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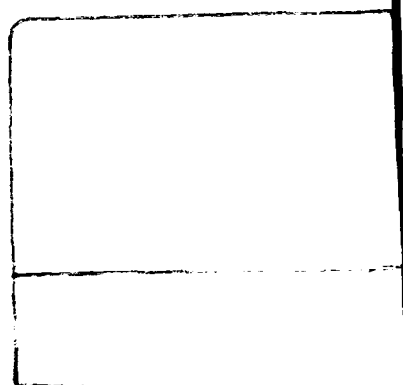
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TACTICAL LEVEL SUPERVISION:  
ENSURING SUCCESS BY FOILING FAILURE

A Monograph  
by  
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Infantry



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## ABSTRACT

**TACTICAL LEVEL SUPERVISION: ENSURING SUCCESS BY FOILING FAILURE. By Major Steven C. Sifers, USA. 38 pages.**

This monograph examines the reason for supervision failures in the U.S. Army. History has shown that proper supervision is important to success and that lack of proper supervision often is the cause of failure.

This monograph uses examples from the Civil War, WW I, and WW II to demonstrate that a lack of supervision can lead to combat failure. Using recent NTC and JRTC after-action comments the monograph then shows that failure to supervise is a current problem in today's Army. A further examination of doctrine shows that while supervision is important no definition or explanation of supervision is contained in current doctrine.

The monograph shows that one reason the Army still suffers from a failure to supervise is that doctrine is unclear on how to supervise and that army schools do not teach supervision.

The monograph concludes by offering a definition for supervision, a model for supervision, and an explanation of the functions, products, and goals of supervision.

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## TACTICAL LEVEL SUPERVISION: ENSURING SUCCESS BY FOILING FAILURE

### INTRODUCTION

*YOU MUST CONTROL, DIRECT, EVALUATE, COORDINATE, AND PLAN THE EFFORTS OF  
SUBORDINATES SO THAT YOU CAN INSURE THE TASK IS ACCOMPLISHED.  
FM 22-100 MILITARY LEADERSHIP*

Properly supervised soldiers and units regularly excel and complete difficult missions. Improperly supervised soldiers and units frequently founder and fail at even seemingly simple tasks and missions. Both military history and military literature clearly demonstrate the importance of supervision to the success of operations. Examples abound of a commander or other leader personally taking charge at a critical time to push forward, encourage soldiers, or correct some error that spells the difference between success and failure. U.S. Army Leadership and "How To Fight" manuals state clearly the importance of supervision in military operations. Undeniably the U.S. Army considers supervision to be a critical leadership competency.<sup>1</sup> Supervision is important at every level of leadership both in training and in war. Personal supervision is at the very core of the Army's philosophy of leadership. BE, KNOW, DO, and lead by example are all supervision-related concepts. The term supervision and its application are very important to military leadership, and seem very simple to understand and apply. As important and simple as supervision seems, improper supervision still causes unit failures today.

The idea that supervision is simple to understand and apply is a misconception. While supervision maybe a simple concept to grasp applying it properly requires an understanding of the functions and products of supervision.

Supervision is a cycle of interrelated functions and products. The continuous application of the cycle must occur throughout all phases of an operation. A break at any point in the cycle can lead to improper performance of a critical task thus putting an entire mission in jeopardy. The cycle of functions must occur without a break and it also must fulfill or accomplish the two end products of supervision: trust and confidence and correct task performance. The two end products of supervision lead directly to the goal of supervision: ensuring a plan or event has the best possible chance of success.

These two end products are basic to an understanding of what the functions of supervision accomplish and are important to an understanding of how to conduct the functions. This distinction is important because it is possible for a leader to perform all the functions of supervision and insure correct task performance but to do it in a way that destroys rather than builds trust and confidence. To prevent this possibility, a leader should have a philosophy of supervision that explains how the leader intends to supervise to insure that he not only accomplishes his mission but also builds trust and confidence.<sup>2</sup> This suggests that supervision is not something simply added at the end of planning if time permits. Supervision must be well thought out and planned in advance.

Supervision is a continuous cycle, important to success and because time is usually a critical element in military operations the task of supervision requires detailed planning. The leader cannot supervise everything himself, both because time maybe short and some critical tasks occur simultaneously. Therefore, the leader should make a plan to supervise. Two kinds of plans are immediately evident--a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) and a mission specific plan. The leader should have both kinds of plans. The SOP would cover generic and routine planning, preparation, and execution tasks. The mission specific plan would modify the SOP for each mission received and identify the

specific tasks the leader would supervise during that mission. Supervision planning is also important in that supervising can be a time intensive activity. A priority of tasks to supervise is important to ensure that the most important tasks receive the leader's attention first. The leader can delegate less important tasks to other leaders. Since supervision is important to success, complex, and time consuming, it follows that the U.S. Army would have a clear, concise, doctrine for supervision.

The U. S. Army in all of its leadership manuals and how to fight manuals states clearly that supervision is important. Unfortunately, no two manuals agree completely on what supervision is or when it takes place. None of the Army manuals contain a definition for supervision or an explanation of a cycle of supervision. No manual contains all the functions in the cycle of supervision or a discussion of the products of supervision. This lack of a clear, concise, one source document concerning supervision leads to some confusion in the Army about supervision.

The confusion over what supervision involves and how to supervise is born out in the National Training Center (NTC), and Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) after-action comments over the last four years. Not only do the comments reveal that many leaders are not supervising, but also the comments themselves reveal some confusion among the observer/controller evaluators (OCE's) about the tasks of supervision. The NTC and JRTC comments concerning supervision center on a lack of rehearsals and a lack of leader checking. These two types of comments reveal a lack of clear comprehension of the total process of supervision by centering on the application of two techniques of supervision (rehearsal and leader checks) while neglecting the reason or purpose behind supervision as a whole process. In some cases AAR comments apparently attempt



to make rehearsals a ninth step in the Troop Leading Procedures, separate and distinct from supervision.

This monograph will attempt to show that tactical level infantry leaders may not properly apply supervision because the Army doctrine is neither clear nor concise in its treatment of supervision. Additionally, the Army training base does not emphasize the importance of supervision. These two reasons lead to a misunderstanding of why leaders need to supervise and how leaders can and should supervise. At its close this monograph will present a recommendation for Army doctrine on supervision. It will be one document that clarifies the functions and products of supervision thus expanding the understanding of what supervision entails and why supervision is so important.

To complete the objective stated above, this paper will first examine the connection between task failure and poor supervision at the tactical infantry level. To accomplish this discussion historical combat examples will be used as well as after-action comments from the NTC and the JRTC. The historical examples will help demonstrate the importance of supervision at the tactical level. The comments from the NTC and JRTC will further point out that lack of supervision is a current problem in the U.S. Army. The comments from the NTC and JRTC will also demonstrate that there is a lack of understanding of what supervision entails even by the observer/controllers evaluating units.

This monograph will next describe and evaluate Army supervision doctrine as stated in the "22" series leadership field manuals, and in the "7" series infantry field manuals. The monograph will then examine briefly the Army training base and how supervision is taught in the army schoolhouse. This discussion will point out both the strengths and weaknesses of the Army's doctrine on supervision.

The next section will then try to clarify supervision through a detailed examination of the functions and products of supervision. This section closes by offering a definition of supervision for the Army and a model of supervision that helps describe the process of supervision throughout a cycle.

The final portion of this monograph will discuss the implications of continuing supervision failures in the Army and offer recommendations on how to correct the misunderstanding of supervision in the Army and the lack of proper application of supervision.

## **HISTORY AND SUPERVISION**

*FUNDAMENTALLY SOUND SUPERVISION IS NOTHING MORE OR LESS THAN GOOD  
LEADERSHIP IN ACTION  
T. IE BASICS OF SUPERVISORY MANAGEMENT*

History is replete with examples of sound and unsound supervision. One must be careful, however, when interpreting these examples. For the connection between incorrect supervision and the overall mission failing is tenuous at best. Some missions fail because of poor supervision. Others fail only partially due to poor supervision. Still others fail for reasons completely unrelated to supervision.

The first example of unsound supervision this paper will examine comes from the Petersburg Campaign of the Civil War. Both the defending Confederates and the attacking Union Armies displayed plenty of faulty supervision at all levels. This historical example will focus on the defense of Fort Harrison. Fort Harrison was a small fort, on the exterior line of defense around Richmond. Fort Harrison proper enclosed a dry moat with an 18 foot wall measured from the bottom of the moat. Fort Harrison enclosed Artillery Batteries No. 7, 8, and

9. Fort Harrison dominated the Varina Road which was the attack route for the left wing of the Army of the James under General Ord.

Defending Fort Harrison was Major Richard Cornelius Taylor, commanding the battalion at Fort Harrison in the absence of the actual battalion commander. Fort Harrison was in a portion of the line which the confederates did not consider was an objective for the Federals. As such, it was not in the best of condition.<sup>3</sup> This consideration changed very quickly on the morning of 29 September 1864 as Ord's forces marched up the Varina Road and massed at the base of the hill beneath Fort Richardson and prepared to attack. (Sketch #1, Annex B) Taylor's lack of realization that his fort would be an objective for the Union troops cannot be considered a failure of supervision; however, there had been a great deal of non-supervision going on in Fort Harrison. When Taylor realized his fort was the objective of the Union attack, he had his men man the ramparts and his artilleryists man the field pieces.

With the Union attack imminent, the Confederate commanders failure to conduct proper supervision became evident. Of the sixteen artillery pieces in Batteries 7, 8, and 9 only two would be available to fire on the attacking soldiers. The field guns in the batteries were victims of improper supervision, among other things. Of the sixteen guns in the batteries, twelve were discovered to be inoperable due to clogged vents or spiked barrels. Of the four remaining operable guns only two would fire due to ammunition compatibility.<sup>4</sup> As a result in part of the lack of defensive artillery fire the Union attack on Fort Harrison succeeded.

Even with the proper artillery fire the Union attack on Fort Harrison may have been successful; however, the Confederates planned on artillery fire from Fort Harrison and their chances of success decreased significantly with the

loss of the cannons. The defeat of Fort Harrison allowed the Union Army a foothold in the exterior line of defense around Richmond.

The faulty artillery pieces may not necessarily reflect improper supervision on the part of Taylor. Obsolete, non-functioning equipment may be present in any situation through no fault of the present commander. What is undeniable however is this: improper supervision resulted in non-functioning and incompatible ammunition which was discovered only as the Union forces attacked. If Taylor or Maury had inspected the cannons, rehearsed crew drill, and rehearsed the defensive plan for Fort Harrison they would have known the condition of the cannons and the ammunition. New cannons and ammunition may not have been available for Fort Harrison but the defenders could have prepared for that eventuality and compensated with more infantryman or found some other solution. Not only were the physical effects of Confederate artillery fire absent, the moral effect of discovering that a large part of the defensive plan was not in place attributed to the short two hours the Union troops took to sieze Fort Harrison.<sup>5</sup>

World War I provides a second historical example of supervision failure. This illustration is from the 7th Machine-Gun Battalion of the U.S. 3rd Division defending along the Marne River near Chateau-Thierry. The 7th Battalion contained two machine-gun companies.

"On the evening of June 1, 1918, the U.S. 7th Machine-Gun Battalion (two companies) occupied positions on the south bank of the Marne at Chateau-Thierry. Company B was disposed with one platoon covering the right flank of the battalion, and two platoons generally covering a bridge across the Marne.

French troops who had been fighting north of the Marne began withdrawing south of the river, and a German attack developed against the American position on the south bank. Germans were reported to have crossed the

Marne in the darkness. The battalion commander had exercised little supervision over his companies. The situation as it appeared to the captain of Company B is described in the personal experience monograph of Major John R. Mendenhall, who at the time commanded this company. He says:

To the captain of Company B the situation appeared desperate. Runners sent to the battalion C.P. failed to return. His own reconnaissance and the report of a lieutenant from Company A, who had been on the north bank, convinced him that, without rifle support, Company B could not avoid capture and was ineffective in the positions it then occupied. Moreover, failure to gain contact with the battalion C.P. implied that it had moved, probably to the rear, and orders had been to cover such a withdrawal.

The captain therefore sent oral messages by runners to his platoons, directing the 1st and 3d Platoons to withdraw to the second-line position, and the 2d, which he hoped was still commanding the bridge, to cover the withdrawal.

The company commander then went to the battalion command post which he found had not been moved. There he received orders to move his company back to its former positions. The captain, with his headquarters personnel and four reserve guns, moved back to the bridge. There he found the 2d Platoon had gone, as well as the others.

In his monograph, Major Mendenhall then describes a fight in the dark between Germans who could be recognized by their helmets, a few French, and the crews of his reserve guns which went into action.

The combined fire of these guns drove the remaining Germans across the bridge. The guns were then moved to positions from which they held the south bank until daylight when the remainder of the company was reestablished in its former positions.

Investigation later showed that the runners had become confused and delivered the company commander's order to each of the three platoons a "Withdraw at once."

Let us now see what happened to the two platoons near the bridge. This is described by Lieutenant Luther W. Cobbey, who commanded one of these platoons.

About 9:30 P.M. a runner came to me with an order to retreat with all possible speed; that the Germans had crossed the river and were on our side. Supposing that the

Germans had made a crossing without my knowing it, I followed the instructions given, which were nothing less than to "beat it."

On the way back we passed through an enemy barrage. We moved about four kilometers to the rear, taking up a position on a hill overlooking the river, where the French had prepared a line of resistance. On arriving there I found Paul (Lieutenant Paul T. Funkhouser, commanding a platoon of Company B) with his platoon: he had received the same order.

After putting our guns into position, we waited for the German attack that we expected at any moment. At about 1:00 A.M. Paul said, "Don't you think we had better go back into Chateau-Thierry and find out whether the Germans are actually in the town?"

Paul and I took one runner and started back. We finally reached the place we started from and to our surprise found there were no Germans on our side of the river. We immediately went to battalion headquarters to find out why we had been ordered to retreat. The major denied any knowledge of our retreat, and showed no interest in the matter. He didn't seem to give a darn what we had done or might do.

Paul and I felt that the only thing to do was to go back, get our men and guns, and get into action again in our old positions, which we were finally able to do about daylight."<sup>6</sup>

This short example illustrates several instances of improper supervision on both the part of the 7th Machine-gun Battalion Commander and the Company B commander. It also demonstrates the advantages of proper supervision on the part of both the Company B commander and two of his platoon leaders.

The narratives of the company commander and his platoon leaders suggests that the battalion commander was not in the habit of actively supervising his subordinates to ensure his orders and his plan were understood or being carried out. The example also demonstrates that the battalion commander may not have had a clear vision of his tactical plan from which to conduct proper supervision. With such a vision, he would have realized that the movement of Company B from the bridge left the river free for the Germans to cross. Having ordered the Company B commander to return his company to positions overlooking the bridge, he took no further action to ensure enough force got back to the bridge. Even as late as the next morning he failed to realize from

the reports of the two platoon leaders that the bridge was still only covered by the reserve guns of Company B.

The Company B commander did not properly supervise his platoons after he transmitted his orders. His plan was to have two platoons move back under cover of the third. What occurred was an immediate withdrawal of all platoons with no covering force. The Company B commander should have been aware of the complexity of a night withdrawal and the need to closely supervise it.

The commander of Company B did perform some supervision functions in that he was in the process of verifying information he thought to be true when he discovered that the battalion had not moved. He moved to correct his mistake, discovered it was too late, and compensated by putting his reserve guns into position overlooking the bridge. The commander was unable to coordinate again with the battalion headquarters to let them know the situation at the bridge since he was almost immediately engaged in fighting Germans on the river. The battalion commander's apparent lack of interest in supervising the operations of his battalion was not an isolated case in WW I, commanders in WW II displayed the same lack of interest in supervision.

During World War II the 28th Infantry Division assigned to the V Corps attacked on 2 November, 1944 to capture the town of Schmidt. Lack of supervision characterized the operation to capture Schmidt at both the regimental and division level. The 28th Division attacked to seize Schmidt with three Regiments, the 109th, the 110th, and the 112th. (Sketch #2, Annex B) The 109th attacked on the division left to protect the division's left flank, the 110th attacked on the right to protect the right flank and to try to open up additional supply routes and prepare the way for a further division or corps attack. The 112th attacked in the center as the division main effort with the mission to seize Schmidt.

The terrain in the Schmidt area was heavily wooded and rugged with a steep, narrow river valley between the division line of departure and the objective. The weather in November 1944 was typical of Germany, wet and cold, with constant overcast skies.

The 112th attacked with three battalions in column. 2/112, first in the column, was to attack to seize the town of Vossenack, just short of the river valley on a ridge dominating most of the terrain in the Schmidt area. 1/112, second in the column, was to pass below Vossenack, cross the river valley, and seize the town of Kommersheidt. 3/112 was supposed to follow 1/112, pass through Kommersheidt and attack to seize Schmidt. The attacks were to take place on 2 November, 1944.

The 112th attacked on 2 November but did not seize Schmidt until late on 3 November. Lack of supervision characterized the attack from the LD to the objective. The 112th prepared to defend the Schmidt area on the night of 3 November, 1944 and defended until pushed back across the Kall River Gorge on the night of 8-9 November. Throughout the 6 days of defense in the Schmidt area the division commander did not visit the front line one time.<sup>7</sup> The regimental commander only came forward late on 4 November.<sup>8</sup> Neither commander seemed to be personally involved in the attack and only the regimental commander was involved in the defense. The 28th Division failed to hold Schmidt for a variety of reasons and the lack of supervision was just one of them. However, even if the failure of the 28th Division cannot be attributed solely to a failure to supervise, the lack of supervision caused many problems during the operation.

Confusion on the morning of 2 Nov caused Co E, 1st Battalion, 112th Infantry to suffer many personnel casualties in an enemy artillery barrage.<sup>9</sup> Due to a prior lack of supervision, Co E did not know the order of march across the LD; therefore, the men stood and loitered around the LD trying to determine who



they were to follow. Enemy artillery struck them as they huddled together in the open on the LD. The company leadership and the battalion leadership took no action to either move the company forward or to put them back under protection until the proper time to move out. The company commander and platoon leaders were present on the line of departure. Apparently, from the evidence of company commander's and platoon leader's confusion, no rehearsal of any kind had taken place prior to the attack. The platoon leader's, company commander's, and battalion commander's, lack of action to correct the error of the company milling around the line of departure shows that mere presence at an activity or task does not constitute supervision. Unfortunately, this lack of supervision at the line of departure was just the start of the supervision problems for the division.

The 2/112th successfully captured Vossenack on the first day and the 1/112th moved out to capture Kommerscheidt. The attack of the 1st battalion bogged down within 250 meters of the line of departure due to enemy small arms fire. The attack remained stalled for the rest of the afternoon and at dark the battalion withdrew back to the line of departure. The regimental commander made no effort to go forward to correct the problem, the 28th Division Commander registered no apparent concern that his main effort stalled 250 meters from the line of departure.<sup>10</sup> The division and regimental headquarters did eventually make a change in the plan due to the stalled attack. Regiment issued an order for the 3rd battalion to attack on 3 November followed by the 1st battalion. This attack was to pass through the 2nd battalion in Vossenack and then head down the Kall River Gorge and into Kommerscheidt. No unit ever made an attempt to reduce the enemy that fired on and stalled the first attack. This enemy location presented problems to the division for the rest of the operation. Every troop movement or supply convoy that moved to the Kall River Gorge along the

one trail available came under artillery fire most probably directed by the troops in the woodline that had caused the original attack to stall.

The trail leading down the Kall Gorge and over the river became the division's main supply route (MSR) for the regiment on the other side of the river holding Kommerscheidt and Schmidt. (Sketch #3, Annex B) An indication of the total lack of supervision by the division commander is that the condition of the MSR was never clear at division headquarters.<sup>11</sup> The MSR was never completely open due to damaged tanks and rock outcroppings. A north-south trail intersected the MSR near the river, the north-south trail began and ended in enemy territory and yet no one took any measures to block the trail or provide security against attack or infiltration by the Germans. At one point on the night of 5 Nov Germans did infiltrate the MSR and ambushed a supply convoy. Until the Division Assistant Division Commander (ADC) visited the regiment across the river no one from division had been down the MSR. Even after the ADC visited, no action resulted to improve the MSR. The MSR was not improved until the regiment in Kommerscheidt and Schmidt had to withdraw back across the river and up the MSR. The lack of information about the MSR was not the only information unavailable to division and regiment.

The division headquarters was out of touch with the units in the field. Twice the division ordered the 3/112th to counter-attack to retake Schmidt, once when the regiment was withdrawing from Schmidt under pressure and once when the regiment was fighting for its life against German attacks on Kommerscheidt.<sup>12</sup> The division failed to realize the critical situation in Vossenack as well. On the division situation map the 2/112th was holding Vossenack when in reality they were pulling out under pressure after 3 continuous days of intense artillery shelling.<sup>13</sup> Finally the division considered

that the MSR through the Kall Gorge secure when in fact the Germans had infiltrated the trail and controlled the key bridge crossing the river.

Lack of supervision has historically created a great deal of trouble for Army leaders. The connection between lack of supervision and task failure is clear in the examples discussed above and the connection remains valid today. The important question is: Does the Army still suffer from lack of supervision today?

The after-action comments from NTC and JRTC rotations indicate that it does, still. The comments indicate not only a lack of supervision on the part of rotational units but also a lack of understanding in the Army as a whole about exactly what supervision entails. The comments from the NTC and JRTC center on two areas of supervision: leaders personally overseeing task accomplishment, and rehearsals.

Virtually every rotation through the NTC and the JRTC over the last three years received comments, at some level, on lack of supervision. Thirty-six NTC after action comments over the last three years address supervision, thirteen on a lack of rehearsals and twenty-three on the lack of personal attention by leaders to specific tasks. These comments do not include the AAR's conducted by O/C/E's during the rotation. Almost all of the rehearsal comments center on a unit not conducting a rehearsal. Only one observation discusses poor rehearsals or rehearsals of the wrong action. The other comments center on leaders not personally overseeing projects, not correctly overseeing tasks or overseeing the wrong tasks, but simply not overseeing any tasks.

Sixty-seven JRTC after-action comments over the last three years address supervision, twenty-two on a lack of rehearsals and forty-five on the lack of personal attention by leaders to specific tasks. JRTC comments reflect the same type of errors found at the NTC.

One hundred and three recorded comments over the last three years at the NTC and JRTC represents a significant problem with the lack of supervision. This is a definite indicator that units continue to suffer the consequences of failing to supervise. That the comments from the NTC and JRTC center on only two portions of supervision seems to indicate that there maybe some confusion in the Army over what supervision entails and how to properly supervise.

To sum up various JRTC observations an O/C/E wrote that at the company, platoon, and squad level "supervision is always a problem. Once the commander issues an OPORD, they never supervise to insure their directives are being carried out; they never check to see if their priorities are being followed. Commanders never supervise platoon leaders...platoon leaders never supervise their squad leaders...squad leaders rarely check their squad positions with the amount of detail required to be effective." <sup>14</sup> The O/C/E's recommendations included "read FM 22-100 on the fundamentals of supervision." Unfortunately, as the reader will discover later in this monograph, FM 22-100 does not contain the fundamentals of supervision.

The following example contains further evidence of a continuing problem with supervision: "Preparation for Combat: The unit showed a general disinterest in preparing for combat operations. Pre-inspections did not occur as evidenced by assembly area preparations being done in the ORP. The unit had about seven hours in the assembly area and was late departing the assembly area because preparation was not completed. Rehearsals were poor. Actions were not practiced as they were to be performed."

The lack of supervision is not restricted to the officer ranks. A JRTC observation stated that "noncommissioned officers are not supervising their subordinates during mission preparation. Because of this, individual soldiers as

well as key teams and elements often do not have the necessary mission essential equipment needed to accomplish their assigned mission."<sup>15</sup>

Finally, observations from the NTC relate statements such as: "Plans which are not rehearsed, fail<sup>16</sup>...rehearsal is an important, absolutely critical part of planning<sup>17</sup>...Co/Tm commanders are the key to making rehearsals happen and should personally oversee them."<sup>18</sup>

Poor supervision has caused failure in past U.S. Army military operations, and continues to emerge as a problem during operations at the NTC and JRTC. Perhaps the answer to why poor supervision is a recurring phenomenon is linked to Army doctrine.

### **ARMY DOCTRINE**

*THE BEST PLAN MAY FAIL IF IT IS NOT MANAGED RIGHT  
FM 7-10 THE INFANTRY RIFLE COMPANY*

Most Army leadership field manuals and all tactical level infantry "How To Fight" manuals include a discussion of supervision. The manuals all discuss how critical supervision is to success. Each manual also contains a statement warning supervisors against undersupervision or oversupervision. What the manuals do not contain is an explanation of what supervision is, why supervision is important, or how to conduct supervision. For guidance on supervision Army doctrinal manuals offer advice such as: check everything, inspect, rehearse, enforce rest, and coordinate. Each manual offers little in the way of a coherent definition of supervision and no single manual is a one source document on what, why, or how to supervise. In fact, the Army does not even have a single definition for the term supervision.

In spite of the lack of an explanation or a definition of supervision, Army leadership doctrine identifies supervision as a key skill in managing and directing the accomplishment of unit tasks. FM 22-100 Military Leadership discusses supervision in the greatest detail of all the manuals and yet the manual contains less than three quarters of a page on supervision. FM 22-100 does not include many of the descriptions found in other manuals such as the Infantry "7" series manuals. This lack of attention to supervision in our capstone leadership doctrinal manual could very well be a key cause of the misunderstanding and misapplication of supervision in our Army.

FM 22-100 can be confusing in its discussion of supervision. One example of the confusion is that the manual recommends "continuously inspecting" then warns about oversupervising.<sup>19</sup> Further FM 22-100 contains the following tasks or actions as part of supervision: control, direct, evaluate, coordinate, plan, establish goals, give instructions, and check.<sup>20</sup> These actions are not explained in detail nor are they linked to any process of supervising. The terms are strewn throughout the discussion of supervision as if it were self-evident how best to perform each action. The manual also treats each action as if it were separate and distinct from every other.

While FM 22-100 has some shortcomings and confusion in the area of supervision, it does contain three very clear and important ideas on the process of supervising:

- + Supervision has a major effect on trust within units.<sup>21</sup>
- + There should be a routine system for checking.<sup>22</sup>
- + Supervision includes looking at the way soldiers accomplish a task, checking firsthand, and inspecting.<sup>23</sup>

These three ideas are a good beginning to the overall process of supervising as one idea relates to the start of supervision, a routine system or plan, one idea relates to how to supervise, checking firsthand, and finally one idea relates to one of the end products of supervision, trust within your unit.

Although the Army's capstone leadership manual causes some confusion about supervision, it also contains a good foundation to start on the process of supervising. As the doctrinal manuals narrow their focus from the Army level down to the company, platoon, and squad level, the focus of supervision should clarify and refine. Unfortunately, this clarification and refinement does not take place in the case of supervision. The infantry manuals offer little or no information on the process of supervision.

FM 7-10, FM 7-8, FM 7-7, FM 7-7J, and FM 7-70, the infantry "How to Fight" manuals from company to squad, respectively, all talk about supervision under the command and control process-- specifically as the eighth step of Troop Leading Procedures. To a manual, each spends less than a page explaining supervision. The majority of the explanations are not about the process of supervision but about two techniques of supervision: rehearsals and inspections. There is a clear lack of understanding in the platoon manuals about when supervision occurs as they all state that "after the plan is issued" the leader supervises. Platoon manuals explain that rehearsals are conducted "if there is time", in the company manuals rehearsals are "always conducted".

Amid the confusing guidance on supervision, the Infantry manuals do present two important elements of the process of supervision: "Coordination" and "insuring that subordinates have the appropriate information." The company manual also states that the commander personally supervises or leads critical actions. Active, direct, personal attention, the manual stresses, is an important ingredient of the supervision process.

There are two more important training manuals that do include some supervision tasks for Officers, these manuals are the Military Qualification Standards(MQS) Manual of Common Tasks for Precommissioning and the MQS Manual for Lieutenants and Captains.

The MQS II Manual for Lieutenants and Captains lists fifteen supervision tasks. This seems like many tasks with an emphasis on supervision. This number, though, is misleading. It is misleading in that adding the term "supervision" to the front of tasks such as: "Supervise Unit Response to Nuclear Attack or Radiological Hazard (Task 04-5030.00-2007)" should indicate that there is something different in this task that requires supervision. Something different from a task like: "Plan Convoy Operations (Task 01-7300.75-0500)" which does not include the term supervision in the task title. However, upon investigating the performance measures for both tasks the supervision requirements in each is roughly equal. Why does one task title include supervision and not the other?

The performance measures provided for each of these tasks further confuse the issue of supervision. For instance, there are supervisory duties listed but not identified as a part of supervision. In each task supervision is limited to the point where the leader is watching the project. This can lead to an understanding, or rather a misunderstanding, that only "leader presence" is supervision and that all "leader presence" is supervision. As the reader saw in all the historical examples as well as the JRTC and NTC observations, leader presence may not always indicate that supervision is on-going. Finally, in some task explanations the MQS II manual contains the words "the leader or supervisor". This wording confuses the issue of supervision. In the Army, leaders are always supervisors.



The MQS I manual for precommissioning also addresses supervision in some of the tasks required of officers before commissioning. However, the manual discusses supervision in general under "leadership" and then a technique of supervision; "inspection" under a totally separate heading. Thus MQS I implies a distinction between supervision and certain techniques of supervision, a distinction which creates some confusion. More confusion develops when the manual, under the standards for inspection (a supervision technique), states that the only task the leader supposedly supervises is "directed corrective actions". Directed corrective actions take place after the inspection is complete. Thus MQS I implies a difference between inspecting and supervising. This confusion about supervision is not cleared up under the manual's general discussion of supervision, for similar to FM 22-100 the manual uses the terminology without explanation.

Leadership doctrine demonstrates that the Army considers supervision important to success, but sufficient explanations and definitions of supervision do not back up this consideration. To discover a complete picture of the Army's doctrine on supervision, a leader must search through many manuals and piece together what he considers the important elements. Even then, however, the picture will be incomplete and disjointed. Some of the manuals are complementary, at least in part; others are contradictory. The "schoolhouse" may correct this lack of coherent doctrine during the Basic and Advanced Officer courses and the Basic and Advanced Non-Commissioned Officer's Courses. If so the need for more definitive guidance in field manuals may not exist.

Unfortunately, the Army's formal school system seems to pay less attention to supervision than Army manuals do. There is no systematic approach to instructing the process of supervision. Leadership instruction does include supervision when discussing "Troop Leading Procedures"; however, there are no

courses designed to teach the process of supervision. Further, there are no exercises specifically designed to point out the consequences of improper supervision. Instruction about supervision is thus fragmented and does not receive the emphasis necessary to impress young leaders with the importance of proper supervision. The Basic and Advanced Non-Commissioned Officers' Course contain only four supervision tasks.<sup>24</sup> These tasks are not preceded by any explanation of the process of supervision. The task standards involve techniques of supervision, not the process of supervision.

Although the Army recognizes that supervision is very important, Army doctrine does not clearly define and explain it and supervision is not taught in the Army's formal schooling process. To correct this deficiency the Army needs a clear, concise definition and explanation of supervision.

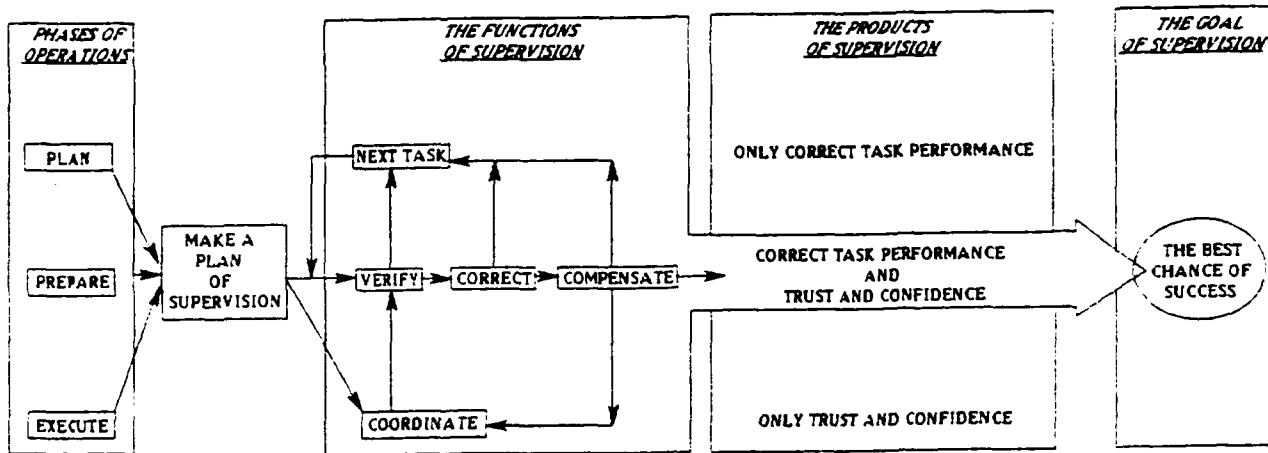
## THE SUPERVISION CYCLE

***SUPERVISION MUST TAKE PLACE AT THE APPROPRIATE LEVEL. IT ENSURES THAT ACTIONS ARE PERFORMED PROPERLY AND MISTAKES ARE CORRECTED.....***

***FM 22-103***

Supervision is a cycle. The supervision cycle contains four functions: verification, correction, compensation, and coordination. Correct application of the four functions provides two products: correct task accomplishment and trust and confidence. The objective of the supervision cycle is giving a plan the best possible chance of success. To help understand this cycle this paper proposes a model for supervision. The cycle of supervision model is on the next page and also included as: Figure #1, Annex A.

CYCLE OF SUPERVISION



A MODEL OF SUPERVISION

The supervision model begins with a determination of the phase of operation in which the supervision is to take place. The reason the phase of the operation is important is that the phase will help determine the technique of supervision to choose. The three phases of the operation are: planning, preparing, and execution.

During the planning phase of the operation the leader may need to personally oversee the preparation of the plan and coordinate the various attachments to the unit. While the leader is overseeing the preparation, he may also need to prepare portions of the plan himself. The leader must properly supervise to insure that the plan is in accordance with his desires while at the same time carrying on the tasks to prepare his portion of the order. One very important supervision task the leader should perform during the planning phase, a task that is critical to the preparation of the plan, is a personal reconnaissance. The reason that personal reconnaissance is a supervision technique in its own right will become apparent during the discussion of the functions of supervision in the following paragraphs. While the planning phase of the operation may offer

a limited amount of supervision techniques the next phase, the preparation phase, offers the widest variety of techniques.

The preparation phase normally begins with a completed and issued plan or order. During the preparation phase the leader can and should use many techniques of supervision to include: briefbacks, rehearsals, communications exercises, and inspections. The leader should visit as many critical locations as possible and see and talk to as many of his soldiers as possible. This process of "trooping the line" is a method for transmitting the leader's commitment, dedication, and sense of mission to his soldiers, this transmission is what Col. Huba Wass De Czege called "exerting moral force in the execution of the mission", a prime ingredient in the leadership role of generating relative combat power.<sup>25</sup> The preparation phase normally has the most time available for supervision as well as the largest variety of techniques of supervision. The leader can choose not only a large number of tasks to supervise but also a variety of techniques to employ. This wide choice is normally not available in the execution phase of an operation.

The execution phase is the most exacting phase for supervision. The timing of the operation, the will of the enemy, and the fog and friction of war all combine to place an unusual amount of importance on the techniques of supervision and the place of supervision the leader chooses for this phase. The exacting nature of this phase lies in the fact that at many levels a leader may only have the opportunity to personally supervise one critical task during the execution of the operation. The leader will need to make this choice in advance during the planning or preparation phase in order to insure enough time is available to move to the proper location. This selection in advance of a technique of supervision leads to the next step in the model, the first step in the actual cycle of supervision, making a plan of supervision.

Time is normally a critical element in planning, preparing, and executing military operations. With limited time available leaders must plan the use of available time to include making a plan of supervision. The leader must prioritize tasks for supervision and then supervise them in order. As described by FM 22-100, a plan of supervision needs to be well thought out, to "ensure... subordinates understand how and why you intend to supervise as part of your leadership or command philosophy".<sup>26</sup> Supervision is too important a task to attempt haphazardly. A plan of supervision is required to identify a purpose for or a specific object of the supervision. Without a plan, supervision will most likely not be effective, it will be aimless wandering and a waste of time. "Management By Wandering Around" or supervision by wandering around as described by Tom Peters in A Passion for Excellence is not aimless wandering, it is programmed and directed.<sup>27</sup> This same idea of programmed and directed supervision applies to military organizations as well as civilian corporations. Tom Peters further states that supervision " is not Gee-whiz socializing, you had best know what you are about.....there should be objectives to your wanderings, to find out what is going on, to find out what is bugging people."<sup>28</sup> At least two types of supervision plans are possible: an SOP and a mission specific plan.

An SOP for supervision is the kind of plan that belongs in a unit Admin or TACSOP. Routine planning, preparing, and execution tasks can be divided among various senior leaders or subject matter experts in a unit. For example: at the infantry battalion level, the battalion command sergeant-major, the battalion executive officer, and the battalion S-3 can all be assigned specific tasks to supervise routinely. Other officers on the special staff, the chaplain for instance, can be assigned some supervisory duties to complete during the performance of their regular tasks. This type of an SOP will not only save time in planning supervision tasks, it will also save time by dividing up the important

tasks to be supervised among more people, thus completing the supervision in less time. The SOP type of supervision plan should always be augmented with a mission specific plan.

A mission specific supervision plan should be made for each new mission. The mission specific plan should supplement the SOP in all cases where possible to give more specific guidance in carrying out the SOP. For instance: if a supervision SOP requires the chaplain to ask soldiers not only his normal morale and welfare questions but also questions about the mission or situation, the chaplain could quiz soldiers about the mission statement or the rules of engagement. Another example is: if, under the SOP, the battalion commander checks the emplacement of obstacles, under the mission specific plan the battalion commander would prioritize all of the obstacles and designate the specific obstacles he will check. This mission specific plan should be part of the backwards planning sequence and should be spelled out in the planning time line. The plan of supervision is the first step to insure the most efficient use of time and the proper supervision of each task. After the preparation of the plan the leaders begin to perform the functions of supervision: verification, coordination, correction, and compensation.

These four functions form a continuous cycle. All four functions may not be necessary for each task, but supervision, as a process, does not stop after one task is properly supervised. Therefore, the cycle continues by switching from supervising one task to supervising another task. The functions follow a logical trail beginning with either verification or coordination, and continuing, if need be, through correction to compensation. Eventually the leader shifts to a new task. To clarify each individual function and the process as a whole a hypothetical scenario will aid in the following explanation of the cycle. The hypothetical

scenario is based on a light infantry battalion in the defense. The scenario is further expanded in each of the function explanations.

The supervision cycle begins with verification. This function involves checking to make sure that something the leader directed is in fact happening as he expects. The leader verifies that his instructions are understood and are being carried out correctly, or that information upon which he based his plan or is basing his plan is, in fact, correct. The logic behind this function of supervision is to verify that the leader's plan or operation is progressing as desired. To set out to discover that information is not true or that instructions are not being carried out is negative and illogical; therefore, the leader sets out to verify that his plan is on track. This difference in attitude may seem slight, but it directly relates to one of supervision's products: trust and confidence. The leader not only verifies that his plan is progressing correctly, but he also verifies that his plan is understood. He verifies that soldiers not only know their tasks but that they know how their tasks fit into the overall plan.

Verifying entails an active participation on the part of the leader; it suggests that in most cases the leader physically moves to some location to perform the verification function. "The number one managerial productivity problem in America is, quite simply, managers who are out of touch with their people...and the alternative, being in touch, does not come via computer printouts or an endless stream of overhead transparencies viewed in darkened meeting rooms".<sup>29</sup> "Staying in touch," the alternative to "out of touch," comes from seeing people, being around people, talking to people. Army leadership is about people and staying in touch with people. Organizations are important, weapons systems are important, maintenance is important, but leaders lead people. Similiar to civilian businesses, Army leaders have "customers" and "products",

i.e. his customers are his soldiers and his product is combat readiness in peacetime, and victory in war.

Along with the physical activity involved in verification goes the mental process of knowing what the task to be supervised or the information to be verified looks like. The leader must know and understand the standards of the task to be supervised and how that task fits into his plan. Prior to verifying a task and its correct completion the leader must have a vision of the end state of his plan and how the task he is verifying fits into that vision. Without this vision the leader can only verify task performance measures which are only part of supervision. This leaves unattended a second part i.e. verifying the way each task fits into the plan.

To illustrate verification the hypothetical scenario comes in handy. In the scenario a light infantry battalion is assigned a mission to defend in sector. As part of the defense the light infantry battalion commander decides to place a wire and mine obstacle in the center of his sector. The obstacle, tied into two restrictive terrain features, will deny the center of the sector to enemy mounted movement.

The first verification the commander can do is visit the proposed obstacle location and verify that the two restrictive terrain features exist and that an obstacle between the two terrain features will accomplish what he wants. The commander then finalizes the plan to put the obstacle in place.

Another verification the commander should do is to visit the obstacle site during construction of the obstacle. The commander verifies that the obstacle is in the correct location and is facing the correct direction. The commander also verifies that the technical details of the obstacle are correct, that the wire is staked down properly and the mines are armed and buried. The commander can verify that the obstacle is covered by direct and indirect fire and the plan to close



any gaps or lanes through the obstacle is understood. Once the commander verifies the information about the obstacle, he can proceed with supervising another critical task in his plan.

The ideal or shortest cycle of supervision is to only need to verify that information is correct and that tasks have been performed to standard. This ideal would make the time spent supervising very short as the leader could move from one important task to the next with little or no pause. This ideal, though, is seldom the case in reality. Therefore leaders must usually perform the next function of supervision: correction.

Correction is the function of righting misinformation or below standard performance. The sooner a leader makes a correction the easier it is to stop the spread of misinformation or below standard performance. Correction follows the verification function in that if the leader discovers something unexpected during his verification, something not in accordance with the plan, he makes a correction to bring the action or task back within the plan. The correction function occurs throughout all phases of the operation, the leader corrects misunderstandings during the briefbacks so that his subordinate leaders do not pass on misinformation. During inspections and rehearsals the leader corrects individual misunderstandings and below standard performance. If the leader is directing the emplacement of a critical asset or controlling movement, he continues to make corrections. The correction function continues throughout the mission. As in the verification function, underlying the ability to correct is the leader's knowledge of the plan as a whole and the task being supervised. If the leader does not understand the plan, the task, and how the task fits into the plan, it will be very difficult to make a correction.

Continuing with the hypothetical scenario of the light infantry battalion will further illustrate the correction function. Imagine that the battalion

commander visited the obstacle site during the construction and discovered the obstacle in the wrong location. To correct this error the battalion commander could direct the movement of the obstacle to the proper location. If the commander verified the obstacle in the proper location but the mines improperly armed he could make an "on the spot" correction to fix the arming error. During the visit the commander could also question the soldiers about the purpose of the obstacle in the commander's overall plan. If soldiers were unaware of the purpose of the obstacle the commander could correct this error with a short explanation of the plan, the obstacle, and how the two fit together.

Making a correction assumes that the misinformation or unexpected occurrence can be corrected and that there is time to apply the correction. What if the leader cannot make a correction due to time or some other reason?

Compensation must occur. Compensation differs from correction. A correction brings an unexpected occurrence back into line with the plan; a compensation brings the plan into line with the unexpected occurrence.

In the case of the hypothetical light infantry battalion, when the commander inspected the obstacle he may have discovered that the obstacle in the wrong location and not tied into restrictive terrain. The obstacle did not meet the commander's desire to deny the center of the sector to the enemy. If the commander did not have the time to move the obstacle or enough obstacle material to build another one, he could not correct the problem. Instead of correcting the obstacle location, the commander could compensate his plan to allow for the misplaced obstacle. The commander can reposition his reserve platoon to compensate for the gap created by the misplaced obstacle. The number of possible compensations is limited only by the commander's imagination and his knowledge of the current situation, thus the leader's active participation is critical to this function.

The will of the enemy impacts most directly on this supervision function. The leader must be ready and available to compensate if the enemy does something unexpected. Inherent in the compensation function of supervision is the leader's, or his designated representative's, knowledge of the situation and his physical location. The leader must be knowledgeable of the current situation and in a location to be aware of or to observe the unexpected occurrence and in a position to effect a change or compensation in his plan. Once the leader compensates for an unexpected occurrence, he must disseminate the change to his unit, his higher commander, and possibly his adjacent units. This dissemination of information is the function of coordination and normally completes the supervision cycle for one task.

Coordination, identified in FM 22-100 as a function of supervision, is similar to verification in that the cycle of supervision can begin or end with it. Supervision can begin by the commander coordinating with higher or adjacent units prior to the start of planning. Supervision can end by the commander disseminating a compensation he made to his plan. For example: In the case of the misplaced obstacle discussed in the hypothetical scenario, the commander can complete the supervision cycle by coordinating the repositioning of his reserve. The commander could also complete the supervision cycle by disseminating the change of position of the reserve to his subordinate commanders. Once again the coordination function is active and suggests visiting units, adjacent units, and higher units, if possible. The best coordination is normally done in person on a site that the coordination affects. The conclusion of the coordination function ends the supervision cycle for a particular task. If done correctly, supervision will have two by-products for the leader and his organization.

Both products are important to the success of a mission. The first product is correct task accomplishment. This is a product of performing the individual

functions within supervision. The second product of supervision is trust and confidence. This is a product of the process of supervision. Together the products of supervision provide the goal of supervision: giving a plan the best possible chance of success.

Giving a plan the best possible chance of success by ensuring correct task accomplishment is the most obvious of the products of supervision. It is also the product upon which most leaders concentrate. General Wesley Clark, the Commanding General at the NTC stated that " in his experience at the NTC, units make two kinds of plans, plans that won't work and plans that might work. Approximately 80% of the plans that might work but fail, fail due in large part to a lack of supervision." <sup>30</sup> The thrust of General Clark's comment is that no plan can guarantee success, so supervision of a plan cannot guarantee success either. However, supervision can give a plan the best possible chance of success. Further, General Clark's statement is an indictment of units today that rely on a plan that might be successful but do not take the steps to give the best chance of success. The adage that an 80% plan produced on time is better than a 100% plan published too late is especially applicable to the supervision product. A plan issued in enough time to allow proper supervision has a much better chance of being successful than a plan issued too late to allow proper supervision. As stated above this product of supervision is the most obvious, and the one that most leaders concentrate on. There is another product of supervision, however, and it is at least as important as insuring that tasks are performed to standard. This product is building trust and confidence.

Throughout the supervision cycle, in every phase and with every function, the leader should build trust and confidence. The manner in which the leader performs the functions of supervision is as important as performing the functions. As Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery said, "The leader must have

infectious optimism...the final test of a leader is the feeling you have when you leave his presence....have you a feeling of uplift and confidence?"<sup>31</sup> The leader must supervise in such a manner as to build, at every opportunity, trust and confidence. According to Tom Peters, "Direct participation is required, seeing with your own eyes and hearing with your own ears is simply the only thing that yields the unfiltered, richly detailed impressions that tell you how things are really going, that give you the minute to minute opportunities to take another couple steps toward building trust".<sup>32</sup>

Proper supervision builds trust and confidence in the leader, in the individual soldiers, in the unit, and in the plan. Supervision, if properly conducted, builds trust and confidence in the leader by displaying his concern for each soldier's ability and welfare. Getting out "on the line" with the soldier and sharing the hardships demonstrates the leader's concern. Displaying knowledge and proficiency at the task and mission demonstrates the leader's abilities. Demonstrating his ability to control the situation and command the unit, the leader builds his soldier's trust and confidence in his abilities. Supervision also builds trust and confidence in the soldier. Allowing the soldier to demonstrate his own proficiency in his task, the soldier builds his confidence in himself. Ensuring he knows where he fits into the overall plan, the soldier develops trust in the plan. Allowing other soldiers to see his proficiency builds their trust in him. Next, properly conducted supervision builds trust and confidence in the unit by allowing everyone involved to see the leader and individuals functioning together as a team. Each person understands his part and the parts of others in the overall plan. Each person involved sees that the interaction of all is necessary to accomplish the mission. Finally supervision builds trust and confidence in the plan by exposing, then fixing, weaknesses and allowing soldiers to voice or demonstrate specific concerns about portions of the plan and then

taking corrective action if required. Supervision also builds trust and confidence in the plan by demonstrating how the plan can and will work. Two specific supervision problems lead to the destruction of trust and confidence, these two problems are: oversupervision and undersupervision.

Oversupervision causes resentment and stifles initiative in subordinate leaders. When a leader oversupervises his subordinates they begin to feel that the leader does not trust them to accomplish a task without his presence. When a leader oversupervises his subordinates they stop taking initiative and begin to wait for instructions from the leader. The price of oversupervision is high but the price of undersupervision is equally costly.

Undersupervision causes frustration and does not lead to accomplishing the mission. When a leader undersupervises his subordinates they feel that the leader is not interested in them or the task they are performing, therefore they are less likely to accomplish the task to standard or to accomplish the task at all. When a leader undersupervises his subordinates, they are frustrated by a lack of guidance concerning what the leader wants. Again, under these conditions subordinates are less likely to accomplish the task to standard. The line between under or oversupervision and proper supervision is very fine and not easily definable.

The fine line between oversupervision and undersupervision highlights the need to conduct detailed supervision planning. "The right level of supervision will depend on the task being performed and the person doing it."<sup>33</sup> The leader must be "in touch" with his unit to understand the factors involved in gauging the proper amount of supervision. Some of the factors are:

- + The experience level of the subordinates
- + The competence of the subordinates
- + The confidence of the subordinates

- + The motivation of the subordinates
- + The difficulty of the task
- + The conditions under which the task is performed

The leader must use his judgment and experience to ensure he does not undersupervise or oversupervise.<sup>34</sup>

The explanation of the supervision cycle is complete except for one piece: a definition of supervision. According to Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary supervision is: "the action, process, or occupation of supervising; esp: a critical watching and directing (as of activities or a course of action)."<sup>35</sup> This definition is not specific enough for Army purposes. Given the explanation of the supervision skills required of Army leaders presented above, a better definition is this: the act of critical watching to verify, coordinate, correct, or compensate an action or plan to ensure correct task performance thus building trust and confidence in order to give the action or plan the best possible chance of success. This definition encompasses the functions, products, and purpose of supervision and, by itself, will help clarify supervision.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

*ALL SOLDIERS BENEFIT FROM APPROPRIATE SUPERVISION BY LEADERS WITH MORE  
KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE*

*FM 22-100*

History has shown that poor supervision is linked closely to unit failure. The U.S. Army recognizes this link, for its leadership doctrine at all levels states the importance of proper supervision to success. However, in spite of the doctrine, current after-action comments from the NTC and the JRTC show that U.S. Army leaders continue to have trouble supervising properly.

The contradiction in the U.S. Army is that while the Army recognizes the link between proper supervision and unit success, the leadership doctrine does not clearly explain supervision. Not only is doctrine unclear on supervision, the Army formal schooling system does little to clarify the concept of supervision. With little clarification and less training, no wonder supervision is so often misunderstood or misapplied.

The process of supervising is a continuous cycle. To properly supervise the cycle must occur throughout the planning, preparation, and execution phases of military operations. The cycle contains four functions: verification, coordination, correction, and compensation. The four functions if performed correctly provide two products: correct task performance and trust and confidence. The two products combine to provide the goal of supervision: giving a plan the best possible chance of success.

Proper supervision is not the panacea for all unit failures. Units fail for a variety of reasons, some not even remotely related to supervision. Even so, enough unit failures are linked to poor supervision to warrant reexamining U.S. Army doctrine concerning supervision. To improve the understanding of supervision within the Army and thus to improve supervision this monograph offers the following recommendations:

- + Adopt a complete definition, explanation, and model for supervision
- + Consolidate supervision doctrine into one manual
- + Ensure that supervision is consistent through all manuals
- + Expand the explanation of supervision in all leadership manuals
- + Expand the instruction of supervision in leadership schools
- + Establish MTP standards for supervision

The Army should add the definition, model, and explanation of the model of supervision presented in this monograph to FM 22-100. This explanation of



supervision, if placed into the Army's capstone leadership manual, will consolidate the Army doctrine on supervision into one manual. Adding the definition and model will also add the idea of a cycle of supervision to the explanation currently included in the manual. The consolidation of supervision doctrine into one manual will set the base for more specific explanations in "How to Fight" manuals. The "How to Fight" manuals could include the definition of supervision and an explanation of the functions, then discuss specific techniques of supervision such as: inspections, briefbacks, Commex's, and rehearsals. The "How to Fight" manuals should stress the importance of making a supervision plan, then supervising by physically overseeing the events contained in the plan. Consolidating supervision into one manual and clarifying supervision in all manuals will go a long way towards correcting the misunderstanding of supervision in the Army, but it will go only part way. The Army school system has a part to play in correcting the misunderstanding.

The Army school system needs to implement a supervision training program in the officer basic and advanced courses and the non-commissioned officer basic and advanced courses. This program would compliment the changes in the manuals and further correct the misunderstanding in the Army. The program should examine past case studies with an emphasis on how poor supervision contributed to failure and how poor supervision could be corrected. The program should also include practical exercises in supervising that stress each of the different functions of supervision. This process would allow the students to examine a variety of techniques. Further, it will allow them to choose techniques that match the situation and their own personality. The practical exercises should also demonstrate that while supervision is a leadership task, the physical and moral domains of combat also impact greatly on a leader's ability and desire to conduct supervision.

Two important aspects of the physical domain of combat are the time and space calculations required when planning supervision. The leader can only supervise one event at a time. However, detailed planning of supervision enables the leader to delegate supervision tasks to his subordinates to insure supervision of all critical tasks. The physical domain also impacts on the leader's ability to supervise when he becomes tired and worn down. The need to supervise is weighed against the desire to rest or eat. Once again, a detailed supervision plan will compensate for the need to rest and eat by delegating supervision tasks among many men. That is, while one leader rests, another supervises.

The lack of sleep also impacts on the moral domain of combat by increasing the stress on the leader and hampering his ability to supervise. Fear is another key ingredient in the moral domain that impacts on supervision. Supervision is a hands-on process and requires leaders to move to critical locations. Under combat conditions, with life threatening events occurring around the leader, the leader will need to overcome fear to properly supervise. With the expanded explanation of supervision in doctrine and the increased supervision training in the school system only unit training is left unattended.

To assist unit level training the Army should formalize standards in the Mission Training Plans for the platoon through brigade level MTP manuals. These manuals are key to planning and conducting unit training. Rather than leave the standards up to each individual commander, a standard in each MTP will give units a base line to begin training and evaluating. The presence of supervision standards in the MTP will help ensure units make a plan to supervise and conduct supervision.

## EPILOGUE

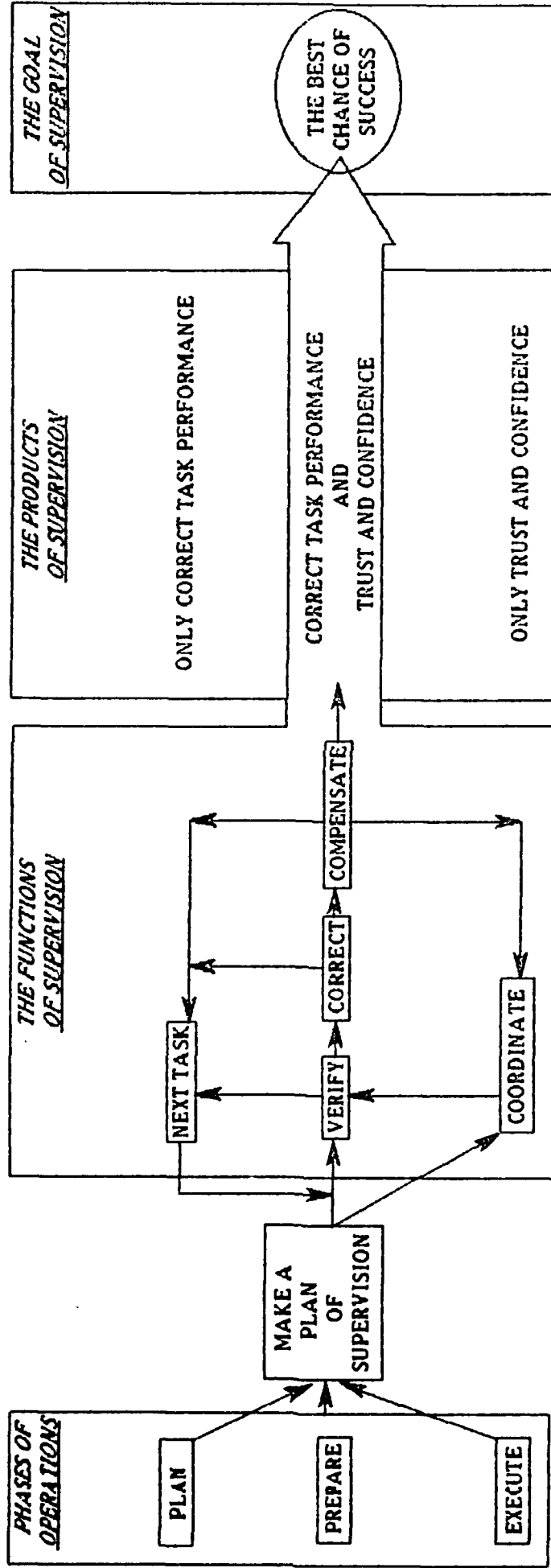
*IF THE LEADER SUPERVISES IT, HE CAN MAKE IT HAPPEN. THE BEST PLAN MAY FAIL IF  
IT IS NOT MANAGED RIGHT. CHECK EVERYTHING.  
FM 7-70*

Poor supervision is an historical cause of mission failure and poor supervision is a current U.S. Army problem. Poor supervision in the Army today is due, in part, to confusing and incomplete doctrine and a lack of emphasis in the Army formal school system.

The Army will never be able to totally correct supervision and even with 100% correct supervision all missions will not necessarily be successful. However, the Army can do a much better job of supervision by adopting the changes recommended in this monograph. Increasing the amount of correct supervision will result in an increase in the number of successful missions.

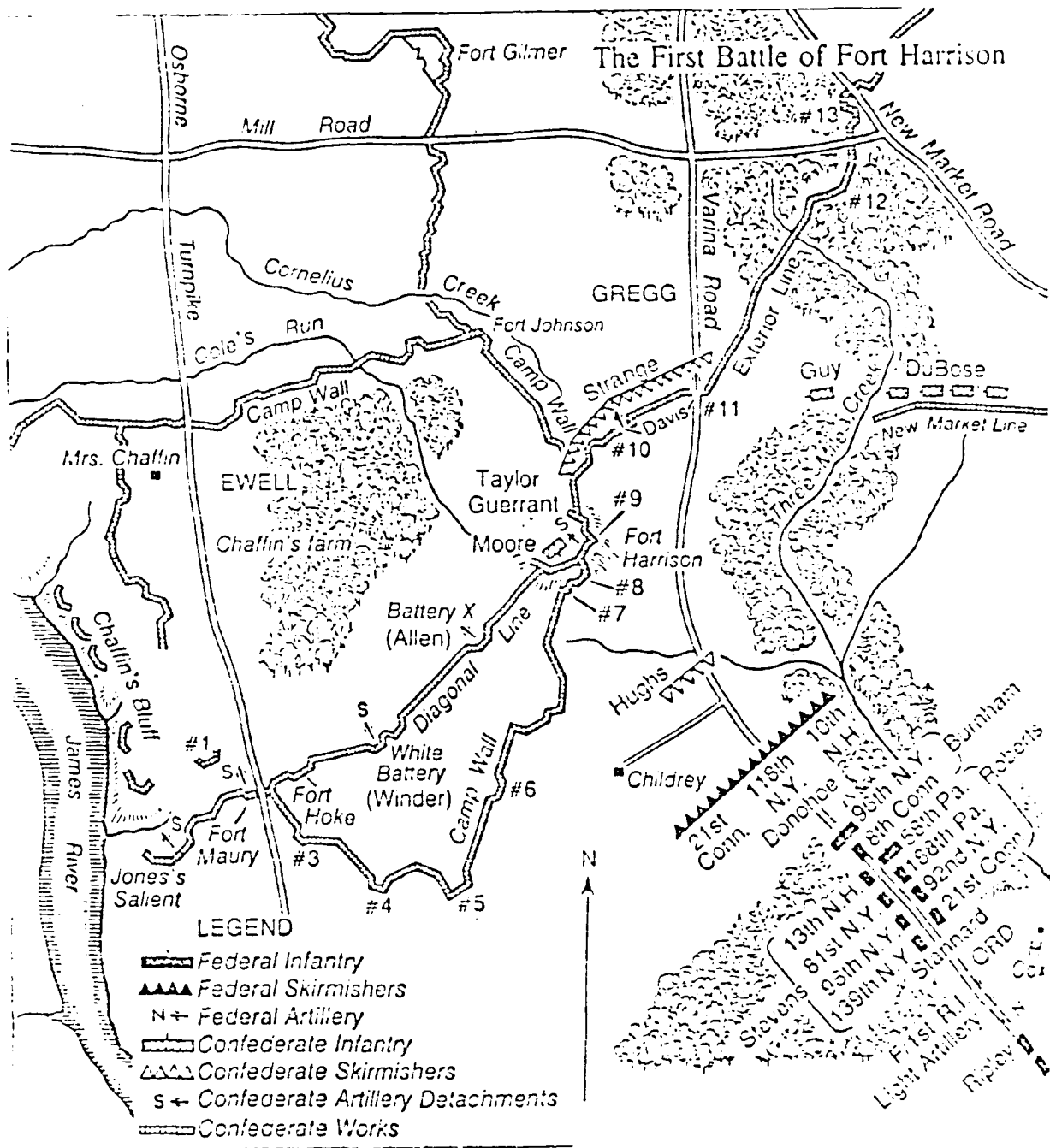
The speed, agility, and lethality inherent in AirLand Battle Doctrine and the future AirLand Operations makes any lack of supervision by American leaders especially costly in terms of soldiers lives and mission failures. On the future battlefield Army leaders cannot afford to misunderstand the process of supervision.

CYCLE OF SUPERVISION



ANNEX A: A MODEL OF SUPERVISION

**ANNEX B: SKETCH #1: FORT HARRISON**

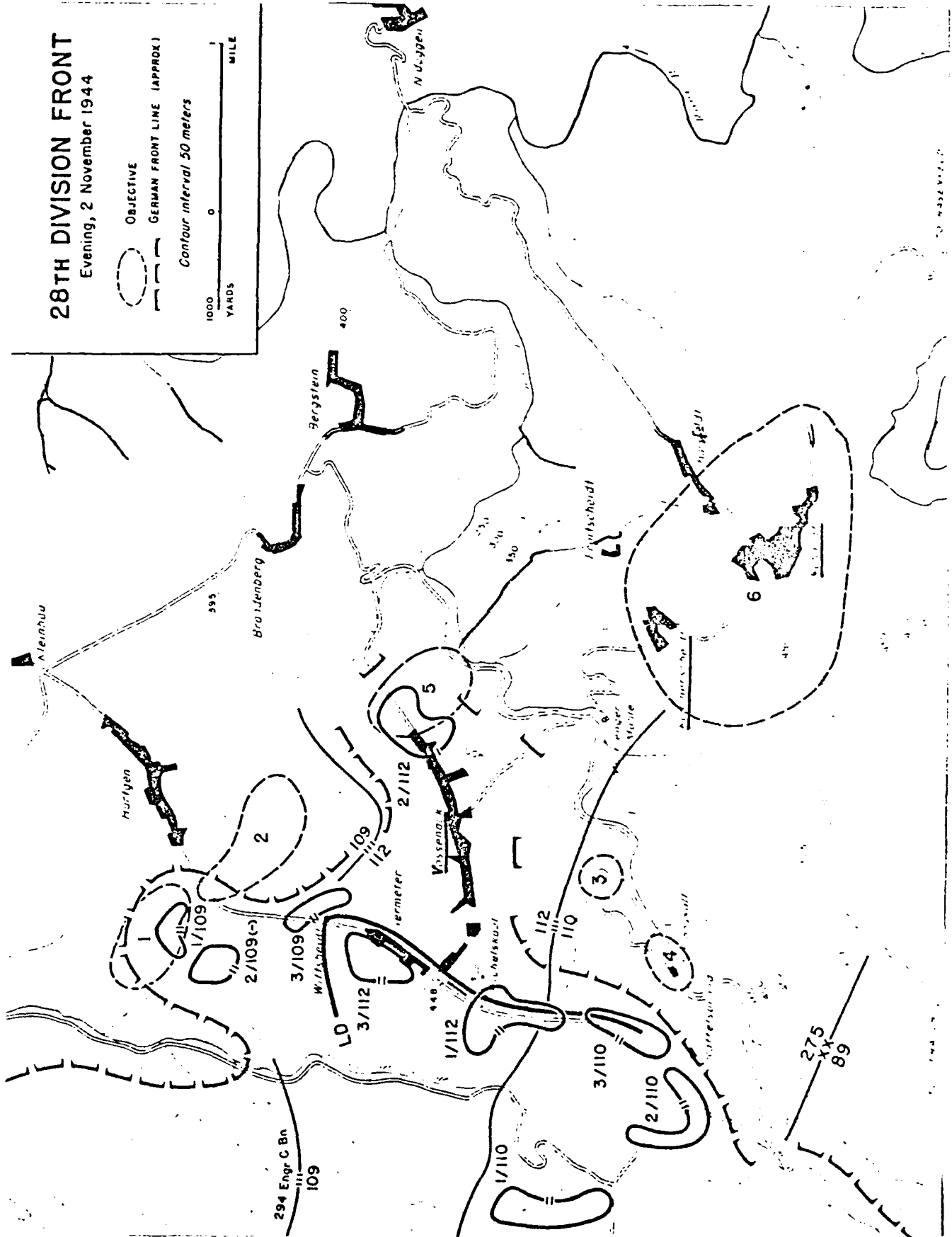
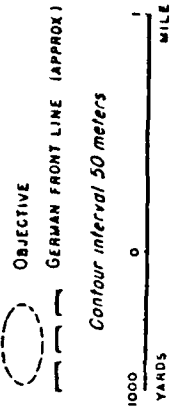


**Fort Harrison Sketch from: Sommers, Richard J., Richmond Redeemed, The Siege at Petersburg, p44**

**ANNEX B: SKETCH #2: THE BATTLE OF SCHMIDT**

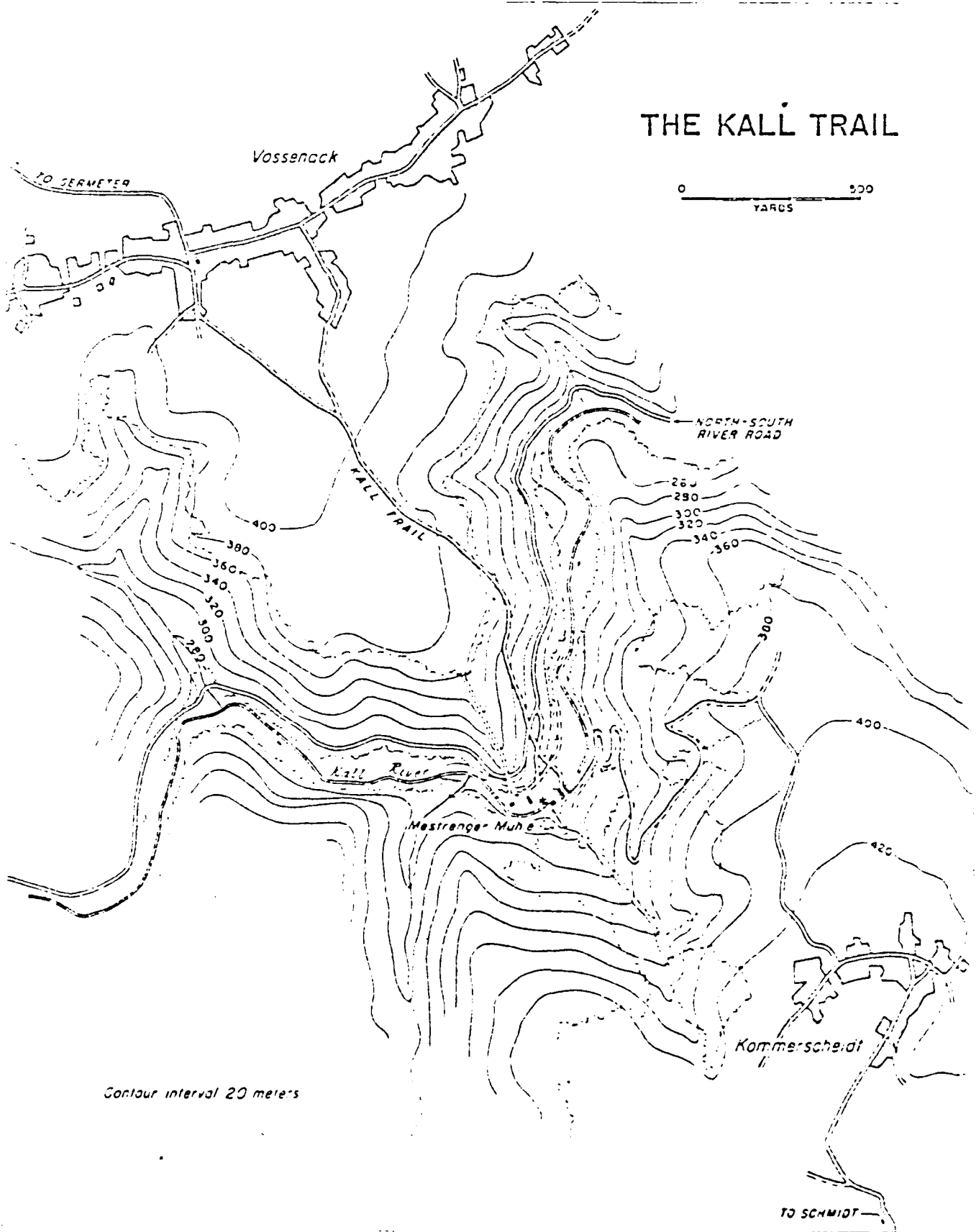
**28TH DIVISION FRONT**

Evening, 2 November 1944



Schmidt Sketch from: MacDonal and Mathews, Three Battles: Arnaville, Altuzo, and Schmidt, p 270.

**ANNEX B: SKETCH # 3: THE KALL TRAIL**



Sketch of the Kall Trail from: MacDonald and Mathews, Three Battles: Arnaville, Altuzzo, and Schmidt. p 287.

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ENDNOTES

- 1 U. S. Army, Field Manual 22-100, Military Leadership, (Washington, D.C.; Department of the Army, 1990), p. 67.
- 2 Ibid., p. 48.
- 3 Sommers, Richard J., Richmond Redeemed. The Siege At Petersburg, (Garden City, New York, 1981), p.14-16.
- 4 Ibid, p. 41-42.
- 5 Ibid, p. 47-49.
- 6 The last 14 paragraphs are quoted verbatim from: U.S. Army, Infantry In Battle, (Washington, D.C.: The Infantry Journal, 1939), p. 201-203.
- 7 Macdonald, Charles B. and Mathews, Sidney T., The United States Army In World War II, Three Battles: Arnaville, Altuzzo, and Schmidt, (Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, Washington, D.C., 1952), p. 313, 314, 327, 362, 389.
- 8 Ibid, p. 307.
- 9 Ibid, p. 266.
- 10 Ibid, p. 269-271.
- 11 Ibid, p. 304, 305, 313, 343.
- 12 Ibid, p. 309.
- 13 Ibid, p. 362.
- 14 JRTC After-Action Comments by MSG. Snafe. Observation #: 5222, Entry Date: 89/06/26.
- 15 JRTC After-Action Comments by SSG. Sullivan. Observation #: 7101, Entry Date: 91/04/22.
- 16 NTC After-Action Comment by Maj Sandoy. Observation #: 4840, Entry Date: 89/03/09.
- 17 NTC After-Action Comment by SSG. Little. Observation #: 5002, Entry Date: 89/03/14.



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18 NTC After-Action Comment by Ashcroft, Rank Unk. Observation #: 5185, Entry Date: 89/03/16.

19 FM 22-100, p. 47.

20 Ibid, p. 47, 67.

21 Ibid, p. 48.

22 Ibid, p. 48.

23 Ibid, p. 48.

24 Basic Non-Commissioned Officers Course Common Training for Leaders, Mandatory Training Annex and Advanced Non-Commissioned Officers Course Common Training for Leaders, Mandatory Training Annex. US Sergeants-Major Academy, Fort Bliss, Tx.

25 Wass de Czege, Huba, "Understanding and Developing Combat Power", (Fort Leavenworth, United States Army Command and General Staff College School of Advanced Military Studies, 1984), p. 35.

26 FM 22-100, p. 48.

27 Austin, Nancy and Peters, Tom A Passion for Excellence: The Leadership Difference, (Warner Books, New York, NY, 1985), p 12.

28 Ibid, p. 449.

29 Ibid, p. 10.

30 Quote used by permission. Given during a briefing by BG Clark to SAMS Seminar #1 during FLTP deployment 19-24 Aug, 91.

31 Austin and Peters, p. 310.

32 Ibid, p. 387-388.

33 FM 22-100, p. 48.

34 Ibid, p. 48.

35 Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, (Meriam-Webster Inc., Springfield, Ma., 1986), p. 1185.

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