supervision. The "open forum" cannot be allowed to become an organized protest session; commanders must guard especially against the outsider who would use this as a device for mass agitation.

Men in combat or hard at work have little time to reflect on their problems, real or imagined, because they are too busy. But when the tempo of fighting and working decreases, they have time to reflect. Little things are magnified. Rumors start. Tensions mount. Requirements come to be regarded as intrusions on individual rights.

. . . average American serviceman will believe what his leaders tell him as long as they do tell him. He must be told the reason for promotions, rewards, and punishments. He must be told what is expected of him and what he can expect from his leaders. The leader must take an active role in explaining his actions and his plans. He must get the word to his men and forestall rumors which inevitably arise when there is no explanation.

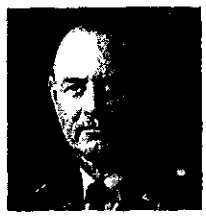
Our servicemen have met the test, and they will continue to do so in the future. They will do their job even better and with less friction when complete and mutual trust exists between them and their leaders.

The mission of every leader is to get the job done, to get the word out, and to treat every man justly and with a full appreciation of his individuality.

Having had the good fortune to work for General Abrams in 1966 when he was Vice Chief of Staff of the Army and again in 1968 when he was COMUSMACV, I was able to observe his military character and leadership under a wide variety of conditions.

General Abrams was eminently fit for the responsibilities and the loneliness of high command positions, intellectually as well as psychologically. He was professionally competent in the highest degree and was willing to expend the effort required to command.

He will take his place in our military history as a great and good man — a leader for all seasons.



Major General Albert H. Smith, Jr., U.S. Army, retired, was J-1, MACV, from July 1969 to March 1970. He also served in Vietnam with the 1st Infantry Division as assistant division commander and acting division commander. He is now Honorary Colonel of the 16th Infantry Regiment.

Combat Motivation

MAJOR ROBERT L. MAGINNIS

Lieutenant Eli L. Whitely was a platoon leader in the 3d Infantry Division in World War II. In December 1944 he was leading his platoon in savage house-to-house fighting through the fortress town of Sigolsheim, France. When his platoon came under intense mortar and machinegun fire, he responded by charging into a building alone and killing two enemy soldiers. Then he stormed into a second building, capturing eleven and killing two more, and into a third building, killing five and forcing twelve to surrender. These actions earned him the Medal of Honor.

When asked why he did these things, he said simply, "My motivation was to keep alive." It would appear, however, that there was more to it than that; in fact, he risked losing the very life he desperately wanted to preserve. (After all, his was not exactly a *safe* course of action.)

Understanding the actions of soldiers in combat is not a simple matter, because combat effectiveness appears to be more than the sum of its parts. We therefore need a holistic approach to understanding the subject — looking at the parts in relation to the whole. One such approach is to examine the interaction of three critical aspects of combat effectiveness — the battlefield itself, the technology we use on that battlefield, and the motivation of the soldiers fighting there.

Although Lieutenant Whitely's World War II battlefield was demanding, it pales in comparison with the one we can expect in the future. That battlefield will depend on initiative, depth, agility, and synchronization. Operations on it will be rapid, unpredictable, and violent. It will be characterized by significant dispersion, confusion, uncertainty, and unprecedented, discontinuous, rapid change. Past techniques that were based upon drill, rote, and continuous supervision will become obsolete, and the focus of decision and control will shift downward toward the squad and the platoon. It is at these levels that future wars will be won or lost.

As for technology, the nature of the future battle will be complicated by the rate at which technology changes. This evolution in deployment methods, associated hardware, and organization will continue to be unprecedented.

The qualitative superiority these innovative systems may provide cannot ensure victory in battle, however. They will be only as good as the soldiers who use them, and soldier performance is difficult to measure.

The problem is that neither the battlefield nor the technology we will use on it can be understood completely at any given time. This leaves us with the third aspect — combat motivation — as our best chance to influence future perfor-

mance. A proper understanding of combat motivation will allow us to anticipate the actions of our soldiers and to increase their effectiveness on the future battlefield.

Why do soldiers fight?

Several studies conducted in the past reveal a variety of reasons, and these findings provide a reference point for today's leaders to use in trying to understand how they can influence tomorrow's soldiers.

After the Spanish Civil War, 300 of the Americans who had volunteered for service in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade participated in a study entitled "Fear in Battle." These volunteers indicated that good leadership was what motivated them. They said that good leaders provided frequent instructions (especially in tight situations), were admired and respected by the men, were experienced, and saw that the soldiers were provided with food, shelter, and other amenities. Most of the men agreed that "knowing the morale of your outfit is high" makes better soldiers.

The soldiers also indicated that they were better fighters because of their fear that if they showed weakness they would endanger the lives of their friends. This was especially true when they were under fire. The study concluded that proper motivation is important in any learning process and that fear is a strong motive if it is working on the right side.

Later, after World War II, many combat veterans, when asked what was most important in keeping them going, named ending the task, solidarity with the group, thoughts of home, and a sense of duty and self-respect. The researcher concluded that the informal group served two functions in combat: It set and enforced group standards, and it supported and sustained the soldier in stressful situations he otherwise might not have been able to withstand.

Vietnam provided similar results. One young soldier said, "We fight for each other. We're really tight here. Nobody else cares for us." In his Vietnam biography *The Killing Zone,* Frederick Downs said, "My job as platoon leader was to control the spectrum of emotions, to guide the men to survival." He also said that "the company commander could command his company more effectively because he got to know the men and their weaknesses and strengths." This supports Colonel Ardant du Picq's assertion that "when soldiers know they have support they are better fighters."

Various attempts have been made to reduce these ideas on combat motivation to some sort of system that commanders and leaders might use to predict and somehow improve their soldiers' combat effectiveness. In fact, the Center for Army Leadership has adopted a combat motivation model for use in the Army's officer advanced courses.

The model consists of four parts — the soldier, his immediate task, his desired outcome, and the other people around him (his leaders, peers, and subordinates). In addition, the model includes three forces that affect these four parts — the influence of the others on the soldier, the value the soldier places on a particular outcome, and his confidence in his own ability to perform the task to the required standard (see sketch).

It may be useful to Infantry leaders to examine these interacting parts and analyze the three forces that influence them. For purposes of illustration, we will use Lieutenant Whitely's World War II situation.

The first part, the soldier, is more than just the man — it is the *whole* man, his personality and temperament, his training experiences, and more. To fully understand Whitely's actions on that fateful day, we would have to have some understanding of these things.

The second part, the soldier's immediate task, was, in Whitely's case, to halt the enemy's resistance. His minimum effective performance in that case had to include actions that would maintain positive control of the men and a decisiveness under fire that would result in the suppression of the hostile fire without undue risk to the platoon.

As for the soldier's desired outcome, Whitely said he was motivated by a desire to survive, but his actions did not appear to support this outcome. It is more likely that he connected his survival to the rapid termination of the task. Or his desired outcome may have been saving the lives of his men and keeping their respect and trust.

The fourth part of the combat motivation model is the role played by the others around a soldier — leaders, peers, and subordinates. Whitely may have risked his life because that is what infantry platoon leaders are supposed to do. Maybe he just did not want to let his commander and his soldiers down.

The first influencing force on a soldier also comes from these other people. They may persuade him to perform the required task or convince him that his performance (to standard) will lead to his desired outcome. In Whitely's situation, he had previously demonstrated his ability to clear buildings of enemy troops. It was not an unfamiliar situation. (He intuitively understood the connection between clearing the buildings and terminating the enemy's resistance.) Additionally, his previous exploits had established a precedent. His soldiers had grown accustomed to his initiative and decisiveness. Anything less would have been out of character for him. Whitely therefore placed himself into a complex relationship in which he was forced either to clear the buildings or to risk losing his credibility.

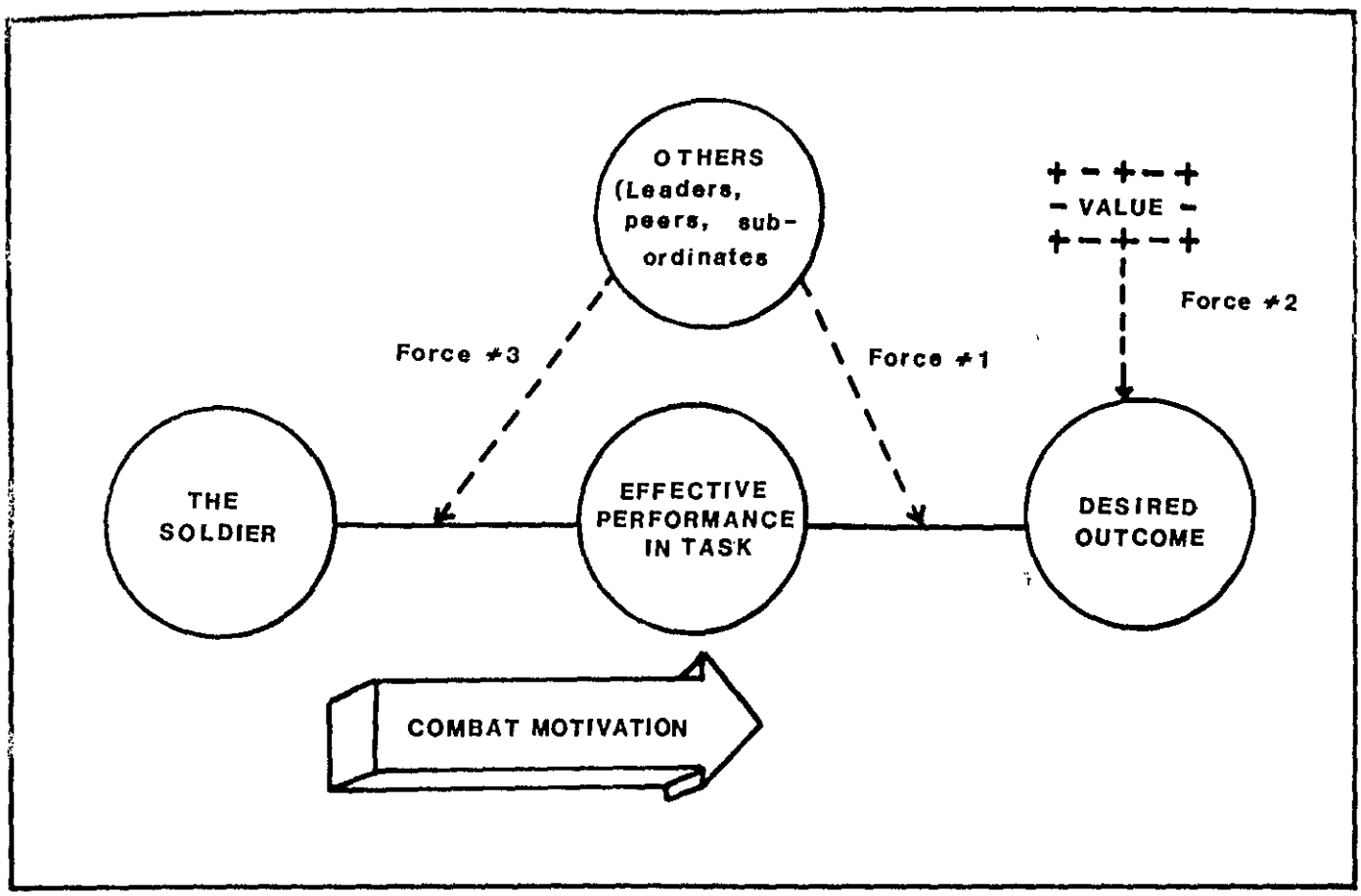
The second influence, the intrinsic value the soldier places on the desired outcome, is also strong. For Whitely this was the termination of the enemy's resistance. He understood from past experience that his combat prowess (his effective performance as an infantry platoon leader) would lead to the desired outcome. This influencing factor is essentially the result of all the pluses and minuses associated with personal actions and their connection to a valued outcome.

The third force, the soldier's confidence in his ability to perform his immediate task to standard, results from his past training experiences, encouragement from others, and his own assessment of the situation.

The combination of the four parts of the model and the three influencing forces explains why Whitely fought so hard.

But how can we take this model and the knowledge of motivation gleaned from earlier wars and apply them to our task of predicting and improving combat motivation among our soldiers today? There are several ways:

- We must take a new soldier and



Combat Motivation Model

equip him with high-quality training so that he will be confident in his abilities and his equipment. We must give him opportunities to act independently, to make decisions that support the accomplishment of his assigned tasks, and to become comfortable with taking the intiative.

• We must make sure this soldier understands what we expect of him. This begins with mundane matters and spills over to actions that lead to effective combat performance. We must not expect perfection at first but must encourage him as he learns to perform to our high standards.

• We must keep the soldier's attention focused on mission accomplishment, helping him to see that he can achieve his personal goals and the unit's goals at the same time and harmoniously. Persuading him to buy into the unit's goals is critical to this task.

• We must either influence the things he values or replace what he values with something we can influence. If he values time off, official recognition, or on-duty educational opportunities, then we must show him how these things are related to his performance and follow through by delivering the desired outcome in exchange for his effective performance.

• We must understand how important trust in his leaders is to him. Soldiers will follow us if our integrity is above reproach, if we are technically competent, and if we consistently demonstrate that we take care of him. Building trust takes a long time but losing it often takes no time at all. The key is consistency. The trust and confidence we earn today will follow us into battle tomorrow.

• We must try to build small teams and keep them stabilized as long as possible. The longer soldiers have worked together and the better they know one another when they get to the battlefield, the better they will fight. This is an unwritten principle of the profession.

If we consistently try to do these things, our ability to motivate our soldiers in combat will be simpler. We must continue to earn the trust of a soldier, keep him informed, provide for his needs and comforts as best we can, and listen to him. We must also set the example by keeping our own morale high. A well-practiced voice of authority when in contact with an enemy force will get results and maintain the soldier's confidence.

The success or failure of a small unit depends to a marked degree upon the leader and what he does. His job is to help the soldier anticipate, understand, and cope with danger and fear. The important thing is for a leader to control a soldier's fear and use it to advantage. A leader who understands why soldiers fight can capitalize on this understanding and motivate them to fight and win.

Maurice de Saxe said, "The human heart is the starting point in all matters pertaining to war." A proper understanding of motivation opens the door to a soldier's heart. Leaders who use their understanding to improve the combat effectiveness of their soldiers can bring excellence to the Army and victory to the battlefield.

Major Robert L. MacInnis is Chief of the Leadership Branch, Combined Arms and Tactics Department of the Infantry School. He is a 1973 graduate of the United States Military Academy and has attended the Naval Postgraduate School.