HISTORICAL TEWT

CAPTAIN DEREK A. MILLER

There are many theories concerning combat effectiveness and the various factors that lead to it. One of the simplest and most universally accepted equations proposes that combat effectiveness equals capability plus will. Certainly a unit that has the capability to accomplish its mission and also the will to fight stands a good chance of being effective.

Unit training focuses on activities that make units fit to fight. We train to teach tactical and technical skills and to build cohesion, trust, and esprit de corps, thus developing capability and will. One technique that can be used to tie the training of capability and will together is a historical TEWT, a tactical exercise without troops conducted on the ground where an actual historic battle was fought.

A TEWT makes the greatest possible use of resources by allowing unit leaders to practice their planning and fine-tune their command functions without having their troops waste time standing around waiting. Thus, by the time they conduct actual full-scale training exercises, the leaders have had an opportunity to become accustomed to their responsibilities, and they can then shift the focus of training to their units and soldiers.

A *historical* TEWT gives the participants an opportunity to study success and failure in actual battle as well as to develop and wargame their own plans.

The 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry, part of the 1st Infantry Division Forward in West Germany, where I served as a lieutenant, recognized that a TEWT was a valuable tool for professional development to help leaders learn tactics and the art of war.

In April 1984 the battalion's officers conducted a historic TEWT at the site of the World War II battle of Schmidt. For three days the participants studied the battle, walked the ground, and developed modern tactical solutions to the challenges leaders of the 28th Infantry Division faced there four decades earlier.

Two months later, in June 1984, the battalion served as the honor guard at Omaha Beach for the 40th Anniversary ceremony of the D-Day landings. This gave members of the battalion a chance to walk the same landing sites the 16th Infantry Regiment had used exactly 40 years earlier. With this opportunity came an idea: While still in Normandy the new battalion commander and the battalion executive officer, who had

organized the Schmidt exercise, discussed the idea that a historical TEWT could be even more productive and interesting if it were used to study battlefields where our own unit, the 16th Infantry, had fought. They felt that studying campaigns in which the regiment had participated would help build esprit de corps and a sense of pride through identification with the unit's history.

The 16th Infantry fought in Europe in both world wars: During World War I, it was the first U.S. unit to fight in France, while during World War II it conducted amphibious landings and fought in North Africa and Sicily and from Normandy through France, Belgium, and Germany to the end of the war. Since the 1st Battalion of the regiment was near the northern European battlefields, a historic TEWT was a realistic goal.

The first week of June 1985 was chosen as the time for the historical TEWT. The stated purpose would be to give the battalion's officers an opportunity to study several battles in which the regiment had participated, to examine the tactics and terrain on the actual battlefields, and to apply the lessons learned to modern-day tactics in Europe and our own wartime mission. We focused on three battles of World War II: Mons, Aachen, and Hamich.

The first, fought between 2 and 5 September 1944, was a classic pursuit battle that caught five German divisions in a pocket just south of Mons, Belgium. German losses in personnel killed and equipment destroyed were crippling, and 25,000 prisoners were captured including three general officers.

Aachen, October 1944, was the first battle of the war fought on German soil. The 1st Infantry Division was engaged in several weeks of bitter house-to-house fighting in the streets of the city.

The third battle, which was fought between 16 and 19 November 1944, took place in the woods south of the village of Hamich, on the northern edge of the Hurtgen Forest just east of Aachen. There, the regiment fought one of its most costly battles, attacking German positions that were fortified with bunkers and an internal trench system. After taking the village, the regiment held against repeated counterattacks for three days without resupply or reinforcement, eventually resorting to hand-to-hand combat to repulse the final German counterattack. For their actions at Hamich, all three battalions were awarded Presidential Unit Citations, the 7th, 8th, and 9th awarded to regimental units during the war.

All the battlefields were within two hours of one another and within a day's drive from our kaserne. And because Mons is close to Waterloo, we decided to include that historic battlefield as well, studying the terrain and the principles of war that had determined the fate of Europe more than 170 years ago.

PLANNING

Once we knew what we were going to do and where, the next step was to begin the planning phase. An interested lieutenant was chosen to be the trip's officer in charge (OIC) and told to pick a team of lieutenants to help with the project. The major tasks that required the team's immediate attention were arranging billeting, transportation, and messing facilities for the group of about 40 and requesting funds to support these requirements. We planned six days, including travel time, to visit the battlefields and to conduct ceremonies honoring the soldiers of the regiment who had been killed during the three World War II battles.

The OIC's tasks also involved coordinating through the proper military and civilian channels to ensure that all requirements for conducting a military exercise in a foreign country were satisfied. This included the protocol arrangements for the memorial ceremonies at Henri-Chapelle Cemetery in Belgium and at 1st Division monuments at Mons and on the German-

Belgian border. Protocol was coordinated with the U.S. Protocol Office, Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers, Europe (SHAPE) and with the U.S. Embassy in Brussels. In addition, active and reserve Belgian military units in the area were asked to participate in the ceremonies, which they agreed to do.

Once the initial planning had been completed, the OIC contacted the 16th Infantry's Honorary Colonel of the Regiment (HCOR), Major General (Retired) Albert H. Smith, Jr., to ask him to assist in our historical research and to attend the TEWT. General Smith had joined the 16th before World War II and took part in every one of its campaigns during the war. During the Mons, Aachen, and Hamich battles, he served initially as a battalion executive officer and then as the regimental S-3. He was in a position to help immeasurably with the TEWT.

We approached the learning process in the following manner: After the selection of the battles to be studied, the OIC divided the requirements among the units in the battalion, making each of the companies responsible for researching and preparing a presentation on a particular battle. Each company commander appointed a lieutenant as the project officer, who became responsibile for collecting lesson materials, developing a lesson plan, and delegating specific portions of the presentation to other officers in the company. The project officers had about five weeks to prepare their presentations. During this period, the assistant OIC held weekly supervisory meetings to help the project officers with any difficulties and to ensure quality control.

Reconnaissance before the exercise was essential. Each of the individual battle project officers visited the site of the battle he was to analyze. Because we could spend only one day at a battlefield, the project officer had to determine what parts of the battle would be most interesting and provide the best learning experience.

This initial reconnaissance effort familiarized us with the areas and gave us insights into how to conduct the TEWT at each location. At Hamich, for example, we found that the original German trench line was still intact, including some of the individual fighting positions along it. The forest where the battle of Hamich was fought was still littered with the implements of war. Both during our reconnaissance and later during the actual TEWT, we found evidence of the fierce fighting that took place there. Some of the battle positions still had machinegun ammunition, expended and non-expended, some still linked together, lying around them. We found artillery shell casings, and even a mortar projectile embedded in a tree.

With this information, the battle project officers were able to plan the itinerary for their presentations and to organize the way the battles would be studied. Each project officer conducted historical research and, if actual regimental operations orders were not available, prepared orders and operations overlays from historical accounts and the regimental history. (The project officers used these orders in their presentations later during the TEWT.)

VOLUNTEERS

While we were in the process of conducting the reconnaissance, the HCOR contacted the battalion with information concerning a group of Belgian nationals who had served in the regiment during the war in one capacity or another. The information, *received through the Society of the First Division*, included the address of one of the Belgian volunteers, and this contact

TAKING THE MYSTERY OUT OF HISTORY

One of the reasons behind the implementation of the regimental system is to instill in soldiers a sense of pride through an identification with their unit and its history.

When the 16th Infantry Regiment's Honorary Colonel, Major General Albert H. Smith, Jr., visits the units of the regiment, he conducts professional development sessions for officers and NCOs. His discussions include the history of the 16th Infantry, its contributions and sacrifices, the origin of its traditions, and the story behind its awards and decorations. He also likes to talk to the soldiers about the regiment's history and that of the 1st Infantry Division in general. He calls his approach "taking the mystery out of history" and finds the privates his best audience.

Other regiments might want to adopt a similar program to acquaint young soldiers with what the regiment has done in the past.

For his program, General Smith developed a single-page historical condensation of the 16th Infantry Regiment's service from 1917 through the Vietnam War—seven campaigns in World War I, eight in World War II, and 11 in Vietnam. From this condensation, he then made up 21 questions with which to challenge soldiers at professional development sessions and during enlisted promotion boards. Basic facts are stressed, not details or hard-to-remember names.

The regiment's Vietnam service, for example, is summed up as follows:

The 2d Battalion, 16th Infantry, assigned to the 1st Infantry Division's 2d Brigade, sailed from San Francisco for South Vietnam on 25 June 1965. By fall, 1st Battalion, 16th and other Division forces had joined in the fighting. Three brigades commanded nine battalions of infantry: 1-2, 2-2, 1-16, 2-16, 1-18, 2-18, 1-26, 1-28, and 2-28. They fought eleven hard campaigns from 1965 to 1970. Finally, on 3 April 1970, Division colors were furled at Di An, South Vietnam for airlift home. Unfurling those colors at Fort Riley in mid-April signaled the return of the Big Red One and its reorganization as a mechanized infantry division.

The quiz on the Vietnam era includes eight questions, such as: Which of the two battalions of the 16th Infantry arrived in Vietnam first, and how did it get there? When did the other battalion join in the fighting?

In his discussions, of course, General Smith fills in the gaps with a description of key battles and fighting heroes.

He says that a simple program such as this one impresses the soldiers with why they wear certain things on their uniforms—Presidential Unit Citations, for example—and why they can be proud of their unit. This enables a soldier to go home to his relatives, some of whom may be veterans of these wars, and talk intelligently about what his unit did.

General Smith believes strongly that because they know that other young soldiers before them rose to the occasion and succeeded in battle, today's soldiers can be confident that they, too, will do well. *EDITOR*

Aachen, 1944

brought a whole new dimension to the exercise.

Within days of his receiving our letter, several Belgians who had served with either the 16th Infantry Regiment or the 1st Infantry Division during the period we intended to study contacted the battalion. Some had lived in the various areas during the battles and had helped treat casualties and clear away destroyed equipment. Many had billeted U.S. soldiers in their homes. Still others had been members of the resistance who aided the U.S. Army in numerous ways. Some had volunteered for service in the U.S. Army and had served as front line soldiers or members of intelligence units.

This group of Belgians helped us greatly with our coordination and logistics. During the reconnaissance of Mons, they also provided us with the original 1st Infantry Division operations orders and overlays of the battle from their archives, as well as period maps that allowed us to see how the battlefield had changed since September 1944. Additionally, since several of them had fought in the battles to be studied, and since they had lived on the terrain all their lives, they were familiar with the course of the battles. They accompanied us on the TEWT to act as guides and to provide historical insights that otherwise would not have been available.

With the help of these Belgians, SHAPE, and several other outside sources, the OIC had completed virtually all coordination and arrangements the week before the TEWT, including billeting, transportation, and meals. The battle project officers had collected lesson materials and completed their reconnaissance. Each project officer distributed historical packets to be read and studied by the TEWT participants either before or during the trip; the packets contained both background material and a description of the conduct of the battles.

When General Smith arrived three days before the TEWT, he and the advance party—consisting of the battalion commander, the OIC, and the individual battle project officers—proceeded directly to the exercise area. There, they completed their arrangements and practiced the presentations, with the HCOR conducting the critiques.

When the main body arrived, everything was ready. The battle project officers, under the supervision of the OIC, took control of the group and began their presentations. Every evening after dinner, the battle project officer for the next day's terrain walk, along with other officers from his company, presented a formal briefing. This briefing included the events leading up to the conflict, the enemy intelligence estimate, friendly and

enemy dispositions, and the operations order (OPORD) that was given to the 16th Infantry leaders in 1944 before the attack. Additionally, the project officers distributed overlays and 1:50,000 maps of the area for the units to use in developing their plans and in writing orders, just as they would do in a regular field exercise.

The learning process for the TEWT was designed to work in a logical sequence, teaching basic principles and training leaders to the next echelon of command. Company commanders served as the battalion commanders within the 16th Infantry, and their lieutenants served as the company commanders. The company commanders received the regimental OPORD and wrote the battalion OPORDs. Their platoon leaders received these orders and developed company OPORDs.

Each command group was permitted to reconnoiter forward to the same point their counterparts would have been able to do in 1944. Company commanders supervised the preparation of orders in their groups. Each leader had to be prepared to brief, as a minimum, a complete scheme of maneuver as well as a fire support plan, an obstacle plan, and graphic control measures. Company groups discussed plans among themselves and prepared to brief them the next day.

On the following day, all TEWT participants met to discuss and critique the solutions with regard to their tactical soundness—on the basis of both the historical perspective and the modern tactical considerations.

The next step of the learning process was for the group to execute the plan by walking the ground, with the project officer explaining the actual conduct of the battle and the actual enemy situation encountered in 1944. At the site of each action, the battalion commander selected members of the group to explain how, within the tactical framework of their order, they would have dealt with the situation, performed actions on contact, and continued the mission.

For additional historical perspective, at certain specific spots where noteworthy actions took place, the HCOR related his recollections of the actual battle. These historical recollections took several forms. Some were his own, while others came from the regimental history, perhaps in the form of a Medal of Honor citation or a distinguished unit citation. Additionally, the HCOR had contacted several battle participants before the TEWT began and asked each of them to submit a brief statement discussing the situation as it actually developed.

One of these men was Technical Sergeant (Retired) Jake Lindsey, the only living Medal of Honor recipient of the 16th Infantry, who related his memories of the Hamich period by telephone to the HCOR.

General Smith read these various historical recollections at the appropriate spot on the ground to help the TEWT participants understand the real situation and the conditions under which these men had fought.

The group of Belgians that travelled with us provided some unique perspectives as well. They had in their possession photographic displays of the Battle of Mons taken in September 1944. During the terrain walk portion of the exercise, this group pointed out specific actions that took place in certain areas and showed us pictures of what it looked like during the battle or shortly thereafter. Sometimes a local resident who saw our group would come out to talk and tell us about the battle as it took place on his farm or in the streets in front of his house.

One Belgian we met, who had been in his teens at the time of the battle of Mons, told us how he had gone into his basement at the beginning of the battle. Twenty-seven hours later, when the explosions and noise stopped, he had come out to find masses of equipment and vehicles on the road in front of his house, all utterly destroyed. His farm and the surrounding area are still littered with some of the debris.

As our group followed the footsteps of the 1st Infantry Division and the 16th Infantry Regiment across these European battlefields, we also stopped to pay tribute to those who fought, suffered, and died in the service of their country. Throughout Europe there are military monuments to the memory of Americans who sacrificed their lives for the greater good. At our two monuments we paused briefly to pay our respects, along with distinguished local nationals and Belgian military detachments.

We also visited the Henri-Chapelle Cemetery. Walking through it was in itself a lesson in history. The dates on the headstones bore witness to the terrible toll of each battle. Recurring dates, such as 16 November 1944 (Hamich), were evidence of the fierce fighting that took place in each location and the price paid for victory.

In the study of military history, there is an inseparable relationship between understanding the tactical action and appreciating the cost of the outcome. Studying the battles by walking the ground on which they were fought and remembering the men who fought them added a perspective to the learning process that could not have been gained in any other way. This, too, is the story of the regiment, a part that we felt should never be forgotten.

The goal of the entire exercise was learning and professional development. Although cities expand, roads improve, the density of units on the battlefield change, and the range and power of weapon systems increase, many of the lessons of the past remain constant. Just as individuals become better leaders by learning from their own experience, so too can we become better leaders by learning from the experience of others.

Most military educational institutions attach great importance to the study of past conflicts, but the additional benefit of being able to see the ground on which a battle was fought is also important to leaders who are responsible for maneuvering their units, using terrain effectively, and leading soldiers.

Although not every U.S. unit will be able to conduct a TEWT on a battlefield its own regiment or division fought on, most can still conduct historical TEWTs of battles other units fought, just as we did at Schmidt. The TEWT itself is still a valuable exercise for training tactical and technical skills; individuals conducting these exercises together become a more competent, confident, and cohesive group within the unit, tying together capability and will and making a more effective unit.

Captain Derek A. Miller served with the 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment as a rifle platoon leader, scout platoon leader, and support platoon leader. Since then, he has completed the Infantry Officer Advanced Course and is now assistant S-4, 2d Brigade, 24th Infantry Division, at Fort Stewart. He is a 1982 graduate of the United States Military Academy.