DEVELOPING A SUPERCHARGED BATTALION

BY

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PREFACE

In late July 1993, the 2nd Battalion 14th Infantry Task Force, 10th Mountain Division, departed Fort Drum for Mogadishu. They were to become the ground element of the 10th Mountain Division Brigade serving as the Quick Reaction Force for the United Nations command in Somalia.

They were the only U.S. maneuver element in country. Over a seventeen hour period on 3 and 4 October, TF 2-14 Infantry--fighting its way from the Mogadishu airfield to downtown--extracted ground elements of Task Force Ranger following the downing of two Task Force Ranger helicopters during an operation that had begun midday on Sunday the 3rd. This battle was marked by fierce fighting.

The 2-14 Infantry accomplished their challenging and dangerous mission. I am one of those who believe that only a really extraordinary infantry battalion could have gotten the Rangers out that night. TF 2-14 Infantry was clearly outstanding. Several of us, therefore, encouraged LTC Bill David to write this story.

Bill's story is simple and complex at the same time. The insights and lessons are, for the most part, timeless and broadly applicable. Bill presents a clear picture of what is required to make an outfit truly first rate.

This is the story of a battalion commander leading his soldiers in combat. LTC David describes how he built on the basic Army training and doctrine formula and added particular emphasis in core areas to develop a winning team.

This is a personal account. It is not history.

Luck was not a factor in 2-14's success. As will become apparent, 2-14's performance was the result of mission/combat-focused training, careful planning, aggressive execution, and an unwavering commitment to the welfare of soldiers.

Prior to the arrival of TF 2-14 Infantry in Mogadishu--after eight months experience in Somalia--the 10th Mountain Division had had no soldier killed or wounded in combat. No one could have predicted the fighting that was to follow.

Between the 1st of August and the 4th of October 1993, TF 2-14 Infantry had two soldiers killed and thirty wounded in battles on 13 September, 25 September and 3-4 October. At the end of their tour, the battalion was awarded the Army's Valorous Unit Award along with 413 Combat Infantryman's Badges, 31 Combat Medical Badges, 32 Purple Hearts, 4 Silver Stars, 12 Bronze Stars with "V" and 12 Army Commendation Medals with "V".

Above all, Bill David's story, and the story of the 2nd Battalion 14th Infantry, is a lesson in mission focus and readiness.

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1 June 1995

SIGNIFICANT OPERATIONS OF TASK FORCE 2-14 INFANTRY

DURING OPERATION CONTINUE HOPE

8 AUG 93: TM B/2-14, TAC CP, HHC(-) respond to no-notice alert to secure the site and recover wreckage/human remains at the scene of a command-detonated ambush that destroyed one HMMWV and killed four MP's. No friendly or enemy casualties.

15 AUG 93: TF 2-14 IN conducts pre-dawn raid that results in the capture of three perpetrators of the 8 AUG ambush. No friendly or enemy casualties.

13 SEP 93: TF 2-14 IN (-) attacks to clear two large compounds in the vicinity of 8enadir Hospital. Intelligence sources indicated that these compounds contained large weapons caches and quartered personnel involved in attacks against UNOSOM forces. The operation escalates into a four hour firefight with the Somali National Alliance (SNA) Militia. TF 2-25 AV provides attack helicopter support. TF 2-14 IN suffers 3 X WIA. Enemy casualties are estimated at 60 killed or wounded.

20 SEP 93: TM A/2-14, TAC CP, HHC(-) conduct pre-dawn raid to capture SNA Militia believed responsible for mortar attacks against the Embassy/University compound -the major UNOSOM and USFORSOM installation in Mogadishu. TF 2-25AV provides attack helicopter support. TM A/2-14 receives RPG and automatic weapons fire on withdrawal from the objective area. A brief firefight ensues. No friendly casualties. Enemy casualties are estimated at 5 killed or wounded.

25 SEP 93: TM C/2-14 IN responds to a no-notice alert to conduct a crash search and rescue operation of a downed Quick Reaction Force (QRF) UH-60 aircraft. The operation escalates into a six hour firefight with the SNA Militia. TF 2-25 AV provides attack helicopter support. TM C/2-14 IN suffers 3 X WIA. Enemy casualties are estimated at approximately 200 killed or wounded.

3-4 OCT 93: TF 2-14 IN responds to a QRF alert and, over a seventeen hour period, performs linkup and extracts ground elements of TF Ranger following the downing of two TF Ranger helicopters during an earlier operation. TF 2-25 AV provides attack helicopter support throughout. TF 2-14 IN losses total 2 X KIA and 24 X WIA. Total U.S. casualties are 18 X KIA and 78 X WIA. Enemy casualties are estimated at over 300 killed and 600 wounded.

NOTES:

1. The Somali National Alliance (SNA) was the political apparatus in support of "Warlord" Mohammed Farah Aideed following the 1991 overthrow of President Siadd Barre and subsequent civil war. The SNA Militia was the active military arm of this organization. Its leadership was composed primarily of former Somali Army officers. Many of its soldiers also had military experience.
2. All Somali casualty estimates are based on information provided at the time of the engagements to the Headquarters, United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) by local human intelligence sources and the International Committee for the Red Cross.

OVERVIEW

In the time of the Civil War, soldiers who had been in combat were said to have "seen the elephant". Today, this same experience is referred to by soldiers as "seeing the dragon". While a lot about warfare has changed since the 1860's, a great deal remains the same. This is particularly true in the light infantry. For soldiers and units engaged in the close fight, the elephant and dragon look very much alike.

Those who have seen the beast have always had difficulty relating the totality of their experience to others. Words and pictures seem incomplete and inadequate. Though some individuals may tell the story and even exaggerate their battle experiences, this seems to be the exception.

The more prevalent feelings among veterans of close combat are that the experiences are private, and that they are not significant when compared to the great battles of history. First hand experiences are usually downplayed. Reality gets distorted by understatement or omission. As time passes, important lessons may become lost.

I believe there is an important story that needs to be told. It is the story of the 2d Battalion 14th Infantry in Mogadishu, Somalia in close combat. It is the story of how a good unit became a very, very good unit and how it proved itself on distant, unnamed streets during the African autumn of 1993. The good news that goes with all this is that the secret to the unit's success-to the extent there is a secret--is simple, compelling, and doable by others.

It was not the experience of combat that made the 2nd Battalion 14th Infantry a great unit. All that happened before it deployed to Somalia. The battalion did not become a great unit over night. It required the combined efforts of the entire battalion team, a superb group of officers, NCOs and soldiers. Their collective commitment to excellence, within a tight training framework, was the key.

This was not a select group. The men that made up 2-14 Infantry were no different in professional experience or character from those found in other units. From 10 December 1991 until 21 January 1994, it was my honor to command these outstanding men. Therefore, I feel it is my responsibility to tell their story.

The account is personal because I do not know how to make it otherwise. My main hope is that it will be useful to battalion commanders and future battalion commanders, executive officers, S3s, company commanders, and lieutenants ... and to the Army. I hope it helps them see a way to develop the full potential of their unit.

The central thesis of this paper is that any battalion in the Army--be it combat, combat support or combat service support--can become a truly outstanding outfit. By focusing on high performance in several fundamental areas that are critical for success in combat, battalion commanders can increase the overall capability of their unit by a significant order of magnitude.

It all starts with doctrine. Army doctrine is the way our institution describes the way it does business. Fortunately, the U.S. Army is blessed with an extremely solid doctrinal foundation. At its core is the "How to Fight" series of manuals, along with FM 25-100/101 and a broad range of Mission Training Plans.

The Army training system tells us how to put doctrine into practice to insure that units are able to execute their mission essential tasks and battle tasks to standard. Quarterly training briefs, Combat Training Center rotations, the Battle Command Training. Program, command post exercises, and field training exercises all play an important part.

Our training system works. It has shaped an army that we think is the world's best. Most battalions in the Army are good units by any measure. Nevertheless, we can always do better.

Any doctrine is in some ways self-limiting. This is not a new problem and Army doctrine is no different. By its nature, our training theory establishes important institutional performance baselines by describing what is required to be done. Achieving minimum standards is emphasized. But, the critical upper levels of unit performance are most often not described or generally emphasized.

The problem is that the upper echelons of performance are exactly where all commanders need to go and want to. They all want their unit to be the best it can possibly be. A commander who ventures into this area finds himself in uncharted territory with little more than his experience, common sense and willpower to guide him.

This paper describes a method to reach those upper levels of performance. It provides a model for building supercharged units -battalions with capabilities of a significantly greater order of magnitude.

This model was tested in combat. Adopted by the 2nd Battalion 14th Infantry in training, it paved the way for overwhelming tactical success during multiple combat operations in Somalia. I believe its simplicity makes it applicable, by extension, for other units. Woven as consistent threads through every unit's Mission Essential Task List are several fundamental areas of individual and collective endeavor that are critical to anything the unit would ever be called upon to do in combat, regardless of factors of METT-T. Indeed, these areas are so centrally important to what the unit is and what it does that they are the defining characteristics of the battalion itself. I call these unit core performance areas.

The civilian equivalent of this same idea was highlighted some time ago by the Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurant chain in their "We Do Chicken Right" ad campaign. Their simple logic as reflected through repetitive advertising with a constant theme. If you wanted to eat fried chicken, come to the place where chicken was king and nothing else mattered. The essence of Kentucky Fried Chicken was chicken. They have their eye squarely on the chicken ball. It was their sole core performance area. Chicken was the only thing they did and they did it better than anyone else.

Battalions don't have the luxury of limiting their METL's to variations on chicken, but an extension of the logic of Kentucky Fried Chicken's ad campaign works. Every unit's core performance areas can be described in a simple and compelling manner. Because core performance areas are at the heart and soul of the unit, it is only logical that this is where commanders should seek to maximize their returns in training. This is what we did in the 2nd Battalion 14th Infantry.

For the light infantry battalion, my own professional experience convinced me that there were three core performance areas that defined the essence of what we were all about. These were the areas, therefore, where we devoted the overwhelming majority of our creative energy and resources. Our aim was to achieve high performance. These core performance areas were:

1. Physical fitness and mental toughness.
2. Marksmanship.
3. Realistic maneuver live fire exercises.

High performance in each of these core performance areas can be achieved with a small--maybe ten percent--increase in soldier and leader effort. To develop a shared understanding within the battalion of what I meant by high performance, and because most soldiers identify easily with the sports world, I used examples from this real to illustrate the idea.

As one measure of individual performance in baseball, a batting average of .300 is recognized among experts as the standard that defines hitting excellence. Even in the major leagues, however, at the end of any season, most hitters are clustered around the .265 -.275 range. Of approximately 350 players in each league, those that hit .300 or above generally number about a dozen, sometimes a few more, sometimes less.

To raise a batting average from .270 to .300, a player only has to improve from 27 to 30 hits out of every 100 at-bats. While this may seem like only a small improvement, the truth is that this tree hit difference--ten percent--is big enough to separate the superstars from the rest of the pack.

It is not important that the business of war fighting does not lend itself to the same precise statistical measurements as baseball. What is important is for commanders to establish a concrete framework for high performance among their unit's leadership in a way that is easily understandable, while showing them that it is an achievable goal within their reach.

Today the Army is busier than ever before. Achieving high performance in any area at our current OPTEMPO may seem like mission impossible. There just doesn't seem to be enough time to do everything the unit is required to do and does it well. Planning calendars are jammed full. Just getting through the current event while simultaneously preparing for the next takes every ounce of energy. As true as this may be, commanders can still achieve high performance in their core areas.

The key is for commanders to stay focused on their unit's core performance areas in a way that always keeps these areas at the forefront of unit consciousness. This is done by integrating them as constant sub-tasks or conditions in everything the unit does. Then, the commander repeatedly hammers them home at every opportunity reinforcing the effort through all doctrinal training management processes regardless of competing demands.

The Army has an excellent body of "how to" knowledge already in existence to guide this process. Just as small corrections in sight picture or sight alignment

at 25 meters translate into large changes in the strike of the bullet at 400, so it does here as well. Careful tuning and fine adjustments from the battalion commander in the core areas what the unit trains on and the way training is conducted are usually all it takes for large improvements in core performance and unit overall performance.

When a commander gets an extra ten percent in the unit's core performance areas, he also gets an added bonus. There is a synergy among core performance areas that powers performance in other important areas to a higher plateau as well. This effect permeates every aspect of command, leadership, attitude, pride, discipline, tactical skill, and determination across a UBOS and METL boundaries. The unit gets supercharged and overall battalion capabilities are catapulted to a significantly greater order of magnitude. The result is performance much greater than most leaders would visualize.

Although I have seen it first hand, I cannot adequately explain the internal dynamics of this phenomenon. Accept on faith that it happens. And while the exact increase in unit capability may be impossible to measure, it is noticeably distinct and real.

Because large gains only occur through a successive series of small steps, those inside the battalion may be among the last to recognize and appreciate what they have gained. It takes a demanding combat experience to show just how good the outfit has become and drive the lesson home.

Such situations being beyond the control of man, most units will never be so tested. However, In Somalia, and particularly on the night of 3 and 4 October 1993, TF 2-14 Infantry was called to battle. Even the worst case scenario at any of the Combat Training Centers could not have been as challenging. It was the battalion's focus on high performance in each of our core performance areas -physical fitness and mental toughness, marksmanship and realistic maneuver live fire exercises -that gave us the capability to meet this challenge.

The three subsequent chapters of this paper discuss each of the battalion's core performance areas in greater detail. To provide a reference point, I begin these chapters by analyzing the linkage between the core area and the essence of the light infantry battalion. Then, in order, illustrate the difference between institutional performance norms (minimum standards) and high performance; I examine the Army's doctrinal position with respect to the core performance area. The third part of these chapters describes the training

approach used by 2-14 Infantry to gain its ten percent performance improvement. I then give a personal assessment of the payoffs of high performance in these core areas in combat. Major points are then summarized at each chapter's conclusion.

In Chapter Four I take the liberty to comment on a topic that is complementary to the core performance areas and just as important. This is the human dimension. For lack of a better description, this chapter is framed as Battalion Commander Combat Leadership Lessons Learned. This chapter deviates from the model and format described above. It discusses major points that are particularly relevant for periods before, during and after the battle.

Very high performance is an achievable goal for every unit. The vast majority of battalions in the Army are already at the "good" stage. Major rethinking and retooling is not required. The battalion commander must simply maintain a clear and constant focus on the unit's core performance areas, make the necessary adjustments to get the ten percent difference in each of them, and then couple personal persistence with every tool available to reinforce the effort and meet the goal. The end result will be a supercharged unit with capabilities of a greater order.

CHAPTER ONE:
PHYSICAL FITNESS AND MENTAL TOUGHNESS

I. IT'S LINKAGE TO THE ESSENCE OF THE LIGHT INFANTRY BATTALION.

Light infantry operations are cruel to the human body. They involve prolonged exposure to the elements, broken sleep on rocky ground, bug bites, rashes, abrasions, contusions and a ration cycle that is never guaranteed unless it is carried on your back. They require foot movements over extended distances while carrying loads that would make a pack-mule weary.

At the completion of any movement, soldiers must have a reserve of both strength and stamina to fight the close, violent fight against a well-rested enemy. No matter how badly they hurt, soldiers have to be able to climb, crawl and sprint long after their adrenaline is gone. Their lives and the lives of others depend on it.

A high state of individual and unit physical fitness, therefore, is essential for light infantry operations. But physical fitness alone is not enough. Soldiers must also have the mental toughness to reach down inside themselves for that extra burst of strength or speed when their bodies are telling them "No". This important connection between the physical and mental is what Vince Lombardi was referring to when he told his great Green Bay Packer teams that, "Fatigue makes cowards of us all." Physical fitness and mental toughness are interdependent and inseparable.-One does little good without the other. Together, they are required for every operation an infantry battalion will ever be called upon to do. They are at the essence of light infantry operations and, for this reason, became one of the battalion's core performance areas.

After taking command of 2-14 Infantry and making an initial assessment, I knew that the battalion was in pretty good physical shape. All the required Divisional standards for individual and unit physical training were being met. Like most units, we had a large number of soldiers who wholeheartedly embraced the value of physical fitness and took the initiative to maintain exceptional levels of condition. However, we were not aiming for the upper levels of collective physical performance as a unit. As a result, I believed that we had not reached our potential in this area and could do better.

As I talked with soldiers and looked back over the training the battalion conducted prior to my arrival, I discovered that the mental aspect of

conditioning also had room for improvement. Because mental toughness is an intangible quality, it is virtually impossible to quantify or measure. But even if they can't define it, units that have real mental toughness know it.

Like any commander, this was the type of unit I wanted. Our soldiers had to know in their hearts that they were the toughest, meanest, baddest SOBs on the block. If companies couldn't go over, under, or around the wall, I wanted them to have the mental fortitude to break the damned thing down. I wanted our soldiers to have the strength of spirit so when the tactical situation went to hell they would find a way to win through brute force of will.

When it came to physical fitness and mental toughness, the battalion was at the good stage. However, we weren't getting our extra ten percent. If we were to become high performers in this core area, I knew we were going to have to adopt a training regimen that would stretch both our physical and mental capacities in parallel.

II. ARMY DOCTRINAL AND REGULATORY GUIDANCE.

There is no argument within the Army concerning the important linkage between physical fitness and combat readiness. For all the right reasons, every division in the Army establishes individual and unit physical fitness standards that provide an important institutional performance baseline.

The 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) has a standard in this area. Individual and unit physical fitness standards are outlined in the Division's Training Regulation 350-1 and are on par with those of other Divisional units. Minimum standards for divisional units, for example, are outlined below:

1. Physical training conducted five days per week.
2. Quarterly four mile run in athletic shoes in 36 minutes or less, normally conducted as a formation run. This is also the XVIII Airborne Corps standard.
3. Semi-annual 12 mile road march in three hours or less while wearing individual combat gear and a fighting load of 15 to 35 pounds.
4. Semi-annual APFT with a minimum overall score of 225 with at least 60 in each event. An average score of 250 is established as a unit goal for PT excellence.

I believed that meeting the Division physical fitness standards was only an important first step in guaranteeing that our soldiers would possess the physical and mental wherewithal to do all the things we could rationally be called upon to do in combat. In a light infantry battalion, however, where the

highest state of physical fitness is so essential to battlefield success, soldiers had to be capable of doing more. We had to be high performers.

Physical training five days a week was the correct frequency, but we had to be sure we were doing the right things to have real teeth in our PT program. For a properly conditioned soldier, a four mile run in 36 minutes is no more challenging than a walk in the park. If unit PT is properly planned and executed, individual fitness levels improve over time so most soldiers can score above 265 on the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) on a bad day.

The twelve mile road march in three hours is a tough challenge that provides a good indicator of overall condition. It has its place in a unit physical training program. However, it does not accurately replicate the total physical endurance demands of light infantry operations. First, the prescribed loads are much lighter than those normally carried by soldiers in the field. Second, meeting the three hour time limit requires soldiers to maintain a run/walk pace that is too fast to be sustained much farther than the finish line. As a result, the event falls short in developing mental toughness to any significant degree.

III. GETTING THE TEN PERCENT DIFFERENCE.

The process began as a leadership challenge to convince the chain of command that we should, and could, get more out of ourselves in this core performance area. I was confident that if physical fitness and mental toughness could be embedded as a dominating core value of the battalion, then natural interaction among the chain of command in our daily routine would lead us to the ten percent performance improvement I wanted. This approach had three important components. To get at the physical fitness piece, we built on an existing value system, very noticeably present in combat arms units that stressed carefully planned, balanced and tough physical training every day to improve overall condition. To get at the mental toughness piece, we regularly stretched ourselves by scheduling grueling unit activities to force everyone through the physical and mental "wall" familiar to any marathon runner. To support this effort, we held ourselves rigorously accountable to every regulatory tool at our disposal.

When the battalion was in garrison, Physical Training (PT) was regarded as the most important unit activity of the day. We jealously guarded this time and rarely let other "important" activities interfere. At each weekly training meeting, daily physical training was briefed in detail down to platoon level. I looked

closely for the proper mix of running distances and time, speed work, road marching, and upper/lower body strength development.

Although unit sports activities were highly encouraged, they were not allowed during PT hours. PT was not the time to play games. It was meant to be hard work for everyone. At the outset of my command tour, this philosophy met with considerable resistance by the chain of command and engendered a lot of professional discussion until all key players understood my intent.

To model the behavior we wanted, the CSM and I religiously did vigorous PT every day and made sure the battalion saw us doing it. We regularly spot checked physical training to insure it was being conducted as briefed. Impromptu After Action Reviews (AARs) at the conclusion of PT sessions did a lot to help soldiers better understand the concept of what we were trying to achieve.

Battalion runs were conducted on Friday mornings about every two or three-weeks. As the unit's physical condition improved, we began to use these runs to work on our mental conditioning as well. We gradually increased the length of these runs to eight miles. Mileage was only temporarily reduced to five or six miles following extended periods in the field.

The battalion XO and a small cadre of NCO's were put in charge of straggler control to insure that everyone in the unit had the opportunity to share in the same experience. The XO's group noted all fallouts by name and policed them into a group that completed the run at a slower pace.

The fine tune adjustments of establishing command interest in all activities associated with physical training and increasing the length of battalion runs really got the ball rolling. By necessity, companies had to conduct vigorous daily PT to avoid incurring the displeasure of the battalion commander during one of his unexpected visits. Pride drove units to maintain this rigor when I was not around because any deficiencies were bound to show when the battalion rolled down the road for the next eight-miler.

Soon the program began to sustain itself. Indeed, after a while, my biggest concern became that we were working as smart as we were hard. To insure the chain of command was maintaining a responsible approach, the Medical Platoon Leader produced a weekly report of all battalion physical profiles. This report was disseminated to the orders group and reviewed every Friday at our command and staff meeting. If we noticed an increase in lower body stress-

related injuries, we backed off on mileage or intensity in our PT sessions until the problem was resolved.
For developing mental toughness, the 25 mile road march was one battalion activity that had a payoff of great proportion. It did more to instill-true mental toughness than any other single training event we conducted. This was the infantryman's marathon. We marched in full combat gear with a field load in the rucksack and all TO&E equipment.

Our goal was to execute one 25 mile road march every quarter, but seven off-post deployments in 25 months limited us to doing it about twice a year. Nevertheless, we always had a 25 mile road march on the Long Range Planning Calendar to keep our physical training program focused on this high performance challenge.

We marked the road march route with mile markers and conducted the march at a sustainable pace of 17:30 per mile. The battalion took one thirty minute and two twenty minute rest halts over the nine hours it took to finish. Soldiers completed the first twenty miles on conditioning. The last five, however, required guts and determination. Completing the road march was a real badge of honor. When it was over, everyone knew they had accomplished something few other units would even attempt, much less complete.

Every summer, the battalion conducted Combat Olympics: one and a half days of full-contact, bone-crunching, inter-company competition based on both military and athletic competitions. This was not "organized athletics" under a different name. Combat Olympics was a carefully constructed event with the aim of forcing as many soldiers as possible into the competition.

Rules, uniform requirements, and schedules were worked out to the last detail. Any violation resulted in disqualification for the company team. Multiple events were run simultaneously to prevent team stacking. Company internal organization was always stretched to the last man. We employed a weighted scoring system that was based on the scale of each event. At the end of the competition, trophies were presented in a battalion formation to individual, team and company winners.

Combat Olympics left just about everyone in the battalion battered, bruised, and physically spent. But the soldiers thrived on the competition. The tougher and more physically punishing it could be, all the better. Not surprisingly, the margins separating individual, team and unit winners from the runners-up were very slim; usually less than ten percent.

The battalion also put on boxing smokers and participated heavily in the Post intramural sports program. While these activities were done more for fun, they reinforced the values we were trying to embed in the unit--that physical fitness and mental toughness are inseparable components of being an infantryman.

Two regulatory tools provided immeasurable support to this effort: the Army Weight Control Program and Medical Evaluation Board process. Both are superb vehicles for eliminating the deadwood that drags unit performance down.

These are programs, however, in which the battalion commander must take the lead. Company commanders and first sergeants cannot do it on their own. They are often too close to the personalities involved to make the tough, impartial decisions these programs require. Nor do they possess the acumen necessary to shepherd the administrative requirements of these programs through to completion. It simply takes the full weight of the battalion commander and staff to make these programs work effectively.

The battalion scrupulously enforced the Army Weight Control Program. Regardless of their duty position, every soldier in the battalion was weighed on a quarterly basis without exception. I personally reviewed the results of all company weigh-ins by name. Those failing to meet standards were immediately enrolled in the program. Their progress was openly reviewed at least once a month during command and staff meetings.

In addition, all fallouts from battalion runs or road marches were weighed on return to the battalion area. These results were also reviewed at command and staff. While most of the fallouts had bona fide physical or medical reasons for failing to complete the event, this technique worked amazingly well to keep the system honest by identifying habitual fallouts and the odd man who slipped through the weigh-in cracks.

Putting the Medical Platoon Leader in charge of the battalion profile log enabled us to maintain control of all of our physical profiles. Those who routinely "rode sick call" became readily apparent. If their problem exhibited signs of becoming chronic, these individuals were referred for "Fit for Duty" medical examinations. When it could be supported, they were entered into the Medical Evaluation Board process. A separate column of the weekly profile report was used to track every step of their progress. These results were also reviewed at command and staff.

Achieving high performance in physical fitness and mental toughness is a goal that is within reach for every unit. It took about six or seven months of hard work before I realized that the battalion had passed from being merely good in this area to a higher level. It occurred when the battalion deployed to Fort Stewart in July 1992 to take part in a ten day XVIII Airborne Corps exercise.

Coming from the temperate North Country summer, a high level of physical fitness was going to be important in helping our soldiers acclimatize quickly to the Georgia heat. Despite everything we had been doing in physical training, however, I was fearful that the battalion's performance would be degraded until the acclimatization process ran its course.

The weather could not have been more brutal. Temperatures rose above 100 degrees every day amid tortuous humidity. The effects of weather on the soldier were exacerbated by their combat loads and the heavy weight Desert Camouflage Uniform (DCU) we wore in our role as the Opposition Force.

As the exercise wound down, I discovered that the neither the weather nor the high OPTEMPO had significantly debilitated the battalion's performance. Soldiers had been pushed hard, yet they remained physically strong and mentally alert. Moreover, we did not sustain a single heat casualty over the ten day exercise.

This told me that the battalion had arrived. We were getting our ten percent improvement. Better yet, as our soldiers observed those from other units that had not fared as well, they knew it too. We were clearly on the right track. Little did we know at the time, however, that about one year later, this core performance area would be tested even more severely.

IV. THE PAYOFFS IN COMBAT.

Fatigue was a constant problem throughout TF 2-14's tour in Somalia. Daily temperatures ranged from the low to high 90's with humidity between 80 and 100 percent. Our standard operational uniform consisted of either heavy or medium weight DCU's, Load Carrying Equipment, M17A1 Protective Mask, Kevlar Helmet, Level II Body Armor and assigned individual or crew-served weapon.

When worn for extended periods, particularly through the heat of the day, the combined effects of uniform and weather were enough to sap the strength of

even the most fit man. Environmental stress, broken sleep patterns and diet also contributed to the cumulative effects of fatigue. A high level of physical fitness and mental toughness, therefore, was essential to combat this ever-present and insidious enemy

Being quartered in the Mogadishu University compound provided the Task Force with a relatively secure base of operations that allowed us to sustain our physical training program. PT was conducted at regular intervals. Even with the demands of the mission, companies conducted vigorous PT at least four times per week, sometimes more. Weight sets in each company area gave soldiers the opportunity to improve upper body strength on their own time.

With few competing time demands other than the mission, individual and unit physical fitness actually improved during our tour. Prior to redeployment, company APFT averages ranged between 265 and 285 points. All our attention to physical fitness and mental toughness, both at home station and in theater, had tremendous payoffs in every facet of the Task Force's Somalia experience.

Without question, a high level of fitness improved force protection all around. Soldiers possessed the mental and physical capacity to stay in the proper and complete uniform, regardless of their physical discomfort. Deviations from the prescribed uniform were conscious decisions made by the chain of command, not personal whim.

When soldiers rolled out of the compound for any mission, they were alert and dressed for combat, remaining that way until their return. Their every appearance meant business and was a silent deterrent. Not a single one of our convoys or outposts were taken under enemy fire as targets of opportunity. I don't believe this was due to chance. There had been too many other examples in theater to the contrary.

Physical fitness and mental toughness gave the Task Force increased tactical capability. We did not have to slow the pace of operations to that of the slowest man. All soldiers had the capability to keep up with the main body. This was clearly demonstrated on numerous operations; however, one in particular will be highlighted to illustrate the point.

In the pre-dawn hours of 13 SEP 93, TF 2-14 IN (-) conducted an attack to clear two large compounds in Mogadishu. Dominating the objective area was a hospital that was densely populated with hundreds of non-combatants. Not

surprisingly, this hospital also doubled as a major SNA militia base of operations.

As morning twilight gave way to sunrise, the Task Force was completing actions on the objective and beginning its withdrawal. Suddenly, we began receiving RPG and automatic weapons fire from the area of the hospital and its surrounding streets. What followed was a major firefight between TF 2-14 and the SNA militia that lasted almost five hours.

Despite all planning and preparation, meeting engagements begin with a sudden, almost unexpected surprise. Soldiers experience a jolt of adrenaline that lasts somewhere around fifteen or twenty minutes. However, as their minds and bodies become adjusted to the situation, adrenaline depleted soldiers often experience a deep fatigue. Veterans of close combat know best that unless soldiers are in top physical condition, they will have nothing left in reserve when their adrenaline runs out.

Even with the accumulated effects of fatigue due to the absence of sleep, combat loads, heat, humidity, and adrenaline depletion, every soldier in the Task Force had physical energy when it mattered most. Soldiers used proper individual movement techniques over a two kilometer route while under continuous fire. Casualties were carried along with no loss of speed or disruption to the integrity of formations. Had the Task Force not been in such good physical condition, our movement discipline could easily have broken down with casualties higher than the three we suffered.

Likewise, the unit's mental toughness was clearly visible in everything we did. It was highlighted most dramatically, however, on the night of 3 OCT 93 when the Task Force was called out to linkup and extract ground elements of TF Ranger that were pinned down by the SNA militia at the site of a downed helicopter.

At 1745 hours, the Task Force's Quick Reaction Company (TM C/2-14) and Battalion Tactical Command Post departed the Mogadishu airfield in an effort to break through to the Rangers with our entire element mounted on board either HMMWV's or 5 Ton Trucks. Over the course of the next 90 minutes we encountered a series of nearly-simultaneous ambushes and found ourselves in a more intense fight than any of our previous engagements. The SNA Militia had effectively sealed off the area around the Rangers against any penetration by thin-skinned vehicles and inflicted three severe casualties on our force in the process.

Despite this setback, as quickly as another effort could be planned and coordinated the soldiers were ready to go. At 2300 hours, a second effort was launched with a larger force involving most of the Task Force. Two rifle companies were loaded into Armored Personnel Carriers provided by the Malaysian battalion in theater and we given a Pakistani tank platoon for additional support. The ensuing seven and one half hours was a continuous fight of great intensity. This time, however, the Task Force was successful in breaking through to the Rangers and accomplishing the mission.

Sometimes close combat boils down to a test a will power between adversaries. Because I had seen our soldiers' guts and determination in training, I was confident we would have the mental resilience to bounce back quickly from our unsuccessful effort. Moreover, I was confident our soldiers would have both the mental and physical staying power to see the task through to the end, even when the situation appeared grim. On both counts, the soldiers proved me right.

After everything we had done in training, any doubts I harbored about being unrealistic or unfair in the demands we placed on our soldiers were put to rest in Somalia. The exceptional physical fitness and mental toughness of the battalion in close combat spoke for itself. In casual conversation with soldiers in the mess hall or field, they very candidly offered the CSM and me their thanks for insisting that the unit do the tough physical training they felt help keep them alive. Although they couldn't define it, these soldiers knew they were part of a physically fit and mentally tough outfit.

V. RECAP: THE BOTTOM LINE.

1. Embed physical fitness and mental toughness as unit core values that are constantly reinforced in everything the unit does.
2. Make physical training the unit's most important recurring daily activity. Do not let anything interfere with PT.
3. Require company commanders to brief their unit PT schedules in detail down to platoon level at weekly training meetings. Closely scrutinize them to insure the right mix of activities.
4. Insure you and the CSM do vigorous PT daily and make sure the battalion sees you doing it. Regularly spot check company and platoon PT to insure it is being conducted as briefed. Use this opportunity to talk to soldiers. Reinforce the linkage between physical fitness and mental toughness and the demands of combat.

5. Regularly schedule grueling battalion events that push everyone through their physical and mental "wall" to developmental toughness. Twenty five mile road marches, eight mile battalion runs and Combat Olympics worked for us.
6. Gain and maintain control of the battalion's physical profiles. Review this list weekly. It will tell you much about your physical training program and your unit.
7. Ruthlessly enforce the Army Weight Control Program without exception. Review the list at least once a month. Weigh all fallouts from battalion runs and road marches for additional quality control.
8. Learn the workings of the Medical Evaluation Board process. It's a great tool to separate those who routinely ride sick call from those with bona fide medical problems.

CHAPTER TWO:
MARKSMANSHIP

I. IT'S LINKAGE TO THE ESSENCE OF THE LIGHT INFANTRY BATTALION.

Marksmanship is the most fundamentally important individual combat skill for the light infantryman. When soldiers lack confidence in the ability of their buddies to provide accurate covering fire, there is no fire and movement. Without fire and movement, fire and maneuver begins to disintegrate. No matter how well-conceived, coordinated or rehearsed the plan, mission success is dependent on solid soldier marksmanship skills at the point of attack.

Close combat remains a fight that is won or lost at squad and platoon level. To win this fight, light infantrymen must be able to consistently hit difficult targets. They must be able to acquire and hit partially exposed and camouflaged targets, that are stationary or moving, during day or night. They must be cross-trained on all weapons in the platoon so that key systems can be manned by confident soldiers when casualties are sustained. In short, they must be masters of all facets of marksmanship.

Fear is a constant condition of combat. In close combat, fear is intense. Many times, a soldier can see his enemy. He is a human being with a face. However, even if the enemy's physical form may not be clearly visible, the flash of his weapon can be seen. The rounds snap overhead. All of these sights and sounds of combat are accompanied by fear.

Death is something few soldiers seriously think about in peacetime. In combat, it is something they think about all the time. Without warning, it pops up right in front of you. Soldiering is not a game. Men you have never met and will never know are trying to kill you. The full fury of battle seems pointed right at you. No soldier wants to die. Combat, however, requires soldiers to face death squarely.

It is very sobering to lay in the prone position with your face in the dirt and enemy fire all around. For a flash, it seems strange and not right that the sum total of life's experiences should come to this. The future is now measured in terms of being able to kill before being killed. Fear is a natural reaction. Fear has weight--it can slow and stop sturdy men.

Confidence in marksmanship is the most important mental ingredient commanders can give soldiers for overcoming their personal fear in combat. When marksmanship is developed to a high level, soldiers gain an intangible psychological edge that prevents paralysis from taking over. It gives them the capacity to act in the face of great danger.

At squad and platoon level--where the battle is won or lost--it is in the acts of individuals that the impetus for fire and movement is found. Skill in marksmanship is the enabling tool that overrides a soldier's natural inclination to go to ground under fire. It can transform a group of otherwise passive individuals into aggressive squads and platoons with the skill and will to win.

For all these reasons, I viewed marksmanship as one of the core performance areas at the essence of light infantry operations. High performance in this area would always give the battalion a key tactical advantage. Once we had it, this advantage would be ours forever. It was an area in which we could control our fate.

II. ARMY DOCTRINAL AND REGULATORY GUIDANCE.

Every Division uses weapons qualification statistics as one of its primary tools to assess combat readiness. Without question, weapons qualification is important. To qualify with an individual or crew-served weapon, a soldier has to master the fundamentals of marksmanship. Qualification tables then provide a consistent standard to evaluate performance and measure progress.

Standard weapons qualification provides the start point for the development of combat marksmanship skills, but it does not replicate the high performance challenge. To kill efficiently and effectively in combat, a light infantryman must be a better shot than the marksmanship tables require him to be.

Weapons qualification is conducted on fixed ranges with clear fields of fire. Targets only move up and down, they are not lifelike, and clearly visible. It is not conducted as part of fire and movement. Except for the noise of the firing line, there are no distracters. Indirect fires, smoke, attack helicopters, and incoming fire are absent. Most often, weapons are fired from the prone position only. Lastly, it may not be conducted at a frequency to keep skills truly sharp.

Against many competing demands for its time and resources, there can be a tendency for some units to get overwhelmed by the crush of events. Unless it

is careful, a unit may discover that most of its time on the range is spent simply keeping up with reportable weapons qualification requirements.

Marksmanship should be one of our major strengths. Focusing on weapons qualification alone, of course, will not develop high performance in combat marksmanship. Units must simply do more in their training to reach this level.

Commanders must make conditions more challenging and realistic to replicate what the soldier will find on the battlefield. The frequency of firing must also be increased to provide soldiers with the opportunity to steadily improve their marksmanship skills over time. Doing these two things will develop combat marksmanship, giving soldiers the skill and will to overcome their natural fears in combat to kill a determined enemy.

III. GETTING THE TEN PERCENT DIFFERENCE.

After assuming command of the battalion and making an initial assessment, I discovered the battalion was in pretty good marksmanship shape. The unit had achieved basic weapons proficiency across the board and all training management standards had been met. Nevertheless, I did not view this as a guarantee that we would be able to perform at peak levels in combat. Like any unit, we had some room for improvement. Therefore, this core performance area became a focus of attention.

Combat marksmanship is where we sought to gain our ten percent improvement. This was something much more robust than simple weapons qualification. We wanted to hone a variety of important battlefield shooting skills to a high level. Doing this would give our soldiers the skills required to overrule their natural fears in combat and kill.

Any unit has the capability to make dramatic improvements in marksmanship. No hard sell is required. NCO's and soldiers fully understand that their survival in combat is directly tied to their ability to shoot. This is one combat skill in which they want to excel.

My personal role in this process was very simple. First, I made targetry and feedback on marksmanship a priority in all collective training, whether it was force-on-force or live fire. Second, I allowed company commanders the freedom to use their initiative in conducting non-standard marksmanship training on the range. These two fine-tune adjustments were all that was

required to put a series of actions into motion giving us the ten percent improvement I wanted.

For all maneuver live fire exercises, targetry was always a key item of my personal interest. For live fire exercises conducted at company level and below, it was one of the areas I had to personally approve in the commander's pre-execution briefing. I wanted to be sure that target arrays were realistic and accurately replicated enemy situational templates appropriate to the training scenario. Once on the range, if the targetry did not lay out as the briefed, the commander and I had a discussion about the reasons why. Fixable problems were corrected on the spot.

For any maneuver live fire range run by the battalion, the same rules applied. The S3 was required to get my personal approval on the targetry plan at the concept brief. Prior to execution, I walked the ground with either the S3 or Assistant S3 to confirm the plan and make any adjustments. It didn't take the battalion long to figure out the battalion commander had a real interest in targetry. If they did not have a good plan, they'd be sent back to the drawing board along with an impromptu class concerning the relationship between targetry and training realism.

Over time our targetry sophistication grew. We gradually replaced silhouettes with JRTC-style target mannequins constructed within the battalion. The battalion S4 coordinated with DRMO for expendable uniform s and equipment to make our targets and objectives as lifelike as possible. One ambitious company commander did the battalion staff one better and rigged moving dummy targets on a squad react to contact live fire range.

We got the ball rolling in the right direction. After a while, momentum took over. Enhancing realism on the range became an area of constructive competition within the battalion where the payoff was higher quality training to the soldier.

Target hits were always counted on all maneuver live fire STXs to grade marksmanship. Soldiers were allowed to see the effects of their weapons by walking over the objective as part of the After Action Review. Seeing a splintered mannequin whose uniform their fire has just torn to shreds helped them appreciate the deadly power at their fingertips.

Without exception, all force-on-force training was conducted wearing MILES. While MILES is far from perfect, it is very helpful in getting soldiers

accustomed to shooting at moving targets and targets that are above ground level. It is also the best system available for honing individual movement techniques under fire. Most live fire exercises were conducted in MILES as well. Even in live fire exercises, observer/controllers had the authority to "kill" soldiers who failed to execute individual movement techniques according to standard.

The greatest advances in individual combat marksmanship training, however, were the product of creativity and ingenuity at company level and below. Their efforts made marksmanship challenging and sustained soldier enthusiasm at the same time by making training fun. I will only mention a few of the techniques our units employed to illustrate the idea.

To give soldiers practice at hitting moving targets, units constructed simple frames out of 2 x 4's and hung plastic bottles or balloons from the cross member. The wind alone was sufficient to cause movement in the targets. In Somalia, one company took target practice on water bottles in the ocean, allowing natural wave action to move the targets. At night, chemlites were put inside the bottles to aid in identification. Soldiers received immediate feedback on their hits.

This same company ran timed squad marksmanship competitions where each squad was issued identical loads of ammunition. All squad weapons were trained on a vertical 4"x4" post planted in the ground with the object being to determine which squad could cut the post in half the fastest. Ties were settled by the fewest rounds expended.

Another company drilled fire teams and squads on marksmanship as part of fire and movement by creating live fire lanes where targets were randomly changed between iterations. Fire teams or squads with the most target hits were appropriately rewarded.

Because I wanted the chain of command to use their imagination in seeking better ways to train, I purposely did not standardize combat marksmanship training into a formal program. Instead, we shared information amongst ourselves at weekly training meetings about marksmanship training techniques that worked well--and those that did not. I saw it as a perfectly legitimate use of time and resources for platoons to go out to the range and shoot without turning it into a standard qualification range. I didn't have to sell its importance to anyone.

Marksmanship was a core performance area in which I wanted to get a ten percent improvement and it was relatively easy to do. Two fine tune adjustments did the trick. First, we made marksmanship a consistent priority in all collective training and established simple systemic feedback mechanisms to assess how we were doing. Second, to improve individual combat marksmanship skills, I empowered the chain of command to figure out the best way to get the results we wanted.

Once they knew they had the freedom to experiment, the NCO's really took over and ran the show. The payoffs were dramatic. Soldiers developed exceptional marksmanship skills and became extremely confident with their weapons. When the battalion did conduct weapons qualification, about 75 percent of the unit shot expert.

The 2nd Battalion 14th Infantry was able to find its ten percent improvement. It became a high performing unit that could flat-out shoot. The proof of this was demonstrated in all the battalion's later combat operations in Somalia.

IV. THE PAYOFFS IN COMBAT.

Focusing on combat marksmanship enabled the battalion to deliver well-aimed, accurate fire during urban combat operations in Mogadishu. After squeezing the trigger, soldiers could see the enemy drop. If fire had been received from the dark recesses of a room, it was soon followed by silence after a 40mm round or burst of machine gun fire went through the window.

Soldiers discovered they had the tools to beat the enemy in his own back yard. It quickly became clear to them which side had the better force. The enemy was the one who was doing the dying. Once in contact, the paralysis of fear never had a chance to take hold. In its place were confident soldiers, doing their jobs the way they had been trained to do.

The typical SNA militiaman was a poor marksman. Instead of using well-aimed shots, he preferred to spray areas with automatic weapons fire. While this technique certainly was a quick attention-getter, our soldiers could see it was an ineffective way to kill. By contrast, because most of our fighting was conducted from point blank range out to 200 meters, on those occasions when the enemy exposed himself for a direct shot, our soldiers got immediate feedback from their well-aimed fire.

All of this gave our soldiers exceptional confidence that was instrumental in maintaining momentum in the attack. Soldiers were never hesitant to fire their weapons. They were confident in the ability of their buddies on the right and left to deliver accurate covering fire. Squad and fire team leaders identified targets with tracers and then the enemy was eliminated. Fire and movement worked just like the book said it would. High performance in individual combat marksmanship was what made it possible.

Soldiers made each round count. From their training, they were familiar with shooting at moving and partially exposed targets from a variety of firing positions. Based on post-battle reports provided to UNOSOM Headquarters by both the International Committee for the Red Cross and human intelligence sources, in each of TF 2-14's engagements enemy casualties exceeded friendly by factors of ten to twenty.

This helped make the ammunition-intensive nature of MOUT less operationally restrictive. Over engagements ranging in length from five to seven hours, companies never ran out of ammunition. Soldiers had the discipline to only shoot at targets they could clearly identify. Constant repetition in training gave them confidence in their ability to use well-aimed shots versus a heavy volume of poorly aimed fire. As a result, ammunition was conserved and we never had to conduct an ammunition resupply under fire--the importance of which cannot be overstated.

Because marksmanship is a core performance area and the essence of light infantry operations, it was an area where I felt a ten percent improvement would give us a decided edge. Combat proved this was so. If committed to doing so, all battalions have the wherewithal to achieve results that are just as good. Doing two simple things consistently in all training did the trick for us.

First, marksmanship was a constant area of battalion commander attention in all collective training conducted within the unit, whether live fire or force-on-force. Second, companies were given the freedom to use their initiative in implementing non-standard instructional techniques designed to improve marksmanship skills. Marksmanship is a task in which soldiers and leaders truly want to achieve excellence. No outside help is required and its payoff in combat cannot be measured.

V. RECAP: THE BOTTOM LINE.

1 Train infantrymen to be better shots than qualification tables require them to be. Weapons qualification tables establish minimum performance standards and provide a reference point to assess marksmanship training. NCO's and soldiers truly want to excel in this combat skill. They know their lives depend on it.

2 Make targetry and feedback on marksmanship a constant priority in all collective training. Conduct all force-on-force training in MILES. For live fire exercises, require commanders to provide detailed targetry plans in the concept brief. Walk the ground and inspect targetry prior to execution. Count target hits and show soldiers the effects of their weapons during the AAR.

3 Give subordinates the freedom to use their initiative in running non-standard marksmanship ranges. Learning is enhanced and enthusiasm is easily sustained when training is fun.

4 Concentrate on combat marksmanship training that requires soldiers to hit camouflaged, partially exposed, and moving targets, both day and night. Require soldiers to shoot from a variety of firing positions.

CHAPTER THREE:

MANEUVER LIVE FIRE TRAINING

I. IT'S LINKAGE TO THE ESSENCE OF THE LIGHT INFANTRY BATTALION.

High performance in the core areas of physical fitness and mental toughness, along with marksmanship, did more than anything else to give our soldiers the skill and will to win in combat. But individual skills and will alone are not enough. Battles are won or lost by units.

There is simply no substitute for realistic maneuver live fire exercises to prepare soldiers and units for combat. Light infantry units must be able to integrate all organic and supporting fires with maneuver to kill the enemy at the point of attack in order to accomplish the mission while sustaining minimal casualties. This is the collective core performance area at the essence of light infantry operations. The best instrument in the commander's kit bag for this training is the maneuver live fire exercise.

Beating an aggressive, organized enemy who is trying to kill you is no simple task. Rather, it is a multi-echelon choreography of incredible complexity. Squads and platoons play the lead roles. To make it work right, a lot of things have to come together very quickly at many levels.

Leaders have to figure out where the enemy is and what he's trying to do. They need the mental agility to determine whether existing plans will work or whether modifications are required. Orders and fire control measures have to be clearly communicated and understood by all. Battle drills must be executed with precision. Each moving piece requires close supervision. Higher headquarters and supporting units must be informed every step of the way. And all this takes place amid incoming fire, deafening noise, casualties, confusion and fear.

As an institution, the Army fully acknowledges the value of live fire training. Soldiers do too. They sincerely want to practice in peacetime what they will be required to execute in combat. Soldiers will gladly do whatever it takes to

make this happen. It's the type of training they joined the Army to do. They crave live fire exercises. It gets their adrenaline pumping and becomes addictive. The more they get, the better they get, the more confident they become and the more they want.

While it is impossible to completely replicate the conditions of combat in training, units can come close. When soldiers experience a realistic live fire, something wonderful happens. The awesome firepower of a light infantry platoon in the attack, supported with indirect fires and attack helicopters, turns soldiers into confident believers that they are part of a destructive machine. When live fires are ratcheted up to company level the effect can be overpowering. The air reverberates and the ground shakes. Every sense of sight, sound, and smell tells the soldier it is the enemy who is in big trouble.

Maneuver live fire exercises provide units with the best opportunity to scrimmage before game day. Simple live fires are the best vehicle to practice the Army's doctrinal play book--squad and platoon battle drills. More complex live fires develop leader situational awareness so necessary to call the correct audibles. Constant repetition in training develops confidence at all levels for quick response to situational changes with commonly understood variations of standard plays.

Despite widespread appreciation for the value of live fire training, there are differences between units in the frequency and intensity in which it is conducted. Clearly, there are risks involved. No one wants a soldier to get hurt. A lot of careful planning is required. Soldiers need to be in a high state of discipline and training. But if the leaders are committed, a battalion can safely do realistic live fire exercises and do them to great advantage.

Before assuming command, I believed supercharged infantry units built their collective training around a centerpiece of robust maneuver live fire exercises. This belief was developed in a previous assignment under a battalion commander who was committed to live fire training. I saw the results. In my opinion, this battalion I was in years ago stood head and shoulders above others. Realistic live fire exercises in training were the principal reason. This early experience convinced me that getting an extra ten percent in this core performance area could make 2-14 Infantry a great battalion as well.

Conducting realistic maneuver live fire training is a major challenge of battalion command. They require keen personal attention and persistence by the battalion commander every step of the way. Delegating this task to subordinates of lesser experience will probably not get the job done. But if the battalion commander truly believes in their value, is genuinely committed to doing them, and focused on his role as the primary collective trainer in the battalion, it is a bill that he does not mind paying.

II. ARMY DOCTRINAL AND REGULATORY GUIDANCE.

As an institution, the Army recognizes the value and importance of live fire training. There is an abundance of doctrinal reference material already in existence to support and assist unit efforts. One of the best single source documents available has been published by the Joint Readiness Training Center's Live Fire Division. This outstanding manual is full of detailed, yet simple, "how to" instructions to assist commanders in enhancing the realism of their live fire training.

Because live fire is merely a condition of training, commanders should not deviate from the guidance outlined in FM 25-101 concerning the assessment and evaluation of this training. Mission Training Plans (MTPs) contain excellent models for live fire scenario development, with appropriate Training and Evaluation Outlines (T&EO's) for all critical tasks and sub-tasks.

The commitment of the Army to live fire training can be found further in every divisional training regulation. Typically, these regulations outline recommended live fire sustainment training. As an example, for the 10th Mountain Division, recommended sustainment training for infantry battalions and below is as follows:

1. *Battalion*: 1 X Combined Arms Live Fire Exercise (CALFEX) every 18 months.
2. *Company*: 1 X CALFEX, 1 X Fire Control Exercise (FCX), and 1 X Live Fire Exercise (LFX) per year.
3. *Platoon*: 4 X LFX per year.
4. *Squad*: 4 X LFX per year.

This broad guidance gives subordinate commanders all the flexibility they need to tailor their live fire training scenarios and tasks to those areas assessed as needing the most practice. Given the amount of discretionary training time to a battalion in any fiscal year, the sustainment training frequencies listed above leads commanders toward internal live fire programs with real substance. Indeed, if commanders were to follow the letter of this law, live fire exercises would become the de facto centerpiece of their collective training.

If all the appropriate bases in planning and coordination are covered, rarely will a brigade or division commander say "No" to a live fire exercise that makes sense. On the contrary, they want their battalion commanders to aggressively pursue them. But they can't do it for you, nor should they have to. This is one ball that is squarely in the battalion commander's court.

III. GETTING THE TEN PERCENT DIFFERENCE.

Because time is such a precious commodity for every unit, commanders must be very judicious in how they use the limited amounts at their discretion. Making the tough decisions concerning how their unit will train is one area where battalion commanders wield enormous influence.

To make each day in the field count, I wanted to insure as many component parts of the battalion as possible were training to their known weaknesses. As a result, we concentrated on the Situational Training Exercise (STX) for most all collective training we conducted when our time was our own. Live fire was integrated as a condition of this training at every opportunity. We executed countless maneuver live fire STXs, at home station and in theater, from fire team through company level, both day and night.

In combat, the company team is normally the smallest tactical formation given a mission involving the tasks of attack or defend. Platoons often conduct independent ambushes or reconnaissance operations and squads conduct security patrols. However, these tasks are usually performed "within the context of the larger company mission of attack or defend. With this in mind,

the scenarios employed in our maneuver live fire STXs were derived from tasks on the company METL.

From the light infantry company METL, I considered two tasks to have the most importance: Movement to Contact--Hasty Attack and the Deliberate Attack (Night). By changing the METT-T elements of enemy and terrain for these two tasks, we were able to develop a wide variety of maneuver live fire STX scenarios that required executing units to expand their repertoire of tactics, techniques, and procedures.

An important self-imposed restriction for our live fire training was that no unit was allowed to double as the controlling headquarters for the task it was executing. This meant that training was always conducted at least one echelon down. The largest formation the battalion could train was the company; the company--a platoon, and so on.

The beauty of training a minimum of one level down is that units can conduct high quality training resourced almost exclusively out of hide. For example, if the battalion was running company maneuver live fire STXs, while one company was in the execution mode, another picked up range support and the third was free to conduct preparatory or remedial training.

To reinforce the combined arms aspects of the fight, at whatever level STXs were conducted, all next-higher systems and supporting arms that would be present in combat had to be replicated. Leaders were provided the same base Operation or Fragmentary Order (with supporting annexes and graphics) they would normally receive by their next higher headquarters.

All live fires were evaluated in accordance with T&EOs from appropriate MTPs. For squad and platoon maneuver live fire STXs, if the company did not have sufficient observer/controllers *(O/Cs)* it was supplemented from officers or NCO's from the battalion staff. I was the senior *O/C* for all company level live fire STXs and was assisted by the CSM and a tailored cadre of officers and NCOs from the staff.

O/Cs doubled in a limited capacity as range safety officers. However, the focus of their safety charter only extended as far as insuring that all fires remained within the range safety fan. Silence by the *O/C* was implied consent. Just as it

is in combat, all fire control within the range fan was the responsibility of the chain of command in the executing unit.

This was an extremely important facet of the way in which our training was conducted. While there were risks involved, because of the level of detail in our planning and rehearsals, I was confident that this structure would be sufficient to maintain the correct balance between safety and realism.

It took the primary responsibility for safety off of the *O/C* and put it where it belonged; on the chain of command. As a result, it prevented our live fire exercises from becoming "canned" events that were over-safetied. I credit this training procedure with being a significant systemic contributor for embedding internal company fire control SOPs down to the lowest level.

Whether the live fire STX was designed to be a day or night operation, the first iteration was always conducted as a daylight blank fire force-on-force run in MILES. After the AAR, the senior *O/C* made the call whether it was safe to go "hot" or whether another MILES iteration was required.

For night live fire STXs, a daylight live fire iteration was conducted as well. All signals and fire control aids to be used at night were rehearsed. After the AAR for this iteration, the senior *OIC* made the call whether it was safe to go "hot" at night or whether another daylight run was required.

Prior to executing any maneuver live fire STX we conducted planning and coordination in considerable detail. Company commanders had to first do their homework before I allowed them to brief a live fire exercise at a training meeting as a scheduled event. First, he had to work out all the resourcing issues with the S3. If the exercise could be resourced, he had permission for further planning.

Commanders were then required to personally brief me on all facets of the training before any live fire exercise was approved for execution. I wanted to see operations graphics overlaid on range fans, detailed objective sketches, and plans for targetry, safety, risk assessment, support and evaluation. Once I approved it, the range packet was given to the S3 for final coordination at the training support meeting.

While some might criticize this as micromanagement, I saw these briefings as an integral component of the mentoring process. Because of the Army's current company grade assignment policy, most captains that come to light units after their advanced course only have mechanized infantry experience.

Even those officers that arrive in the battalion wearing a Ranger Tab lack an appreciation for the level of detail required in planning and control of light infantry operations at the company level. Although they are quick and ready learners, they simply do not have a deep bag of light infantry tricks. Therefore, they need to be taught many of the things that more experienced light infantrymen take for granted.

I viewed these sessions as being at the heart of "commander's business" and used them as professional tutorials. It was my quality time with the company commanders. The meetings were very informal, usually over a cup of coffee at the table in my office. They were one on one with a lot of give and take. Our discussions usually went far beyond the mere live fire STX they were trying to get approved. We discussed how I wanted them to fight their unit and, therefore, how I expected them to train.

The company commanders got to know how I thought through operations, and I, them. I tried to increase their learning curve by giving them the benefit of my past mistakes. We frequently hit on larger tactical problems within the battalion in need of resolution. These meetings were mutually beneficial. I never failed to come away from them without learning something new. As I reflect back on my command tour, I believe they were among the most important things I did.

Any echelon of command has the wherewithal to create a high quality training environment for the unit below. For training lethal squads, platoons, and companies prepared for the challenges of combat, there is no better tool than the maneuver live fire STX. There is an abundance of doctrinal material available to support this effort. But it all starts with the battalion commander. He must be committed to doing them the right way, persistent in overcoming obstacles, and unwilling to compromise for anything less.

IV. THE PAYOFFS IN COMBAT.

Realistic maneuver live fire STXs as the centerpiece of collective training was the critical factor that enabled us to defeat the enemy in every tactical engagement in Somalia. Squads, platoons, and companies were able to conduct fire and maneuver confidently, aggressively, and safely. Supporting direct fires were routinely placed within five meters of advancing soldiers, both day and night.

This did not happen by luck. Live fire exercise gave units the opportunity to perfect internal fire control SOPs so they were clearly understood by all. In most respects, the fire and maneuver we executed in combat was done exactly as we routinely did it in training. Constant repetition made it seem natural. Given the intensity of close combat, once a unit is in contact with the enemy, this is not a lesson that can be taught and learned on the spot.

As the ground maneuver element of the UNOSOM Quick Reaction Force, TF 2-14 always had to be ready to respond to crisis situations. In these cases, our planning time was always severely limited. Once the initial concept of the operation had been hastily sketched out with the company commander(s), there was never sufficient time to insure it was clearly understood at the lowest level. Additionally, because situations were frequently unclear, we often had to rely on our professional judgment to fine tune our concept of the operation once we were in the objective area. Much was done on the fly.

The derivative benefits of extensive maneuver live fire training were most prominent in these operations. Had the battalion not focused on live fire so heavily, I do not believe our tactical execution in these situations would have been nearly so good. As a consequence, I suspect that we could have suffered a fratricide or friendly fire injury on more than one occasion.

Maneuver live fire training acclimates soldiers and leaders to this environment. Because we concentrated on making our live fires as realistic as possible, leaders developed keen battlefield awareness that made a lot of radio transmissions unnecessary. Repetitive training in a variety of different situations helped leaders visualize what was happening at lower levels.

It fostered an atmosphere of trust and confidence that, in the absence of radio traffic, lower echelons were doing the right things. This greatly simplified command and control. Orders could be given to subordinates telling them what to do without wasting time on the how. It left the net free of superfluous traffic and clear for reporting. Most importantly, it gave me and the company commanders the freedom to perform our most critical personal tasks.

When confronted with changes in the tactical situation, we were able to think through the cycle of action-reaction-counteraction. As a result, we avoided a lot of knee-jerk decisions. On more than one occasion, having the freedom to think prevented us from making a snap decision in the heat of battle that, in hindsight, may not have achieved its intended aim while being very costly.

None of this could have occurred without realistic maneuver live fire training. An old lesson re-learned one more time is that units will perform in combat exactly the way they are trained. Realistic maneuver live fire exercises were the best thing we did to acclimate our soldiers and leaders to the conditions of combat.

Due to live fire training, TF 2-14 achieved overwhelming tactical success in its first engagement and only got better over time. While soldiers and leaders always maintained a healthy respect for the enemy, there was no doubt in their minds as to who was the superior force and who would win in any firefight. The unit was truly an aggressive team with supreme confidence in their abilities. Physically, they felt that they could not be defeated. As a result, they were never mentally beaten.

All of these factors came heavily into play during 3-4 October in the few short hours the Task Force prepared for combat following our first, unsuccessful effort to rescue the Rangers. Every soldier had clearly heard the din of fighting rise above the city since the battle had started earlier in the day. Ears strained as radios crackled with emotional situation reports barely audible above the noise of incoming and outgoing fire. There had already been many U.S. casualties and as long as the battle raged, there were bound to be more. No one believed it would be an easy night.

In the darkness, a couple of soldiers held flashlights aloft and the orders group crowded in on all sides as I talked them through a simple concept of

operations from a map stretched over the hood of a vehicle. In the background was all the discordant noise of a unit trying to make something complex and difficult happen very quickly. Helicopters raced overhead at low level. Executive officers and platoon leaders scurried all around positioning APC's, tanks and trucks from disparate units into march order formation. The shouts of first sergeants, platoon sergeants and squad leaders moving men and equipment filled the air.

As the Orders Group broke its huddle, there was insufficient time for any detailed brief back. Nevertheless, I was confident that the company commanders understood both the plan and my intent. This understanding would be less clear at platoon level. At squad and individual soldier level, there would be, at best, only a rough idea of the situation, mission and fire control measures. The situation compelled us to rely on the tactics, techniques, and procedures we had developed in live fire training to carry us through.

Soon after the Task Force departed the staging area it began receiving intense RPG and automatic weapons fire as it had earlier in the day. With the bulk of our soldiers now riding in more survivable APC's, however, we were able to fight our way through. Once in the vicinity of our objectives, soldiers dismounted from their APC's and carried the fight on foot.

Our hastily developed plan survived enemy contact with only minor modifications. Even though they did not understand the full situation, squads and platoons executed their pieces of the operation exactly as we planned. Although there were several grim moments before the mission was accomplished, the end result should not have come as a surprise.

What these men had been asked to do on that night was, in many ways, merely a variation of what they had experienced so often before in training. Further, the Task Force did not suffer a single fratricide or friendly fire injury. The linkup and extraction of the Rangers was a success. Extensive live fire exercises in training were the key.

In every post-Somalia interview conducted of TF 2-14, our soldiers and leaders confirmed what we already knew to be true. In their minds, the training

that best prepared them for combat were the extensive live fires the unit conducted as a matter of routine at Fort Drum and in theater. Like me years before, they also had become believers in the importance of this core performance area.

V. RECAP: THE BOTTOM LINE.

1. Accept no substitute for realistic maneuver live fire exercises in training to prepare soldiers and units for combat. Because live fire is merely a condition of training, all doctrinal training and training management processes apply. Evaluate all live fire training using T&EOs from appropriate MTPs.

2. Develop live fire STXs with scenarios based on company METL tasks to maximize training time available. Change the METT-T factors of enemy and terrain to provide variety in training that expand unit playbooks.

3. Allow no unit to double as the controlling headquarters for the task it is executing. Provide executing units with the same orders and BaS coverage they would normally receive in combat.

4. Permit *OIC s* to function as range safety officers only to insure fires remain within safety fans. Make all other fire control the responsibility of the executing unit.

5. Retain approval authority for all live fire training at battalion commander level. Require company commanders to personally brief you in detail prior to execution.

CHAPTER FOUR:

BATTALION COMMANDER COMBAT LEADERSHIP LESSONS LEARNED

While commanders at brigade level and above have greater positional power than battalion commanders, their personal presence is not as often felt at soldier level. Formations above battalion level are simply too large for the commander to have widespread interaction with all their soldiers on a continual basis. This is not so at battalion level. By virtue of their position, and the extremely close-knit nature of the organization they command, battalion commanders very directly influence the lives of hundreds of soldiers.

Companies and battalions make up the basic family unit of the Army. Soldiers might identify with their division or brigade, but they bond with their company and battalion. Ask a soldier what unit he's in and the odds are that he'll respond with the company and battalion designation first. It falls on the battalion commander, therefore, to be the Army's caretaker of this family unit.

The position demands intimacy. Battalion commanders are closely involved in everything their units do and how they do it. Their personal influence on everyone and everything in the unit is so great that it impacts on all facets of battalion life. There is very little within the battalion that escapes their personal attention.

Indeed, it could be argued convincingly that the personal influence battalion commanders exert on their units is without equal at any other level in the Army. As a consequence, it is a generally accepted truth within the Army that over time, battalions, in many ways, come to reflect the standards, commitment and priorities of the commander himself.

By virtue of their dominant position within the organization, battalion commanders are their unit's primary behavioral role model. Their acts of commission and omission are always in plain view of subordinates and the subject of much discussion. This makes the responsibility of battalion command one that carries an enormous weight to always do the right thing.

The combined effects of position and organization forces battalion commanders to not only focus on accomplishing the mission, but also on how the mission is accomplished. The long term health and well being of their units depends on their ability to balance this dual focus.

These factors are, of course, every bit as relevant when battalions are deployed to theaters of operation--probably more so. When a battalion is deployed, soldiers and units live together twenty four hours a day, seven days a week. Anything that was working well in the battalion prior to deployment requires constant maintenance to sustain. Things that weren't working so well get worse.

When battalions are deployed to operational theaters, the mission can be all-consuming. It requires a concerted effort by the commander to maintain his focus on all the other areas that are important to the battalion. But every operational deployment has an end date. Once it arrives, the battalion immediately begins preparation for the next mission. The leadership challenge of battalion command is to finish the first race on a horse that is ready to run the next.

For these reasons, when TF 2-14 was alerted for deployment to Somalia, I felt it was important that we not limit our focus to the operational domain alone. When it came to the mission, I was confident everything we had done in training would hold us in good stead. Our leadership had to be focused on the human dimension as well. Someday, Somalia would become a memory. When that day came, I wanted an outfit that was still ready to run.

Subsequent sections of this chapter focus on what I refer to as combat leadership lessons learned. I will highlight those elements that, in hindsight, I consider most relevant from our experience in Somalia. Sub-sections are broken down to cover periods before, during and after the battle. When taken in whole, they are intended to provide a picture of how we endeavored to sustain the long term well being of the battalion.

BEFORE THE BATTLE

The text below is a reprint from a handout I provided to all the officers in Task Force 2-14 Infantry in conjunction with an Officer Professional Development class I gave prior to our deployment. My intent was to reinforce in the minds of our officers that they had to take the long term view of the operation. Based on the training we had conducted and our past performance, I had no doubt the battalion would accomplish its mission to a high standard. For the health and well being of the unit, however, the manner in which we 'accomplished our mission was also extremely important.

The role of the officer in this process was critical. As the mission wore on, I thought it might be easy for officers to lose their long term focus or become complacent in their duties. Therefore, I felt it was important to establish a common reference point of expectations up front. Although the focus of my discussion was at the platoon leader level, it is equally applicable to all Task Force officers.

GOING TO WAR: PERSONAL NOTES:

1. Officers are the standard bearers of the Army's institutional values. Soldiers and NCO's will take their cues from what you do or say and what you do not do or say. Seek excellence in all things and never let a fault or error pass by you uncorrected.

2. Have trust and confidence in your chain of command. Once a decision is made, vigorously support it 100%. If you hear grumbling in the ranks, put a stop to it immediately. Never do anything to foster the notion that "higher" is screwed up. Remember, you are somebody's "higher" too.

3. Performance counseling does not stop once in theater. On the contrary, it occurs more frequently. Performance counseling remains our best available tool to modify individual behavior that affects unit performance. This task is not delegated below squad leader level. Platoon Leaders review every counseling in their platoon. Your platoon notebook becomes your bible.

4. Training does not stop in theater. You must have a series of mission related training scenarios ready to go at all times. Most training will be "opportunity" training. Accept the fact that you will not be popular when you force your platoon to do this.

5. Pre-combat and post-combat checks are SOP to every mission. This task is not delegated below squad leader level. No deviations.

6. AAR's are conducted upon completion of every mission. Lessons learned are incorporated into SOP's immediately.

7. The ultimate form of troop welfare is bringing everyone back home alive with all equipment operative.

8. Establish personal goals for self-improvement on this deployment; both mental and physical. Encourage your subordinates to do the same.

9. Pray regularly and get to know your God. Encourage your subordinates to do the same. There are no atheists in foxholes.

10. . Keep a diary. It is a good tool to aid in your professional growth. Encourage your subordinates to do the same.

11. Maintain your balance and sense of humor. Do not get "stressed out". You will lose the trust and confidence of your platoon if you do. Understand the difference between losing your temper and showing your temper.

12. No individual deviations from the prescribed uniform. Ever. Deviations are conscious decisions by the chain of command based on METT-T, not personal whims.

13. All soldiers perform personal hygiene daily. Shave and brush teeth at a minimum. Squad Leaders check. You and PSG verify. No exceptions.

14. Physical training is conducted daily in accordance with METT-T. Develop a program of standard isometric and manual resistance exercises.

15. Do not let good performance go unrewarded. Do not allow poor performance to go unpunished.

16. Encourage constructive feedback from subordinates as to how we can do thing s better, then funnel recommendations up through the chain of command. Most often, the best solutions come from the bottom up.

17. Weapons and ammunition are cleaned at every opportunity.

18. Take charge of all government property in view.

19. There is always something that needs to be checked or verified.

20. Stop rumors. Immediately. Ruthlessly. Do not allow the morale of your platoon to rise and fall based on the latest rumor. If you do not hear it from the chain of command, it is not true.

21. We are a combat organization, expert in the controlled application of violence. Follow your instincts, they are probably right. The chain of command will support you. Maintain patient, aggressiveness in your platoon. Be decisive and execute with unrelenting fury.

DURING THE BATTLE

The major points listed below were derived from personal experience in numerous combat operations the Task Force conducted during its tour in Somalia. While most of them are not new, they are nevertheless true.

1. The battalion commander deploys well forward with his tactical command post. He is not indispensable. If he becomes a casualty, someone else will step up to take his place. The Army has many qualified people who can do his job.

2. The battalion commander's personal leadership counts. His behavior in tough situations will help shape and guide the actions of others.

3. Listen to the battle around you. What you do not hear is sometimes just as important as what you do. Do not rely solely on radio reports. Your experience in training exercises gives you the best gut feel of ground truth when reports tell you differently.

4. Think. If you are not doing it, neither is anyone else. Think action, reaction, counteraction. Any decision made in haste will cause needless waste.

5. All leaders must stay cool and clear-headed under fire. This takes concentrated effort and it starts with the battalion commander.

6. Subordinate leaders need reassurance. Sometimes this takes a gentle form, sometimes not. Everyone knows accomplishing the mission is the way home. Subordinates truly want to do the right thing, but fear and confusion sometimes get in the way.

7. No knee-jerk reactions when soldiers get killed or wounded. This is the unfortunate nature of our business. It will happen despite your every effort. Accepting this fact and then living with it is difficult.

8. Give subordinates the time and space to develop the situation. They have a difficult job to do. Don't badger them with unnecessary reporting requirements. Waiting is the hardest part; particularly when you know your men are dying.

9. Remember the Regiment. Many have stood in your shoes before. Do not allow your actions to stain the Colors. After we are gone, the Regiment lives on.

AFTER THE BATTLE

The points listed below are designed to help battalion commanders take stock in themselves and their unit as they prepare for the next battle.

1. Learn from what you and the unit did and continue seeking organizational improvement. Do this even if it means changing your personal ways. Actively enforce the AAR process so good ideas are not stymied at lower levels.

2. Keep routine decision making decentralized and save the important ones for yourself. Your staff and subordinate leaders need room to take the initiative and work out problems on their own. The better they can do this, the better they can serve you.

3. Be tolerant of honest mistakes. Everyone is under stress and trying their best. As long as mistakes don't cause casualties or impede mission accomplishment, they probably aren't that important.

4. Pace yourself for the long haul. Your battalion needs a commander who is physically and mentally fresh. This includes regular sleep, PT, hygiene, and relaxation. If you do not maintain your balance, neither will your battalion.

5. Don't let the OPTEMPO make you lose sight of everything else. Lots of other things still demand your attention: awards, punishments, promotions, rear detachment, family support group, maintenance, Mess Hall, etc.

6. Insure that you stay visible and approachable to soldiers. Do routine management by walking around to keep your finger on the pulse.

7. Maintain a full court press to keep rumors in check, both at home and in theater. Write a monthly newsletter to dependents. Send videos to the Family Support Group. Routinely meet with companies to dispel groundless rumors.

8. Maintain your perspective and sense of humor. Not everything is serious. If you don't laugh very often, chances are no one else does either. Units that don't laugh, even at themselves, have big problems.

It is almost impossible to overstate the impact that battalion commanders have on their units. While accomplishing the mission will forever be the commander's paramount consideration, it cannot be his only one. Fulfilling his role as caretaker of the Army's basic family unit demands a balanced approach to command. For sustained operations, the battalion must maintain its health over the long term. Therefore, it is important that battalion commanders always keep one eye peeled on the how the battalion accomplishes the mission.

The points listed above reflect the approach to this challenge used by TF 2-14 Infantry during its tour in Somalia for periods before, during and after the battle. They are not all-inclusive lists. Moreover, there are plenty of areas in which we probably could have done better. However, these points and suggestions worked for us.

CONCLUSION

Regardless of whether it is a combat, combat support, or combat service support unit, any battalion in the Army can be a truly great outfit. By focusing on high performance in several fundamental areas that are critical for success in combat, battalion commanders can increase the overall capability of their unit by a significant order of magnitude.

The principles outlined in the Army's doctrine and training system work. They have shaped an Army that is the world's best. Individual and unit performance levels throughout the Army are solid. As a consequence, most battalions are pretty good by any measure. Nevertheless, there is always room for improvement.

Every unit has several fundamental areas of individual and collective endeavor that are critical to anything the unit would ever be called upon to do in combat, regardless of factors of METT-T. These areas are the defining characteristics of the unit's essence. I call them unit core performance areas.

Commanders can achieve high performance in their core performance areas with only a small increase in effort, about ten percent. Getting this extra ten percent, however, requires commanders to maintain a long term focus on their core performance areas that does not change in the face of competing demands. Core performance areas must be constantly integrated as sub-tasks or conditions in everything the unit does. They must then be reinforced at every opportunity by all the institutional weight the chain of command can bring to bear.

My professional experience convinced me that there were three fundamental areas that defined the essence of the light infantry battalion. These became the core performance areas for the 2nd Battalion 14th Infantry. These areas were:

1. Physical fitness and mental toughness.
2. Marksmanship.
3. Realistic maneuver live fire exercises.

We maintained a constant focus in these areas, both at home station and in theater. Our aim was to find the extra ten percent that would make us high performers in each of these core performance areas. Getting the extra ten percent did not require a major overhaul of the unit. Thoughtful, fine tune adjustments in what the unit trained on and how training was conducted was the key.

When a unit achieves high performance in its core performance areas, they get an added payoff of tremendous proportion. Because core performance areas are at the heart and soul of the unit, there is a synergy among them that powers enhanced performance in other important areas as well. The result is a supercharged unit with capabilities of a greater order of magnitude.

Adopting this philosophy in training paved the way for the 2nd Battalion 14th Infantry's performance throughout all its combat operations in Somalia. The battalion got more than its extra ten percent in each of its core performance areas. It was a high energy, high performance outfit across the board.