

# Morale – Sustaining the Cognitive Weapon of War: Insights from the World War II Special Services Division

A Monograph

by

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## Abstract

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Large-scale combat operations (LSCO) present psychological strain in a scale unrivaled by other types of military operations across the conflict continuum. As such, morale mitigates the negative effects of combat stress. However, the Army's doctrine does not consider what morale is or how it serves as a cognitive weapon of war. Further, large-scale morale operations no longer exist in the military's institutional memory. Because humans have enduring characteristics that span generations, history offers insights applicable to modern morale. World War II provides a historical example of large-scale morale operations, viewed through the lens of the Army's Special Services Division, the progenitor of modern Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR).

A program evaluation of the Special Services Division demonstrates that morale programs were most successful when they removed soldiers from psychological isolation and confirmed the war's just cause. Consequently, actual movement to more familiar spaces, such as rest camps and passes to non-combat zones, as well as regular communication with loved ones proved the most effective methods to decrease mental isolation. Similarly, programs that reinforced society's belief that war was just and educated servicemembers about how their missions fulfilled the just war objectives reinvigorated and sustained morale. Ultimately, this case study suggests that high morale requires much more than basic MWR programs. A lack of consideration concerning morale leaves the Army at risk of limiting its human capacity during LSCO.

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## Acronyms

AG	Adjutant General
AR	Army Regulation
DOD	Department of Defense
ETOUSA	Eastern Theater of Operations, United States Army
FM	Field Manual
GI	Nickname for American soldiers during World War II, derived from the initialism for Government Issue or General Item
JP	Joint Publication
LSCO	Large-Scale Combat Operations
MWR	Morale, Welfare, and Recreation
RAND	RAND Corporation, an abbreviation of Research and Development
USO	United Service Organizations
TM	Technical Manual
V-Mail	Victory Mail
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association

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## Introduction

In military action, the force of an army is also a product of mass times something, some unknown x... This x is the spirit of the army, that is, the greater or lesser desire to fight and subject themselves to danger.

—Leo Tolstoy, *War and Peace*

While serving on Saipan between 1944 and 1945, Army Chaplain Herman Murdock often visited the patients at the island's hospital. As Murdock crossed the airfield on one such visit, "several waves of Japanese planes" attacked, targeting parked American aircraft. He wrote that for several weeks prior to this attack, the Japanese bombed the base nightly but during the day, US servicemembers "felt safe but weary." Now, Japanese munitions dropped in daylight as Murdock first sought cover beneath his jeep, darted behind barriers, and finally "rolled under a nearby building." He later realized the barriers were not barricades but barrels filled with fuel.<sup>1</sup> Commenting on the effect of enemy air attacks, General Dwight Eisenhower wrote, "Our experience to date shows that the dive bomber... has much greater moral than material effect."<sup>2</sup> Chaplain Murdock's vignette provides a vivid portrayal of how sudden and reoccurring aerial attacks might have frayed the nerves of World War II soldiers.

In addition to those experiencing enemy air attacks, psychological strain occurred in troops facing a variety of wartime stress. First Lieutenant Theodore Draper described the men of the 84<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division living in muddy and "soaking foxholes" in the Ardennes. He identified another kind of battle against "mud or ice or rain or vermin or boredom or homesickness or imaginary terrors."<sup>3</sup> As part of Operation Market Garden, paratrooper Raymond Hoffman recalled parachuting into Holland and then wearing the same dirty, torn clothing for the next two

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<sup>1</sup> Herman Murdock, "Some of Herman's Memories and Humor, Extracted from His Album and Compiled by Ruth M. Murdock, 1995," Personal Papers of Sandra Hollenback, 31.

<sup>2</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower to AGWAR, December 19, 1942, Box 130, document 729, Pre-Presidential Papers, Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, KS.

<sup>3</sup> Theodore Draper, *The 84th Infantry Division in the Battle of Germany, November 1944 – May 1945* (New York: The Viking Press, 1946), 34, 108.

months.<sup>4</sup> James Fry's regiment received 1,300 replacements after three months in combat, which equaled forty-three percent of its authorized personnel strength.<sup>5</sup> Replacing nearly half a unit after only ninety days in battle meant that all remaining soldiers lost a superior, subordinate, friend, or acquaintance. These soldiers likely experienced grief and worried about their own safety, in turn reducing the unit's mental resiliency.<sup>6</sup> The individual experiences of Murdock, Draper, Hoffman, and Fry were common among US troops engaged in large-scale combat throughout the Second World War. These events degraded individual effectiveness.<sup>7</sup> When widespread across tactical formations, psychological degradation amplified to accumulate negative combat effects up to the

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<sup>4</sup> Raymond Hoffman, interview by Dr. Maclyn Burg, September 22, 1978, transcript, Eisenhower Oral History Project, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, KS, 413.

<sup>5</sup> James Fry, *Combat Soldier* (Washington, DC: The National Press, 1968), 161. During World War II, the Army authorized standard infantry regiments 3,130 personnel, mountain infantry regiments 3,046 personnel, parachute infantry regiments 2,482 personnel, and armored infantry regiments 2,472 personnel. These authorizations are according to the US Army Tables of Organization obtained from the *The Nafziger Orders of Battle Collection*, Combined Arms Research Library, Fort Leavenworth, KS.

<sup>6</sup> In a unit with a forty-three percent casualty rate in ninety days of combat, the statistical likelihood of unscathed survival was low. Additionally, psychologist Daniel Kahneman explained that the "availability heuristic" heightened feelings of danger. This heuristic is "the process of judging frequency by 'the ease with which instances come to mind'." Vivid images, such as death, trigger an "availability cascade." In turn, the image becomes psychologically accessible, arouses emotion, and decreases the ability to think logically about the actual probability of an event occurring. Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking Fast and Slow* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011), 129-130, 311, 322-323.

<sup>7</sup> Used herein, degradation is a break-down in a soldier's ability to perform required tasks. Many physical and mental causes reduced combat effectiveness, to include sleep deprivation, illness, injury, weather exposure, and fear. For instance, studies found that not sleeping in just a twenty-four hour period results in slower information processing and reaction time, risk acceptance, carelessness, and poor judgment. While stress reactions varied, these types of strain often led to stress casualties. Researchers Todd C. Helmus and Russell W. Glenn found that in certain units engaged in "highly intense combat operations," "stress casualties" equaled "physical" casualty rates. Across an entire theater, rates often approximated twenty-five percent of physical casualties." Historian John Ellis remarked that even if a World War II soldier was not an official stress casualty, "this did not mean that he was not in a state of constant psychological turmoil." In turn, capability degradation and stress lowered morale. Todd C. Helmus and Russell W. Glenn, *Steeling the Mind: Combat Stress Reactions and Their Implications for Urban Warfare* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2005), 93, 116; John Ellis, *The Sharp End of War: The Fighting Man in World War II* (London: David & Charles, 1980), 241, 248; Anthony Kellett, *Combat Motivation: The Behavior of Soldiers in Battle* (Boston: Kluwer, 1984), 233-236; Dave Grossman and Loren W. Christensen, *On Combat: The Psychology and Physiology of Deadly Conflict in War and Peace* (Warrior Science Publications, 2008), 25.

operational level of war.<sup>8</sup> Yet, as Royal Army physician Charles McMoran Wilson noted, “If a soldier is always using up his [mental] capital, he may from time to time add to it.”<sup>9</sup> Enhancing morale restores and sustains depleted psychological resources.

For centuries, military thinkers have written about morale and the psychological aspect of war. T.E. Lawrence argued that “the whole house of war” is “the Algebraical element of things, a Biological element of lives, and the Psychological element of ideas.”<sup>10</sup> Sun Tzu ruminated that the warrior must avoid the enemy “when his morale is high” but strike the enemy “when his morale has flagged.”<sup>11</sup> Similarly, nineteenth-century Prussian theorist Carl von Clausewitz argued that low morale proved “the major decisive factor” in certain failed historical battles and campaigns.<sup>12</sup> Despite developments in weapons technology, French military thinker Ardant du Picq wrote forcefully on the preeminence of the human influence in war. He argued, “Nothing can wisely be prescribed in an army...without exact knowledge of the fundamental instrument,

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<sup>8</sup> Organizational development expert Peter Senge defined the terminology reinforcing, or amplifying, feedback as a process that spurs growth, both positive and negative. The acceleration of reinforcing feedback eventually encounters a limit to that growth, which Senge called balancing, or stabilizing, feedback. In the case of accumulating psychological strain, a negative type of growth, military leaders desire stabilizing feedback to slow or stop the detrimental effects of combat stress. This paper argues that leveraging morale provides the stabilizing feedback to slow the reinforcing mechanism of combat-produced psychological strain. Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* (New York: Currency, 2006), 79-83.

<sup>9</sup> Charles McMoran Wilson (Lord Moran), *The Anatomy of Courage: The Classic WWI Account of the Psychological Effects of War* (New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 2007), 70.

<sup>10</sup> T. E. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (Hertfordshire, UK: Wordsworth Edition, 1997), 181.

<sup>11</sup> Sun-Tzu, *The Art of Warfare*, trans. Roger Ames (New York: Ballantine Books, 1993), 131.

<sup>12</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 231. British Field-Marshal Viscount William Slim provided an example that supports Clausewitz’s assertion that morale can be a “major decisive factor” in battle. While taking part in the First Arakan Campaign in April 1943, Slim’s XV Corps devised a plan to trap the counter-attacking Japanese force along the Mayu Range in Burma. Despite a sound plan and the XV Corps’ superior strength, several critical battalions failed to hold the line and the Japanese pushed the corps back. Slim argued that if his unit had not experienced months of defeat and mental strain, the XV Corps would have proven victorious in this battle against the Japanese. Likewise, in his study of military morale historian John Baynes concluded that the finest tactical plan “can be a complete failure if morale is bad, while a poor plan can be made to work well if morale is good.” William Slim, *Defeat into Victory: Battling Japan in Burma and India, 1942-1945* (New York: Cooper Square Press, 2000), 159-160; John Baynes, *Morale: A Study of Men and Courage* (Garden City Park, NY: Avery Publishing Group, Inc., 1988), 93.

man, and his state of mind, his morale, at the instant of combat.”<sup>13</sup> Additional military theorists and their ideas about morale could fill an entire tome.<sup>14</sup> As such, reoccurring references to the human psyche across centuries suggest that morale is an important topic to weigh when arranging military operations.

Despite its apparent importance in war, contemporary US military publications provide only cursory references to morale. Joint doctrine charges servicemembers to translate morale into combat capabilities reflected in staff estimates.<sup>15</sup> Army doctrine calls “morale and cohesiveness” a “cognitive consideration” for commanders and planners when establishing operational framework. It also tasks planners to consider morale while arraying forces or determining task organizations.<sup>16</sup> Both joint and Army doctrine assign unit morale responsibilities to commanders and further delegate unit morale assessment to command sergeants major and other senior enlisted advisors.<sup>17</sup> The Army delegates morale, welfare, and recreation (MWR) program

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<sup>13</sup> Ardant du Picq, *Battle Studies: Ancient and Modern Battle*, trans. John N. Greely and Robert C. Cotton, in *Roots of Strategy, Book 2* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1987), 65.

<sup>14</sup> In addition to generic discussions regarding morale and its benefits, some military thinkers and leaders determined morale is one of the most important aspects of war. Clausewitz wrote, “the moral elements are among the most important in war.” Similarly, despite shortfalls in intelligence, equipment, soldiers, and training, Field Marshal Slim stated that the threat to morale “was the most serious danger” his unit faced. In his study on morale, historian John Baynes argued that “the maintenance of morale is recognized in military circles as the most important single factor in war.” Clausewitz, *On War*, 184; Slim, *Defeat into Victory*, 28-30; Baynes, *Morale*, 93.

<sup>15</sup> US Department of Defense, Joint Staff, *Joint Publication (JP) 5-0, Joint Planning* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), C-1.

<sup>16</sup> US Department of the Army, *Field Manual (FM) 3-0, Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), 1-26; US Department of the Army, *Field Manual (FM) 6-0, Commander and Staff Organization and Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2014), 2-27, 9-20, D-2.

<sup>17</sup> US Department of Defense, Joint Staff, *Joint Publication (JP) 3-0, Joint Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), I-15; US Department of the Army, *Army Doctrine Publication (ADRP) 6-22, Leadership* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 4; US Department of the Army, *Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 5-0, The Operations Process* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 4-3.

coordination to G-1 and S-1 staffs.<sup>18</sup> While Army doctrine considers morale an “intangible” factor that is important to combat power, the military’s capstone publications do not specify what morale is or how it has a bearing on wartime capabilities.<sup>19</sup>

Lack of specificity regarding morale is problematic because cognitive considerations multiply combat capability. Unlike twenty-first century US military experiences, future combat may present contested domains where constant “fear, violence, and uncertainty” reigns supreme on the battlefield.<sup>20</sup> Like the soldiers in the opening World War II vignettes, US ground forces could again endure extended periods in which the enemy maintains air or sea superiority. Combat under such conditions provides additional opportunities for friendly casualties and longer periods in which soldiers endure the stress of anticipated or actual enemy attack from all directions. Further, in 2017, the US Army reemphasized the probability of future large-scale combat operations (LSCO).<sup>21</sup> As depicted in Figure 1, the scope of LSCO exceeds all other types of

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<sup>18</sup> US Department of the Army, *Field Manual (FM) 1-0, Human Resources Support* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2014), 1-6; US Department of the Army, *Army Techniques Publication (ATP) 1-0.1, G-1/AG and S-1 Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2015), 1-4; US Department of the Army, *Army Techniques Publication (ATP) 1-0.2, Theater-Level Human Resources Support* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), 5-9.

<sup>19</sup> US Army, *FM 6-0*, 9-18. The Center for Army Leadership offers a NATO product describing “Morale and Unit Effectiveness.” This information resulted from a 2002 through 2006 NATO-led study. NATO, “Annex G – A Leader’s Guide to Psychological Support Across the Deployment Cycle,” in *Stress and Psychological Support in Modern Military Operations* (Neuilly-sur-Seine, France: Research and Technology Organisation, 2008), accessed February 14, 2019, [http://usacac.army.mil/sites/default/files/documents/cal/LeadersGuide\\_v2\\_3\\_USNATO.pdf](http://usacac.army.mil/sites/default/files/documents/cal/LeadersGuide_v2_3_USNATO.pdf).

<sup>20</sup> US Army, *FM 3-0*, 1-2. In the 2017 National Defense Strategy, Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis stated, “every domain” is already “contested- air, land, sea, space and cyberspace.” US Department of Defense, *Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America: Sharpening the American Military’s Competitive Edge* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2018), 3.

<sup>21</sup> The 2017 edition of the US Army’s capstone doctrine publication – *FM 3-0, Operations* – reemphasized planning and training for large-scale ground combat operations after a nearly eighteen year emphasis on counterinsurgency. While the manual provides no large-scale combat operations definition, it described LSCO’s characteristics as armed conflict against a peer threat, specifically “aimed at defeating an enemy’s armed forces and military capabilities in support of national objectives.” Moreover, *FM 3-0* clarified that LSCO is more “chaotic, intense, and...destructive” than combat “the Army has experienced in the past several decades.” The manual exemplified World War II as large-scale ground combat, citing such battles and campaigns as Sidi Bouzid and Kasserine Pass in North Africa and the Hürtgen Forest and the Battle of the Bulge in Europe. US Army, *FM 3-0*, ix, 1-1, 1-2.

military actions within the conflict continuum. Thus, while the United States develops military technology to gain advantages over its competitors in contested environments and LSCO, it must also consider ways to achieve a cognitive advantage. High morale provides the psychological sustainment necessary during the most difficult combat scenarios to provide the desired asymmetry against competitors.

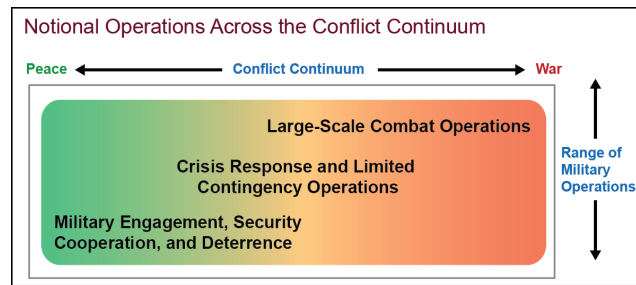


Figure 1. Notional Operations Across the Conflict Continuum. *Field Manual (FM) 3-0, Operations* 2017, 1-1.

Therefore, morale requires increased attention as the Army prepares for LSCO. Strategist Colin Gray argued, when “the human element is missing from the theoretical or doctrinal action, so also as a consequence is likely to be due anticipation of the potential power of contingency.”<sup>22</sup> The American experience during the Korean War and World War II hold the last vestiges of LSCO morale programs. Consequently, the practical knowledge of conducting large-scale morale efforts no longer exists in the Army’s operating memory. Because humans have enduring characteristics across generations, considering morale through the insights of history, theory, and doctrine provides an opportunity to identify continuities helpful for modern military planning.<sup>23</sup>

To fill this gap, World War II provides a lens through which to determine beneficial aspects of morale operations during LSCO. Specifically, the Army’s Special Services Division

<sup>22</sup> Colin Gray, *The Strategy Bridge: Theory for Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 37.

<sup>23</sup> Historian John Lewis Gaddis’s description of contingency and continuity govern the use of those terms herein. He defined continuities as “patterns that extend across time” and contingencies as “phenomena that do not form patterns.” John Lewis Gaddis, *The Landscape of History: How Historians Map the Past* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 30.

delivered morale resources to psychologically sustain soldiers and extend operational reach.<sup>24</sup>

The Second World War was the first time the Army ran morale programs through a military staff structure. Prior to this, civilian organizations, such as the YMCA, the Knights of Columbus, the American Library Association, and the Jewish Welfare Board, spearheaded soldier morale initiatives.<sup>25</sup> What is more, World War II provides useful insights because of the length of overseas service; the majority of American soldiers deployed for two or three years.<sup>26</sup> Despite long deployments, American forces reached their military end states and faced few culminating points.<sup>27</sup> Consequently, a program evaluation of the Special Services Division demonstrates that morale programs were most successful when they provided soldiers relief from combat conditions, connection with home, validation of the war's just cause, and information explaining operational objectives. These aspects proved most important because they reduced psychological isolation and provided soldiers a just war narrative for which they felt was worth fighting.

Research from three distinct source pools led to these conclusions. The first pool is the soldier's voice. More than fifty soldiers' memoirs and letters bring the troops' personal experiences to life. Commentaries from wartime participants or observers, such as Ernie Pyle and

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<sup>24</sup> Joint and Army doctrine define operational reach as "the distance and duration across which a joint force can successfully employ military capabilities." This study is most concerned with how morale sustains the duration of time a soldier can perform under large scale combat conditions. See US Joint Staff, *JP 3-0*, II-7; US Department of the Army, *Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 1-02, Terms and Military Symbols* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2016), 1-70.

<sup>25</sup> Frederick H. Osborn, "Recreation, Welfare, and Morale of the American Soldier," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 220 (March 1, 1942): 50.

<sup>26</sup> US soldiers often commented on the length of time they had been away from home in their personal correspondence. For instance, Technical Sergeant Lee Merson noted that by late 1942, he had already been overseas a year and a half. Similarly, infantry Private Vincent "Buddy" Forret wrote that he had been in Europe for nearly two years by January 1944. Mina Curtiss, ed., *Letters Home* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1944), 55, 208.

<sup>27</sup> Joint and Army doctrine describes military end state as "the set of required conditions that defines achievement of the commander's objectives." They explicate culminating point as "the point at which effectively continuing the attack is no longer possible and the force must consider reverting to a defensive posture or attempting an operational pause." US Joint Staff, *JP 5-0*, xxii, IV-36; US Army, *ADRP 1-02*, 1-34; US Department of the Army, *Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 3-0, Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), 2-8.

S.L.A. Marshall, provided hundreds of other soldiers' input.<sup>28</sup> Secondary sources further enhanced this perspective, most notably Lee Kennett's *GI*, James J. Cooke's *American Girls, Beer, and Glenn Miller: GI Morale in World War II*, and John Ellis' *The Sharp End of War*. Examining these sources together provided an amalgamation of servicemen's wartime experiences and a consensus regarding the programs that best maintained or improved morale.

While the soldier's perspective is integral to understanding morale, it is susceptible to bias and, to borrow a term from military historian Gregory Daddis, the "corruptibility of memory."<sup>29</sup> Therefore, sociological, psychological, and theoretical studies on morale, provide the second resource pool. First, the Special Services Division charged its Research Branch to "collect facts about soldiers' attitudes." Under the auspices of its chief, Samuel Stouffer, the branch compiled more than 300 available reports, many evaluating soldier morale.<sup>30</sup> What is more, two

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<sup>28</sup> In 1988, Roger J. Spiller, Deputy Director of the Strategic Studies Institute at Fort Leavenworth, questioned S.L.A. Marshall's "ratio of fire" finding published in the book *Men Against Fire*. According to Marshall, only 15 to 25 percent of US soldiers fired their rifles during World War II. However, after studying Marshall's field notebooks and interviewing Marshall's aid, Spiller argued that Marshall had no statistical proof to support this conclusion. Nonetheless, Spiller acknowledged that Marshall developed a new and beneficial research method through "the promptness with which recollections of combat were gathered, and from the orientation of Marshall's inquiries – the combat soldier himself." Political scientist Eliot Cohen and Historian John Gooch concurred with that portion of Spiller's assessment. Cohen and Gooch wrote that Marshall's interview method captured "the essence of contemporary warfare in a way not possible by more conventional methods." Consequently, while this monograph does not draw from Marshall's rate of fire statistics, it does utilize Marshall's conclusions as drawn from the techniques lauded by Spiller, Cohen, and Gooch. S.L.A. Marshall, *Men Against Fire: The Problem of Battle Command* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1947), 56; Roger J. Spiller, "S.L.A. Marshall and the Ratio of Fire," *Royal United Service Institute Journal* (Winter 1988): 63-71; Fredric Smoler, "The Secret of the Soldiers Who Didn't Shoot," *American Heritage* 40, no. 2 (March 1989), accessed January 29, 2019, <https://www.americanheritage.com/content/secret-soldiers-who-didnt-shoot>; Eliot A. Cohen and John Gooch, *Military Misfortunes: The Anatomy of Failure in War* (New York: Free Press, 1990), 40.

<sup>29</sup> Gregory A. Daddis, "A Problem of Language: Strategy and the American War in Vietnam" (lecture, US Army School of Advanced Military Studies, Fort Leavenworth, October 22, 2018).

<sup>30</sup> Research Branch published monthly "What the Soldier Thinks" newsletters, issued to regimental commanders and above, and several volumes of survey findings. Special Services Division, "How to Use this Report," in *What the Soldier Thinks* 1 (Washington, DC: War Department, December 1943), i, accessed September 1, 2018, [http://staging.gibsondesign.com/marshall/pdfs/soldier\\_thinks/what-the-soldier-thinks-1.pdf](http://staging.gibsondesign.com/marshall/pdfs/soldier_thinks/what-the-soldier-thinks-1.pdf); Samuel A. Stouffer, Edward A. Suchman, Leland C. DeVinney, Shirley A. Star, and Robin M. Williams, Jr., *The American Soldier: Adjustment During Army Life, Volume I* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949), 9-10; John A. Clausen, "Introduction," *Social Psychology Quarterly* 47, no. 2 (June 1984): 184; Joseph W. Ryan, *Samuel Stouffer and the GI Survey: Sociologists and Soldiers during the Second World War* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2013), 61.



complementary military morale studies provide insight from before and after World War II. Alton Railey published the first survey, *Study of Morale of the U.S. Army*, in 1941, just prior to America's entry into the Second World War. Martin Goldman's 1953 publication, *Morale in the AAF in World War II*, demonstrated the continuity of Railey's pre-war findings.<sup>31</sup> Several other works offer more recent and cross-cultural counterweights to the potential temporal biases of World War II-era studies. Military analyst Anthony Kellett's 1984 book *Combat Motivation: The Behavior of Soldiers in Battle* and Israeli field psychologist Ben Shalit's 1988 work *The Psychology of Conflict and Combat*, among others, inform foundational understandings of military psychology. Further, Ben Shephard's 2001 work, *A War of Nerves*, and William Darryl Henderson's 2003 book, *Cohesion*, offer more recent perspectives.

Military morale policy and program descriptions provide the third and final resource pool. The Special Services Division and its leadership left a wealth of written works that provide justification for the development of programs throughout the war. Most notably, the division published a thirteen-volume history in 1945, thoroughly describing policies and decision making. Alongside this history stands numerous Special Service regulations and manuals.<sup>32</sup> The division's leadership also published articles in academic journals throughout the war, meant to explain and generate support for morale programs from academic communities. Lastly, correspondence between Generals George C. Marshall, Dwight Eisenhower, and subordinate commanders provide insight into how Army leadership intended to enhance morale at the operational level. These numerous Second World War sources stand in stark contrast to the limited consideration of morale in modern joint and Army doctrine, further highlighting the gap in our current planning for morale operations.

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<sup>31</sup> Alton H. Railey, *Study of Morale of the U.S. Army, 1941*, Box 5, Gilbert R. Cook Papers, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library.

<sup>32</sup> These sources range from several editions of *Technical Manual (TM) 21-205, Special Service Officer*, to regulations governing information-education programs, library services, sports and recreation, and music. Each described the specific program and how that program enhanced soldier morale.

Thus, this work offers historical insight by deriving the most prominent morale-producing themes from the three source pools. Specifically, this project identified efforts that most impacted morale by examining where the soldier's voice, sociological, psychological, and theoretical studies on morale, and military morale policy and programs intersected (represented by overlaps graphically depicted in Figure 2). Two criteria emerged that established specific morale efforts as more effective than others: removal from psychological isolation and confirmation of the war's just cause. Consequently, actual movement to more familiar spaces, such as rest camps and passes to non-combat zones, as well as regular communication with loved ones proved the most effective methods to remove soldiers from combat isolation, thereby preserving morale. Similarly, programs that helped soldiers understand why they fought and educated servicemen about the military end state fulfilled the just war criteria and sustained morale. Comparing these themes to World War II's morale efforts provides a program evaluation of the Special Services Division.

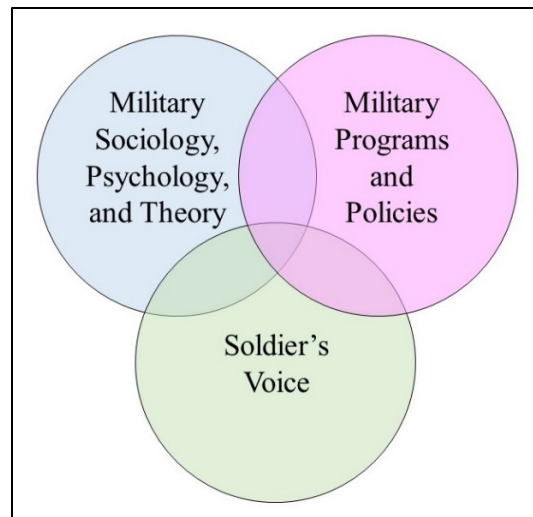


Figure 2. Research Method. This study draws conclusions from the overlapping areas within the three depicted resource pools. Created by author.

In scoping this exploration of morale, the project focused as follows. First, numerous contemporary publications cite cohesion, training, discipline, and leadership as important sources of troop morale. Each of those aspects are either well-defined or enjoy voluminous written

inquiry.<sup>33</sup> In contrast, this study pursued elements of morale not available in current military doctrine. In so doing, it offers additional considerations for Army planners and Adjutant General (AG) Corps members charged with the coordination of morale services. Second, the post-World War II Special Services Division evolved into the modern Army MWR program. This work only considers Special Services Division efforts within the confines of US World War II involvement. Post-war occupation duties presented morale challenges outside the scope of LSCO and entail a separate line of inquiry. Finally, this monograph considered only Army soldiers, to include Army Air Corps personnel. Like the concept of occupation duty, sailors and civilians contributing to the overseas war effort faced considerations separate from large-scale ground combat.

This monograph continues in three major parts. The first section provides a brief overview of two terms: The Special Services Division and morale. A description of the Special Services Division history, structure, and programs provides a platform to effectively evaluate its programs. Since modern capstone military doctrine does not define morale, this section also

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<sup>33</sup> Primary group theory is a potent theme explaining cohesion and morale. Sociologists Edward Shils and Morris Janowitz defined a primary group as one “characterized by intimate face-to-face association and cooperation,” in military terms defined as a squad or section. For more primary group theory sources see Edward A. Shils and Morris Janowitz, “Cohesion and Disintegration in the Wehrmacht in World War II,” *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 12, no. 2 (Summer 1948): 280-315; Ben Shalit, *The Psychology of Conflict and Combat* (New York: Praeger, 1988); Peter J. Schifferle, “Incorporating Enemy Psychological Vulnerability into US Army Heavy Division IPB Doctrine” (Monograph, School of Advanced Military Studies, US Army Command and General Staff College, 1993, accessed January 22, 2019, <http://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/p4013coll3/id/1342/rec/6>). The US Army regularly studies and evaluates leadership and its effects on soldier morale in the form of the Center for Army Leadership Survey of Annual Leadership (CASAL). For the most recent CASAL results, see Ryan P. Riley, Katelyn J. Cavanaugh, Jon J. Fallesen, and Rachell L. Jones, *2015 Center for Army Leadership Annual Survey of Army Leadership (CASAL): Military Leader Findings- Technical Report 2016-01* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: The Center for Army Leadership, 2016), accessed February, 13, 2019, <https://usacac.army.mil/sites/default/files/documents/cal/2015CASALMilitaryLeaderFindingsReport.pdf>. Additional publications that explore leadership’s effect on morale include US Department of the Army, *Field Manual (FM) 6-22, Leader Development* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2015); and US Army, *ADP 6-22, Leadership*. Historian Hew Strachan contributed an article discussing the benefits of training and cohesion on military morale. See “Training, Morale and Modern War,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 41, no. 2 (April 2006): 211-227. For Army doctrine discussing training’s effects on cohesion and morale, see US Department of the Army, *Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) Training* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2018); US Department of the Army, *Army Regulation (AR) 350-1, Army Training and Leader Development* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017); US Department of the Army, *Army Techniques Publication (ATP) 6-22.6, Army Team Building* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2015).

explores previous explanations of morale to create a common understanding and usage. The second section of this work argues that removal from feelings of isolation raised soldier morale in combat, thereby extending operational reach and avoiding culmination. Specifically, temporal removal from the psychological isolation of combat provided mental relief and extended soldiers' endurance within the combat zone. Moreover, mechanisms that connected troops with their loved ones, most notably mail, further removed soldiers from feelings of psychological isolation from family and friends. The third section considers how a just cause sustained morale and provided soldiers the drive to achieve the military end state. The Special Services Division initiated programs that kept soldiers apprised of both the strategic war narrative and current operational disposition. Clarity of purpose motivated the troops to strive for a military end state they easily understood. Ultimately, this case study suggests that high morale requires much more than basic MWR programs. A lack of thought and planning concerning morale leaves the Army at risk to miss an opportunity to maximize its human capacity during LSCO. Thus, the largest military morale effort in American history offers the contemporary Army planner important considerations for future combat operations.

## Section 1: The Special Services Division and Why Morale Matters

The field of morale is a darkling plain, littered with dead clichés, swept by pronunciamientos, and only fitfully lit up by the electrical play of insight.

—Martin Goldman, *Morale in the AAF in World War II*

Before proceeding to the methodological findings, this section introduces two concepts: The Special Services Division and morale. Understanding the Special Services Division's structure provides a baseline for follow-on assessment. Further, it demonstrates that military organizations must plan and resource morale operations more than current doctrine suggests. This section ends by establishing the definition and purpose of morale, synthesized through historical descriptions of the concept. It finds that morale is a state of mind that drives a group to a common goal despite adversity, thereby extending operational reach toward the military end state.

Prior to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, low US soldier morale concerned Army Chief of Staff George C. Marshall. In September 1940, the President instituted conscription and federalized National Guard units. By July 1941, he extended National Guard troops' active duty service for an additional six months. With no declared war, neither active nor National Guard troops understood the purpose for the expansion of the military and morale fell.<sup>34</sup> In response, the US Army established the Morale Division on March 14, 1941. Marshall charged the organization to "assist commanders in all matters of morale, recreation, and welfare" and investigate sources of morale problems. Upon America's entry into the Second World War, the War Department expanded the program and in March 1942, renamed it the Special Services Division.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Ryan, *Samuel Stouffer*, 39; P. S. Madigan, "Military Neuro Psychiatry, Discipline, and Morale," *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* 32, no. 5 (January-February 1942): 495-496.

<sup>35</sup> Howard C. Bronson, "Music in the Army," *Music Educators Journal* 28, no. 6 (May-June 1942): 27; Christopher P. Loss, "Reading Between Enemy Lines: Armed Services Editions and World War II," *The Journal of Military History* 67, no. 3 (July 2003): 822; US Department of the Army, *Technical Manual (TM) 21-205, The Special Services Officer* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1942), 7.

In its wartime form, the Special Services Division boasted a staff structure for Army-wide planning, morale officers at unit level, and Special Service companies. The staff structure consisted of Army Motion Pictures, Welfare and Recreation, Facilities, Information-Education, and Research divisions (depicted in Figure 3).<sup>36</sup> Located at Washington and Lee University, the Special Services School trained its soldiers and officers, as well as civilian employees of the Information-Education Division's Research Branch. While the Research Branch conducted sociological studies throughout the Army, the division assigned trained Special Service officers to each army, corps, and division headquarters. By 1942, each regiment designated a morale officer as an additional duty or staff position. Morale officers maintained libraries, organized athletic, music, and dramatic performance events, operated movie theaters, and coordinated traveling entertainment.<sup>37</sup> Special Service companies assisted these efforts overseas (see Figure 4). By 1943, the Army established forty companies, each authorized 109 soldiers. In addition to conducting the above-described recreational activities, the companies ran rest camps, operated snack bars, and coordinated "mobile entertainment units." One company supported 15,000 servicemembers spread across "four recreational centers" or 45,000 troops in the deployed environment.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> US Army, *TM 21-205* (1942), 10-12.

<sup>37</sup> Stouffer, *Army Life*, 9; James J. Cooke, *American Girls, Beer, and Glenn Miller: GI Morale in World War II* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2012), 30; Lee Kennett, *GI: The American Soldier in World War II* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), 93; Albert Wertheim, *Staging the War: American Drama and World War II* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), xii.

<sup>38</sup> *Special Services Division History*, vol. 1 (Washington, DC: War Department, 1945), 7; vol. 5, 4; vol. 6, 1-5; US Department of Army, *Field Manual (FM) 28-105, The Special Service Company* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1944), 3; Cooke, *GI Morale*, 104.

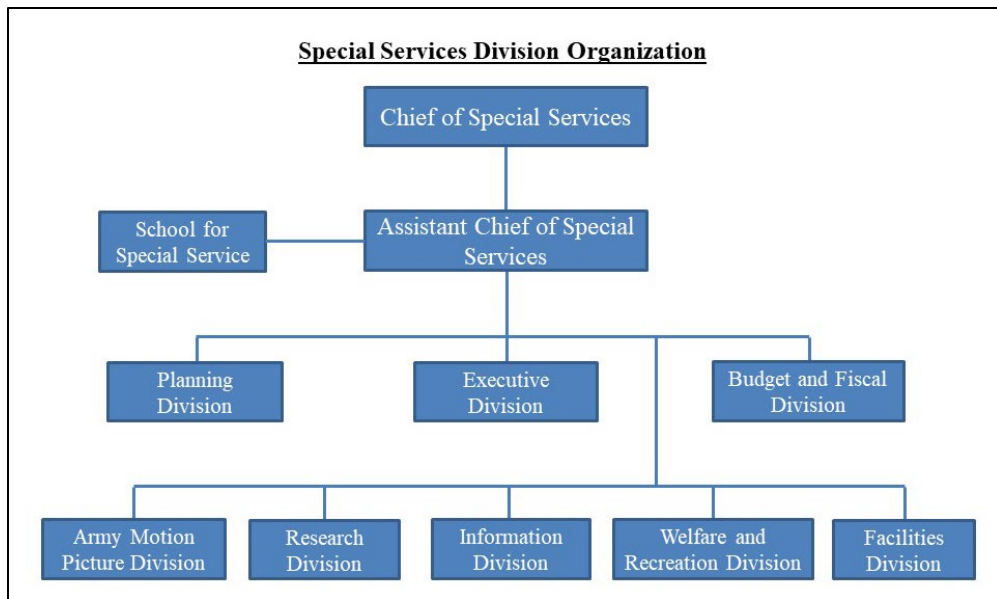


Figure 3. Special Services Division Organization. Created by author, data derived from *Special Services Division History*, Volume 1, 1945.

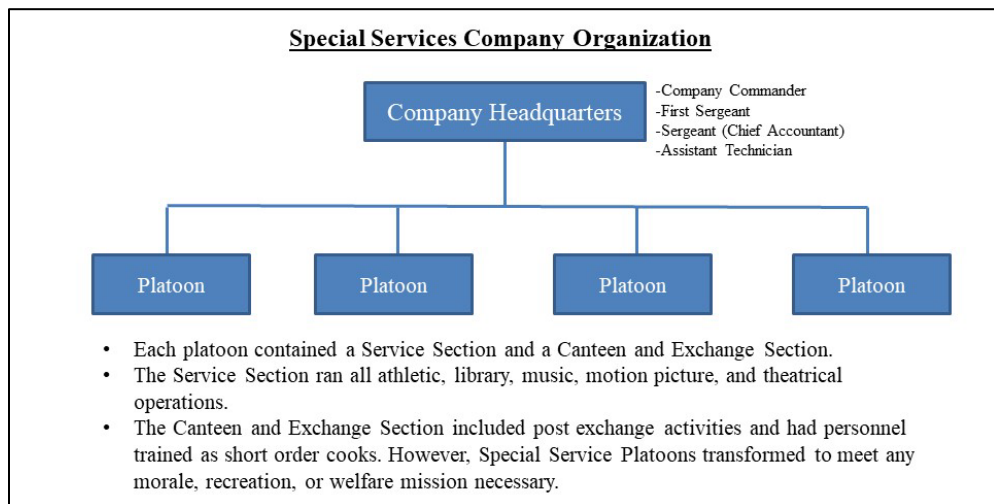


Figure 4. Special Services Company Organization. Created by author, data derived from *Special Services Division History* and James J. Cook, *American Girls, Beer, and Glenn Miller: GI Morale in World War II* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2012), 94.

Understanding the division’s structure emphasizes the effort and planning large-scale morale operations entail. No morale program was possible or effective without the above-described personnel who planned, implemented, and assessed them. Thus, modern morale planners must examine and consider specific force structure to deliver morale programs in LSCO.

Yet, to understand how to operationalize morale mechanisms, the Army must first reflect upon the meaning of morale and nest its morale planning therein. As an intangible cognitive

element, defining morale provides leaders a deeper understanding of what it provides the force. It also explains how morale extends operational reach. Given only limited modern military doctrinal descriptions of morale, the following seeks to establish a working understanding of the term by synthesizing historical and theoretical uses.

Several sources provided published definitions of morale. Alton Railey's pre-World War II and Martin Goldman's post-World War II sociological studies showed near identical thinking. Each described morale as a state of mind providing a willingness to perform a duty in unfavorable conditions.<sup>39</sup> In their post-war works, sociologist Samuel Stouffer and historian S.L.A. Marshall both added that group behavior "toward some common goal" exemplified the term.<sup>40</sup> Two twenty-first century studies, one by former military psychology professor William Henderson and another by the RAND Corporation, agreed that units as a whole demonstrated military morale.<sup>41</sup>

Considering the effects of high morale on military operations is another perspective through which to define the term. Historians, theorists, military leaders, sociologists, and psychologists alike provided insight. Based on personal observation and countless interviews with World War II soldiers, S.L.A. Marshall argued that morale stimulated men "to action" even when they became "fearful in combat."<sup>42</sup> Strategic theorist Edward N. Luttwak agreed. He argued that

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<sup>39</sup> Railey, *Study of Morale*, 12; Martin Goldman, *USAF Historical Study No. 78: Morale in the AAF in World War II* (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: USAF Historical Division, 1953), 1-2.

<sup>40</sup> Stouffer, *Army Life*, 83; Marshall, *Men Against Fire*, 158.

<sup>41</sup> William Darryl Henderson, *Cohesion: The Human Element in Combat- Leadership and Societal Influence in the Armies of the Soviet Union, the United States, North Vietnam, and Israel* (Honolulu: University Press of the Pacific, 2003), 18; Helmus, *Steeling the Mind*, 26. These authors' conclusions not represent lone views in their fields, nor are these the only areas to discuss morale. Psychologist Ben Shalit wrote that "a willingness to fight" proved a commonality amongst the "various definitions of morale." Anthony Kellett also agreed that a key consideration for military morale is "the will to fight." Philosopher and World War II veteran J. Glenn Gray agreed that in units with high morale, "many are of a like mind and determination," while "suppressing...individual desires in the interest of a shared purpose." Pre-World War II psychologist, Robert A. Brotemarkle wrote that morale, as a condition, was met when "the group purpose and goals become the dominant consideration." Shalit, *Psychology of Conflict*, 35; Kellett, *Combat Motivation*, 7; J. Glenn Gray, *The Warriors: Reflections on Men in Battle* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1970), 43; Robert A. Brotemarkle, "Development of Military Morale in a Democracy," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 216 (July 1941): 79.



morale did not provide simple happiness, but rather “the willingness to fight.”<sup>43</sup> General Dwight Eisenhower’s wartime letters to his subordinate, William Lee, demonstrated his ruminations on the outputs of morale. According to Eisenhower, morale was more than “mere cockiness;” it provided “confidence” and “esprit de corps.”<sup>44</sup> Further, RAND and NATO research associated high morale with fewer stress casualties and higher performance.<sup>45</sup> Indeed, polling by the Special Service’s Research Branch concluded that units with higher morale held greater confidence, superior stamina, and experienced fewer casualties than units with lower morale.<sup>46</sup>

Synthesizing the preceding insights offers the following understanding: Morale is a state of mind that causes a group to, under unfavorable and prolonged conditions, willingly and confidently perform a duty and achieve a common goal. As evidenced by this definition, morale psychologically sustains soldiers over time because it helps them overlook the hardships of combat because they are focused on a specific objective. Morale enables soldiers to mentally withstand combat conditions longer, thereby protecting against stress casualties which helps avoid friendly mission culmination for psychological reasons. Therefore, this mental state extends operational reach both spatially and temporally across the area of operations. Further, when soldiers understand their specific objective, morale increases. In turn, because morale is goal oriented, it ties units directly to, and propels them toward, the military end state (see Figure 5 for

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<sup>42</sup> Marshall, *Men Against Fire*, 170.

<sup>43</sup> Edward N. Luttwak, *Strategy: The Logic of War and Peace* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press, 2001), 18.

<sup>44</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower to William M. Lee, August 18, 1943, Box 71, William M. Lee Papers, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene KS.

<sup>45</sup> Helmus, *Steeling the Mind*, 119; NATO, “Annex G,” G-32. Researcher David Rowland added that low morale exacerbated the symptoms of shock and surprise in battle. David Rowland, *The Stress of Battle: Quantifying Human Performance in Combat* (London: TSO, 2006), 208-212.

<sup>46</sup> Samuel A. Stouffer, Arthur A. Lumsdaine, Marion Harper Lumsdaine, Robin M. Williams, Jr., M. Brewster Smith, Irving L. Janis, Shirley A. Star, and Leonard S. Cottrell, Jr., *The American Soldier: Combat and Its Aftermath, Volume II* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949), 15.

a visual depiction of this concept). In other words, and to borrow from the Special Service Division’s terminology, morale is a cognitive “weapon of war.”<sup>47</sup>

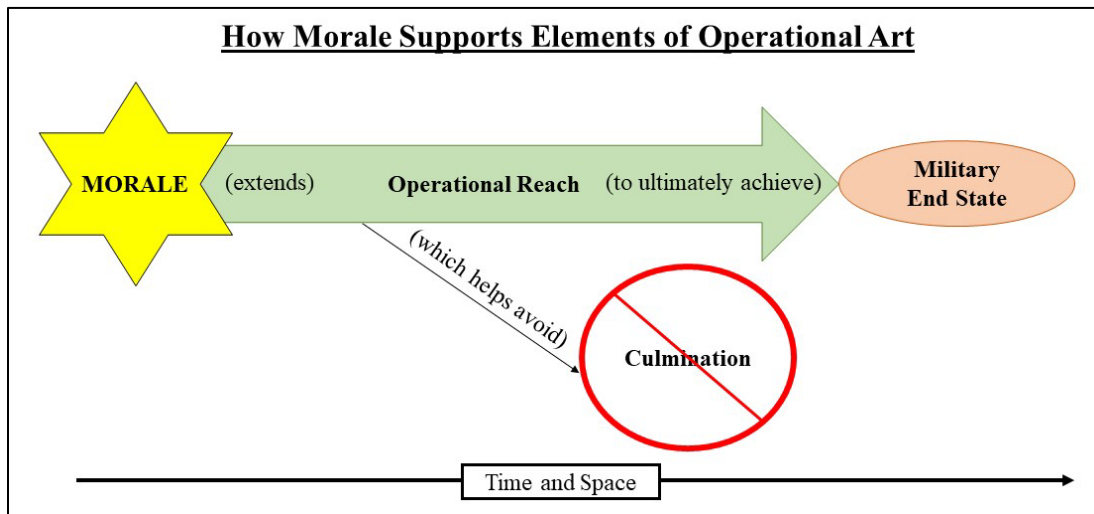


Figure 5. How Morale Supports Elements of Operational Art. Created by author.

Thus, morale’s definition provides a rubric against which to evaluate the Special Services Division. The framework offers structure in several ways. First, the proffered understanding is timeless. It features a synthesis of points from multiple authors and studies that were compatible despite origins in varying fields and periods. This delivers evidence of enduring human characteristics that help to glean insights from World War II morale programs applicable to modern operations. Next, the definition serves as a guide, describing the outcomes of successful morale initiatives. It illuminates the purpose of any morale program, regardless of the era in which the program exists. Finally, by providing a clear but broad end state, it opens the creative space to allow a variety of ways and means to establish and perpetuate morale. In so doing, the following describes the importance of two criteria that promulgate the definition of morale: removal from psychological isolation and validation of a war’s just cause.

<sup>47</sup> US Department of the Army, *Technical Manual (TM) 21-205, The Special Services Officer* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1944), 1.

## Section 2: Return from the Abyss – Removal from Psychological Isolation

If you neglect the human factor, as a leader you will fail.

—S.L.A. Marshall, “Military Leadership”

Newly arrived to Patton’s Third Army in early 1945, replacement Richard Kingsbury spent his first night on the line. Kingsbury described the “loneliness of a deep order” that “gripped” him as he stared out into the darkness. The only light he saw was “the eerie, sporadic lightning flashes produced by cannon firing.” After studying the unfamiliar gloom, Kingsbury determined that the trees were moving. Suddenly, he heard a man with a German accent calling to the American troops, claiming he had a wounded US officer in his possession. Kingsbury wrote that the isolation of that night, in an alien environment, brought him to the “borderline between sanity and nervous breakdown.”<sup>48</sup> Although sitting alone in a foxhole caused physical isolation from his fellow soldiers, combat also left Kingsbury mentally isolated.

Richard Kingsbury experienced what military theorist James Schneider called the “empty battlefield.” As weapons technology improved, military formations spread out in space. Not only were comrades physically farther away, but the enemy often seemed invisible. Schneider wrote, “[i]n isolation and desolation, the soldier faces the yawning abyss of the empty battlefield, threatening to engulf him in the black jaws of moral destruction.”<sup>49</sup> In Army parlance, physical and psychological isolation is a defeat mechanism. While doctrine states that psychological isolation can “breakdown...enemy morale,” it is just as hazardous to friendly forces.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> R. Richard Kingsbury, *The Eighteen-Year-Old Replacement: Facing Combat in Patton’s Third Army* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2008), 51.

<sup>49</sup> James J. Schneider, “The Theory of the Empty Battlefield,” *Royal United Service Institute Journal* (September 1987): 38-43. While this monograph concentrates on the experiences of World War II Army soldiers, several World War II Marines provided comprehensive examples of mental isolation and the empty battlefield theory. See Robert Leckie, *Helmet for My Pillow: From Parris Island to the Pacific* (New York: Bantam Books, 1979); Eugene B. Sledge, *With the Old Breed: At Peleliu and Okinawa* (New York: Presidio Press, 1981).

<sup>50</sup> US Department of the Army, *Army Techniques Publication (ATP) 5-0.1, Army Design Methodology* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2015), 5-4.

Augmenting the empty battlefield theory, soldiers deployed overseas not only existed in a foreign country but also lived in a manner very different from garrison or civilian life. Troops often slept on the ground, consumed inconsistent diets, and performed the most unfamiliar act of all: killing another. Distance from loved ones marked a second cause of mental isolation. Facing the threat of death and injury present in combat, both soldier testimony and academic study proved the troops continuously sought connections with loved ones. British Field Marshal Viscount William Slim called this “the heart sickness of long separation from home.”<sup>51</sup> Not surprisingly, an examination of the three source pools determined that removal from mental isolation improved a soldier’s psychological well-being. More specifically, actual movement to more familiar spaces, such as rest camps or passes to non-combat zones, as well as regular communication with loved ones boosted American troop morale during World War II.

## Rest Camps and Pass Programs

Removal from the combat setting and return to more familiar circumstances provided psychological relief for soldiers, thereby reinvigorating morale. Consider the earlier vignettes depicting the constant threat of injury or death and the relentless strain of the enemy overhead, in front, and sometimes behind.<sup>52</sup> A Research Branch study found that even when the front was quiet, considered the most “favorable” of combat conditions, soldiers still only averaged four hours of sleep in any 24-hour period, the result of normalized alertness, fear, or both.<sup>53</sup> Soldiers’ letters and memoirs reveal that even small movements away from the front-lines improved morale by reducing the stress of combat.<sup>54</sup> The lure of an actual bed and hot food filled the

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<sup>51</sup> Slim, *Defeat into Victory*, 181.

<sup>52</sup> Charles McMoran Wilson noted in his 1945 study of war’s psychological effects that in times “of peace men meet death but once or twice in a lifetime.” In contrast, wartime causes men to “meet death” almost “daily and in every shape.” Wilson, *Anatomy of Courage*, 155.

<sup>53</sup> Stouffer, *Combat and Its Aftermath*, 79.

<sup>54</sup> Richard Kingsbury remembered enjoying six hours of sleep one night in a hay loft. The lure of an actual bed and hot food filled the thoughts of many soldiers. Kingsbury, *Eighteen-Year-Old Replacement*, 63.

thoughts of many soldiers.<sup>55</sup> Other sources described the delight seemingly mundane tasks not possible in combat brought: shaving, the smell of soap while washing clothes, the feel of a chair pulled-up to an actual table, showering under warm water, receiving new uniforms, and the taste of a donut and hot coffee onboard a ship ferrying men away from combat.<sup>56</sup> In his 1945 study of the psychological effects of war, Charles McMoran Wilson summarized why these men felt relief away from the threat of battle: “It is not comfort we miss out there...it is the mind that gets out of gear.”<sup>57</sup> Given that small steps can psychologically reinvigorate the soldier, the Special Services Division provided programs to afford that continuity.

First, Special Services Division personnel expanded formal rest camps. Even the most austere rest camps proved valuable for exhausted soldiers. Despite still being in range of enemy artillery, the beachhead rest camp at Anzio got men further away from the enemy infantryman’s weapon. One soldier told Ernie Pyle, “There’s a hell of a lot of difference between getting shells spasmodically at long range and being right up under Jerry’s nose where he’s aiming at you personally.”<sup>58</sup> Martin Goldman found commanders acknowledged that “short spells of relief form

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<sup>55</sup> Sergeant Walter Bernstein noted that he dreamed “all the time of warm beds with clean sheets and steak the size of your arm.” Similarly, Sergeant James Dawson Cook wrote home from North Africa, “Man, I’d give a dollar for one of Mom’s hot biscuits and a glass of cold sweet milk.” Other soldiers longed for sleep so strongly that even a hospital bed proved a relief for some. Both Kingsbury and fellow infantryman Myron Berkheisen recounted how the prospect of rest in a hospital bed only brought them relief despite their injuries. Association of the United States Army (AUSA), *Yank: The Story of World War II as Written by the Soldiers* (Washington, DC: Brassey’s, Inc., 1984), 5; Curtiss, *Letters Home*, 217; Kingsbury, *Eighteen-Year-Old Replacement*, 127-128; Howard H. Peckham and Shirley A. Snyder, eds., *Letters from Fighting Hoosiers* (Bloomington: Indiana War History Commission, 1948), 113.

<sup>56</sup> Morton Eustis and David E. Finley, *War Letters of Morton Eustis to his Mother: February 6, 1941 to August 10, 1944* (New York: The Spiral Press, 1945), 228-229; Donald R. Burgett, *Beyond the Rhine: A Screaming Eagle in Germany* (New York: Dell Publishing, 2001), 10; Fry, *Combat Soldier*, 117; Hoffman, interview, 269; Ernie Pyle, *Brave Men* (New York: Henry Hold and Company, 1944), 1-2.

<sup>57</sup> Wilson, *Anatomy of Courage*, 45.

<sup>58</sup> Pyle, *Brave Men*, 168. At Anzio, the Army established a semi-permanent rest camp at Caserta, five miles from the beach head. See Ellis, *Sharp End of War*, 297.

the...wearing routine of overseas military life” improved morale.<sup>59</sup> Therefore, the Special Services Division increased rest camps across overseas locations.

By 1944, the Special Services Division provided more permanent rest areas in nearly all combat zones. Rest camps appeared in Paris, Brussels, Rome, the Riviera, Britain, Cannes and Capri, and New Zealand. In India, the military built rest camps at Darjeeling, Shillong, and Calcutta, and at Camp Schiel, Tsuyang, and Kunming in China.<sup>60</sup> Following his tour on Saipan, Chaplain Murdock fondly remembered a week he spent at the Kilauea Rest Camp on Hawaii and Staff Sergeant Edward Wiles described the Camp Mabuhay rest area in the Philippines.<sup>61</sup> Once established, these camps offered victory mail (v-mail) forms, live entertainment, and movies.<sup>62</sup> Soldiers received changes of clothes and enjoyed showers and beds with clean linen. Other amenities included athletics, swimming pools, games, and reading rooms. Sightseeing tours were also popular at camps away from active combat zones.<sup>63</sup> Soldiers remembered the psychological rejuvenation provided by even short rest camp stays. James Fry argued these places “saved the sanity” of soldiers “in desperate need of that type of mental therapy.”<sup>64</sup> A change of scenery proved powerful for soldiers enduring long tours in the combat zone.

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<sup>59</sup> Goldman, *Morale in the AAF*, 62.

<sup>60</sup> Cooke, *GI Morale*, 129; Goldman, *Morale in the AAF*, 62.

<sup>61</sup> Murdock, “Herman’s Memories,” 31; Peckham, *Fighting Hoosiers*, 319-320.

<sup>62</sup> To save limited cargo space during World War II, the v-mail process microfilmed letters written on special v-mail forms for transport overseas. Once the microfilm reached its overseas location, the letter was enlarged and delivered to the recipient using normal postal delivery means. Whereas 150,000 one-page letters consumed thirty-seven mail bags, microfilming these same letters reduced them to the space of one mail bag. Smithsonian National Postal Museum, “V-Mail,” accessed December 13, 2018, <https://postalmuseum.si.edu/exhibits/past/the-art-of-cards-and-letters/mail-call/v-mail.html>.

<sup>63</sup> Francis C. Steckel, “Morale Problems in Combat: American Soldiers in Europe in World War II,” *Army History* 31 (Summer 1994): 5.

<sup>64</sup> Fry, *Combat Soldier*, 250. Wiles added that “next to home,” these rest camps were “about as nice a place as I could ask for.” Peckham, *Fighting Hoosiers*, 320.

Next, pass and excursion programs further released men from the mental strain of combat conditions and reinvigorated morale. The Army's leadership directly supported in-country excursions.<sup>65</sup> While reviewing Research Branch poll results, General Marshall discovered that when there was a lull in combat, soldiers wished to see the country in which they fought. Marshall relayed this point to Eisenhower, directing him to pursue additional in-country tour programs.<sup>66</sup> Concurring with Marshall's assessment, Eisenhower directed the Special Services to increase pass opportunities by coordinating self-organized excursions.<sup>67</sup>

The Special Services' chief, Brigadier General Frederick Osborn, realized that the Special Services was not large enough to expand the pass program on its own.<sup>68</sup> Therefore, he increased infrastructure by partnering with the Red Cross and the newly created United Service Organizations (USO).<sup>69</sup> The USO and Red Cross established a network of clubs and hotels for servicemembers. Following his combat experience in Normandy, Raymond Hoffman enjoyed the "leave hotels" coordinated across England and Scotland, calling this the "nicest thing that was ever done" for the troops.<sup>70</sup> While on a pass to Rome and Florence, James Fry wrote that he "enjoyed complete freedom from...worry."<sup>71</sup> According to these soldiers, short periods of rest reinvigorated their capability to sustain what became multi-year deployments.

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<sup>65</sup> It is also important to note that African and European cities welcomed US servicemember tourism. Once Allied forces consolidated gains in Africa and Europe, cities like "Cairo, Alexandria, Tripoli, Benghazi, Bombay, Delhi, Rome, Naples, and Brussels" enjoyed the economic advantage and "bars and cafes sprang up to cater" to the troops. Ellis, *Sharp End of War*, 303.

<sup>66</sup> George C. Marshall to Dwight D. Eisenhower, October 19, 1944, Box 80, George C. Marshall Papers, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, KS.

<sup>67</sup> John C.H. Lee to Dwight D. Eisenhower, August 25, 1945, Box 71, John C.H. Lee Papers, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS.

<sup>68</sup> Osborn, "Recreation, Welfare, and Morale," 55.

<sup>69</sup> In fact, one unit fighting in Italy, unable to send any of its men on pass, sent its Special Services officer to Naples to buy the men souvenirs. Pyle, *Brave Men*, 172.

<sup>70</sup> Hoffman, interview, 308.

When considering the criteria of removal from mental isolation overlaid upon the definition of morale, the Special Service's rest camp and pass programs provide three timeless insights. First, it was not the rest camp content that mattered but that soldiers temporarily escaped the psychological strain of battle. A comparison of popular American leisure activities between the 1940s and today would likely result in both similarities and differences, the result of changing social trends and new technology. But that comparison is irrelevant. The enduring point is that soldiers welcomed the opportunity to leave the heat, cold, mud, pain, strain, or danger of combat, attributes that remain present in the physical environment of contemporary battle. Short stints away from the front-line sustained morale, thereby improving and extending subsequent combat performance, directly observable by Army leaders.<sup>72</sup>

Next, despite the positive soldier commentary concerning rest, pass, and sightseeing programs, establishment timelines suggest that these efforts were too little and too late. Given full-fledged programs widely appeared only in 1944, a limited number of soldiers experienced rest opportunities. Fry observed that "no great number [of soldiers in his unit] were able to take advantage of this relaxation."<sup>73</sup> As a result, those soldiers longest in combat or showing symptoms of physical or psychological breakdown received rest camp and pass priority.<sup>74</sup> This demonstrates a missed opportunity. Early rest program implementation inserts greater combat power by allowing soldiers to restore cognitive capabilities sooner. What is more, early

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<sup>71</sup> Fry, *Combat Soldier*, 118. Pass opportunities occurred in North Africa as well. For instance, Morton Eustis visited Cairo and Franklyn Johnson visited the French Foreign Legion's home at Sidi-bel-Abbis. Eustis, *War Letters*, 67; Franklyn A. Johnson, *One More Hill* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1949), 17.

<sup>72</sup> In addition to Generals Marshall and Eisenhower's acknowledgment of the value of rest and pass programs, Field-Marshal Slim wrote about the importance of rest opportunities. Fighting in Burma and India, Slim used the annual monsoon season to "rebuild morale." He specifically described the importance of improving the state of local towns and cities for use as rest locations for his weary troops. Slim, *Defeat into Victory*, 161-162.

<sup>73</sup> Fry, *Combat Soldier*, 229.

<sup>74</sup> Steckel, "Morale Problems," 5.



implementation allows the morale enterprise to adjust and become more effective as combat operations proceed, enabling morale-producing methods to evolve across time and space.

Finally, maximizing the benefits of rest camps takes considerable planning and resourcing. Relatively few troops enjoyed rest camps because it was also difficult to remove soldiers from the front lines given only limited personnel. According to historian John Ellis, a soldier was lucky if he received a pass opportunity “more than once every 6 to 8 months.”<sup>75</sup> To fully leverage the benefits of rest opportunities, the Army must sustain replacement shelves. Moreover, rest camp locations require consideration. While some rest camps were easily accessible, others were not. For example, the closest rest camp to Iwo Jima was at Caserta, 3,500 miles away.<sup>76</sup> This further limited the number of soldiers who received rest opportunities.

## Connecting with Home

While rest camps and passes removed soldiers from the unfamiliar front-line setting, those efforts did not remedy the sense of isolation from hometown America. Upon the United States’ entry into World War II, psychologists warned military planners that feelings of removal from the familiar could increase morale problems.<sup>77</sup> Therefore, the Special Services Division attempted to provide a solution through leisure activities. It distributed book and magazine kits and traveling libraries, athletic equipment, musical instruments, record players, and musical record “Hit Kits of Popular Songs.”<sup>78</sup> It believed these programs reduced the soldier’s “sense of

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<sup>75</sup> Ellis, *Sharp End of War*, 296.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 298.

<sup>77</sup> Kennett, *GI*, 93; National Research Council, *Psychology for the Fighting Man: What You Should Know About Yourself and Others* (New York: Penguin Books, 1943), 343.

<sup>78</sup> John Jamieson, “Books and the Soldier,” *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 9, no. 3 (Autumn 1945): 322; William H. Quarterman, “A Program of Reading in War and Peace,” *ALA Bulletin* 40, no. 8 (September 1, 1946): 274; *Army-Navy Hit Kit of Popular Songs, “U” Issue* (Washington, DC: War Department, 1945) – This resource is located in the author’s private collection.

isolation from home” by providing familiar activities in an otherwise unfamiliar setting.<sup>79</sup> Author Paul Fussell fondly recounted the positive reception of the Armed Service Edition books issued by the division.<sup>80</sup> Infantryman Franklyn Johnson described how magazines he received passed through many hands, reducing the magazines “to tatters.”<sup>81</sup> In North Africa, Special Service officers bought all the radios and musical instruments for sale around Oran for troop use.<sup>82</sup> The Fifth Army Special Services officer showed movies daily at the Anzio beachhead.<sup>83</sup> Officer Morton Eustis spent two thirds of a letter to his mother describing a show headlined by Josephine Baker.<sup>84</sup> The Special Services Division designed these efforts to return a sense of normalcy to the combat soldier and help him adjust to life in an unfamiliar environment.<sup>85</sup>

While these programs were popular, analysis of available sources demonstrated that the ability to connect with loved ones made greater impacts on soldier morale. Although still in garrison, a series of letters from soldier Kevin McCann demonstrates this point. After a visit from his wife, Kevin wrote her the same afternoon. Kevin scribed he was eager to hear about her return trip home in a letter he expected to receive from her the next day. When the anticipated letter did not arrive, McCann wrote, “Didn’t get a letter from you tonight. Suppose it missed the afternoon mail yesterday.” Later that week Kevin explained he felt “down and depressed” because he knew hardly anyone there.<sup>86</sup> McCann demonstrated that being in an unfamiliar place was hard and

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<sup>79</sup> *Special Services Division History*, vol. 8 (Washington, DC: War Department, 1945), 1.

<sup>80</sup> These books were so revered, a unit officer planned and guarded their distribution, trading, and storage. Paul Fussell, *Wartime: Understanding Behavior in the Second World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 240.

<sup>81</sup> Johnson, *One More Hill*, 115.

<sup>82</sup> Ernie Pyle, *Here is Your War* (New York: Henry Hold and Company, 1943), 36.

<sup>83</sup> Pyle, *Brave Men*, 167.

<sup>84</sup> Eustis, *War Letters*, 101-102.

<sup>85</sup> Osborn, “Recreation, Welfare, and Morale,” 53.

became worse when he felt isolated from his wife through lack of communication. Having witnessed countless such scenarios, Ernie Pyle concluded that the soldier's first need was mail.<sup>87</sup>

The power of communication with loved ones was not new or singular to the US Army during World War II. Nineteenth century development of the steam locomotive and rail networks cemented the link between soldier and home.<sup>88</sup> Messages transmitted at rates previously unrealized. The introduction of the telegraph and then the telephone enhanced the soldier's ability to communicate with loved ones, although often at high monetary cost. During the Great War, the German government viewed postal service as a morale boost for the troops. It transported mail to and from the front for free, eventually moving 500,000 letters and packages each day.<sup>89</sup> Attesting to the program's success, the German government emphasized the importance of mail for morale during World War II. In the harsh conditions of the eastern front, and amidst the logistical dilemmas that lay therein, the German army still prioritized postal delivery. Historian David Stahel pointed out that mail was Germany's "most popular method of raising morale" in the bloody and harsh conditions of the eastern front. Nonetheless, the dire logistical problems in Germany's eastern theater, left many units without mail for weeks. Consequently, those units experienced "serious implications for the morale of the men."<sup>90</sup> Its ability to transcend time and culture makes communication with loved ones a powerful source of morale.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Kevin McCann to Ruth McCann, June 29, 1942 and June 30, 1942, "Letters, Kevin to Ruth, June 29- July 3, 1942," Box 5, Kevin McCann Papers.

<sup>87</sup> Pyle, *Here is Your War*, 35.

<sup>88</sup> James J. Schneider, "Vulcan's Anvil: The American Civil War and the Foundations of Operational Art" (School of Advanced Military Studies Theoretical Paper No. Four, US Army Command and General Staff College, 1992), 34.

<sup>89</sup> Holger H. Herwig, *The Marne, 1914: The Opening of World War I and the Battle that Changed the World* (New York: Random House, 2009), 101-102.

<sup>90</sup> David Stahel, *The Battle for Moscow* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 198.

<sup>91</sup> John Baynes extended mail's cross-cultural thread of continuity to his study of the Scottish Second Rifles in World War I. According to Baynes, for the Scottish soldiers in the trenches, mail proved an important source of morale as well. Baynes, *Morale*, 101.

Confirming the importance of connection with loved ones, sociologists identified communication with home as the most frequent soldier leisure activity and soldier memoirs mentioned it numerous times. The Research Branch discovered that letter writing was the most common soldier off-duty action.<sup>92</sup> In response, on average American soldiers received fourteen pieces of mail weekly.<sup>93</sup> In his post-war survey, Martin Goldman concluded that “mail was incredibly important for morale” because the thoughts of American servicemembers “turned first and foremost toward home.”<sup>94</sup> Soldier accounts support these conclusions. Both Franklyn Johnson and Army Air Corps Staff Sergeant John Ely confirmed that mail call caused morale to skyrocket.<sup>95</sup> In one note home, Richard Kingsbury told his girlfriend that his morale depended on her letters.<sup>96</sup> Moreover, mail was so important to soldiers that they knew exactly how long it took letters to travel to and from the front lines.<sup>97</sup>

In contrast, delays in mail delivery decreased morale. It is not surprising that frustration regarding mail was highest in the early years of the war. In 1942 and 1943, the postal infrastructure was still immature and competed for cargo space with ordnance, food, and other

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<sup>92</sup> The first issue of the Research’s Branch *What the Soldier Thinks* report addressed the concerns specific to the married soldier. In response to the hardship of separation, the survey determined, “Overseas, an important factor is the mail service.” In that same edition, researchers polled soldiers in New Guinea to determine what they did in their free time the day prior. 75 percent of soldiers said they wrote letters home. In its quarterly reports compilation, “The Off-Duty Life of Soldiers, writing letters was the highest rated off-duty activity for men stationed in the United States and overseas. Special Services Division, “The Married Soldier” and “Leisure-Time Activities in New Guinea,” in *What the Soldier Thinks* 1, 11, 15. Special Services Division, “The Off-Duty Life of the Soldier,” in *What the Soldier Thinks: Quarterly Report, with Charts, of Research Studies Indicating the Attitudes, Prejudices and Desires of American Troops* (Washington, DC: War Department, 1943), 67, accessed December 15, 2018, [http://staging.gibsondesign.com/marshall/library/publications\\_soldier\\_thinks.html](http://staging.gibsondesign.com/marshall/library/publications_soldier_thinks.html).

<sup>93</sup> Kennett, *GI*, 73.

<sup>94</sup> Goldman, *Morale in the AAF*, 56.

<sup>95</sup> Johnson, *One More Hill*, 115; Peckham, *Fighting Hoosiers*, 76.

<sup>96</sup> Kingsbury, *Eighteen-Year-Old Replacement*, 107.

<sup>97</sup> First Lieutenant Frank Woltman noted that V-mail letters moved fastest from the front to the states, faster than regular mail. However, incoming V-mail moved slower than regular mail to the front. In either case, mail could travel to or from the states in fifteen days. Peckham, *Fighting Hoosiers*, 51.

combat-related supplies. What is more, when military operations stopped mail delivery, sociological surveys found morale sagged in response.<sup>98</sup> Theodore Draper explained that “the worst part about going into combat” was that mail often stopped. He wrote, “Men wonder what they will miss in their letters.”<sup>99</sup> Amidst the hardship of combat, it was often the severing of soldiers from their more human ties with home that proved most difficult.

In addition to the basic desire to remain connected with family, regular communication raised morale by reducing concern for conditions at home. This allowed soldiers to focus on their immediate military tasks. Research Branch polls found that more than half of soldiers “worried about” loved ones in the states.<sup>100</sup> Even General Omar Bradley admitted preoccupation by thoughts of home. On June 8, 1944, his daughter was married in the United States. Bradley, unable to attend as he traversed Omaha Beach, shared the uncertainties of any father whose child experienced a life-changing event.<sup>101</sup> Twenty-first century researchers Todd Helmus and Russell Glenn explained that “non-military-related stressors” added to operational pressure, thereby decreasing morale.<sup>102</sup> Lee Kennett added that soldiers felt powerless to positively affect family crises while overseas.<sup>103</sup> While it may appear that the ability to communicate with loved ones caused more worry than benefit, wartime surveys found that mail provided more advantages than disadvantages.<sup>104</sup> Whereas a letter with bad news impacted only one soldier, the loss of morale in

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<sup>98</sup> Goldman, *Morale in the AAF*, 56-57.

<sup>99</sup> Draper, *Battle of Germany*, 195-196.

<sup>100</sup> Stouffer, *Combat and its Aftermath*, 86. S.L.A. Marshall explained that morale dropped when a soldier believed something was wrong at home. S.L.A. Marshall, “Military Leadership” (lecture, University of St. Andrews, Oxford, November 15, 1945), 16.

<sup>101</sup> Omar N. Bradley and Clay Blair, *A General's Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), 257.

<sup>102</sup> Helmus, *Steeling the Mind*, 24.

<sup>103</sup> Kennett, *GI*, 73.

<sup>104</sup> Goldman, *Morale in the AAF*, 56.

times of limited mail delivery was far greater because it impacted an entire unit. Conversely, and not surprisingly, the receipt of mail caused heightened morale.<sup>105</sup>

World War II soldiers often described mail communication because it was the cheapest and most consistent means. However, servicemembers also sought telephonic and telegram communication. Camps in the United States and England provided telephones to soldiers in training and during rest periods. Because of the popularity of phone banks, camps increased the number of phone circuits as resources became available. Furthermore, while on maneuvers in the US countryside, leaders caught soldiers using the in-home phones of locals, such was the desire to remain in contact with loved ones.<sup>106</sup> Morton Eustis noted that after arriving in North Africa in 1942, he combed the American base for telephone lines to make a “frightfully expensive” Christmas Eve call home. When he could not find any, he sent a cable instead.<sup>107</sup>

Therefore, it is not so much the means as it is the importance of communication that should give modern planners pause. Again considering morale’s purpose and Special Service Division efforts, two continuities emerge relevant for contemporary planners. First, facilitating soldier communication with home is important. Negating feelings of isolation from family and friends provided soldiers mission focus, therefore raising morale. However, it also demonstrated that, dependent on the context in which LSCO occurs, morale communications resources rightly received lower shipment priority to combat equipment, such as ordnance, weapons, and vehicles. While equipment prioritization is necessary, planners must consider ways to balance the delivery of communication mechanisms as early as possible and in greater number to maximize its morale producing benefits. Furthermore, while mail was and remains separate from the Special Services

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<sup>105</sup> A soldier’s ability to communicate with loved ones allowed him to allay family member worries. Morton Eustis used his letters to reassure his mother and sister. Eustis noted, “this whole show will be a much greater strain on you at home than it will be on those of us who...take part in it.” The ability to decrease the fears of loved ones further reduced the stress a soldier felt from isolation from his loved ones, thereby reestablishing focus toward the combat that lay before him. Eustis, *War Letters*, 198, 204, 233.

<sup>106</sup> Kennett, *GI*, 72.

<sup>107</sup> Eustis, *War Letters*, 62.

Division and modern Army MWR, there are other means of personal communication that commanders and MWR staffs can plan for, including phones and videoconferencing.

However, widespread use of communication mechanisms introduces risk in the form of operational security, the second morale planning continuity. During World War II, the Army spent time and resources censoring soldier letters. Leaders enforced strict rules regarding when servicemembers could describe past combat operations in homebound mail to avoid the interception of still-relevant mission details by the enemy. The risk of soldiers purposely or inadvertently divulging sensitive information to loved ones or the enemy remains equally, if not more, valid today. While World War II soldiers could only divulge sensitive material via letter, telephone, or telegraph, contemporary troops have all those methods as well as smart phones, computers, and the Internet. Nonetheless, given the importance of soldier communication with home, planners must consider how to maximize communication opportunities while mitigating risk and maintaining operational security.

Communication with home connected soldiers to their family and friends, but it also foreshadowed a deeper meaning. Conversation with loved ones formed the basis of a dialogue with society, important in signaling the nation's support for war and the efforts of its soldiers. The next section explores how the social validation of just war builds morale and how the Special Services Division augmented the nation's support.

### Section 3: “Why We Fight” – The Dialogue between Soldier and Society

Anyone will say that the great basic factor in the creation of military morale is devotion to a cause.

—Major General James Ulio, “Military Morale”

Well-known cartoonist Bill Mauldin served as a World War II infantryman and recounted a story of personal connection to the American people. While traveling through Pennsylvania on pre-deployment maneuvers, a woman and her children approached Mauldin and his fellow soldiers at a rest stop. She handed them a basket containing a pot of coffee, paper cups, “and a sack of cookies, doughnuts, and sandwiches.” As the troop train pulled away, the woman told them she needed neither the pot nor the basket back. In response, the family’s generosity overwhelmed Mauldin and he noted, “that was the first time I enjoyed the rather special feeling a soldier is supposed to get about the people he is presumably in uniform for.”<sup>108</sup> It is this special feeling that bound soldier to society, engendering the state of mind to willingly and confidently sacrifice one’s self to safeguard a people and their way of life.<sup>109</sup> Moreover, it was civil recognition that validated soldiers fought for a worthy cause.

Civilian recognition bound the military to society. Men willingly faced hardship and battle because they believed their cause was worthwhile and their actions would create a more peaceful world. Hometown affirmations not only created a dialogue that removed soldiers from combat isolation, but they also confirmed that soldiers risked themselves for a righteous reason. Just war theorist David Fisher explained that society shapes an ethical military through “support

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<sup>108</sup> Bill Mauldin, *The Brass Ring: A Sort of Memoir* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1971), 118.

<sup>109</sup> S.L.A. Marshall came to a similar conclusion when he wondered what caused men to risk themselves in war. He determined, “above and beyond any symbol...are all of the ideas and ideals which press upon men, causing them to accept a discipline and to hold the line, even though death may be at hand...Men must feel themselves a part of something greater than themselves if a nation is to achieve a high destiny.” Marshall, *Men Against Fire*, 161, 167.



and guidance.”<sup>110</sup> Therefore, reflected in the ethical conscience of the American people, *jus ad bellum* – a just cause for war – provided the moral element that fed World War II morale.<sup>111</sup> This final section argues that societal approval of World War II’s righteousness and the provision of information regarding progress toward the war’s military end state sustained US troop morale.

## Initiating the Dialogue: Just Cause

Soldiers most often sought dialogue with society through the press. Ernie Pyle noticed that servicemembers consistently asked him what “the folks at home” thought about the war effort.<sup>112</sup> The troops sacrificed in combat and they expected the American public to provide recognition of just service through positive feedback in the media.<sup>113</sup> Often, articles captured the US societal response soldiers desired. However, some articles (or lack thereof) decreased soldier morale.<sup>114</sup> Stewart Hartfelter described an attempt to help US newspapers acknowledge his unit’s efforts. Hartfelter believed news articles portrayed the Philippine landing as a quick win, which sold short the ferocity of both the Japanese and American troops. He wrote to US newspapers,

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<sup>110</sup> David Fisher, *Morality and War: Can War be Just in the Twenty-First Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 258.

<sup>111</sup> Soldiers were driven by several specific *jus ad bellum* conditions. First, “possessing a just cause” and “right intention” came in the form of fighting the Axis aggression against the United States’ allies. Moreover, US involvement in World War II was defensive in nature, a result of Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor and Germany’s declaration of war against the United States. Thus, America attempted to remain out of the war, making its eventual participation the “last resort,” a third condition of *jus ad bellum*. These conditions motivated US soldiers to fight, providing a framework on which all other soldier morale grew. What is more, the following section demonstrates that soldiers strove for a peaceful world order. Indirectly, this paved the way for “*jus post bellum*,” justice after war. James Fieser, “Just War Theory,” *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, accessed December 15, 2018, <https://www.iep.utm.edu/justwar/>.

<sup>112</sup> Pyle, *Here is Your War*, 48.

<sup>113</sup> Omar Bradley observed that his men appeared to “fight better” when “Pyle was around.” Ernie Pyle was known for his stories of hometown heroes, published frequently in US newspapers. What is more, researcher Anthony Kellett pointed out that as many as 300 “daily newspapers” and 10,000 “weeklies” ran Pyle’s articles. Thus, he had an extremely high readership. Fussell, *Wartime*, 155-156; Kellett, *Combat Motivation*, 187-188.

<sup>114</sup> Kellett also argued, “Just as public recognition (or lack of recognition) of the soldier’s efforts and sacrifices can bolster (or undermine) his morale, so his will to continue fighting can be eroded by his sense of war-weariness or of flagging support at home.” Kellett, *Combat Motivation*, 177.

attempting to correct the reporting deficiency.<sup>115</sup> Martin Goldman concluded that when praise was forthcoming, morale improved, while morale “did less well” when “accolades were few or delayed.”<sup>116</sup> Instances of negative public feedback proved demoralizing. Pyle described an occasion in which the press suggested that the First Infantry Division did not fight well in its early North African battles. Pyle remembered that the division’s soldiers were “wrathful and bitter” of the criticism.<sup>117</sup> Servicemembers not only desired this metaphorical dialogue with US society; hometown recognition directly affected soldier morale.

However, press acknowledgement was not just a symbolic pat on the back for a job well done, as J.F.C. Fuller suggested. Fuller wrote, “No healthy man is willing to die or to live unrecognized. It is by stimulating his vanity that we increase his credulity.”<sup>118</sup> While media recognition may have stirred a few soldiers to greater heights, it provided longer lasting morale in the form of civil support. Perhaps the most powerful fount of morale depended on what society deemed moral. Positive feedback recognized that soldiers sacrificed themselves for a just cause. While morality depends on socialization, so too does morale.<sup>119</sup> Psychologist Ben Shalit argued that before engaging in conflict, potential combatants ask themselves a series of questions he termed “the process of appraisal”: “What is it all about?” “Does this [conflict] concern me?” and “Can I do something about it?”<sup>120</sup> Historian Peter Paret noted that a nation’s attitude influences

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<sup>115</sup> Peckham, *Fighting Hoosiers*, 307-308.

<sup>116</sup> Goldman, *Morale in the AAF*, 49. For example, Colonel James Fry recounted how disappointed his unit was when it received no press publicity following harsh fighting around the Italian Arno River. Fry, *Combat Soldier*, 166.

<sup>117</sup> Pyle, *Here is Your War*, 260.

<sup>118</sup> J.F.C. Fuller, *The Foundations of the Science of War* (London: Hutchinson & Co., LTD., 1926), 133.

<sup>119</sup> Gray, *The Warriors*, 39.

<sup>120</sup> Shalit, *Psychology of Conflict*, 6.

how soldiers view “the character of a certain war.”<sup>121</sup> In other words, society provides soldiers the answers to Shalit’s “process of appraisal.” World War II demonstrated that the nation’s reaction to the war and its warriors helped complete the American soldier’s war appraisal.

The ideology undergirding US entry into World War II was relatively more apparent than during the Great War. Despite US attempts to avoid war, Japan attacked the United States, only then rendering war necessary to ensure no additional violence against the American homeland. Further, Germany declared war on the United States, making combat in Europe a last resort as well.<sup>122</sup> Historian John Ellis argued that the American people also understood the ideological reasons for war, most notably “the forces of democracy ranged against the evils of fascism.”<sup>123</sup> Studies showed that soldiers better understood the issues causing war during World War II than during World War I.<sup>124</sup>

Nonetheless, neither loved ones nor the press could fully elucidate the reasons for certain wartime actions to all segments of the population. Even after Pearl Harbor and the United States’ entry into the war, many Americans did not understand why they should “risk their lives” in Tunisia, New Guinea, or Italy to defeat Hitler.<sup>125</sup> Similarly, Martin Goldman found that more inactive theaters made it difficult for the soldiers to “see how their drab duties had anything to do” with the war effort.<sup>126</sup> Just war theorists Michael Walzer explained that there is no automatic hatred toward the enemy during war. Walzer wrote, “Armed, he is an enemy; but he isn’t my enemy in any specific sense; the war itself isn’t a relation between persons but between political

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<sup>121</sup> Peter Paret, *The Cognitive Challenge of War: Prussia 1806* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 2.

<sup>122</sup> The author acknowledges that this statement is open to other interpretations. Nonetheless, this was a major theme incumbent to America’s entry into the Second World War.

<sup>123</sup> Ellis, *Sharp End of War*, 315.

<sup>124</sup> Kellett, *Combat Motivation*, 171.

<sup>125</sup> Ben Shephard, *A War of Nerves: Soldiers and Psychiatrists in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 243.

<sup>126</sup> Goldman, *Morale in the AAF*, 37.

entities and their human instruments.”<sup>127</sup> As such, mere killing and destruction did not sustain US troops in war. They needed to understand how their duties met US just war aims.

In response, the Special Services Division sought to augment society’s responsibility to validate the justness of war. In early 1942, the division partnered with director Frank Capra to produce the first of a seven-part documentary entitled *Why We Fight*.<sup>128</sup> In its opening credits, the following lines appear: “The purpose of these films is to give factual information as to the causes, the events leading up to our entry into the war, and the principles for which we are fighting.”<sup>129</sup> US training camps showed the films to its trainees and polls found the series clarified the war’s cause for its audiences.<sup>130</sup> These films provided for the soldiers what sociologist Arnold Rose called “the basic ingredient of knowledge as to why” a soldier fought, imbuing him with the

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<sup>127</sup> Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations* (New York: Basic Books, 1977), 36.

<sup>128</sup> Frank Capra received a major’s commission in the US Army Signal Corps just days after the attack on Pearl Harbor. Reporting to the Signal Corps’ Army Pictorial Service in early 1942, the Army immediately reassigned Major Capra to the then-named Morale Branch to create morale films for Signal Corps production. Capra was the first chief of the film section in what would become the Information Division within the Special Services Division (there were also news, radio, and pamphlet sections). Army Chief of Staff, General George C. Marshall personally assigned Capra the *Why We Fight* film project. In his memoirs, Frank Capra recalled Marshall’s words from that meeting: “Now, Capra, I want to nail down with you a plan to make a series of documented, factual-information films – the first in our history – that will explain to our boys in the Army why we are fighting, and the principles for which we are fighting.” Frank Capra, *The Name Above the Title: An Autobiography* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1997), 309, 314, 317, 319, 327.

<sup>129</sup> “Prelude to War,” in *Why We Fight*, directed by Frank Capra (Special Services Division and Signal Corps, 1943), DVD (Periscope Film, 2013).

<sup>130</sup> Although designed by and made for the Army, the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard also adopted the *Why We Fight* films for use. One Special Services Division publication helped explain why these films were a product of the Special Services Division. The Army charged the Special Services officer to inform “the soldier on the causes of this global war” and show “him the reasons ‘why we fight’.” Capra, *Name Above the Title*, 336; Special Services Division, “Leadership and the Mental Conditioning of Troops,” in *What the Soldier Thinks* 1 (December 1943), 12; Special Services Division, “Measuring the Effectiveness of Informational Motion Pictures,” in *What the Soldier Thinks: Quarterly Report, with Charts, of Research Studies Indicating the Attitudes, Prejudices and Desires of American Troops* (Washington, DC: War Department, 1943), 67, accessed December 15, 2018, [http://staging.gibsondesign.com/marshall/library/publications\\_soldier\\_thinks.html](http://staging.gibsondesign.com/marshall/library/publications_soldier_thinks.html).

“conviction that his side was right and the other side was wrong.”<sup>131</sup> The Army later released the films to theaters across the United States.<sup>132</sup>

To balance the government-approved viewpoints in the *Why We Fight* films, the Special Services Division provided soldier self-study opportunities. The Army called this “Informed Patriotism” and viewed its libraries as “war information centers.” The division stocked libraries with newspapers, journals, and books.<sup>133</sup> The Special Services’ history explained, “Books and magazines keep soldiers in touch with what is going on in the world.”<sup>134</sup> While both the films and reading material were Army-selected (and censored, whether intentionally or not), the programs deserve mention. These mechanisms acknowledged the importance of faith in, and understanding of, a just cause to build the fighting will which, in turn, built soldier morale.

While this section highlights the importance of societal validation of just war, it less obviously eludes to the relative consensus necessary to provide such confirmation. Nonetheless, consensus enabled societal support to US soldiers during World War II. Given the social media age of the twenty-first century, consensus building to establish the civil-military dialogue is arguably more difficult than it was in the 1940s. Australian Army officer Sean Childs pointed out that because “today’s soldiers” access and process “knowledge from across the world, they are facilitating more diverse views...which serve to erode consensus.”<sup>135</sup> The civilian population also has access to the same information. While this may appear to be a tension working against any future soldier-society dialogue, it also provides an opportunity. To fully leverage human capital in war by maximizing morale, involvement in future large-scale combat must be contingent upon

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<sup>131</sup> Arnold Rose, “Bases of American Military Morale in World War II,” *Public Opinion Quarterly* (Winter 1945-1946): 413.

<sup>132</sup> Capra, *Name Above the Title*, 336.

<sup>133</sup> US Army, *TM 21-205* (1942), 25; Loss, “Reading between Enemy Lines,” 813.

<sup>134</sup> *Special Services Division History*, vol. 8, 1.

<sup>135</sup> Sean Childs, “Soldier Morale Defending a Core Military Capability,” *Security Challenges* 12, no. 2 (2016): 48.

societal approval. Strategic studies professor Joseph L. Strange and British Army Colonel Richard Iron called such societies a “strong-willed population,” defined as “large groups with common beliefs that compel” its leaders “to engage in conflict.” While Strange and Iron considered “Americans in the wake of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor” as an example, they also cited the ongoing Palestinian-Israeli dispute as another.<sup>136</sup> This shows that national consensus is still possible, at least somewhere, in the twenty-first century. Therefore, even a limited US majority consensus creates a powerful force by virtue of US size and resources.

### Sustaining the Dialogue: Maintaining the Soldiers’ Faith in Cause

While society initiated civil-military dialogue by validating jus ad bellum, the Army bore responsibility for maintaining soldiers’ faith in that cause. An important ingredient for military morale was purpose nested in cause. Alton Railey concluded that the most serious disparager of soldier morale was the “lack of a tangible objective.”<sup>137</sup> The 1940 institution of conscription and the federalization of National Guard soldiers left large numbers of servicemembers at training bases with no active war. One soldier told Railey, “We’re not sore at the President or the Chief of Staff [of the Army] but we think, just the same, that they aren’t coming out with all they know.”<sup>138</sup> This soldier’s opinion supported the findings of sociologist Henry Durant who concluded, “morale is the relationship to a given end.”<sup>139</sup>

When soldiers did not understand how their efforts contributed to the end state, morale fell. The Research Branch found that servicemembers wanted “to know ‘why.’” They did “not

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<sup>136</sup> Joseph J. Strange and Richard Iron, “Center of Gravity: What Clausewitz Really Meant,” *Joint Forces Quarterly* 35 (October 2004): 26.

<sup>137</sup> Railey, *Study of Morale*, 52.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 60. In 1941, educator Eduard Lindeman argued that governments establish morale through “truth telling with respect to world events...on behalf of those democratic ideals which contribute our major reasons for taking the risks of war.” He continued, “It is no longer feasible...to fight modern wars successfully unless the battle takes place...on the battle front and on the home front.” Eduard C. Lindeman, “Recreation and Morale,” *American Journal of Sociology* 47, no. 3 (November 1941): 395-396.

<sup>139</sup> Henry Durant, “Morale and Its Measurement,” *American Journal of Sociology* 47, no. 3 (November 1941): 406.

want to operate in a vacuum.” Units would be “more efficient,” it concluded, if soldiers were informed about how their actions contributed “to the success of the overall” objective.<sup>140</sup> Army Air Corps soldier Laverta Baldwin exemplified this notion. Referencing his posting in India, he told his mother, “I could be doing far more for the war effort if I were home...I haven’t done a thing since coming here toward working on a plane. If only we would get away from this base to a busy place, I would be happy again. Before, we worked like dogs ‘keeping them flying’ seven days a week, ten to fourteen hours a day.”<sup>141</sup> Baldwin did not understand his purpose.<sup>142</sup> As T.E. Lawrence wrote, “Morale, if built on knowledge, was broken by ignorance.”<sup>143</sup> Army and Special Services Division leadership understood this point. Providing information to soldiers affirmed faith in a just cause and improved morale.

Army leadership grasped the importance of providing information to the troops. World War II doctrine advanced the idea, instructing leaders, “In all phases of administration, training, and operations make every effort to keep your men informed. Nothing irritates American soldiers so much as to be left in the dark regarding the reason for things.”<sup>144</sup> Research concluded that lack of knowledge encouraged rumor and created fear, while information reduced “the fog of war” and mentally strengthened the soldier.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> Special Services Division, “Keep Your Men Informed,” in *What the Soldier Thinks 7* (Washington, DC: War Department, July 1944), 6, accessed December 11, 2018, <https://www.marshallfoundation.org/library/digital-archive/soldier-thinks-vol-7/>.

<sup>141</sup> Peckham, *Fighting Hoosiers*, 333.

<sup>142</sup> Referring to low morale in the Burma-India theater in 1942, British Field-Marshal Slim wrote, “we needed from the highest national authority a clear directive of what was to be our purpose in Burma.” He argued that any purpose “would have had an effect not only on the major tactics of the campaign, but on the morale of the troops.” Slim, *Defeat into Victory*, 118.

<sup>143</sup> Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, 165.

<sup>144</sup> Quoted in Molly Guptill Manning, *When Books Went to War* (New York: First Mariner Books, 2015), 17.

<sup>145</sup> Kellett, *Combat Motivation*, 225, 227.

In response, the Special Services Division instituted reception programs at replacement centers. When soldiers arrived at overseas replacement depots, an officer provided an orientation briefing, appraising soldiers of the operational position of units throughout the theater. To augment this briefing, replacement center commanders posted updated “situation maps.” If soldiers remained in the depots for extended periods, they received weekly updates on unit positions, tasks, and purposes as well as any relevant policy changes. Moreover, replacement centers used loud speakers to broadcast news programs.<sup>146</sup> Given the Special Services Division’s responsibility to provide information regarding the war effort, the Army interchangeably called Special Services personnel Morale Officers, Orientation Officers, and Education Officers.<sup>147</sup>

Late-war doctrine evidenced the Special Services’ confidence that information improved morale. The Special Services Division’s 1945 *Technical Manual 28-210, The Information-Education Officer*, articulated the following conclusions: “All armies now recognize the need for training the soldier’s mind, in order to maintain his zeal for work and combat...such qualities of mind can grow only in the presence of a free press and freedom of speech...Free access to information...and the opportunity to pursue self-education.” The consequence of these endeavors, the manual argued, “develops a positive attitude and an aggressive spirit,” characteristics of high morale.<sup>148</sup> These doctrinal statements reflected the growing realization the morale depended on providing soldiers operational information relevant to their mission’s purpose.

## Completing the Dialogue: How the Soldier’s Combat Experience Reinforces Society’s Just War Assessment

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<sup>146</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower to George C. Marshall, August 21, 1944, Box 80, George C. Marshall Papers, Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, KS.

<sup>147</sup> Special Service Division, ETOUSA, *ETOUSA Special & Morale Services Guide* (ETOUSA: Government Printing Office, 1944), 5.

<sup>148</sup> US Army, *Technical Manual (TM) 28-210, The Information-Education Officer* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1945), 1, 3.



Sustained by the societal validation of just cause and the provision of operational information, the World War II soldier's combat experience often reinforced jus ad bellum for society. First Lieutenant Ted Ellsworth recounted the Italian people's joy after liberating the town of Scerni. He wrote that "the books, newspapers, allied leaders, army pamphlets, and propaganda machines had been right...Our armies were treated as liberators...Evil was loose."<sup>149</sup> Similarly, Private First Class Myron Burkenpas recounted the liberation of a concentration camp. He saw people with "shaven heads...sunken stomachs...ribs standing out like rails on a fence." Although hating Army life to that point, Burkenpas declared, "I can wholeheartedly and honestly say that I'm glad I'm here doing a little bit to help stop these horrible atrocities."<sup>150</sup> Finally, Second Lieutenant Vernon Buchanan, a member of the Army Air Corps, wrote a letter for a friend to mail home in the event of his death. Buchanan scribed, "I feel I have done something to be proud of, something perhaps that will aid America to remain 'the land of the free, the home of the brave.' If my death helps end this war one minute sooner, I consider it worthwhile." Buchanan was killed in action over Luzon in January 1945.<sup>151</sup>

The personal validation of their war's just cause provided soldiers an even greater drive to fight for a more peaceful world order. Historian John Ellis wrote that in the last two years of World War II, Allied soldiers produced "a burgeoning belief in the actual possibility of social change."<sup>152</sup> Given the practicality of daily survival in contrast to pondering the ideological foundations of war, obvious proof of social injustice persisted across the World War II battlefields, visible to American servicemembers. Research Branch surveys found that "faith in

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<sup>149</sup> Ted Ellsworth, *Yank: Memoir of a World War II Soldier (1940-1945)- From the Desert War of North Africa to the Allied Invasion of Europe, from German POW Camp to Home Again* (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 2006), 130.

<sup>150</sup> Peckham, *Fighting Hoosiers*, 182-183.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, 264.

<sup>152</sup> Ellis, *Sharp End of War*, 320.

mission” continued to be an active “ingredient in morale” the longer the war persisted.<sup>153</sup> This was because countless other American soldiers experienced events like those of Ted Ellsworth and Myron Burkenpas. For instance, Donald Burgett, a squad leader in the 101st Airborne Division remembered the liberation of the Landsberg Concentration Camp in Germany.<sup>154</sup> During his first days on the Philippine islands, Private John Crawford described a Filipino family he encountered in “a heavily bombed area, their home and lives destroyed.”<sup>155</sup> Therefore, soldier morale also tied to their vision for jus post bellum, justice after war.

These experiences not only reinvigorated soldier motivation to achieve the military end state, but soldiers also conveyed these encounters home, thereby reinforcing society’s resolve. Private First Class James E. Rosenberger wrote his family, “this job I am helping to do is worth it.”<sup>156</sup> Similarly, Second Lieutenant Gus Fallen, fighting in Italy wrote, “The people are very friendly to us and welcomed us with tears and small meager presents...They all think their country will be free like the US.”<sup>157</sup> Infantry Staff Sergeant Gene Eckerty noted that sacrifice was a fair trade to enable “an everlasting peace.”<sup>158</sup> Thus, these actions completed a feedback loop of dialogue between society and the Army that validated the justice of war, providing soldiers motivation to fight, thereby increasing morale (see Figure 6).

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<sup>153</sup> The Research Branch’s surveys also found that “faith in the cause and in the future” ranked highest among ways commanders could improve morale. Special Services Division, “Problems Created or Accentuated by Men’s Lack of Information,” in *What the Soldier Thinks* 10 (Washington, DC: War Department, November 1944), 1, accessed December 11, 2018, <https://www.marshallfoundation.org/library/digital-archive/soldier-thinks-vol-10/>; “Leadership and the Mental Conditioning of Troops,” in *What the Soldier Thinks* 1, 3.

<sup>154</sup> Burgett, *Beyond the Rhine*, 113-137.

<sup>155</sup> Peckham, *Fighting Hoosiers*, 291.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 133.

<sup>157</sup> Curtiss, *Letters Home*, 25.

<sup>158</sup> Peckham, *Fighting Hoosiers*, 169.

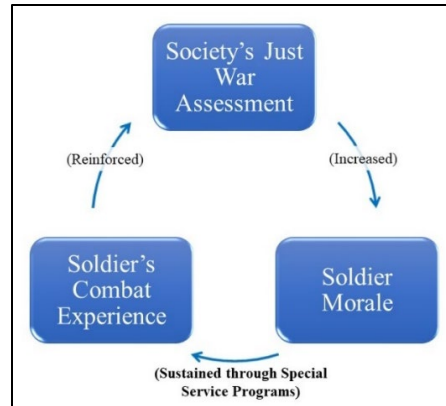


Figure 6. The Dialogue between Soldier and Society – How just war and information build morale. Created by author.

One could suggest that the all-volunteer force may not require war's social validation, so relevant to the conscripted World War II Army. However, research suggests otherwise. Political scientist Eliot Cohen argued that the “military resembles America” now more than ever.<sup>159</sup> Cohen's point was largely contingent on the views of two social scientists, Morris Janowitz and Charles Moskos. Janowitz contended that technological change led to military professionalization in a bureaucratic manner more closely akin to civilian organizations.<sup>160</sup> Because the professional officer is subordinate to the political process in both war and peace, officers must therefore hold even greater “sensitivity to the political and social consequences of military operations” as a result of this bureaucratization.<sup>161</sup> Similarly, Moskos regarded this transformation the result of the Army's movement from an institution to an organization. According to Moskos, an institution is something “viewed...as being different or apart from the broader society” because of its values, norms, and beliefs.<sup>162</sup> He echoed Janowitz by concluding that with the advent of the all-volunteer force, the Army moved away from the “institutional format” (although not completely) to that of

<sup>159</sup> Eliot Cohen, *Supreme Command: Soldiers, Statesmen, and Leadership in Wartime* (New York: The Free Press, 2002), 298.

<sup>160</sup> Morris Janowitz, *Sociology and the Military Establishment* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1965), 17; Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait* (New York: The Free Press, 1974), 3-16.

<sup>161</sup> Janowitz, *Sociology*, 115; Janowitz, *Professional Soldier*, 426.

<sup>162</sup> Charles C. Moskos, *A Call to Civic Service: National Service for Country and Community* (New York: The Free Press, 1988), 16.

an organization, staffed by those pursuing an occupation. Moskos concluded that as a result, the professional military “refracts societal trends” more than the drafted army.<sup>163</sup> Thus, social validation of just war is more relevant now than it was during World War II.

Further, civil confirmation of just war, compared against the rubric of morale, provides another consideration for both operational and strategic-level planning. Special Services and MWR programs alone cannot maximize troop morale. Society’s confirmation that World War II was a just war increased soldier motivation and morale. Likewise, once fighting began, soldier morale improved when servicemembers understood not only how they fit into ongoing operations but also how those operations contributed to the military end state. However, evidenced by the narrative of Private First Class Baldwin, Research Branch reports, and the findings of Martin Goldman, Special Service programs alone were not enough to increase the strategic and operational information flow. This suggests that operational and tactical level leaders play an important role in morale through information. Soldiers must understand how their missions fit into the larger objectives of war. In so doing, soldiers can better focus on the end state and fulfill the goal-oriented portion of morale’s definition. Moreover, the Special Services Division could only augment society’s all-important just war validation. Both actions focus and motivate soldiers toward mission accomplishment, reminding them why they fight and invigorating morale.

Hence, understanding cause and purpose improved morale and drove soldiers, in tandem, toward the military end state. Troops who believed in the war’s justness held greater motivation than those who deemed the war unjust. Likewise, soldiers with clear purpose faced fewer instances of fog than those without. In either case, a soldier enjoyed greater morale, sustaining him and those like him as the Army strove toward its military end state (see Figure 7). However, when soldiers deemed the cause just AND understood their operational purpose, morale

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<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 3; Charles C. Moskos and Frank R. Wood, eds., *The Military: More Than Just a Job?* (McLean, VA: Pergamon-Brassey’s, 1988).

multiplied and sustained soldiers for longer periods as they strove toward the military end state (see Figure 8).

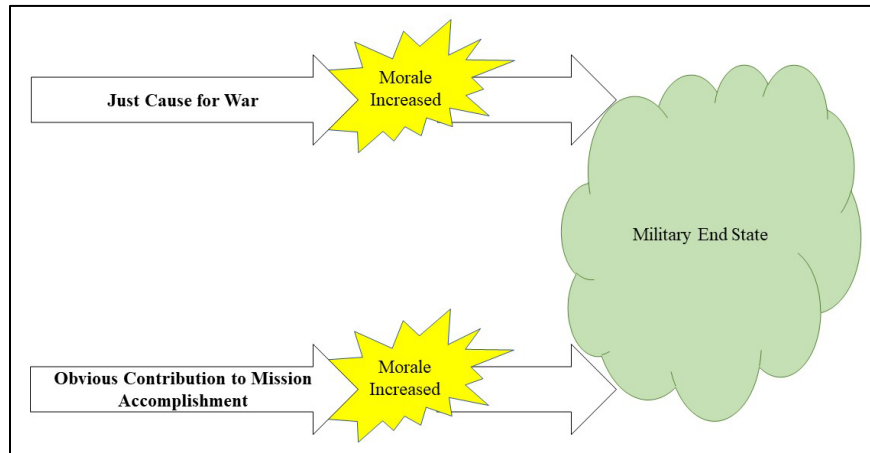


Figure 7. The Effect of Just Cause and Mission Contribution on Morale and the Military End State. Created by author.

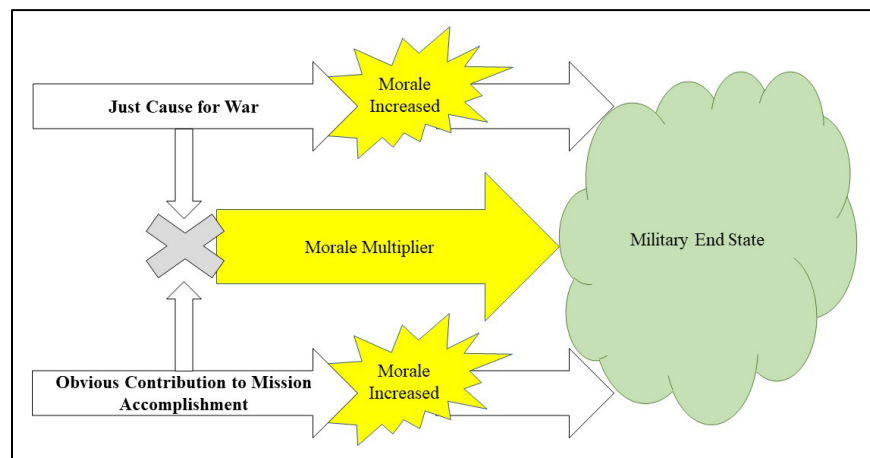


Figure 8. Multiplying Morale – The Effect of Both Just Cause and Mission Contribution on Morale and the Military End State. Created by author.

## Conclusion: Morale – The Army’s Opportunity to Maximize Human Capital

Yet, because [war] is fought between men rather than between weapons, victory will still go, when armaments are even relatively equal, to the side which is better trained and of higher morale – advantages which are obtained neither easily, quickly, nor without the sacrifice of more than money in peace.

—Field-Marshal Viscount William Slim, *Defeat into Victory*

Despite changes in tactics, technology, policy, or any other variable that colors the events of combat, humanity remains war’s continuity. Historian John Keegan wrote that every battle features “the behavior of men struggling to reconcile their instinct for self-preservation ...and the achievement of some aim over which other men are ready to kill them.”<sup>164</sup> While victory in war depends on physical strength and the expertise to plan sound operations, combat remains difficult and dangerous. As training and equipping feeds physical strength, and education and experience feed expertise, morale feeds the psychological aspect of war, a characteristic specific to the human participant in battle. It remains the human psyche that bridges the gap between perceived danger and victory, bringing physical strength and expertise to bear.

As the Army trains and plans for the challenges of large-scale combat operations, it must also consider how to maximize its human element through morale. Yet, the last vestiges of large-scale morale operations stand seventy years in the past, no longer resident in operational memory. To the Army’s great benefit, because certain human characteristics endure across time, history proves a useful resource to glean insights for future consideration. The American World War II experience provided an ideal historical example when considering how to sustain morale through LSCO. The Army operated in several theaters of war for multiple years, making the Second World War the largest morale effort across time, space, and soldiers supported in American history. What is more, World War II was the first time the military instituted its own morale program in the form of the Special Services Division, the progenitor of modern MWR. Therefore,

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<sup>164</sup> John Keegan, *The Face of Battle: A Study of Agincourt, Waterloo and the Somme* (New York: Penguin Books, 1976), 303.

the expansive nature of US morale operations provided broad points of consideration for the myriad environments and circumstances that may face the US Army in the future.

After evaluating relevant policy, memoirs and letters, and psychological, sociological, and theoretical studies, four aspects of morale proved most beneficial to US World War II soldiers. The four contributors to morale included relief from combat conditions, communication with home, society's validation of war's righteous purpose, and understanding how military missions contributed to operational objectives. These sources of morale were important because they reduced psychological isolation and confirmed the just war narrative, thereby decreasing the normal mental strain of combat and motivating the soldier.

To fully evaluate the Special Services' efforts, however, morale's definition served as a rubric against which to anchor past efforts. Morale is a state of mind that causes a group to, under unfavorable and prolonged conditions, willingly and confidently perform a duty and achieve a common goal. As such, it psychologically sustains soldiers through combat, extending operational reach toward the military end state. During World War II, mental sustainment occurred when soldiers enjoyed even brief respite from the hardship of combat. In battle troops felt psychologically isolated from the normal aspects of their pre-war lives. The constant strain resultant from the physical and mental stressors of battle chipped away at the soldier's ability to maintain the state of mind necessary to fight and endure for prolonged periods. Special Service rest camps and pass programs relieved the servicemember's psyche from constant battle strain, enabling him to longer withstand the combat environment than if he received no rest at all. What is more, return to varying levels of normalcy released soldiers from mental strain. Whether enjoying a shower or hot meal at a beachhead rest camp, relishing a three-day pass in Rome, or reading a letter from a girlfriend or wife, servicemembers felt less isolated when experiencing normal activities. Consequently, these small things enabled US soldiers to fight for an indefinite amount of time, reinvigorating morale and extending operational reach. Barring shortfalls in

equipment, planning, or physical capability, operational reach, in turn, reduced instances of military culmination.

World War II soldiers also endured long periods in combat because society validated that the war was just. Support from family and friends, as well as the feedback provided by the American press proved to the troops that society deemed the war effort just. Along with Special Services augmentation in the form of films, libraries, and replacement camp briefings, these mechanisms made clear that the reasons for war and the possibility of self-sacrifice was virtuous. Soldiers were able to focus on the military end state when clear cause coupled with an understanding of how individual military operations achieved national objectives. This fulfilled the common goal criteria within morale's definition.

Thus, while soldiers expended mental capital in combat, World War II demonstrated that there are methods to refill depleted morale. Yet, as the trained morale officers, professional sociologists, and deployed companies within the Special Services Division's structure elude, morale planning, execution, and assessment is not a simple endeavor. It started before the war began and remained active throughout. Despite the manpower and effort morale operations demand, they provide an opportunity to maximize human potential on the battlefield and therefore deserve immediate consideration. Furthermore, as a historical example, the Army's Special Services Division during World War II provides the following additional insights.

First, morale runs deeper than MWR and is more than simple entertainment or a "leg show." While athletic opportunities, movies, or traveling performers provide temporary mental diversions in combat, morale relies on a dialogue between the soldier and society. Soldiers require the support of loved ones through regular contact. More importantly, a majority of the population, holding shared beliefs backing military means, compel soldiers to act because they believe in a war's purpose. This suggests that the strategic context is imperative to maximize morale at the operational level. Moreover, because of this reliance, the national atmosphere as it pertains to a specific conflict provides a potential measurement of soldier morale. Thus, the



interplay between national and soldier morale lends an opening for further study at the strategic level.

Next, morale increases with a soldier's removal from psychological isolation. Whether the result of the "empty battlefield," weather, injury, death, fear, or not knowing what will come next, combat places mental strain on the soldier. As a result, he is psychologically isolated from everything that is familiar. To mitigate the risk of stress on morale, physically removing troops from combat, even for a short time, reinvigorates servicemembers to sustain them across longer operations. Similarly, connecting soldiers with their loved ones returns some aspect of the familiar. Information concerning how a military effort fits into the operational and strategic objectives erases the fog of war, refocusing the soldier on the task at hand.

Thus, renewed and vigorous contemplation of morale operations provides an opportunity to amplify the Army's human capacity during LSCO. Morale is a cognitive weapon equally as important to any physical weapon on the modern battlefield. The Army can replicate and build upon the insights from history to psychologically enhance its soldiers. The World War II Special Services Division demonstrated that morale operations require infrastructure, planning, and expertise. It contained a Department of the Army staff structure as well as combat zone units that planned and delivered the effective sources of morale. Further, it required the expertise of sociologists to assess and reassess troop morale needs based on specific context, location, and events. These skills are beyond those of the contemporary commander, senior enlisted advisor, or S1. Even with this infrastructure, World War II morale operations were nearly too little and too late. Therefore, if planners begin to consider morale now, prioritizing its requirements efficiently among the immediate needs of combat, the US Army will maximize its human capital and create an advantage over future foes otherwise equal in physical power and expertise.

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