

REMARKS TO NCO'S OF THE 4-4TH BRIGADE  
30 MARCH 1979

I recognize that this is a very special unit, and indeed so does the Commander-in-Chief United States Army Europe. He never sees us without asking me how things are getting along at Wiesbaden. He worries about you all because he sees you in a kind of deprived situation up here, no local training area and so on. The Chief of Staff of the Army who was down at ~~Wiesbaden~~ <sup>Baumholder</sup> last week <sup>also</sup> asked how the brigade was getting along at Wiesbaden, and I've been able to report factually "fine," ~~makes a~~ ~~visit of necessity~~. I guess we can call the Presidential Visit accurately enough a necessity, and the TRAINCON, while you may have regarded that less than necessary, it was very important to the rest of the outfits in V Corps. You would be interested to note that VII Corps is going to follow suit and have their own TRAINCON because of the work you did here. That's not what I came here today to tell you. I want to talk, sort of a last shot, about the role of the noncommissioned officers in the Army. Some of you have heard me on this before and if so just bear with me for the sake of those who haven't. Many of my contemporaries in the Army misconstrue, misunderstand me when I say that the noncommissioned officer is absolutely essential to the future of the Army. They think that I am mouthing a truism after all we have said about the NCO being the backbone of the Army. Or they think that I am saying something to the effect that NCO's are more important than officers, or that NCO professionalism is more important than any of the other nifty training or personnel oriented undertakings in the Army. That is not the case. Quite to the contrary

I just finished delivering a very different message to the officers over there which was something to the effect that there is more than enough work for everybody if the NCO is rightly regarded by the officer corps and his role is understood, there is more than enough for the officer to do. Indeed, a solid and effective noncommissioned officer corps can free officer time and energy which can be better directed to the purposes for which officers were hired in the first place. Because of these misunderstandings I think its important to try to clear the air and state one more time, if you will, why it is that the Army and this Division Commander stresses to role of the noncommissioned officer, stresses it to the point of requiring each Annual General Inspection conducted by the Division Inspector General to focus on the role of the NCO in training, in maintenance, in supply, in personnal administration, and to report to me at the conclusion of the inspection the degree to which the noncommissioned officers in the insepcted units are effectively discharging their responsibilities in those areas; why the division has fielded the training proficiency tests and uses those as one measure of effectiveness of its commanders; why the division has put the emphasis that it has placed in a variety of other areas in the way the noncommissioned officer looks after the discipline of the soldiers put in his charge. Using that term as I will throughout the speech in exactly the sense the Army intended it to be used, discipline to teach, discipline to train. Sure you get a guy rap his tail for his appearance, or his haircut, or his manner of speaking, but that's teaching, and it's necessary if the soldier is going to perform effectively as a member of his unit. His teaching should come from his sergeant; why the division has put the emphasis it has placed on Soldiers'

Manuals and Job Books and the other adjuncts of individual training. There are several answers to the question of why that emphasis. The first is simply that the Army had no alternative. The Army is intrinsically different from the Navy and the Air Force and this causes a lot of mistification, particularly among NCO wives. In a community like this where there are a lot of Air Force people it's very difficult to sort out looking at it from the outside why the Army expects so much more of its NCO's than the other services, and again, the answer is we don't have any other choice. Our NCO's simply have to carry more weight, responsibilities, act more independently than the NCO's of the Air Force or Navy. To understand that proposition let me ask you to look the problems from the perspective of three flag officers and let's start with an admiral down in the Mediterranean. This fellow commands maybe 40 to a 100 moving entities, maneuverable parts--ships, airplanes. He can walk into his flag plot at any time of the day or night and there will be a display up on the wall that shows him exactly where everyone of those entities are. He can pick up a radio-telephone and talk to it. If he doesn't like what its doing, he can change it. And everyone of those entities are under the command of an officer. Orders and instructions can go direct from the admiral to the captain of the ship or the pilot in command and ~~instantaneously~~ <sup>in a moment</sup> the course of the ship and aircraft can be changed to fit the will of the commander. Highly centralized operation. Let's look at an Air Force 3-star like the Commander of the 17th Air Force over here. If war comes he repairs to a bunker, he sits in a big plush chair in front of a communications console and up on the wall is a projection of radar display and there will be maybe 400 to a 1000 aircraft in the air at any given point in time over Europe.

He can see every one of them in real time. He knows where they are located, what their direction of flight is, how fast they are going, how high they are, and what their mission is. He can pick up a radio-telephone on a console in front of him and talk directly to any one of those entities, change its course, change its mission, tell it to return to base, redirect it to another target. And in every case he is dealing with an officer, perfect knowledge of what's going on out there. Capability to talk officer-to-officer to direct the course of the battle. Compare the circumstances of those two gentlemen with the circumstances of LTG Berry of V Corps up here. He has something like tens of thousands of maneuverable entities out there--artillery survey parties, OP's, communications teams, maintenance contact teams, rifle squads, tanks, cavalry platoons, and so on, down to the individual trucker making a supply run back to the trains on his own. Thousands and thousands of moving parts and there is no magic radar anywhere in the system that will tell LTG Berry where those guys are. He doesn't know, he may know where they reported they were in some cases 24, 48 hours ago. But what they're doing right at the moment, he has no way of knowing--can't see them, doesn't know what's happening, won't for several hours, can't communicate with them, has thousands and thousands of them out there and he can talk to maybe 10 commanders subordinate to him, and they in turn can talk with a certain number of subordinates under them. The way the Army has to operate on the battlefield is with decentralization, and that is categorically different from the way the Navy operates and the way the Air Force operates. . And again, that V Corps commander is dealing with maneuverable entities, the overwhelming majority of which are under the command of noncommissioned officers. This is not an officer dominated service, this is an NCO

dominated service. And so if the division emphasizes the professionalism of its noncommissioned officers it is emphasizing the professionalism of those who carry the share of the combat capability of our forces, that is Army. You<sup>as</sup> sergeants in the United States Army can take particular pride and satisfaction in that. You represent something quite different from a Chief Petty Officer of the United States Navy, or a Senior Sergeant of the US Air Force. You represent something much more to your service and to your country. But there are other reasons for this emphasis. It is not well understood by my contemporaries and many other officers more junior in rank and less well endowed in service. Not well understood that the primary role of the noncommissioned officer in combat is that of a trainer. Now the officer in combat concerns himself with tactics, and the officer in combat concerns himself with the larger aspects of the management of the unit. But down in the squad, in the tank crew, in the maintenance contact team, in the truck platoon, in the artillery battery, and in the gun sections, there are soldiers and sergeants who make those systems work. None of you who have looked at the casualty projections for war, can help but be impressed that many of the soldiers we will lead into combat, if God forbid we have to lead our soldiers into combat, many of those soldiers will not survive the first five days of the war. They will become casualties. Their place will be taken by replacements. Indeed most of us who have been in combat, Korea, Viet Nam, dealt continuously on a day-to-day basis with the problem of training replacements to do the job they had to do there. In both of those wars of course you had a very conscious replacement and rotation policy in effect. And regardless of casualties, that problem was there. Now who trains the soldier to take his place as a member of the

gun crew, the survey team, the communications team. It has to be the sergeant. It's the sergeant who teaches the replacement how to survive and how to do his job in combat, and the sustainability, the very capability of the force to keep fighting after that initial status of training is dissipated by casualties, the capability of the force to do that hinges upon the capability of the noncommissioned officers to take the new soldiers in hand and train them for what it is that the unit expects them to do. Don't expect the replacement system to provide you with trained replacements it won't happen, except in rare incidents, almost by accident. There was a lot of discussion recently in the paper by the Individual Ready Reserve and the tough straights the Army is in because of the fact that the fellows that were on the rosters as members of the IRR have now served their 6 year term and are leaving or falling off of the rosters. Even if we had all 500,000 of the guys that we're supposed to have on those lists, you have to remember many of those fellows got their training 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 years ago. Think of what has transpired in the force just in the past couple of years, attack helicopters, new artillery munitions, TOW, DRAGON, new tanks, and that weapon systems change is going on continuously. Is anybody here suspect that a 63C trained on wheeled vehicles back in 1974 is really up to being a 63C in the 1-70 Armor today? Or than an infantryman, an 11B, trained in 1975, is capable of walking in and putting his hands on a DRAGON and making it function? He probably never saw a DRAGON, maybe never heard of it. Well, where is he going to learn? How about all of those clerks and headquarters community types that we will pull and throw into the replacement stream. You know guys whose fingers are warm from carressing typewriter keys that are going to become members of tank crews, and artillery ammunition humpers in wartime. Whose going to take them in hand and convert

them from the delicate routines of offices in Heidelberg and Bad Kreuznach and teach them how to move the 155 into the tubes. Who's going to do that? The battery executive officer? The battery commander? No. Some gun commander will be the guy that does that. That, gentlemen, is the stuff of strength in combat. Units that have good sergeants survive. Units that have good sergeants suffer fewer casualties. I have seen that again and again in my service in combat, three combat tours. I tell you that with all the conviction of 30 years of service. If you want strong units in war, build strong sergeants in peace. Now, there's another urgency bearing on us which is an extension of the one that I just described. The Army faces a technological revolution, it's in the midst of it. The materiel that is coming into the Army is different in kind from the materiel that we have had in the past, and there's a lot more of it. And it effects every thing we do in profound ways, in ways that we never anticipated. During the month of <sup>February</sup> we did some experimentation at Baumholder with the tank thermal sight. Very much like the experimentation that was conducted a year ago down at Baumholder by the 1-70 and E/1/10th Cav with the Air Force Maverick system. With our own tanks of the 2-68 Armor and with the new tank sight, we inquired into a number of issues like how ~~are~~ <sup>far</sup> out can you recognize a T62 from M60; to what extent does it really matter if you have a heater on in your tank or not and other questions of interest. The point here is that we are dealing with a capability that makes a great deal of difference to the tankers who have it. You can see great distances, 3,000 to 5,000 meters. You can pick out tanks, APC's or anything that is metal out there unerringly, day or night. The sight doesn't know the difference between day and night except that in daytime

if you have sun, the metal gets a little hotter and easier to see. But otherwise the sight doesn't know the difference. You can see through smoke, fog, rain, snow. You can see unerringly. We are circulating in the division now some pictures taken of a tank antenna, tank in defilade. Nothing showing but the antenna, but they had the heater on and the antenna was a little bit warmer than the background, and you could pick that antenna out very clearly at 3000 meters. When you get into that you see, you're in a whole new realm of capability. But you're also in the unit maintenance business. You're talking here about super cooled, re Fridgerated light emitting diodes in the middle of the sight there's a big refrigerator. We're dealing with super coolants and a sight that has its own computer built in, its got a lot of digital electronics. The whole turret mechanic requires new deminsions and tank commanders have to learn how to care for a different kind of equipment than anything we've handled before. In case after case, whether you're talking artillery, communications, infantry, weaponry, instance after instance after instance we are dealing with a completely new kind of equipment requiring of its operators a degree of precision and care that we have not asked of our soldiers in years past. Just think for example of the difference between a guy commanding a rifle squad today and the man that will be standing in the turret of the infantry fighting vehicle in the future. Today, the squad leader or if he has appointed somebody else as the gunner, the gun up in the turret of the M113 has his hands on a .50 caliber. And somewhere in the back of him is a DRAGON and a 762 and some rifles, grenade launchers. The infantry fighting vehicle which will be issued over here beginning in 1981, the man in the turret will be standing in a stabilized turret, he will have mounted on the

side of the turret two TOW with a range of 3700 meters, he will have on of these thermal sights, day or night capability, he will have an optical sight, he will have a 25mm automatic cannon with a switch capability to go from anti-tank to anti-personnel at the flick of a wrist, he will have a 7.62 machine gun coax all mounted to the same sight. And he can sit there and just dial up any one of these several weapons systems and knock out targets to nearly 4000 meters. In the back will be the DRAGON. In the back will be machine guns and they will be firing port weapons in addition to the rifle. A very much more complicated training problem for that sergeant squad leader. Are we going to have any TRADOC school process those squad leaders through? Probably not. Probably the vehicles will arrive here just like the Rise/Passive tanks did. You'll go down, pick them up and learn about them on the job. Sergeants will learn about them by doing. Now we have been practicing you in the procedures that we need to follow to handle these more complicated weapons systems. Sure, many of you have looked at some of those tests with those tasks, conditions and standards that we have put in the training proficiency test or that you find in your present Soldiers' Manual and say, "Pretty rudimentary", and "Why should I spend much effort drawing soldiers to do that." Important to do so because fundamentally you're learning an approach to the problem. As the new item of equipment appears, we've got to describe the tasks, necessary to operate and maintain them, sustain them. We have to describe the conditions under which we will evaluate the capability of the soldier, gunner, operator, or maintainer to perform said tasks and the standards that he must meet in carrying out his duties, and then we would ask of the sergeants

and that they train to them. Train to the tasks under the conditions stipulated, to the standards stipulated, and evaluate frequently. And as a replacement comes in, train them to it. Get them up to the standards and keep them there. And we're saying that while the officer training managers can do their most to assure time on the training schedule, minimum appearance at these big events to which the Command Sergeant Major made earlier reference, while the officer training manager can do much to provide the time, the resources, and the soldier to the sergeants ultimately training has got to be done by the sergeant trainer. Those new weapons systems. Just as he will in combat, in other words, peacetime because of the press of the new equipment, the sergeant trainer becomes central to the Army's ability to inject all of this new materiel, all of this new technology, and we're very dependent upon your mastering the techniques of training explicit in the Soldiers' Manual, Job Book, TPT, learning center and all the other apparatuses of the individual training system. You'll need it all. You'll need correspondence courses, the learning centers, you'll need every bit of ingenuity that you capable, noncommissioned officers, professional noncommissioned officers can bear to train our soldiers up to up to these tasks. But there is a final, and maybe more direct reason for emphasis on NCO professionalism. It has to do with the building of cohesive units. I've been talking about it politely throughout this presentation but to be explicit, units survive and win on battlefields by hanging together. There is of course a terrible propensity familiar to many of you who have been in combat under the stress of battle each man begins to look out for himself. When that happens, units suffer heavy casualties. To lose cohesion, to lose the

capability to hang together, to fight as one, one-for-all, all-for-one, to lose that is to face desintegration. I have seen it personally, seen units desintegrate, seen the terrible penalty that units pay for failing to maintain cohesion. And I know surely as I stand before you that the answer is strong sergeants and the answer indeed to many of the stresses that we face in peacetime is exactly strong sergeants. There was recently published in USAREUR a study conducted in artillery units of V Corps Artillery by a team of psychologists from the United States Army Medical Command. This report which was authored by a Doctor Manning states that far from commanders being that artillerymen, referring to the soldiers of the artillery, will not be able to handle the stresses and strains of rapid sustained fire in a war time condition. Far from being concerned that physical exhaustion of the soldier ammunition handlers and the soldier gunners will attenuate the power of the V Corps Artillery, commanders should be concerned over the effects of stress and strain on their noncommissioned officers and their officers because they, they felt, would give out sooner than the soldier. Now that is a truism. We didn't need a team of psychologists to run a study to tell us that because every one of you have heard the old Army saying that there is no such thing as a tired soldier, there is only tired leaders. That's really what the findings of that study were. That officers and NCO leaders would give out long before the strong back of the soldier in the ranks under the stress of combat. Then they went on to talk about what made effective units different from the units that they had observed who were relatively ineffective and they came to the conclusion exactly that it was cohesion or teamwork, a sense of belonging to the organization, a pulling together, a looking out for one another that went from the top to the bottom and

laterally within the organization. And they made a number of very interesting observations about all that. They first cautioned about the use of competition because competition can frequently be dysfunctional in creating that sense of teamwork. They pointed out that the best thing that the artillery units that they observed in V Corps Artillery had going for it were battery level athletics because that, more than any other undertaking of these units that they observed tended to build teamwork within the organization. Then they went on to talk about the drug problem and they said that the most disruptive factor in these organizations was the Army's effort to suppress drugs which tended to cause the abusers, generally speaking the lower ranking soldiers to find common cause with other abusers, to buddy up with the guys who were abusing, and to form cause with them against the officers and the NCO's who were leading the suppression effort. Got into a kind of "we"- "they" thing which was very dysfunctional for the building of teamwork. And having very adequately, I thought, diagnosed the problem, the doctor went on to give a kind of weak prescription and said the answer is more battery level athletics. I certainly agree with him that battery level athletics are nifty, certainly very helpful, but it's difficult for me to see that as being sufficient, to solve so serious a problem as the tendency of the young soldier to get sucked into the drug culture, or to come to grips with the preparation for combat, or the introduction of new weapons systems, or any other problems that face the force. I just don't think that's enough.

I would maintain that in addition to any team building undertakings such as athletics within a company or battery that the Army needs to put stress on the professional relationship between the soldier and the sergeant. The soldier regards his sergeant as a reliable source of information on how to do the job, and how to handle his equipment, and how to survive on the battlefield and how to come to grips with the Army's personnel and judicial system. If he regards him as a reliable guide to discipline the Army, doesn't have to like him incidently, or even openly admire him, but just simply regard him as a source for his professional association. He has, I submit, that vital link with his organization without which you cannot function either in peace or in war as a military unit. A soldier who has that kind of regard for his sergeant, is far more likely to turn to the sergeant for personal advice on personal problems, family difficulties, and all the rest. So I am saying to you, fellows, that all of this NCO professionalism that we have been pushing in the 4th Brigade and in the 8th Division at large goes directly to solving those pernicious and persistent people problems that the Army has correctly focused on in the recent past. But not often enough identified as being in part a problem addressable with the training system. So for all of the reasons that I have cited, the work that we have been doing to which the Command Sergeant Major made reference goes to solving the problems of the Army present, and the Army future. I want you to know that both the Chief of Staff of the Army, in his recent visit, and the Commander-in-Chief United States Army Europe, General Blanchard, in his recent visit, told me that this Division represents something special for the 7th Army and for the Army at large in the way that it has promoted

noncommissioned officer professionalism. In brief your work has been noticed and admired from afar by the high commanders of the Army. General Rogers, after having been briefed by the division Master Gunner, and by several other sergeants in the course of his visit at Baumholder grabbed me by the elbow and said, "If we just had a hundred sergeants like that in every division, we could take on anything the Soviets could field against us". And I said, "Sir, we have those sergeants, these guys were not individually selected, they were put out to talk to the Chief because they were doing their job, that's what they were there for, that's what they've been doing. I just cannot adequately communicate to you the pride that I felt at the way these very competent sergeants handled themselves with these senior officers. For example, we took General Rogers into a maintenance tent up on Range 35 and we had assembled there the officers and NCO's of two companies that had just finished a REALTRAIN battle the day before. In one of these companies, the company commander's track was hit with artillery just as they were getting ready to go across the line of departure and the company commander was ruled out of action. In this platoon there was only one other officer and he was way over on the right flank, so the platoon sergeant stepped forward, took command of that company and led it through the attack. Superb example of cohesion, teamwork. Superb example of what makes for units that are resilient enough to stand up to the stresses on the modern battlefield. Superb example of the kind of training that we ought to point at, day-in and day-out. Confident and competent sergeants are the hallmark of the unit, it can take anything that the new technologies can offer, anything that future battlefields can offer. Take anything that society offers, stresses and strains of racism, of drugs, of subversive movements of any

master them and come out a capable military outfit that can do the job for which it was brought into being by the United States Government. You have got that capability here in 4th Brigade, not as good as I'd like, not as good as you'd like, we can get a hell of a lot better. Take pride, Sergeants, in what you have achieved. You represent, as General Blanchard put it, something very special for the United States Army. Cherish that, Nurture it. Foster it. General Blanchard ended up his talk with me and asked what have we done to document this, what have you put on paper that would help other divisions in trying to get at the solution to the problems that we have just been talking about. I responded that we had not put much of it on paper, although there were bits and pieces of it in TPT's, supplements to the Army Training and Evaluation Program, NCOPP, and a few other publications, but there is certainly no kind of overall coherent explanation in writing. And I said, "as a matter of fact I am kind of reluctant to try and do that, I don't think there is any way of adequately describing everything that is going on". I said the most persuasive way to communicate what is going on in the 8th and the 4th of the 4th is to bring other leaders of the 7th Army here and let them see it all as we did at TRAINCON, or as we are doing right now down at Baumholder. Let them observe our soldiers, our NCO's, our officers in action. Let them talk to the soldiers and the leaders and draw their own conclusions to the degree which it works. Draw their own conclusions as to how that compares with what's going on in other organizations. Draw their own conclusions about the relative effect and impact on readiness of our approach versus that other outfit's approach. I told General Blanchard that I am very confident that any one who comes down to talk,

to observe with an open mind will be persuaded that we have the right approach. I said, and I hope you will forgive me for doing so, but I actually did, I said, "General Blanchard, Generals in this division in the past were asked to produce papers, and they like I do today pointed to the soldiers and said, as I would have you, General Blanchard or anyone else interested in knowing whether we're doing it right, point to those soldiers and I say, as I say to you "These Are My Credentials."