

An outline of

“Preparing a Battalion for Combat”

by

LtCol William C. David

A series of four articles that appeared in *Infantry* magazine between May and December 1995. LtCol David commanded one of the best-trained infantry battalions in the 10th Mountain Division. In Somalia, his battalion was recognized for exceptional performance during the October 1993 battle of Mogadishu.

“Preparing a Battalion for Combat: Physical Fitness and Mental Toughness”

by LtCol William C. David

Infantry, May-June 1995

1. **Infantry operations require physical fitness and mental toughness**
 - a. Minimize heat and environmental injuries
 - b. Counteract lack of sleep
 - c. Counteract poor diet
 - d. Respond faster to injuries
 - e. Overcome adrenaline-rush / fatigue cycle when endangered

2. **Battalion PT standards *exceeded* division PT standards**
 - a. Five days a week
 - b. Five-mile run in thirty-six minutes, with a final eight-mile run
 - c. 20k hike in three hours, with a final 40k hike in 9 hours
 - d. PFT
 - e. Quarterly weigh-in

3. **Training management procedures need to cover physical fitness training**
 - a. PT goals briefed at Training Meeting
 - b. PT time is protected
 - c. PT is *not* unit sports

d. PT included combat Olympics

4. **SOP for battalion PT**

- a. XO collects stragglers, briefs company commanders at staff meeting
- b. Stragglers weighed-in
- c. Remedial PT is company responsibility

**“Preparing a Battalion for Combat:
Marksmanship”**

by LtCol William C. David
Infantry, July-August 1995

1. **Marksmanship is fundamental for:**

- a. Fire and movement needs confidence in peers' marksmanship ability
- b. When under fire, marksmanship confidence counteracts fear
- c. Ammunition conservation avoids resupply problems

2. **Known Distance (KD) is only a *minimum* marksmanship standard**

- a. Fleeting, moving, unknown distance firing is needed
- b. Frequent shooting is needed
- c. All shooting requires feedback. All maneuver live-fire requires feedback. All force-on-force with MILES requires feedback to teach movement techniques. All training plans need to address feedback.

3. **Do not limit the imagination of commanders.** Our commanders did innovative shooting:

- a. Hang bottles and balloons from frame
- b. Shoot at bottles in water
- c. Squad competition to cut 4x4 post in half

4. **Marksmanship requires the battalion commander's attention.** The training plan needs to address marksmanship. Subordinate commanders need imagination.

“Preparing a Battalion for Combat: Maneuver Live-Fire Training”

by LtCol William C. David
Infantry, September-October 1995

1. **Realistic maneuver live-fire training prepares a unit for combat.** Train like you fight.
 - a. Collective training. Units shoot in support and in close proximity of one another.
 - b. Leaders’ situation awareness, orders ability, and fire control techniques are trained.
 - c. Battle drills are rehearsed. LFX are best training for battle drills.
 - d. Supporting arms are integrated during complex live-fire training.

2. **Firepower skills give men *confidence* in their unit**
 - a. “Since we cannot be physically defeated, we will never be mentally defeated.”
 - b. Shortens radio transmissions and shortens orders
 - c. In combat, there is no time to double-check SOPs, learn new fire control procedures.

3. **Battalion commander needs to prioritize live-fire training**
 - a. Training plans need live-fire focus
 - b. Training plans need live-fire requirements: graphics, range fans, targetry, safety plans, TTPs, and support
 - c. Battalion live-fire standards:
Battalion: (1) one combined arms exercise every 18 months
Company: (1) CALFEX, (1) FCX, (1) LFX every 12 months
Platoon: (4) LFX every 12 months
Squad: (4) LFX every 12 months

4. **Techniques**
 - a. STX with live-fire, including HHQ orders, overlays, and graphics
 - b. Company missions: movement to contact, hasty attack, and deliberate (night) attack

- c. All subordinate LFXs support company METLs: Platoon ambush, recon, squad patrols
- d. All LFXs are evaluated against published standards
- e. Use blank-fire walk-throughs as rehearsal.

5. **Training Philosophy**

- a. Train one level down in order to provide resources: battalion trains company, company trains platoon.
- b. All fire control is responsibility of unit chain of command in order to reinforce combat realism.

“Preparing a Battalion for Combat: Combat Leadership Lessons Learned”

by LtCol William C. David
Infantry, November-December 1995

1. **The battalion commander is the caretaker of the battalion family.**
2. **Before the battle:**
 - a. Counsel on performance
 - b. Train in theater
 - c. Troop welfare is bringing men home
 - d. Set goals for individuals and unit
3. **During the battle:**
 - a. Go forward and set the example
 - b. The commander’s example in tough situations guides the actions of others
 - c. Stay cool under fire
 - d. Reassure subordinate commanders
4. **After the battle:**
 - a. After-action review (AAR) updates the SOP
 - b. Be tolerant of mistakes
 - c. Pace yourself for the long haul