the care of battlefield casualties. Prior to the introduction of Tactical Combat Casualty Care (TCCC), U.S. medical personnel were taught to conduct battlefield trauma care with limited consideration of the tactical situation.⁵ TCCC uses the Combat Applied Tourniquet, hemostatic dressings, and improvement in airway management to enable early medical intervention at the point of injury without compromising the tactical situation. When combined with a phased medical system, the TCCC achieved its aim to "ensure that good medicine is combined with good small-unit tactics." ⁶

5 Butler, Two Decades of Saving Lives on the Battlefield: Tactical Combat Casualty Care Turns Twenty, 2017, 1

³ Clarke, BBC: World War One: Medical Advances Inspired by the Conflict, 2014, 1

⁴ United States Foundation for the Commemoration of the World Wars I: American Military Medicine in World War I, 2013, 1

⁶ *Ibid.*, 5

During the U.S. advance to Bagdad in 2003, tourniquets were decisive in stopping hemorrhaging in soldiers with serious extremity wounds. This allowed casualties to be kept alive until the tactical situation permitted evacuation to forward surgical treatment teams.⁷ Data from one U.S. Army shock surgical platoon deployed to Iraq reveals that of all operative patients, 94% suffered from high energy wounding.⁸ During the implementation and training period from 2006 to 2007, tourniquets reduced deaths from extremity hemorrhage from a rate of 23.3 deaths per year to 17.5; after full implementation this rate was reduced to 3.5 deaths per year.⁹ Of the U.S. casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan as of 2008, well over 1,000 U.S. soldiers' lives were saved with tourniquets.¹⁰

While medical advancements saved the lives of soldiers deployed on OIF, distance continued to present challenges to the medical system. The rapid movement of combat forces during the initial invasion phase of OIF needed to be supported by a medical system that could keep pace, as medical studies recognised that for every combatant that dies, there are between four to six combatants that are severely injured.¹¹ U.S. forces were able to shorten the distance and time to medical care and increase the survivability rates of casualties by using surgical shock trauma platoons forward in the battle

Ibid. Chambers *et al*, The Experience of the US Marine Corps' Surgical Shock Trauma Platoon with 417 Operative Combat Casualties During a 12 Month Period of Operation Iraqi Freedom, 2006, 5
 US Army Institute of Surgical Research: Death on the Battlefield (2001 to 2011): Implications for the Culture of Combat Casualty Care, 2012, 8
 Ibid., 1
 Butson and Cooksley, The Cove: Salt For Your Wounds, 2015, 1

space.¹² Despite these forward medical capabilities, soldiers still died when the time required for casualties to reach medical facilities was too great. Data from 2001 to 2011 showed that of the combat deaths in Afghanistan and Iraq, nine out of ten occurred prior to arrival at a medical facility, with 24.3% of these deaths likely preventable.¹³ However, units that utilised TCCC, combined with a command-directed casualty response system, reduced preventable deaths. The U.S. TCCC-based Ranger First Responder program utilised by the 75th Ranger Regiment was able to reduce the unit's incidence of preventable death to the unprecedented low level of 3% of their total fatalities.¹⁴

WWI and OIF highlight the importance of an effective medical system to support combatants and prevent the loss of life. In both conflicts, medical personnel were utilised to provide care to casualties at point of injury. An echelon system of medical care was used to increase the responsiveness of medical personnel and assets, which resulted in increased patient survivability. The continued use of advancements in medical procedures and technologies both at the point of injury and during subsequent treatment also enhanced the casualty's outcome.

The Australian Army, like the U.S. Army, utilises TCCC as the means of training and preparing basic first responders in the initial care and treatment of combat causalities in a tactical environment. TCCC is one of the Army's combat behaviours and it contributes to the effectiveness and survivability of casualties from the point of injury to definitive care, while also enabling

¹² Chambers, 5

¹³ Butson and Cooksley, 1

¹⁴ US Army Institute of Surgical Research, 5

the best care for casualties through the Land Based Trauma System. Soldiers that are proficient in combat first aid provide commanders with a force that can react decisively when faced with traumatic situations. Additionally, the issuing of individual



Figure 2 Casualty Collection Point Scenario - Modern

first aid kits to all soldiers allows fast and responsive treatment at the point of injury. The introduction of tranexamic acid to prevent or treat excessive blood loss from major trauma has increased a casualty's life expectancy prior to reaching definitive care. This increase in time gives a commander greater latitude in treating the tactical threat before having to provide personnel to support casualties, improving overall tactical decision superiority.

The reduction of casualties from WWI to OIF demonstrate that close and reactive medical care has a positive impact on the survivability of casualties. The Australian Army operates an echelon medical system that includes advanced first aid being conducted at the point of injury, then advanced resuscitation being undertaken by a treatment team, and finally damage control surgery undertaken at a Role 2 Enhanced or higher medical facility. This system is framed around the "10-1-2" or "golden hour" rule for movement of a casualty to care. As seen in previous conflicts, however, delays in the movement of casualties due to the tactical situation, availability of evacuation

assets, and distance to medical facilities will affect the survival rates of seriously wounded combatants. WWI and OIF demonstrate that commanders need to consider the speed of advance and the location of medical assets to appropriately balance the tactical and medical risks.

Noting that delays in movement of casualties will cause additional deaths, it is imperative that casualty care and evacuation be given the appropriate attention in training to ensure it is undertaken to the highest standard on operations. Soldiers need to be equipped and regularly trained in TCCC. CASEVAC routes (inclusive of casualty collection points and ambulance exchange points) need to be rehearsed and detailed in orders, at all echelons, to ensure all personnel are aware of their roles and responsibilities when delivering aid to casualties. While the tactical situation dictates the movement of casualties from point of injury, commanders need to consider risk to mission success against risk to casualties. Consideration should be given to rates of advance and the placement and security of forward medical treatment teams, as this will impact on the survivability of casualties. By building a responsive medical system that does not require a shift in focus from the tactical situation to casualty care, commanders will gain decision superiority over adversaries with less advanced plans.

The current process utilised by the Australian Army to track a casualty's location on the battlefield is done in near real time, via voice and digital reporting. The casualty's location is relative to the last update. There is limited ability to digitally pass a casualty's medical condition report from point of injury through to subsequent medical providers as the casualty moves rearward through the battle space. Additionally, there can be a lack of awareness between tactical formations and the Casualty Regulation Centre, as they often operate on different networks. This can lead to confusion within headquarters, delays in casualty evacuations, and impact on decision superiority as commanders focus on casualty evacuation rather than the tactical situation.

Accelerated Warfare tasks the Army to "leverage emerging technology as a potential source of advantage".¹⁵ Advancements in health-state monitoring could be incorporated into a casualty regulating



Figure 3 Modern Ward and Treatment

and command and control evacuation system. This would allow early identification of casualties to reduce response time of evacuation platforms and also provide clinicians with forewarning of casualties' medical conditions to enhance triage and responsiveness. Through the utilisation of emerging technologies and other Defence capabilities, Army can close the gap in the current battlefield casualty tracking system. A responsive medical system will provide greater situational awareness to commanders and health planners and allow commanders to focus on the tactical situation, enhancing decision superiority.

¹⁵ Burr, Accelerated Warfare: Futures Statement for an Army in Motion, 2020, 2

From WWI to OIF, advancement in medical technologies from the splint to the combat tourniquet, training soldiers and medical personnel in the provision of first aid, and utilising a responsive, tiered medical system have enhanced the survivability of combatants on the modern battlefield. These advancements have broadened commanders' decision superiority by allowing a commander time to deal initially with the tactical situation rather than to divert combat troops to the support of casualties. Training in TCCC, conducting comprehensive training in CASEVAC, and ensuring medical assets are tactically positioned to provide timely care to a casualty will improve the outcomes for all soldiers on the battlefield, not least lend to regaining or maintaining the initiative. The ADF should embrace emerging technologies that can digitally identify casualties, prioritise health support, and reports casualties' medical status and location across the battlespace. It is through using the past to guide the future that the ADF will ensure that it is ready to save a life, while maintaining the fight.

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Fight to Win – Leadership

by CAPT Trent Lamb

Leadership is an intangible and vital element of warfighting which directly influences the outcome of a battle. Described as an art, leadership is the ability to influence troops at a personal level rather than relying solely on



Figure 1 Officer Delivering PL O-Group – EX TS19

rank or position in order to gain advantage over the enemy. Effective leadership generates decision superiority by enabling initiative and generating tempo. Conversely, poor leadership can reduce an otherwise effective force to failure. Lieutenant Colonel Herbert Jones VC, OBE, in the Battle of Goose Green, and Major Harry Smith SG, MC, in the Battle of Long Tan demonstrate how trust, understanding, and risk are fundamental elements of effective leadership.

The Battle of Goose Green was fought from 28-29 May, 1982, between the United Kingdom and Argentina as part of the Falklands War. The Argentinians, led by Lieutenant Colonel Italio Piaggi, established defensive positions around the settlements of Goose Green and Darwin with a force consisting of three infantry companies, eight batteries of antiaircraft guns, and a battery of 105mm pack howitzers.¹ Lieutenant Colonel Jones commanded the British 2nd Battalion, Parachute Regiment, which consisted of three infantry companies, a patrol company, a support company, a battery of 105mm howitzers, and an anti-tank platoon.² Jones' mission was to conduct a raid to capture the settlements of Goose Green and Darwin before withdrawing to become the reserve for subsequent operations.³



Figure 2 LTCOL H Jones

Jones had an uneasy relationship with his subordinate commanders, resulting in a low level of trust throughout the command. This was demonstrated during the battle when one of the company commanders reported the situation in front of his company to Jones via radio. Jones required the company to remain in position so that he could advance to the company's location to assess the situation for himself. The distance travelled across uncleared ground and the time required for Jones to do so were considerable, which added unnecessary risk to himself and his unit. This additional time enabled the Argentinians to retain the initiative.

¹ Fremont-Barnes, A Companion to the Falklands War, The History Press, 2017, 108-109

² Adkin, Mark, Goose Green: A Battle is Fought to be Won, 1992, Appendix 1

³ Fremont-Barnes, 110.

There was a lack of a common understanding between Jones and his subordinate commanders as to the Argentine forces located in the Goose Green area prior to and during the battle. This was caused when Jones cut short the intelligence briefing before his orders due to time constraints. This error

was compounded by the fact that the enemy situation had changed significantly since the last intelligence update, as reported by a Special Air Service observation post onto the settlements. Analysis of the information gained by the patrol would have identified a weakness in the Argentine defences.⁴ Without shared understanding and effective mission command between Jones and his subordinate commanders, there were limiting factors which would impinge on the eventual success of the mission.



Figure 3 MAJ H Smith

Jones placed himself and his unit at risk when, failing to recognize his force was insufficient to capture Goose Green and Darwin, he attacked the outmatched Argentine force regardless. It was only because the Argentines surrendered that the British did not sustain even greater casualties as they achieved the capture of the settlements. Jones was physically too far to the rear when the battle commenced, degrading his ability to effectively lead the forward elements. To rectify both command and control, Jones advanced to the lead company's position, yet both Jones and his Adjutant were decisively engaged by

4 *Ibid.*, 111

an Argentine machine gun position at the front. Both men were killed while attempting to clear the position, and Jones was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross for this action.⁵

The Battle of Long Tan was fought on 18 August 1966, in Phuoc Tuy Province, South Vietnam between Delta Company, 6th Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment (6 RAR) and the Viet Cong's 275th Regiment supported by the 445th Battalion. Delta Company, under the command of Major Harry Smith, had been tasked to patrol east of Nui Dat to clear possible enemy positions which had been mortaring the base the morning prior.⁶ As Delta Company commenced their patrol from Nui Dat and cleared the rubber plantation in vicinity of the village of Long Tan, the company was engaged from the east by elements of the 275th Viet Cong Regiment and later the 445th Battalion, totalling approximately 2,000 soldiers. Delta Company was supported heavily by 105mm and 155mm artillery and reinforced by 3 Troop, 1st Armoured Personnel Carrier Squadron and Alpha Company, 6 RAR, causing the Viet Cong to eventually withdraw.7

There was a significant level of trust between Smith and his subordinate commanders as demonstrated during the battle when his platoon commanders reported an enemy force which was far greater than that which had been assessed. Smith believed the assessment of the lead platoon commander and called for danger close offensive support – an unlikely and

⁵ Ministry of Defence, Supplement to the London Gazette, 14 December 1982, 16117

⁶ Grandin et al, Danger Close: That Battle of Long Tan, as told by the Commanders to Bob Grandin, Allen and Unwin, 2019, 85

⁷ Cameron, The Battle of Long Tan: Australia's Four hours of Hell in Vietnam, 2016, 62

dangerous thing for a commander to do unless he trusted his subordinates implicitly.

In addition, the common understanding between Smith and his subordinates prior to and during the battle enabled effective passage of information from the forward line, back to Smith and upwards to Task Force HQ. Communicating accurate locations of friendly and enemy forces, in addition to battlefield commentary, enabled a common operating picture from which individuals could appropriately respond. This passage of information and accuracy of reporting enabled danger close fire missions without causing friendly casualties in addition to the conduct of aerial ammunition resupply of a complex battlespace.

Smith took prudent risk during the battle by conducting an assessment of the enemy strength and identifying that it was a superior sized forced. Once identified, the company adopted a defensive posture and Smith positioned himself to have sufficient situational awareness and effective command and control of his forces. Further, Smith enabled Captain Morrie Stanley, the forward observer attached to Delta Company, to remain static, enabling him to call for accurate fire support for the lead platoons. Again, Smith took the considerable but prudent risk in ordering a danger close fire mission to prevent the enemy from overrunning Delta Company's position.

Trust, understanding, reliability, and risk combine to form the basis for effective leadership in the Battle of Long Tan, where said elements are largely absent from the Battle of Goose Green. Leadership is primarily about the influence of followers engaged <u>on a personal lev</u>el.⁸ The ability to motivate and inspire followers 8 Australian Army, LWD 0-0 Command, Leadership and Management, relies heavily on trust and mutual understanding. Followers need to believe that the leader will only take considered risk on their behalf for the leadership to be truly effective.

Smith demonstrated the importance of trust in command, built during additional training he directed Delta Company to conduct above the rest of the battalion. He had faith in the information that he received from the front, resulting in him not having to move forward to confirm the situation on the ground. Smith's leadership contributed to his superior decision cycle, as it enabled rapid offensive support to suppress the enemy. If Smith were required to move forward to confirm the platoon commander's assessment, it could have resulted in a delay in offensive support and Delta Company's position being overrun. Further, it is likely Smith would have been decisively engaged and caused further delays.

Jones' level of trust towards his subordinates was limited, which meant he felt he had to personally confirm the information he received from his subordinates, taking additional time to make decisions and further undermining his leadership and degrading his decision superiority. His movement to the forward line to assess the situation himself enabled the Argentinians to have freedom of action during this time of indecision. If Jones had trusted his subordinate commanders, he could have issued orders without moving forward, thus increasing the tempo of his unit.

The lack of common understanding between Jones and his subordinates stemmed from Jones failing to pass critical information, leaving his subordinates unclear of the 2008, 3-1 enemy disposition. If Jones' company commanders had an understanding of the Argentine positions, it is likely that additional direction from Jones would not have been required. Compare this with the shared understanding during the Battle of Long Tan where Smith provided critical information such as friendly and enemy dispositions, which enabled the effective marry-up of more than two units in contact without generating friendly casualties. This is a direct result of members of Delta Company and relieving elements having a common understanding of doctrine and standard operating procedures.

Seeking to mitigate risk is a critical element of leadership that can lead to decision superiority. Jones engaged a dugin defensive position without a greater force ratio. Had Jones identified that he did not have the force ratio required to capture Goose Green, he should have mitigated the risk by requesting additional assets or opting to only conduct a raid on the garrison within the Goose Green area – a task he could have likely achieved. Jones was decisively engaged and died as a result, thus providing no further leadership for the duration of the battle. During the Battle of Long Tan, Smith identified that his force was numerically smaller and didn't have the required combat power to assault the enemy positions, so he decided to adopt a defensive posture whilst requesting support from higher. It was only when Smith received reinforcement in the form of Armoured Personnel Carriers that he initiated an assault upon the enemy positions. Had Smith attempted an assault with only his company, it is likely that it would have resulted in its destruction given the vastly numerically superior force and the difficulties in adjusting danger close offensive whilst in the assault.

Smith's superior leadership directly contributed to decision superiority by enabling Delta Company to make timely and tactically sound decisions, which ultimately led to the successful defeat of a significantly superior sized force in an encounter battle. Smith was able to observe the action of the Viet Cong, orient his company and supporting assets, decide on a course of action, and communicate that all effectively to his force. This enabled his force to act faster than the Viet Cong. In the Battle of Goose Green, Jones' autocratic leadership style did not generate decision superiority. Following Jones' death, Major Chris Keeble, the Executive Officer, assumed command from his position in the Battalion command post located to the rear. With better situational awareness and understanding, not least forced by circumstance, Keeble took charge of subordinate call signs, issued rapid orders and achieved the decision superiority that undermined Argentine defences and led to the conscripts surrendering. Although the two battles resulted in the same number of killed in action, the scale significantly differed. The Battle of Long Tan was a company versus a regiment, while the Battle of Goose Green was a battalion versus a battalion.

As Smith demonstrated through his actions during the battle of Long Tan, a commander's leadership ability directly impacts a force's ability to generate decision superiority which provides a force with a competitive advantage over the adversary. In order to retain the ability to defeat a numerically or materially superior adversary, Army needs to continue to develop leadership at all levels to build trust in teams, engender shared understanding, promote reliability, and enable subordinates to demonstrate disciplined initiative. Accelerated Warfare identifies that current and future battlespaces will be substantially different from the past as they will be contested across not only the traditional domains of air, land and sea, but the newly contested domains of cyber and space. In order to meet the aim of the defending Australia and its interests, the ADF will require effective leadership at all levels across the spectrum of warfare. The concept of Ready Now and Future Ready identifies that Army needs to be prepared for increased cooperation, between not only ADF, but other government departments, non-governmental organisations and other defence forces. The concept also states that there will be additional competition from other state and non-state actors against Australia and its interests. To match the uncertain. changing and diverse nature of future conflict, a commander's ability to employ the key elements of trust, understanding and risk in their leadership style will be crucial in maintaining a competitive advantage.

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