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**HOW SHOULD THE BRIGADE AND DIVISION COMMANDER
ASSESS SUCCESS OR FAILURE ON THE AIRLAND BATTLEFIELD?**

by

**Major William G. Butler
Infantry**

**School of Advanced Military Studies
U.S. Army Command and General Staff College
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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Name of Student : William G. Butler, Major, Infantry

Title of Monograph : How Should the Brigade and Division Commander
Assess Success or Failure on the AirLand Battlefield?

Approved by :

Harold R. Winton
(LTC Harold R. Winton, Ph.D)

Monograph Director

Richard Hart Sinnreich
(COL. Richard Hart Sinnreich, MA)

Director, School of
Advanced Military Studies

Philip J. Brookes
(Philip J. Brookes, Ph. D.)

Director, Graduate
Degree Programs

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ABSTRACT

HOW SHOULD THE BRIGADE AND DIVISION COMMANDER ASSESS SUCCESS OR FAILURE ON THE AIRLAND BATTLEFIELD? by MAJ. William G. Butler, USA, 39 pages.

This monograph deals with the assessment process during the course of battle. The accuracy of assessment can mean the difference in success or failure in combat. To enhance the potential for success the commander must have a method to assess the progress of battle. A method of assessment provides information from which the commander can make decisions during the course of battle. If the assessment process is absent or faulty there is a greater chance that the decisions made will be counter-productive to the accomplishment of the mission.

Current US Army doctrine does not address the question of how to assess the progress of battle. Military theory provides a foundation and a general direction to focus a potential assessment process. History provides examples of battles where the successful commanders had an adequate assessment process and unsuccessful commanders failed to recognize success or failure due to an inadequate assessment process.

This paper culls out from military theory and historical examples principles for assessing the progress of battle. It concludes with a recommended assessment method. The recommended method incorporates the physical, cybernetic, and moral domains of battle with the elements of combat power and the historical principles of effective assessment processes. The study then briefly examines the implications of this process for contemporary doctrine.



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HOW SHOULD THE BRIGADE AND DIVISION COMMANDER ASSESS SUCCESS OR FAILURE ON THE AIRLAND BATTLEFIELD?

INTRODUCTION

Napoleon is reported to have said words to the effect. . . "I have lost battles at lunch time but have achieved victory by dinner". Clausewitz tell us that if one can reverse a losing battle before its conclusion and gain victory, the initial loss becomes a foundation for a greater victory.

"For on closely examining the tactical progress of an engagement it becomes obvious that, up to its very end, the results of each of the subsidiary engagements are only suspended verdicts, which not only may be revoked by the final outcome, but may be turned into their very opposites."¹

Recognizing that the outcome of battle may be reversed in mid-cycle, how does a commander assess the performance of his organization in terms of success or failure during the conduct of the battle? Can he reverse a losing effort if he doesn't recognize he is losing? How does he maintain the momentum of the organization in victory if he does not recognize he is winning?

The elements which are integral to the process of recognition are the establishment of valid criteria by which to judge success, the identification of elements of the engagement which relate to the criteria, and the methods

¹Howard, Michael, et al. CARL VON CLAUSEWITZ ON WAR. Translated by M. Howard and Peter Paret. Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1976, pg. 243.

employed to gather the information concerning the elements of the engagements.

Success is defined in relationship to the ends desired when an armed force engages in combat. Before combat the commander establishes the criteria by which the success or failure of an engagement is to be judged. Based upon these criteria, the commander must be able to perceive clearly those elements of the battle which relate directly to the established criteria. Recognition of these elements affects the decisions of the commander, thus affecting the outcome of battle. If the commander fails to establish relative criteria or is incapable of recognizing the indicators of the valid criteria, his chances of victory in combat are greatly diminished.

This monograph will concern itself with how to assess success at the tactical level of war. What is the tactical level of war and what separates this level from the operational level? The U.S. Army OPERATIONS manual, FM 100-5, defines tactics as "The art by which corps and smaller unit commanders translate potential combat power into victorious battles and engagements."² Engagements are small conflicts usually of short duration. They are a subset of battles. Battles are fought by large organizations over a more extended period of time. The result of battle will normally affect the campaign plan. FM 100-5 states that operational art is "the employment of military forces to attain strategic goals in a theater of war or theater of operations through design, organization, and conduct of campaigns and major operations."³ FM 100-5 envisions engagements fought by divisions and smaller forces while battles are normally fought by division and higher forces.

²FM 100-5, **OPERATIONS**, May 1986, pg. 10.

³Ibid

Being able to assess the progress of combat at the tactical level is significant. An accurate assessment ensures that the lives of soldiers are not needlessly lost in a futile attempt to save a battle already lost or conversely, assures the effective use of available resources to gain victory. There exists a relationship between engagements, battles, and campaigns. Not all tactical engagements affect the outcome of campaigns, but all campaigns are affected by the success or failure of some engagements and almost all battles.

This paper proposes to deal with the question, "How should the Brigade and Division Commander assess success or failure on the AirLand Battlefield?" To gain insight into this question, we will take a look at theory and doctrine as they relate to the question. After this foundation is established, we will examine three historical examples of methods used in assessing the progress of battle. From this look at theory, doctrine, and history, conclusions will be drawn as to what aspects of the assessment process are most likely to work on the battlefield of today. Finally, the monograph will conclude with some implications for current doctrine and command and control procedures for the U.S. Army.

THEORY AND DOCTRINE

The commander's ability to assess the progress of an engagement is dependent upon identifying elements within the engagement that give indications as to the outcome. Clausewitz writes that the outcome of engagements may be recognized by three distinct signs. One is moral, the moral determination of the commander. The other two are material, the loss of one's own troops and the amount of ground lost.

The first indicator is "the psychological effect exerted by the commanding officer's moral stamina."⁴ If the commander believes he is losing or has lost, his communications with his soldiers and his commanders will reflect the belief. His attitude then will affect the decisions made not only by himself but also by his subordinates and this will have a detrimental affect on the outcome of the engagement.

The second indicator is "a wasting away of one's own troops at a rate faster than that of the enemy's."⁵ This estimate can be made by the tactical commander fairly accurately. This estimate is easier at the lower tactical echelons because of the commander's closeness to the combat.

The third element of recognition according the Clausewitz is " the amount of ground lost."⁶

These elements represents a means by which the commander can assess the progress of battle. The more definitive these elements become during the battle the more difficult it will be to effect change, thus the more difficult to alter the outcome of the battle.

Clausewitz defines the success of battle in relation to the ends desired when the battle was joined. The "moment of decision" is reached when one of the activities listed below is accomplished.

- 1) Where the purpose of the engagement is the possession of some mobile object, the decisive moment is reached when the object is lost.
- 2) Where the purpose . . . is the possession of a of a certain locality, the decisive moment is . . . reached when the locality is lost.
- 3) . . . where the main objective is the destruction of the enemy's forces, the moment of decision

⁴Howard, et al, CLAUSEWITZ ON WAR, pg. 250

⁵Ibid

⁶Ibid

comes when the victor ceases to be in a state
disarray"⁷

The elements of recognition represent a means by which to assess the progress of battle. The definition of success and the "moments of decision" provide structure to the battle in that they focus the commander's thoughts on the critical aspects of the battle. From these critical aspects the commander can backward plan and determine the criteria by which to judge the progress of the battle.

The selection of criteria to judge success is therefore critical for the commander. What does theory say are tools that the commander must use to conceptualize the battle? The first may be his imagination. Baron Von Freytag writes that,

" . . . with the help of a sound military imagination, an officer can always have a definite picture of the military situation before his eyes and can therefore make a sound decision . . . they will seldom fail completely if carried through with determination, for they have basically a sound foundation."⁸

Clausewitz writes of imagination as the "frivolous goddess"⁹ This highlights the negative side of imagination. The commander whose imagination fails to see situations in their true light has often led his forces to disaster. Imagination relates to the commander's tactical ability to maneuver his forces and the technical ability to employ his firepower systems on a given piece of terrain.

⁷Ibid, pg 241

⁸Freytag-Loringhoven, Baron Von. **THE POWER OF PERSONALITY IN WAR.** Harrisburg, Pa.: The Military Service Publishing Company, 1955; reprint ed. . Fort Leavenworth, Ks.: Command and General Staff College, 1986. pg. 116

⁹Ibid, Howard, et al. **CLAUSEWITZ ON WAR.** pg. 110

Another tool of the commander is the ability to recognize the human dimensions of combat. Ardant Du Picq writes " tactics is an art based on the knowledge of how to make men fight with their maximun energy against fear."¹⁰According to this line of thought the basic factor of tactics is the human heart. To assess the human heart, a commander must be personally involved with his soldiers. He must be able to look into subordinates' eyes and listen to their voices and determine if the heart is capable of performing the assigned mission. This tool of the commander relates to his leadership capabilities.

A third tool of the commander is the ability to ascertain " decisive points" prior to the battle. Yes, it is true that this ability may be directly related to a commander's imagination. But it seems to me that the selection of "decisive points" within a battle is more closely connected to a commander's ability to reason. Imagination permits the commander to viuslize a battle. Reasoning allows the commander to determine critical elements within his conceptualized battle.

Baron De Jomini states in his book, THE ART OF WAR, that decisive points will be determined by :

- 1) "the features of the ground"
- 2) "the relationship of the local features to the aim"
- 3) "the positions occupied by the respective forces"¹¹

¹⁰Du Picq, Ardant COL, French Army. BATTLE STUDIES: ANCIENT AND MODERN BATTLE. Translated by COL. J.N. Greely, USA and MAJ R.C. Cotton, USA. Harrisburg, Pa. The Military Service Publishing Co. 1946, pg. 18.

¹¹Jomini, Baron De, THE ART OF WAR. Translated by G.H. Mendell, CPT, USA, and W.P. Craighill, LT, USA. Westport, Ct.: Greenwood Press, 1971

These points may be determined by the commander before battle is joined. Their determination will guide him in the formulation of his plan for the conduct of the engagement or battle. In developing his plan the commander attempts to protect his force so as to bring the maximum combat power to bear at the decisive points in the battle.

A contemporary military theorist, Professor James J. Schneider of the School of Advanced Military Studies, has postulated there are three domains of battle, the physical, cybernetic, and moral. The physical element concerns things such as weapons, forces, terrain, and weather. The cybernetic element is characterized by organizational structure, information flow within the organization, and articulation of concepts to the organization. The moral element deals with the spirit of the soldiers and the status of key leadership positions *within the organization*.

FM 100-5, OPERATIONS, recognizes the importance of combat power. It states there are three essential components to success in meeting the challenges of modern combat. The first is superior performance by soldiers and leaders who simply won't accept defeat. Second is the requirement for sound, well understood doctrine for fighting. Finally, success requires sufficient weapons and support and support equipment to sustain combat.

How is this translated to the tactical level of combat and the ability of the commander to assess success? The doctrine manual acknowledges that combat power decides the outcome of battle and engagements. Superior combat power " is generated through the commander's skillful combination of the elements of maneuver, firepower, protection and leadership in a sound plan flexibly but forcefully executed."¹² The most essential element is leadership. Herein lies the connection between the essential components of

¹²FM 100-5, **OPERATIONS**, May 1986, pg 12

success and the tactical level of command. It is the ability of the commander to assess the sufficiency of the elements of combat power, as they relate to the battle being fought, which will determine success or failure.¹³

Now that we see what theory and doctrine have established as precepts for success, what does doctrine tell us about how to analyze a situation? Is there an accepted doctrinal method concerning an assessment process? Our leadership manuals may offer some thoughts.

FM 22-100, **LEADERSHIP**, outlines a method a leader may use to analyze a situation. It states in part, that a leader must determine:

1. Who has the information to help me accomplish the mission?
2. Do I know what I must do to accomplish the mission?
3. Do I know how to do what must be done?
4. Am I motivated to do what must be done?"¹⁴

These questions seem simplistic and soul searching type of questions. It seems to me that this method of analyzing a situation will raise more questions than it will answer. Therefore this method does not lend itself to quick assessments on the battlefield. The combat leader must make critical and timely decisions in very short time frames.

Our senior leadership manual, FM 22-999, states that there are four functions that a senior leader performs to implement his intent. They are "command, control, management, and leadership."¹⁵ In addition the manual

¹³The elements of combat power may be further subdivided into particular functions. I invite the reader to gain additional insight into this subject by reading: Wass de Czege, Huba, COL, USA. **UNDERSTANDING AND DEVELOPING COMBAT POWER**, Course Special, AMSP Course 2, School of Advanced Military Studies, Fort Leavenworth, Ks. 1984.

¹⁴FM 22-100, **LEADERSHIP**, October 1983, pg. 293

¹⁵FM 22-999, **LEADERSHIP AND COMMAND AT SENIOR LEVELS**, November 1985, pg. 7-15

asserts that " purpose, direction, and motivation gains victory at the senior tactical level."¹⁶ Again our doctrine fails to provide a method of assessment.

HISTORICAL EXAMPLES

If we have no current agreed upon method to assess the progress of battle, let us take a look at three historical examples of leadership in combat and ask the question, how did the successful leaders assess the progress of battle and what did unsuccessful leaders fail to do? I have chosen three historical examples. Two are from World War II, the Battle of Schmidt, November 1944, and the 82d Airborne Division's participation in the Battle of the Bulge, December 1944. The third example is the Battle of the Ia Drang River Valley in the Republic of South Vietnam, November 1965.

We will begin with the Battle of Schmidt conducted 2-9 November 1944 by the 28th Infantry Division commanded by MG Norman D. Cota.

On 2 November 1944 the 28th Infantry Division attacked to seize the town of Schmidt, a hub of road networks from which could be viewed the Schwammenauel Dam, an important link in a series of Roer Dams. Successful seizure of Schmidt would gain maneuver space and supply routes for VII Corps, protect VII Corps' right flank, facilitate future operations to seize the Roer Dams, and divert enemy reserve forces away from the First Army's main effort. This last aspect of the mission was to be overcome by events, however, and the Army's main effort would not begin until the 16th of November. This would allow the enemy reserves to fight the 28th Division and still be able to recover in time to meet the main attack. In reality, and as

¹⁶Ibid.

no one anticipated, the 28th Division was being committed with little hope of success.

General Cota found little opportunity to exercise initiative in developing his course of action. The corps commander, General Gerow, had directed the 28th Division to commit one regiment in the north to the woodline overlooking the village of Huertgen and one regiment to open secondary roads in the south leading to Richelskaul. This left General Cota with one regiment to make the main attack to Schmidt. This same situation had been faced by the 9th Division with disastrous results.

What was the end state of battle visualized by General Cota? He expected to have one regiment, the 112th, occupying and defending Schmidt. One regiment, the 109th, would seize the village of Huertgen in the north; and the 110th Regiment would attack to seize the road junction at Raffelsbrand and the village of Simonskall. These two objectives would open secondary roads in the Monchau Corridor leading to Schmidt.

The accomplishment of the end state hinged on several critical elements. The first element was the protection of the limited manpower resources available to the division to accomplish the three disparate missions. The regiments required protection in the form of firepower and maneuver plans so as to limit attrition of the force before they reached their final objectives. A second critical element was the designated Main Supply Route (MSR), the Kall River trail leading out of Vossenack to Kommerschmeidt. This trail was the only means to sustain the main effort. Another critical element was the early opening of the secondary roads in the south leading to Schmidt. These roads would be needed to bring additional forces to Schmidt and to facilitate future operations of the corps.

The previous efforts of the 9th Division in the Huertgen Forest had identified another critical element. That was the requirement for direct fire support weapons, tanks or tank destroyers, in the forest. These systems were needed to confront the numerous pillboxes which held up the infantry advance and inflicted heavy casualties. In addition tanks or an anti-tank capability was need in Schmidt to repel an expected armor-led counterattack.

Prior to battle did General Cota recognize the critical elements of the battle? The answer is, yes and no. He was concerned that his main effort would be attacking uphill under the guns of the German artillery firing from the Brandenburg-Bergstien Ridge. He recognized he needed the secondary roads in the south, but he failed to give the 109th Regiment the means to counter the pillboxes in the forest which would stop the regiment. General Cota failed to appreciate the precarious nature of his designated MSR. Because of this he would lack the ability to get additional support to the main effort when it was required.

What was his method of obtaining information concerning the critical elements of the battle? Prior to the battle he took no action to gather information. He did not direct any patrolling activity. If he had done so, the patrols might have given him information concerning the disposition of enemy troops, the precarious nature of the MSR, and the location of minefields and pillboxes, as well as have aided in navigation through the forested terrain. Additionally, he did not conduct a personal reconnaissance of the division area of operations. Failing to do this, he lacked personal knowledge of the physical domain of the battle.

General Cota decided to begin his operation in the north with the 109th Regiment attacking along the Germeter-Huertgen road. The 112th

Infantry Regiment was to conduct the main attack . One battalion of the 112th Regiment reinforced with tanks would take the Vossenack ridge in the center of the division zone. The remaining two battalions were to attack south of Vossenack between the 110th Inf, Regt. and the battlion of the 112th position on the Vossenack ridge. The attack was to go across the Kall River , through Kommerscheidt, to Schmidt. A third regiment, the 110th, made a supporting attack in the south. One battalion was held as a nominal division reserve.

General Hodges, the First Army Commander, approved of the plan. He had visited the 28th Division area and was impressed. He reportly found the division " in fine fettle, and raring to go, and optimistic over giving the Boche a fine drubbing."¹⁷

This impression by General Hodges indicates an overly optimistic view of the coming battle. Although General Cota had earned a reputation for personal daring and courage, he and his division were dispirited by the environment which confronted them when they relieved the 9th Division in the Huertgen Forest. The division had entered a dismal forest.

*"All about them lay emergency rations containers, artillery-stripped trees, stacks of unearthed mines, . . . almost impassable firebreaks and trails, shell and mine craters by the hundreds, pitiful remains of deer cut down by artillery and mines, and men from graves registration. . . . removing bloated bodies of the fallen. The 9th Division troops were dirty, unshaven, nervous, morose. . . ."*¹⁸

The battle began according to plan on 2 November. General Cota remained in his command post monitoring radio nets and following the progress of the battle on his operations maps. The northern regiment ran

¹⁷MacDonald, Charles B. THE BATTLE OF THE HUERTIGEN FOREST. NEW YORK, N. Y. Jove Publications , Inc., 1983. pg. 90.

¹⁸Ibid.

into stubborn resistance in the woods along the road and made little headway. The Vossenack Ridge was taken in the center of the zone. However, the limit of advance had left the troops in exposed positions along the edge of the ridge and they were bombarded with effective artillery fire from the Brandenburg-Bergstein Ridge. The attack in the south had stalled from the beginning and there was fierce fighting from tree to tree with no forward movement.

In the center the main attack was committed along the original route only to run into several entrenched automatic weapons. The attack was called off early without any regimental maneuver or call for additional fire support. The Regimental Commander, Col. Peterson, decided to change the route of attack to go through Vossenack and down the cart path across the Kall River. General Cota took no action to change this decision even though he was later to state that he expected the main effort to be pressed more vigorously.

The main attack began again on 3 November. The 112th Inf. Regt. made it across the Kall Gorge with two battalions. They cleared Kommerscheidt leaving one battalion there in defensive positions. One battalion continued on to Schmidt arriving around midday. The taking of Schmidt was relatively easy and the soldiers were lulled into a false sense of security.

By the second day of battle the situation looked like this from General Cota's command post. One battalion was on the objective, one battalion at Kommerscheidt, one battalion reinforced on the Vossenack Ridge, one regiment tied down on the northeast side of the road to Huertgen. The division had reported a 1300 meter advance by this regiment, when in fact

the regiment had only progressed 300 meters.¹⁹ The 110th Regt. in the south was pinned down in the forest and had made no headway. There was a critical need for tanks or some other direct fire support weapon in the forest to break the stalemate.

Except for one tank company, General Cota had consolidated his tanks with division artillery. Instead of reinforcing the effort in the south with tanks, General Cota committed his reserve to a circuitous effort to get behind the German defenses in the south to relieve pressure on the 110th Regt. Thus, General Cota deprived himself of his only means to reinforce his main effort. Additionally, General Cota had dedicated less than one third of his engineer assets to improving the cart track across the Kall Gorge. The remaining assets of the engineer group were committed to rear area operations. He had also directed the engineers to secure the Kall Trail but because of unclear guidance, the engineers assumed they were only to provide local security for the engineer work force. This indicates a lack of appreciation for what the little cart path meant in terms of success or failure for the 28th Division.

During the early morning hours of 4 November, the 3d day of battle, a company of tanks attempted to traverse the Kall River Gorge. Because of the rough terrain, the narrow path and the lack of engineer preparation, five tanks were disabled along a bend in the path. Three tanks made it through of which two were disabled before reaching the town of Kommerscheidt. Only one tank made it through to support the 112th Regt. initially; two additional tanks were to make it Kommerschmeidt before the battle was over. The disabled tanks blocked the cart path and the only supply route to

¹⁹Curry, Cecil B. **FOLLOW ME AND DIE: THE DESTRUCTION OF AN AMERICAN DIVISION IN WORLD WAR II**, New York, N.Y., Stien and Day, 1984
pg. 31

the main effort was cut. "Not even the dexterous little weasels could get through."²⁰

At dawn on 4 November the Germans counterattacked at Schmidt with elements of the 116th Panzer Division. There was a 75 minute delay before the first American artillery fired in support of the 112th. General Cota was aware of the attack. There is no evidence that he attempted to correct the delay in the artillery's failure to fire. By the time the artillery delivered its first concentration the German tanks and infantry were in the town of Schmidt, and a rumor spread through the American battalion that they were to withdraw. The battalion commander had positioned himself in a pillbox to the rear of his battalion and was not in a position to exert any personal influence to squelch the rumor. The battalion fled in a confused and disorderly fashion. In less than 3 hours Schmidt was retaken by the Germans as the 112th fell back on Kommerschiedt. General Cota had met the German counterattack with less than 1/9th of his maneuver combat power.

Major Hazlett's battalion defending in Kommerscheidt reported that it was very difficult, if not impossible, to stop the soldiers fleeing from Schmidt. 200 soldiers were eventually stopped and augmented the defenses around Kommerscheidt. In addition, LT. Raymond Fleig, commander of the only tank to get through the gorge by this time, supplemented the defenses.

The German forces continued their attack toward Kommerscheidt. Because of several instances of personal heroics, particularly by LT. Fleig and his tank, the attack was repelled by mid-afternoon. The Germans fell back to regroup and rally on the high ground in Schmidt overlooking Kommerschmeidt.

²⁰Ibid. pg. 104

As the Germans fell back, General Cota ordered the regimental commander to counterattack. This seemed to be a logical order for someone who was looking at a map in a rear command post. However, the reality of the situation, one battalion retreating in disarray, no armor reinforcement, and a considerably larger enemy force made the order ludicrous.

Previous to the Schmidt battle, "Dutch" Cota had always ascertained the situation at the front first hand. However, during the Battle of Schmidt he confined himself to his rear command post and followed the events of the battle on the map. Why did he change his method of assessing the progress of battle now? Had he lost his moral determination to the psychological malaise of the Huertgen Forest?

No matter what the reason, General Cota and his staff never grasped a true picture of the situation. Because of this the 28th Division was doomed to defeat through the rest of the Battle of Schmidt. With no other game in town, the Germans were free to concentrate forces against the 28th Division. This they did; and after tenacious fighting at Kommerscheidt, defeated the 112th Inf. Regt. and pushed it back across the Kall River. The Germans continued the attack in Vossenack. There American engineers pressed into service as infantrymen repelled the German attack and held on to the ridge. During the course of the battle COL. Peterson, the commander of the 112th Regt., received a message to report to General Cota at his command post. COL. Peterson made his way there even though he was twice wounded. Upon seeing COL. Peterson, exhausted, wounded, dirty, and mentally confused, General Cota fainted.²¹

During the battle General Cota remained in his command post monitoring communications sent to his staff. The reports received were

²¹MacDonald. **THE BATTLE OF THE HUERTGEN FOREST** PG 118

confusing and misleading. He had no established reporting procedures. The reports were random reports submitted mostly by combat support and combat service support units. The reports failed to address the identified critical elements of the battle. Because of this, there was a perception in the headquarters that the fighting was rough but that the division was making progress.

When it became apparent that the operation had stalled General Cota sent his Assistant Division Commander, Brigadier General Davis, forward to view the battle and report. Lacking an understanding of what the commander thought was critical to the success of the battle, General Davis was unable to impress upon General Cota the urgency of the situation. General Cota failed to realize the true nature of the battle because of his *faulty assessment process*. Through his lack of knowledge of the battle situation, General Cota contributed to the defeat of his division.

General Cota's lack of an adequate assessment process is evident in his failure:

- to establish critical elements of the battle
- to articulate the importance of certain activities during the battle
- to gain a true appreciation of the Kall River Trail
- to recognize the initial stages of defeat
- to recognize the need for direct firesupport weapons in the forest
- to gain a clear understanding of the situation at
Kommerschmiedt

Had General Cota assessed the critical nature of the MSR and dedicated more engineer support to maintain the road, it is possible that more tanks

and critical support could have reached Kommerschmeidt. This could have meant the difference in the battle. The 112th Regiment may have successfully defended Kommerschmeidt and eventually moved back to Schmidt.

The Battle of Schmidt was one of the most costly operations conducted by a United States division during World War II. The 28th Division lost 6,184 casualties while the Germans suffered half that many.

Three months later the 82d Airborne Division was given the mission to take Schmidt. This they accomplished. MG Gavin, the Division Commander, was also moved by the sight and environment of the Huertgen Forest. He gave much thought to the previous failures in the forest. He wrote " the thought crossed my mind that the disaster that had befallen the 28th Division in the Kall River valley might have had some relationship to the lack of understanding in higher headquarters of what the actual situation on the ground was. It turned out to be true, as I learned later."²² Before General Gavin was to fight in the Huertgen Forest, however he had a " rendezvous with destiny" in the Ardennes and the Battle of the Bulge.

The Battle of the Bulge, 82d Airborne Division

On the evening of 17 December 1944, while having dinner with his division staff, General Gavin received a phone call from the XVIII Corps Chief of Staff. The call informed him that because of the absence of General Ridgway, the corps commander and General Taylor, the commander of the 101st Airborne Division, he was to assume command of the XVIII Corps.

²²Gavin, James M. **ON TO BERLIN: BATTLES OF AN AIRBORNE COMMANDER 1943-1946**. New York, N.Y.: The Viking Press, 1978, pg. 266.

Furthermore the corps was to be prepared to move within 24 hours after daylight on the 18th of December. The German army had made a breakthrough in the Ardennes and the XVIII Corps was to be used to hold the northern shoulder of the penetration and block further penetration.

General Gavin decided to position the 101st at the town of Bastogne and his own 82d Airborne Division on the northern shoulder vicinity the town of Werbomont. The 82d was to defend along the Ambleve and Salm Rivers. The division defensive line made contact on the left with the 30th Infantry Division vicinity La Glieze. From there the line went from Cheneux-Trois Ponts-Grant Halleux-Veilsalm-Salmchateau to Herbronual where contact was to be made with the 3d Armored Division on the right. The army commander's intent was to hold the shoulder, disrupt the penetration and then counterattack due south to destroy the German forces.

General Gavin began to assess the situation and recognized there were many critical elements to this operation. They began with the requirement to move the division rapidly on short notice. The next requirement was to establish a credible defense after identifying critical bridge sites and crossroads. Additionally the defense hinged on securing the flanks by tying-in with adjacent units on the right and left. As the battle progressed, one additional critical element developed, the conduct of a withdrawal.

The movement of the division to the front did not cause General Gavin undue concern. Even though the division was resting and recuperating after its battles in Holland, he had taken measures to ensure the division was ready to move on short notice. The divisional units were issued four days of rations and ammunition and were in a high state of readiness for the move. The move would be mainly administrative in nature. He delegated the responsibility of the move to subordinates.

Prior to the 82d's arrival at the front, General Gavin was a busy man. He departed his rear command post around 2330 hours on 17 December and traveled to the First Army headquarters at Spa. There he conferred with General Hodges in person around 0900 hours on the 18th. After talking with General Hodges, he went to Werbomont, the initial defensive area for the 82d Division, to recon the area. He arrived around mid-afternoon. At 1630 hours he went to Bastogne to brief the Acting Commander of the 101st Division. He arrived back at Werbomont around 2000 hours, just in time to meet the first vehicles of the 82d Division arriving at their dismount points.

" I wish to suggest that you have me relieved. I must be going nuts. There's a two-star general in a jeep. . . . " ²³The presence of General Gavin at the front lines was not strange to the soldiers of the 82d Division, but soldiers of other divisions were not accustomed to seeing general officers at the front in advance of the soldiers.

General Gavin's reconnaissance had divulged certain key terrain features. He had determined,

"An analysis of the terrain made it clear that the key defensive position had to be the dominating terrain from Fraiture to Salmchateau. To support those positions, the artillery and supporting services had to be in the valley to the north and in the wooded hills beyond. The loss of the Malempre or Vielsalm, followed by a penetration of the valley toward Lierneux by the Germans, would make the southern position of the 100-square-mile area untenable. In turn the occupation of the foothills extending from Bra through Fosse and including Abrefontaine afforded another good defensive position. Supporting artillery could be placed behind the hill mass several miles to the north. The next good defensive position extended from Werbomont to the very high hill mass on the northern banks of the Ambleve River. There were a few key

²³MacDonald, Charles B. **A TIME FOR TRUMPETS**. New York, N.Y. William Morrow and Company, Inc. 1985 pg 433

north and south roads in the area. The Habiemont-Liernax highway provided access to and from the area for all artillery and service vehicles. The Werbomont-Manhay-Fraiture road provided access to all rear areas to any enemy who could advance up that highway. The heavily forested hills on one hand offered excellent cover for defenders; on the other hand they required troop density to defend because of the cover afforded an attacking enemy."²⁴

Throughout the 82d Airborne Division's participation in the Battle of the Bulge, General Gavin continued to travel all along his division defensive line. He met with regimental commanders, battalion commanders, company commanders, and individual soldiers. He exercised personal leadership. The method he adopted to assess the progress of battle was not to rely on reports or communications. This was in part a reaction to the deception operations being conducted by the Germans. There are many examples of his involvement.

The first example is his presence at the town of Trois Pont. He had earlier recognized the importance of holding the town so as not to allow the German 1st Panzer Division to cross the river and link up with Kampfgruppe Peiper. General Gavin had positioned the 504th Regiment in Trois Pont with the mission of not allowing the German to cross the Ambleve River. When General Gavin became aware of the attack at Trois Pont he went directly to the command post of the 504th Regiment to ascertain if additional forces were needed to defend the town and river crossing. He spoke with the regimental commander and assessed that the regiment could hold. Having done that he committed his efforts to other activities on the battlefield, such as coordinating with adjacent units of the 106th Infantry Division and the 7th Armored Division.

²⁴Gavin. ON TO BERLIN. pg. 221

Another example of General Gavin's visualization of the battlefield was his recognition of the importance of the Fraiture crossroad. This crossroad blocked enemy penetration into the division's rear area. On 23 December General Gavin went to the crossroads to assess the situation. He arrived in time to observe the very intense battle for the crossroad. The Germans overwhelmed the defending force. Upon seeing this, General Gavin immediately ordered elements of the 504th Regiment to travel across the division rear and position themselves to protect the division right flank. He recognized the loss of the crossroad caused a threat to the division rear. To his chagrin he determined he would have to conduct a withdrawal to consolidate his defense and occupy more defensible terrain.

Of particular note was General Gavin's handling of the mission to withdraw. General Gavin knew this mission would be quite dangerous and that it would not be well received by the troopers. He was greatly concerned about the attitude and morale of the troops. The division had never conducted a withdrawal in its combat history. Airborne troopers never gave ground. The division was proud of its history, and the order to withdraw would not be favorably received. What General Gavin did was two fold. First he gathered all of his regimental commanders together, including the battalion commanders of the 508th Regt. which was to guard the withdrawal of the division, and went over the operation in detail. He articulated the desired end state and how this withdrawal fit into the overall plan of the First Army. Second he published a memorandum to be read to the troops outlining the requirements of the operation. Then he spent the evening visiting the troops of all the battalions bolstering their morale.

As we see in the withdrawal operation, General Gavin had a clear picture of an end state. His personal leadership helped him articulate that

fact to his subordinate commanders and troops. In addition during the withdrawal when confronted with the information that approximately 500 Germans were in his rear , he had the presence of mind to stay with the plan and get into good defensive positions from which to meet a greater threat.

General Gavin's personal reconnaissance gave him the information from which he could ascertain the critical elements on the battlefield. With this knowledge he had a structure through which he could assess the progress of the battle. The aspects of the battle he looked at and assessed were primarily critical terrain features; however, he also devoted efforts to assessing the moral determination of his subordinate commanders and the individual troops.

General Gavin's method of assessment was primarily personal involvement. He recognized critical elements of the battle and went about addressing each one. For the movement of the division and rapid occupation of the initial defensive positions, he relied on established procedures and training within the division. He personally reconnoitered the critical terrain features and was present when combat occurred at those sites. He assessed the fluidity of the situation and recognized the importance to tie in his defense with adjacent units. To accomplish this, he personally went to coordinate with adjacent units and higher headquarters. Upon receiving the order to withdraw, he immediately knew it would have a morale deflating effect on his troopers. He took particular care to explain the mission and the underlying needs, in detail not only to his subordinate commanders ,but also to the individual soldiers.

General Gavin's ability to maintain a coherent vision of the battlefield in the midst of confusion and chaos was instrumental in the success of the 82d Airborne Division.

General Gavin's means to traverse the battlefield to make his personal assessment was limited. He travelled in an unprotected vehicle, the jeep. Twenty-one years later commanders had available a much more mobile means to view a dispersed battlefield, the helicopter.

The Battle of the Ia Drang, 1st Cavalry Division

On the 19th of October 1965 two North Vietnamese Army regiments attacked the special forces camp at Plei Me, Republic of Vietnam . The 1st Cavalry Division deployed one brigade to Pleiku, just north of Plei Me, "to assist in the defense of key US/ARVN installations vic Pleiku or reinforce II Corps operations to relieve Plei Me CIDG Camp."²⁵ On the evening of the 25th of October a relief column arrived at the Plei Me Camp. The North Vietnamese Army (NVA) regiments broke contact and withdrew to the west and south toward Cambodia.

General William C. Westmoreland , MACV Commander, visited the commander of the 1st Cavalry Division, General Kinnard, and directed the 1st Cavalry Division to pursue and destroy the enemy. The division was responsible for finding and destroying all enemy forces that threatened the Central Highland region of South Vietnam. General Kinnard saw the critical elements of success as finding the enemy, fixing him in location, cutting off the enemy's line of retreat, and finally destroying the enemy force through the employment of superior combat power. The 1st Brigade prosecuted the battle until relieved by the 3d Brigade.

²⁵Hay, John H. Jr. LTG, USA. **VIETNAM STUDIES: TACTICAL AND MATERIAL INNOVATIONS**. Washington, D.C. Department of the Army, 1974. pg. 11

On 9 November 1965 the 3d Brigade began operations to the south and west of the village of Plei Me. The mission was to find the enemy, fix him in location, and then destroy him. To accomplish this mission the division commander, General Kinnard, was employing one third of his division, the 3d Brigade, to search out the fleeting enemy and fix him, one third as a ready reserve to assist in the destruction of the enemy, and one brigade committed to base defense vicinity Pleiku. General Kinnard had initially instructed COL. Brown, the commander of the 3d Brigade, to patrol south and southeast of Plei Me. After 3 days of futile operations, General Kinnard directed COL. Brown to search westward toward the Cambodian border.

COL. Brown focused his attention on the wooded area south of the Ia Drang River at the base of the Chu Pong massif. This mountain straddled the Vietnam and Cambodian border. He had conducted an aerial reconnaissance of the area. He felt the prospects of finding the enemy in this area were good. This sector had been an operating base for the Viet Minh during their war with the French. Additionally, no friendly troops had been in the area for quite some time. If he failed to find the enemy in the vicinity of the Chu Pong, he would concentrate his efforts farther south and closer to the Cambodian border.

COL. Brown was a "tall, lean officer, well schooled in airmobile techniques and with plenty of experience in infantry tactics."²⁶ Taking his cue from the division commander, COL. Brown planned to commit the 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry to search operations at the base of Chu Pong

²⁶Cash, John A. **VIETNAM STUDIES: FIGHT AT THE IA DRANG 14-16 NOVEMBER 1965.** in **SEVEN FIREFIGHTS IN VIETNAM.** by John Albright et al Washington, DC Office of the Chief of Military History, United States Army, 1970.

Mountain, while keeping one battalion, the 2d Battalion, 5th Cavalry, in ready reserve. The 2d Battalion, 7th Cavalry was detailed to base defense.

At approximately 1030 hours 14 November, the 1st Battalion 7th Cavalry landed at LZ X-RAY, vicinity of Chu Pong Mountain. Unknown to the American forces, General Chu Huy Man, commander of the NVA forces, had made plans to attack Plei Me once more on the 16th of November. He had begun his move to Plei Me at dawn on the 14th of November. The 33d Regt. was leading with the 66th and 32d Regt.'s following. As soon as the troopers of the 1st Bn., 7th Cav. landed at LZ X-RAY they engaged elements of the 33d NVA Regt. General Chu Huy Man decided to postpone the attack on Plei Me and instead destroy the American force which had violated the security of the Chu Pong sector. By noon on 14 November the NVA battalions were preparing to assault the lead elements of the 1st Bn, 7th Cav. in LZ X-RAY.

As might be expected, a fierce battle ensued. The greatly outnumbered American infantrymen fought a courageous engagement often resulting in close hand to hand combat.

The importance of this engagement was not lost on COL. Brown. He received continuous reports from the S-3 of the 1st Bn., 7th Cav.. The Commander of the battalion was on the ground and was relaying information to the S-3 orbiting in a helicopter above the fight. The information in turn was sent to COL. Brown. COL. Brown immediately flew to the area and personally ascertained the situation. He recognized the size of the enemy force and the consequences of the battle. He reported his finding to the division commander. Additionally, he began to reposition artillery units to be able to bring more firepower in support of the 1st Bn., 7th Cav.. He alerted the 2d Bn, 5th Cav to be prepared to move overland to reinforce the 1st Bn., 7th Cav.. He made this decision based upon his knowledge that he could not

insert the battalion via helicopter into the LZ because of intense ground fire. COL. Brown also had Aerial Rocket Artillery helicopters dispatched to the scene to provide continuous fire support.

In the meantime, General Kinnard was closely following the battle. He assessed that he had accomplished the first phase of his operation, that of finding the enemy. He alerted the 2d Brigade to be prepared to assist the 3d Brigade in fixing the enemy. He began to develop a plan to cut off the enemy's line of retreat back into Cambodia. To accomplish the final critical element of destroying the enemy, General Kinnard's final plan was to position an ARVN airborne unit along the Cambodian border to be the anvil onto which the NVA forces would be driven and destroyed.

This initial battle of the Ia Drang represents three levels of command working in harmony to achieve the predetermined end state. LTC Moore, the commander of the 1st Bn., 7th Cav., engaged in directly conducting the very vigorous and deadly engagement. He constantly assessed the fight in terms of troop deployment, employment of fire support systems and diminishing capabilities of his soldiers involved in fierce protracted combat. He recognized the importance of his ability to view the battle in a structured, clear, and concise manner. He wrote in his After-Action Report, "periodically throughout a battle, the commander must mentally detach himself from the action and objectively think--what is not being done which should be done to influence the situation, and what is being done which should not be going on."²⁷ LTC Moore wrote that he was particularly concerned with anticipating future enemy operations, resupply of water and ammunition, evacuation of WIAs and KIAs, and fire support priority to the companies. Additionally he

²⁷LTC. Harold G Moore, 'After Action Report, IA DRANG Valley Operation 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry 14-16 November 1965. 9 December 1965, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), APO SF 96490, pg 19.

recognized at 1530hrs that he was going to need a night landing capability, and took measures to get a Pathfinder unit on the ground with him. LTC Moore also took the time during lulls in the battle to talk to the soldiers to assess morale and bolster it if need arose

For his part, COL. Brown was not engaged in directing the troops in immediate combat. Instead he went to the battlefield, ascertained the needs of the unit in combat and issued orders in support of the direct combat. He was able to view the battle from an aerial platform from which he could assess the nature of the terrain and the deployment of both the enemy and friendly forces, and determine the immediate requirements to assist the ground commander. Additionally, his thoughts were focused on the intent of his initial plan and he made adjustments in the execution of the plan to ensure success.

General Kinnard was not focused on the immediate engagement. However, he too was instrumental in ensuring COL. Brown received the additional support requested. General Kinnard assessed the engagement in relationship to his established end state. This meant he must take action to ensure the enemy did not have the ability to retreat freely into Cambodia, that the enemy was destroyed, and that casualties to his own unit were minimized. His thoughts and efforts were focused on this task. He took the necessary action to reposition units to accomplish this mission. Additionally, General Kinnard recognized that this was the first battle fought between NVA regular forces and US Army forces, and the significance was not lost on him.

The prompt recognition of the size of committed NVA forces and the timely reinforcement of the 1st Bn., 7th Cav. were instrumental in the ultimate victory of the 1st Cavalry Division. The 1st Bn., 7th Cav. was

reinforced by the 2d Bn., 5th Cav. and with indirect and direct fire support systems. The NVA forces of General Chu Huy Man were defeated and they broke contact in an attempt to reach safety in Cambodia. General Kinnard committed the 2d Brigade to pursue the enemy and positioned forces along the line of retreat of the NVA regiments. These combined efforts resulted in the total destruction of the 32d, 33d, and 66th NVA regiments.

General Kinnard's method of assessment was relatively simple. Technology had provided an aerial platform from which to view the entire battlefield. The helicopter also made it possible to reposition forces rapidly to destroy the enemy. In addition, the division had an effective reporting system. General Kinnard had accurate and timely information concerning the battle.

CONCLUSIONS

Theory establishes the need to assess both the material and moral aspects of battle. Clausewitz gives us three signs by which to recognize the outcome of engagements. One is moral, the moral determination of the commander. The other two are material, the loss of one's own troops and the amount of ground lost.

The historical examples presented offer an insight into the mind of the tactical commander during battle. A key ingredient in the formula for success for General Gavin and General Kinnard was their ability to assess accurately the progress of battle. The assessment process began before the battle and was a continuous and dynamic process throughout the course of the battle.

The historical examples indicate there are some principles basic to the assessment process. The four principles are a clear understanding of the desired end state, identification of the critical elements of the battle, the commander's articulation of his desired end state and critical elements of battle, and the personal involvement of the commander in the assessment process.

The attainment of a clear understanding of the desired end state requires the commander to establish certain criteria for success. First he must define success. The definition may include the location or position his force must occupy at the conclusion of battle. Another aspect of success may be the minimum acceptable status or combat effectiveness of his force when battle terminates. A third element of success may be the desired end state of the enemy force. Does the enemy have to be destroyed? Is it sufficient just to disrupt the enemy's plans? What is the maximum level of enemy unit cohesion acceptable at the end of battle, battalion, company, platoon, etc.? Defining success is critical because it is the foundation of the assessment process.

General Cota did not adequately define success. He did assign objectives for the regiments to seize, the village of Huertgen, the town of Schmidt, and the opening of secondary roads in the Monchau Corridor leading to Schmidt. He failed to address the desired status of enemy forces at the end. Furthermore, his failure to define success adequately allowed the 112th Infantry Regiment to occupy Schmidt with a minimum number of forces which were clearly vulnerable to counterattack. General Kinnard, on the other hand, had established a clear understanding of the desired end state. Success was defined as the destruction of the 32d, 33d, and 66th NVA Regiments to the extent they posed no military threat to the US/ARVN

installations in the Central Highlands region of the Republic of South Vietnam. General Kinnard established the desired end state of the enemy and the positions he wanted his forces to occupy at the termination of battle.

Once the commander has determined the desired end state, he must identify the critical elements of success. These elements represent the stepping stones to success. Critical elements of success are those activities that must be accomplished to attain success. Upon determination of these activities, the commander must decide if they must be accomplished in a prescribed sequence. When identifying the critical elements of the battle the commander conducts an analysis of the elements of combat power. He answers the following questions: What are there critical maneuver tasks to perform? What is the best method to protect the force? How can the unit's firepower be used most effectively? What is the status of the leadership within the unit? In addition to evaluating the elements of combat power, the commander analyses the domains of battle. He ascertains the physical requirements of battle. He assesses the spirit and morale of the soldiers. Finally he determines the adequacy of his organizational structure to perform the mission.

For the conduct of the battle of Schmidt, General Cota failed to identify all the critical elements of the battle. He failed to recognize the requirement for direct fire support weapons to counter the pill boxes in the forest. He did not accurately assess the precarious nature of the Kall River Trail. His maneuver and fire support plans did not adequately protect his force. In the final analysis, he did not accurately recognize the status of leadership in key positions within his organization.

For his battle, General Gavin had identified the critical elements. He recognized that he had to move rapidly and occupy defensive positions on

key pieces of terrain. He accurately assessed the importance of the bridge across the Ambleve River in Trois Pont. He accurately assessed the importance of the Fraiture crossroads. He correctly perceived the damaging effect that the order to withdraw would have on the morale and spirit of his unit.

After identifying the critical elements of the battle , the commander must articulate the desired end state and the critical elements of battle to his subordinates. The explanation of success and how to achieve it is crucial to unifying the efforts of an organization. Each subordinate must be aware of what the commander believes to be the critical aspects of the battle.

General Gavin took particular care in articulating the criteria for success and the critical elements of the battle to his subordinates. He often met face-to-face with his subordinate commanders to deliver orders personally. Before the conduct of the withdrawal, he met not only with all his regimental commanders but also with the battalion commanders of the 508th Infantry Regiment which was to perform the critical guard mission during the withdrawal. In addition he published a memorandum outlining the requirements of the operation. This memorandum was read to all soldiers of his command. He also went to each of his units to talk personally to the soldiers.

Two aspects of the conduct of the Battle of Schmidt indicate General Cota failed to articulate his desired end state and the critical elements of the battle. The first example is the failure of the main attack to be pressed vigorously the first day. The Regimental Commander called off the attack after exerting only minimum effort. When told of the postponement of the main attack, General Cota indicated he meant to have the main attack prosecuted more vigorously. The second example is the confusion concerning

which unit was responsible for the security of the Kall River Trail. General Cota believed he had given that task to the engineers. The engineers thought General Cota had tasked them to provide local security for engineer work only.

The final principle of the assessment process is the personal involvement of the commander. The commander must conduct a personal reconnaissance before the battle. This reconnaissance can provide valuable information for defining success and identifying critical elements of the upcoming battle. Prior to battle the commander must evaluate his ability to obtain information concerning the critical elements of the battle. In addition the commander must recognize the activities he can delegate to subordinates and which ones he must accomplish himself.

General Gavin epitomizes the principle of personal involvement. He clearly understood the requirement. He was present at Trois Pont and the Fraiture crossroads. He visited adjacent unit headquarters to coordinate the defense. During the course of the battle he visited all of his subordinate units. The key to his success may have been his personal reconnaissance prior to the battle. General Kinnard and Colonel Brown were also personally involved in assessing the progress of their battle. Technology had provided them a more mobile and efficient means by which to view the battlefield. From the vantage point provided by the helicopter in flight, they could view the entire battle area and have direct communications with their subordinates. For his part, General Cota never became personally involved in the battle. He relied on random reporting which was often confusing and

misleading.²⁸ He confined himself to his command post and never grasped a true appreciation of the situation.

The four principles of the assessment process are a clear understanding of the desired end state, identification of the critical elements of battle, articulation of the desired end state and critical elements, and the personal involvement of the commander. These principles establish a logical mental process for the commander to use to facilitate his successful assessment of the battlefield. The principles and selected components may be found at Appendix 1.

IMPLICATIONS

The recommended method of assessment has implications concerning current doctrine, training and organization. The assessment process is a function of command and control and thus has impact on command and control doctrine. The ability to inculcate the need for assessing the progress of battle into the officer corps is a function of training. The organizational structure enhances the effectiveness of the assessment process in that it provides the apparatus for the flow of information within the organization.

Doctrine manuals recognize the difficulty in command and control on the future battlefield. The doctrine expressed as AirLand Battle does not in and of itself complicate the assessment process. It is the nature of the battlefield this doctrine envisions that will complicate the process.

²⁸During his visit to the School of Advance Military Studies, LTC. Raymond Fleig was asked what type of reports were being sent to division during the combat at Kommerscheidt. He replied there was no prescribed system of reporting.

Doctrine does not address the need for assessing the progress of battle. FM 101-55, CORPS AND DIVISION COMMAND AND CONTROL, delineates the the functions of command and control but fails to answer the question of how a commander should assess the progress of battle. The leadership manuals present a method of analysis for generic leadership situations. U.S. Army command and control doctrine should include a method of assessing the progress of battle.

Current doctrine does address two of the principles of assessment. It is clear that doctrine identifies the requirement for the commander to be personally involved in the execution of the battle. Doctrine also delineates the commander's responsibility to articulate his objectives, goals, plans and now his "intent". The command and control doctrine must capture a method of defining success and identifying critical elements of battle. Once this has been done it must combine the four principles in an effective method of assessment and publish this method in one doctrinal manual. It is recommended this manual be a command and control doctrinal manual.

Once doctrine has established an assessment method it is incumbent upon the training community to inculcate commanders and future commanders with this process. The officer education system must be more attuned to the mental thought processes of a combat leader. Current teaching is concerned with the mechanical aspects of command. It fails to teach a leader how he should think about the course of a battle.

As with doctrine, two principles of the assessment process are currently being reinforced in training exercises. Combat leaders are trained to be personally involved in the activities of their units. Likewise, the ability to articulate orders orally and in writing has received added emphasis in the training schools and in individual units. The crucial aspects of defining

success and identifying the critical elements of battle , on the other hand, are not being addressed. In the training schools officers must be taught to define success beyond the simple definition of killing the enemy. During field training exercises leaders should be required to state their definition of success prior to executing a combat operation. Once they define success, they should be required to identify the critical elements of the battle, the stepping stones, which will get them to success. Classroom instruction and field training exercises must combine the four principles and train the leader to assess the progress of battle.

There is no requirement to change the organizational structure of a unit to implement the assessment process. There is a requirement to train the leader in evaluating the adequacy of the organizational information flow. The assessment process depends on the commander receiving critical information, while at the same time not being overwhelmed with voluminous data not directly related to the critical elements of the battle. This implies that subordinate staff officers and assistant/deputy commanders may make more decisions in the name of the commander . Additionally, commanders should be trained to view the organizational structure as a fixed structure but not an inflexible one. The duties , responsibilities , and functions of the organization's subparts should facilitate the commander's accomplishment of his mission.

An adequate assessment process entrenched in command and control doctrine will facilitate success on the battlefield. The commander's ability to foresee the elements of success or failure, coupled with sound military decisions, will enhance the combat effectiveness of his unit. In the final analysis it is the combat effectiveness of a unit which will be critical to success or failure.

APPENDIX 1: METHOD OF ASSESSMENT

PRINCIPLE

Clear understanding of
desired end state

Identification of critical
elements of the battle

Articulation of the end state
and critical elements of the
battle

SELECTED COMPONENTS

- What does success mean?
- Where must my force be located at the end of battle?
- What is the minimum acceptable status of my force at the end of battle?
- What should be the status of the enemy force when the battle ends?

- What activities must be accomplished to be successful?
- Do those activities have to be completed in sequence?
- What is the result of an analysis of the elements of combat power?
 - *What are the critical maneuver tasks?
 - *What is the best method to protect the force?
 - *What is the status of key leadership positions?
 - *How should the firepower systems be employed?

- What is the results of an analysis of the domains of battle?
 - *What are the physical requirements of battle?
 - *What is the state of morale?
 - *Is the organizational structure adequate?

- Do my subordinates understand my desired end state ?
- Are my subordinates aware of what I believe to be the critical

aspects of the battle?

Personal Involvement

- Have I conducted a reconnaissance?
- Where should I be located during the battle?
- Which unit do I need to observe most closely?
- Do I have the means to traverse the battlefield?
- What activities can I delegate to subordinates?
- Do I have an adequate reporting system to obtain information on the critical elements?

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