

Foreword

*The winning of battles is the product of the winning of men.
That aptitude is not an endowment of formal education
In the military services, though there are niches for the pedant,
character is at all times at least as vital as intellect, and the
main rewards go to him who can make other men feel toughened
as well as elevated.*

Quiet resolution.

The hardihood to take risks.

The will to take full responsibility for decision.

The readiness to share its rewards with subordinates.

An equal readiness to take the blame when things go adversely.

*The nerve to survive storm and disappointment and to face
toward each day with the scoresheet wiped clean, neither dwelling
on one's own successes nor accepting discouragement from one's failures.*

*In these things lie a great part of the essence of leadership,
for they are the constituents of that kind of moral courage that
has enabled one man to draw many others to him in any age.*

S. L. A. Marshall, *The Armed Forces Officer*

I have often reflected that Brig. Gen. SLAM Marshall's death was untimely. Part of his life's work came to fruition in the Army's National Training Center, and it is sad that he never had a chance to join troops exercising there. Those of us who laid out the concept for such a facility and first described the training techniques it would use were students of his. Surely he would have rejoiced in the opportunities the NTC provides to assert in the training of line battalions, better than ever before, those enduring verities of human nature which govern the soldier in battle far more than weapons, or doctrine, or time or clime. And surely too he would have admired this book, so close to his own work in style and content.

Captain Bolger is both well read and articulate, and conveys his reader effectively into the midst of eight vicarious battles at the NTC. His narrative will be disquieting to some Army leaders, especially those daunted by our constant struggle to eke out progress without making mistakes. This journal is replete with recorded mistakes, most of which would have been lethal in actual combat. And I suppose these will be misused by some committed to military reform to document charges that the Army's doctrine needs revision, or that it is otherwise maladroit. For my own part, I wish that this young officer could have drawn his inspiration for his comments in what he calls the Great Game —careerism within the officer corps— not from James Fallows and Richard Prillaman, but from SLAM Marshall. (The Armed Forces Officer):

We can take two officers. Lieutenant Doe enters military service with one main question in mind: "Where does my duty lie?" So long as he remains on that beam, he will never injure the morale of the Service...But in the mind of Lieutenant Roe the other idea is uppermost: "What kudos do I get from my position?" Unless that man changes his ways, he will be a troublemaker while he remains in the Service, a headache to his fellow officers, and an object of resentment for those who are under him...When any officer thinks only about: "What is policy?" rather than "What should policy be for the good of the Service?" he has trained his sights too low.

But preoccupation with the "Great Game" aside, Captain Bolger has presented the now and future Army a superb treatise on how to train mounted troops in tactics and fieldcraft. As a handbook for young leaders, I consider it superior even to E.D. Swinton's *The Defence of Duffer's Drift*. As a text for senior officers on the taxonomy of a well-conducted field exercise, it has no peer.

Bolger documents three advances in U.S. Army training technique, all in use at NTC:

(1) **Engagement simulation.** For direct-lay gunnery, modern technology can assure safe, realistic representations of shooter-target transactions, including important logistic dimensions. At the NTC both direct-fire simulation devices and computer-orchestrated target arrays for live fire enable the trainers to put the unit in training through situations that invoke all its soldiers' skill in positioning and using their weapons. The laser devices — MILES (Multiple Laser Engagement System)— permit force-on-force training, and have been issued throughout the Army for small unit training in that mode; NTC is the largest application for these relatively expensive, exceptionally effective training aids to date.

(2) **Range instrumentation.** Among the equipment that allows NTC to employ so many MILES devices simultaneously are automated communications which link centrally positioned computers with each tank and armored personnel carrier, so that they can track its movements and record the results of its engagements. These data can be aggregated and analyzed, and presented in vivid graphics for the purpose of controlling the exercises, and of aiding the trainers in presenting the After Action Reviews central to the training technique. Tapes of the engagements and the AAR become part of the unit's "Take-Home Package" to which Captain Bolger refers in his footnotes.

(3) **A non-U. S. adversary.** Captain Bolger's Dragons fought many of their battles against the best-trained Soviet armored force in the Free World —and perhaps the best there is anywhere. The NTC OPFOR is a specially trained and equipped formation of Americans who are steeped in Soviet military doctrine and lore, and who can portray convincingly a wily, resolute, determined foe, a Soviet Motorized Rifle Regiment operating on familiar terrain out to defeat its American antagonist whatever the cost.

I think it is fair to conclude that training at the NTC is stressful. Most participants agree with Captain Bolger on that score. The reader may judge from his account of the Dragon 's experiences whether this stress serves useful purposes. It is also evident that NTC exercises are expensive. How effective they are, and whether they thereby justify such difficulties and expense, is again a matter for the reader to weigh.

I personally believe, on the evidence of Bolger's account, that the soldiers of Task Force 2-34 Infantry (the Dragons) individually and collectively learned more at Fort Irwin than they might have learned in two weeks at war. And all emerged alive. Those Dragons may no longer serve together, but infantry and armored units in which they will train or fight in years to come will profit from what they learned. The NTC breeds battle-wise soldiers bloodlessly.

That says it all.

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