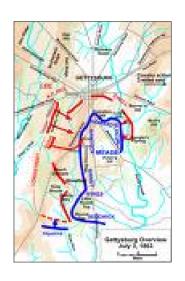
How to Study a Battle

Military History and Combat Leader Development





PME for Company Officers
LtCol B.B. McBreen

New Challenges for Officers

- Lower echelons of combined arms teams
 Lower echelons of decisionmaking
- Increasing
 - Technology / C2 / SA / Media
 - Combat Power, Precision, and Range / Joint Operations
 - Weapons / System complexity / Close urban terrain
 - Irregular conflicts / COIN / Indigenous Forces / Cultures
- Smaller Combined Arms Forces + Complex conflicts
 - = Increasing Expectations of Competence
 - Of both you and your people

Increasing Expectations of Competence

- Solution: Increase abilities of commanders
 - Increase experience, training, and education:
 "Fanatical pursuit of tactical excellence"
 - Increase pace of self-development:
 "Old heads on young shoulders"
 Squeeze 20 years of experience into 10 years
- The Marine Corps cannot adequately prepare you. What do we do to compensate?

Fight alongside your ancestors

- The human dimension never changes
- Battle references: shorthand of the profession
 - The Key Leaders and the Key Decisions
- Read widely, outside USMC, pull carefully
- Know 20 battles

Naktong Bulge: 1950 2 / 5

Operation COBRA: 1944 CCA 3rd AD



Ancestors



- Capt Charles MacDonald
- Capt Hans von Luck
- Capt Richard Winters
- Maj John Howard
- Capt William E. DePuy
- Capt Samuel Jaskilka
- Capt Ron Christmas
- Capt _____

- I/3/23 Inf 2ID
- K / PzAA 37 7PzD
- E / 2 / 506 PIR 101AB
- D / 2 / OBLI 6PD
- C / 1 / 357 Inf 90ID
- E / 2 / 5 Mar 1MarDiv
- H / 2 / 5 Mar 1MarDiv
- OEF / OIF USMC

How to Select a Battle Teach in order to Understand

- Select a battle that *interests* you.
- Select something *small*. Stay focused.
- Select something relevant.
- Sources: The military leader is a historian
 - Read as if you are going to explain it later you are.
 - Say more than you show. Hand out more than you say.
 - Know the *one* standard text. Review the others.

How to Present a Battle

- "Why do I care?"
 - Justify your issues to the audience
 - Like a movie, create interest in the first two minutes
 - Use the stories of real people to gain interest

• Specificity is the Key: Focus!

- One take-away lesson. One memorable thesis.
- Follow a *single* Unit. Follow a *single* Leader.
- Follow a *single* Decision, Issue or Event.

Battle Study: The Seven Products

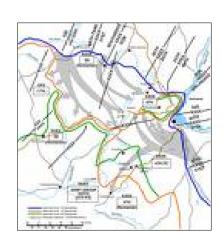
1. An **Overview**

Strategic to operational to tactical

2. A Map on the Wall

- Combat leaders know that the dirt is reality
- 3. A Task Organization
- 4. An **Enemy** Organization
- 5. A Timeline
- 6. A Lessons Learned
 - Summarize relevant issues

7. A Bibliography



[Op HUSKY Handout]

Go Deeper than the Fight...

- Compare their army to ours
 - What does this battle mean to us *today*?
- Learn about armies IOT look at ourselves
 - Look for deeper issues: Military Anthropology
 - How are institutions Built? Evolve? Fail?
 - Officer Selection? Education? Professionalism?
- See Atkinson, Perret or DePuy on the U.S Army, Doughty on the French, Van Crevald on the Germans
 - Not battles, but institutions

COIN Battle Study Challenges

- Diplomatic, Economic, Information vectors
- No battles. No states. No governments.
- No enemy order of battle
- Years and years of conflict
- Revolutionary theory vs tactical decisions

"Insurgents start with nothing but a cause...the counter-insurgents start with everything but a cause and gradually decline..."

COIN Battle Study Questions

- "How well did the army know their enemy?"
- "How well did the army adjust to the fight?"
- "How well did key leaders direct the fight?"
- "What tactical actions supported or contradicted the strategic goals?"
- "How well did military leaders support diplomatic, economic, and information leaders, organizations, and objectives?"
- "What can Marines learn from this conflict?" "Who else can learn from this conflict?"

Dozens of Battle Study Examples: www.2ndbn5thmar.com/history/battlestudies.htm

- Task Force Smith 1950
 - 2ndbn5thmar.com/history/TFSmith1950.pdf
- Op HUSKY 1943
 - 2ndbn5thmar.com/history/505thPIR1943.pdf
- The Battle of Goose Green
 - 2ndbn5thmar.com/history/2Para1982.pdf
- Kampfgruppen in BARBAROSSA
 - 2ndbn5thmar.com/history/6thPzDiv1941.pdf