



Submitted as
"Thoughts
on
Training"

KEEPING THE CURRENT DETERRENT ON ITS TOES

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KEEPING fighting units in fighting trim is the Army's No. 1 job. This may be "peacetime," but the outfit in training today could be in action next week. Korea could happen again.

How can we maintain top-notch outfits without the pressure of a shooting war?

First we must decide what we want. Do we want garrison soldiers or field soldiers? The garrison soldier won't win your war, so let's aim at the field soldier. Train him for the field and accept spit-and-polish standards somewhat less than those of a palace guard.

Give the field soldier time to clean up, make him stand garrison inspections, see that he is properly clothed, instill into his training confidence and unit pride. On the street he'll look like what he is: a conditioned, ready fighting man the Nation and its Army can be proud of.

But don't distract him with extra sets of web equipment and a shiny

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helmet liner for parades. That sort of eyewash merely wastes time and money. Let him spend his time keeping his working tools ready, not putting a high shine on footlocker brass.

Live up to high standards

One principle of leadership is to set standards high, then see that they are met.

Most men prefer to work hard to meet the highest possible standards rather than drift along in a rut. Soldiers curse the leader who makes them sweat, but when they attain his standards their pride of accomplishment is the sweetest of rewards.

Achieving high training standards preserves units in battle. The outfit that habitually digs in deeply without being told, observes camouflage discipline, eats chow or gasses up quietly, and insures its security on the move and at halts lives longer. The leader who accepts less than the best trades away his unit's battle value.

The leader's task is simply stated: see that the job is done the right way, every time, and accept no substitutes. This takes guts, but it builds proud outfits that perform their combat mission and survive.

Bear down on training programs

A well-trained battalion is a structure of well-trained platoons, specialists and leaders. Concentrate tactical training on your handiest unit: the platoon. Here you can work day in and day out on the individual soldier *and* on the small team. Devise battle drills for standard attack, defense and delay situations, and all the rest, so that you develop teamwork that clicks every time. Insist on attention to details of individual skills, of security and intelligence, of use of supporting fires and of speed of maneuver, of maintenance and all the other essentials. Develop four or five men in each platoon who can take charge and run it. Through competition build *esprit* where it is sorely needed: in the platoon.

At the same time train your specialists, above all aiming at top-flight commo and maintenance men. Select them early, pick them smart, send them to school, back up the commo officer and the S4, bear down on commanders, and you'll get what you want.

Work on leaders, too, from platoon sergeants up. With chalk talks and terrain walks, skull sessions and bull

sessions, drill them in the theory and practice of their profession. Get them to arguing, then ask for ideas.

Develop the battalion, slow-motion at first, then at cruising speed. If you don't get a good outfit in this way, man, you just don't *want* a good outfit!

Confidence begets confidence

The seasoned, self-confident outfit never lets you down. That confidence comes from the unit's knowledge that it is good, plus the collective feeling in each man that *he* is good. Two things tell a soldier he is good: the feeling that he is fit enough to lick any man his size or bigger; confidence in and identification with his weapon. He acquires a feeling for his weapon in only one way: through practice, on the range and off. A quarter to a third of the soldier's training time should be spent in firing his weapons. The infantryman must be able to operate every infantry weapon.

Our soldiers need physical hardening, for the self-confidence it provides and to put them into shape for battle. Our people trail most of the world in the development of leg, back and shoulder muscles, and in endurance. The infantryman may move by air, truck or track, but he fights on foot, digs with a shovel, and carries loads uphill on his back.

The fit soldier, with a firm grasp on his weapon, is one of the finest specimens of the race. Put him into that shape, see that he knows it, and you have solved much of your problem.

Training saves pressure

Rugged training builds good outfits. But you can't push your outfit forty-four hours a week without its becoming stale. To keep a unit fit to fight at a moment's notice the pressure must be relaxed. What trainers of troop units need is policy guidance like this:

In garrison, train in the mornings only. Get everyone out, make it rugged but good, and you'll get far better results than all day at one-third interest level. For results are what we want, not entries on the training chart. Use afternoons for maintenance, schools, preparing training, administration, athletics, and relaxation.

During maneuvers or on the range, increase training time to make full use of facilities, with allowances for maintenance. On field exercises or maneuvers, train twenty-four hours a day.

Two or three times a year, knock off

training for a week or so and have a big cleaning and maintenance session, followed by detailed inspection. Put this policy into effect and you will have better units the year around. Your men will be happier and stick around longer.

Teach what's important

Is it more important for each rifleman and gunner to know how to reduce a stoppage in a machine gun, or how to adjust artillery fire? How to arm a mine, or how to issue an operations order? How to kill a tank, or how to measure road distances from a map?

Let's face it: in every rifle company there are good men who will *never* learn all these things, if they try for thirty years. Too many soldiers don't know survival methods, yet we spend time trying to teach them things that are "nice to know."

Noncommissioned officers must know how to read a map and how to make fire adjustment, but let's not try to teach these to every man. If a couple of men in each squad get the tricky points after two or three exposures, call yourself lucky and stop right there. Be sure every man knows how to do his basic job and survive, before you resume.

The rifleman or the gunner needs to know only a few things, but he must know them thoroughly. Decide what those things are, reduce them to their simplest forms, be sure each officer and noncommissioned officer knows them well and can pass them on to their men so that they will never be forgotten.

They learn through leaders

Troop units need strong lines. The chain of command grows strong only through exercise. Training is the soldier's daily work. If he gets it from outside his chain of command the strong links become weakened. Make *your* leaders train them. If your leaders don't know the essentials of their men's jobs, or can't teach them, they have no place as commanders. Train them or replace them.

Put the heat on commanders. Set standards high, give leaders time to train, help them in preparing. Encourage them to add their own ideas of "how" to their training, but make them produce. Inspect, encourage, correct.

Do all of this and you'll have leaders and platoons that will be ready for another Korea.