

# ‘SERVE TO LEAD’

‘Sound leadership - like true love, to which I suspect it is closely related - is all powerful. It can overcome the seemingly impossible and its effect on both leader and led is profound and lasting’.

Sydney Jary MC 18 Platoon.

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## Foreword

Serve To Lead. Those three words that appear on your cap-badge are the motto of Sandhurst. They tell you a lot about where you are, and about what it means to be an officer. If this short book helps you to understand that, then it will have achieved its purpose. This is the new revised edition of the anthology of sayings and writings from people who have understood that very well indeed, including some of the most distinguished officers that the British Army has produced, and compiled by the staff of the Department of War Studies here at Sandhurst. You will find in it some passages that are thousands of years old, extolling the eternal truths of soldiering, and some from people that you will meet and talk with, possibly while you are still here. We give a copy to each of our new officer cadets, for you to dip into and read, and to take away with you when you leave to start your own career as an officer. By the time that you have left Sandhurst you will have read this book through probably several times. You will find much in it that is helpful and inspiring, and probably some things with which you will disagree as well. Make a point of re-reading it just before your passing out parade, and see if you still agree with yourself when you first arrived. Passages and phrases that you have read in it will echo in your mind almost every day in your career as an officer, however long and distinguished that might be, and they will usually come to you when you need them most. **Serve To Lead.**

## *Serve To Lead - Introduction to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*

*Shortly after the amalgamation of the Royal Military College Sandhurst and the Royal Military Academy Woolwich in 1947, the new academic staff compiled an anthology designed to introduce cadets to the complexities of military leadership. They chose as the title the motto of the new Academy, "Serve To Lead". This was a paradox, but one which was immediately understood by a generation which had grown up in the First World War, had suffered economic privation in the Depression, had fought in the Second World War, and had then voted en masse in 1945 for Atlee's Labour Party. By the end of the twentieth century, upwards of 50,000 British officers had received copies. To many it became a treasured possession, an old friend to whom one could turn in times of need. Indeed, more than one very senior officer referred to it as 'the Bible'.*

*But like the Bible, by the beginning of the third millennium Serve to Lead was beginning to show its age. It contained extracts from histories popular in the 1940s, but subsequently shown to be factually flawed, written by men like Sir John Fortescue and Sir Arthur Bryant. Also included were extracts from radio broadcasts made by generals like Slim, Montgomery and Harding to help Britain through post war austerity. In language redolent of the time before the First World War, they exhorted the youth of the nation to 'play up, play up and play the game'. Slim, for one, had made these broadcasts out of a sense of duty, but was a little embarrassed by the result. He confided to a friend that it was 'all jolly hockey-sticks' and 'carry on St Hildas'; it is difficult to believe that men with Montgomery's and Harding's acerbic wit did not feel the same. Perhaps most importantly, Serve to Lead failed to address an extensive critique of military leadership which had begun in the middle of the nineteenth century, and had been reinforced by disasters of the Boer War, the First World War and the early years of the Second World War. Clearly the editors of the anthology hoped that if they did not afford the critics space, they would be ignored.*

*The core of Serve to Lead, the distilled experience of some of the best soldiers Britain has ever produced, is pure gold and has been kept intact. Men like Slim, Montgomery, Harding and Hackett fought in actions of an intensity and commanded formations of a size which it is improbable (though not impossible) that any British commander will see again. Much of Fortescue, Bryant and*

*some others has been discarded. Their place has been taken by the best of recent scholarship, for example, the letters of Ivor Maxse, the most brilliant trainer of men Britain produced during the First World War, the diary of Alan Brooke, the CIGS for much of the Second World War and the primary architect of victory, and, at the other end of the military hierarchy the recollections of Lieutenant Sydney Jary, MC, the only platoon commander in British 2<sup>nd</sup> Army to survive from Normandy to the German surrender in command of the same platoon. The new edition has also included the thoughts of officers who fought in the campaigns, both conventional and unconventional, of the second half of the twentieth century, men like Julian Thompson, John Kiszely, Hew Pike and Rupert Smith. It has also extended the range of the extracts. The editors of the original edition failed to include a single instance of women exercising leadership, even though there were many examples to hand, SOE operatives like Odette Churchill and Nancy Wake. It seems equally perverse that an anthology on British military leadership should not include the thoughts of Oliver Cromwell, George Anson, Sir John Moore, Ernest Shackleton and several others of like stature, all of whom have many interesting things to say on the subject.. So, too, does Xenophon, whose experiences recounted in his Anabasis, written at the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> Century BC, leap across the centuries. Many of the problems faced by Xenophon in the mountains of Anatolia are exactly the same as those faced by young officers in the mountains of Afghanistan at the dawn of the third millennium AD.*

*Having just emerged from an era of total war, and expecting the outbreak of the Third World War at any moment, the editors of the original anthology selected extracts which dealt almost exclusively with behaviour on the battlefield, or directly related to sustaining forces on the battlefield. The material chosen for the new anthology reflects the much more complex world of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Like their predecessors the officers of today require physical courage, but just as important, and much more difficult, is moral courage. The anthology includes examples of individuals who placed their careers on the line in defence of a greater principle, but there are just as many examples of individuals who failed the test. The reader will quickly discover that a major difference between the anthologies is that the new edition balances the positive with the negative. Indeed, examples of what not to do are sometimes the more important.*

*During the past fifty years the motto Serve to Lead, and all it stands for, has been an object of ridicule for some sociologists, psychologists, and social historians. For example, the author of the Peter Principle, the Canadian psychologist Professor Lawrence Peter, once queried “serve to lead” with the question “Why should the ability to lead depend on the ability to follow? You might as well speak of the ability to swim depending on the ability to sink”. “Serve to lead” is, of course, a paradox, but it is a paradox which should be understood by every officer cadet after each has completed the first command task on Barossa. If cadets have not understood the meaning of the paradox, they have no business aspiring to be officers in the British Army.*

# LEADERSHIP

‘Leadership is a process by which a single aim and unified action are imparted to the herd. Not surprisingly, it is most in evidence in times or circumstances of danger or challenge. Leadership is not imposed like authority. It is actually welcomed and wanted by the led’.

Correlli Barnett Address to the Army Staff College 1977.

## A Simple Truth?

Discussion of leadership is so often overloaded with vague but emotive ideas that one is hard put to it to nail the concept down. To cut through the panoply of such quasi-moral and unexceptionable associations as “patriotism”, “play up and play the game”, the “never-asking-your-men-do-something-you-wouldn’t-do-yourself” formula, “not giving in (or up)”, the “square-jaw-frank-eyes-steadfast-gaze” formula, and the “if... you’ll be a man” recipe, one comes to the simple truth that leadership is no more than exercising such an influence upon others that they tend to act in concert towards achieving a goal which they might not have achieved so readily had they been left to their own devices”.

Norman Dixon, *On the Psychology of Military Incompetence* (1975).

## Clearly Expressed

‘Leadership is the phenomenon that occurs when the influence of A (the leader) causes B (the group) to perform C (goal-directed behaviour) when B would not have performed C had it not been for the influence of A’.

WH Henderson *Cohesion: The Human Element in Combat* (1985).

## Or Not So Simple? And Not So Clear?

Unlike characters in novels and films, most men react nervously to real battle conditions. Discipline and regimental pride are supports but, in decisive moments of great danger, the grip of the leader on the led is paramount. Infantry section and platoon commanders must possess the minds and hearts of their soldiers. Strength of character is not enough. Successful leadership in battle, although complex and intangible, always seemed to me to depend on two factors. Firstly, soldiers must have confidence in their leaders' professional ability and, secondly, they must trust them as men. It helps, too, if a leader has the reputation of being lucky.

Sydney Jary MC 18 Platoon (1987).

## Leadership and Management

We do not in the Army talk of “management”, but of “leadership”. This is significant. There is a difference between leadership and management. The leader and the men who follow him represent one of the oldest, most natural and most effective of all human relationships. The manager and those he manages are a later product, with neither so romantic nor so inspiring a history. Leadership is of the spirit, compounded of personality and vision: its practice is an art. Management is of the mind, more a matter of accurate calculation, of statistics, of methods, timetables and routine; its practice is a science. Managers are necessary; leaders are essential.

Address to the Australian Institute of Management 4 April 1957 by Field Marshal Sir William Slim Governor General of Australia.

## In A Nutshell

Fixed (things) - management

Variables (people) - leadership

Major General Julian Thompson, Commanding 3 Command Brigade in the Falklands Conflict 1982.

## Being a Leader - The Desiderata 401BC

When on active service the commander must prove himself conspicuously careful in the matter of forage, quarters, water-supply, outposts, and all other requisites; forecasting the future and keeping ever a wakeful eye in the interest of those under him; and in case of any advantage won, the truest gain which the head of affairs can reap is to share with his men the profits of success.

Indeed, to put the matter in a nutshell, there is small risk a general will be regarded with contempt by those he leads, if, whatever he may have to preach, he shows himself best able to perform.

If, further, the men shall see in their commander, one who, with the knowledge how to act, has force of will and cunning to make them get the better of the enemy; and, if, further, they have the notion well into their heads that this same leader may be trusted not to lead them recklessly against the foe, without the help of Heaven, or despite the auspices - I say, you have a list of virtues which make those under his command the more obedient to their ruler.

Xenophon, Kyrour Anabasis (400 BC).

## Being A Leader - The Desiderata - In All Times

Perfect your military knowledge, study the use of weapons, their tactical handling, the enemy's character and methods, and the way to make use of ground.

Study the men under your command. Know them well and be known to them. Gain their confidence by your knowledge, energy and skill, and by your interest in their welfare. Always be cheerful with them, however you may feel. Teach yourself to think out reasoned appreciations leading to clever but uncomplicated plans quickly but unhurriedly.

Study methods of deception and make full use of them. Always aim at misleading the enemy. Always seek surprise. Keep your object clearly before you. Concentrate your efforts and resources at the decisive point. Always think well ahead.

Work out the best methods of control in different tactical situations. Practise them constantly. Study the situation carefully. Don't waste any time. Make up your mind and stick to it. Get out your orders quickly. Make certain that everyone clearly knows what you intend to be done.

Maintain the initiative. Make opportunities and seize them at once. Don't wait for them to come. Be prepared to take risks, but don't be foolhardy. Know your commander's intention and act in accordance with it. Don't wait for orders. Inaction is always wrong.

Never take counsel of your fears. Think of the enemy's difficulties and how you can take advantage of them. Remember that it is willpower that wins. Never relax your efforts until victory is won. Attend to the comfort of the troops before you think of your own.

Be loyal to your superiors and to your subordinates. Express your views clearly and frankly, but when a decision has been reached support it fully, and stop all criticism. Never take shelter behind others when things for which you are responsible have gone wrong.

Refrain from jealousy, resentment and self-seeking. Be tactful. Never make friction. Be thoughtful and considerate, but maintain firm discipline. Never order troops to do what you are not prepared to do yourself. Never give an unnecessary order. Never overlook failure to carry one out.

Keep fit yourself and make certain that your men do, too. Keep your own nerves under control and study your men's.

Last of all remember that success in war depends more than anything else on the will to win.

Brigadier Maunsell, an extract from *The RMA Sandhurst Study Morale, Leadership, Discipline* (1947).

### Three Types of Leader

'Institutional leaders, who maintain their position by virtue of the established social prestige attached to their office.

Dominant leaders, who maintain their position by virtue of their personal capacity to impress and dominate their followers.

Persuasive leaders, who maintain their position by virtue of the personal capacity to express and persuade their followers.

FC Bartlett, *Psychology and the Soldier* (1927).

## A LEADER - NOT A PARAGON

I said that leadership was concerned with getting people to do things. What I meant was getting them “To do things willingly”. What then must there be to a leader if he is to secure this willing acceptance of what he wants? He must be able to offer to those under him what they need. First of all they need direction in the execution of a common enterprise. But they have other needs and these of course will vary. It may be courage when they are afraid. It may be perception when they are muddled and confused. He must give them this. But above all, he must be able to take upon himself some part of their trouble and so help to secure their release from a burden which can be intolerable. He must be the possessor of qualities which are relevant to the task with which his men are concerned, skills and qualities which they respect. Even at the lowest level of military leadership the leader may not have all the relevant skills. It does not matter: what the group wants is a leader not a paragon.

He must have understanding. It is worth remembering that military practice is group practice. Many of the military forms which look so unnecessary or even absurd, the worship of regimental totems, the eccentricities of dress and custom, the cultivation of a separate identity for the group - these have been developed and are still dedicated precisely to the creation and maintenance of that coherence on which the effective performance of a group under pressure depends. The leader must realise this.

He must be able to manage fear, first in himself for if he cannot then his leadership must begin to fail: but in others also for otherwise they may collapse. He must also be able to manage failure as well as success, for failure is seldom final and the man helped on from one failure may well fail no more.

The personal qualities required are not found everywhere. A few people are born with them but too few, for the Army as for any other enterprise where leadership is wanted. Men who might be leaders have therefore to be sought out, and then trained and helped to form the habit of acting as the leader should.

I would add only this. A man really only gets a full response from the men he leads by something approaching a complete fusion of his own identify with the whole that he and they together form. This demands a great deal of the leader.

General Sir John Hackett C-in-C British Army of the Rhine February 1968.  
(Transcript of BBC broadcast Looking for Leadership, February 1968).

## THE MANY FORMS OF LEADERSHIP

There are some people who believe that leadership is something which is inborn, or which you acquire automatically at a public school; but neither of those things is true. There are certain fundamental qualities which affect leadership and which depend to a very large extent on upbringing and the moral and spiritual values which you learn in your family and in your environment as a young man; but there is no special way, nor is there any special cast or class, which has the prerogative of leadership.

There are many forms of leadership. Political parties have their leaders; every big organisation in industry or commerce, all have their leaders; and, at the other end of the scale, so do dance bands, and so do gangs of thieves and smugglers. There are many qualities that apply equally to every type of leader, but you and I are concerned with one particular type of leadership - to my mind the highest type of all - and that is leadership on the battlefield; and I believe it to be of the highest type because it has to be exercised under conditions of great difficulty and considerable danger. I would like you to be quite clear about the conditions under which you will have to exercise leadership. You will frequently be tired. You may also be cold and wet, and hungry, and thirsty. You may be dripping with sweat, or you may be freezing with cold. You won't know precisely what is going on; you won't know exactly where the enemy is; you certainly won't know what he is going to do, or what his capabilities are of doing anything. You may not know where your own people are, or what they are going to do. To put it briefly, you have got to be able to exercise leadership in conditions of fatigue and fear, uncertainty and ignorance, and often in isolation. That is what makes it extremely difficult, and that is why leadership on the battlefield calls, in my view, for the very highest qualities.

Now, you have got a good deal to help you. You have got the comradeship of your men and, I hope their confidence; you have the traditions and the reputation of the Regiment or Corps to which you have the honour to belong; and, above all, you have the knowledge that what you have to do, however difficult and dangerous it may be, you are doing as your duty in the service of your Queen and your country, and even above that you have the knowledge of your duty to God. So that you have many beliefs and factors to help you in this particularly difficult job, and it is always as well to remember that when you talk about the difficulties.

Many qualities are required in a leader. Different people have different views about which are the more important. In my opinion there are five outstanding - mental and physical, moral and spiritual - qualities without which you cannot hope to be successful and a good leader on the battlefield. The first of those qualities is a mental and physical one, and that is fitness - *absolute fitness* of mind and body. If your brain is not clear, you cannot control it and make it think logically and quickly and come to sound conclusions: then you cannot make the plans or the decisions that are required of a leader of men in battle. If your body is not absolutely fit so that you can force out of it that last ounce of effort that is needed to carry through your job, or to achieve success - well, you won't succeed. So absolute fitness of mind and body is essential.

Then I would say that you have got to have *complete integrity*. You have got to be honest, not only with yourself but with the men you lead and the people with whom you work; and honesty and integrity are things that you cannot compromise with - you cannot alter; if you do, you will lose confidence and you will not be able to lead. You must have complete integrity.

Next after that - not in any order of priority, but this is how I have put them down to keep them in my own mind - there is an *enduring courage*. Pretty well everyone can be brave for a few minutes. Most of us can, if we steel ourselves to it, take one plunge, or make one decision, or incur one risk. But the sort of courage you must have to lead on the battlefield is an enduring courage, and one that will go on when other people falter; one that will enable you to do what you know to be right, irrespective of the danger or the difficulty, often contrary to the advice of well-meaning friends.

Then you must have *daring initiative*. Initiative means doing right away what you might, if you had time, think of doing a few minutes later. If you wait for things to happen to you, they will happen all right - and here I am quoting the words of my predecessor, also spoken here: they will happen to you, but they won't be what you like, and they certainly won't bring you success. Initiative means seeing at once - and very quickly - what needs to be done making up your mind to do it, and then seeing it through right to the bitter end.

Then you must have *undaunted will-power*. The will-power is the motive power; it is what enables you to make yourself fit in mind and body; to produce in you - in your heart - the courage, the enduring courage that I spoke of; to give you the courage to do your duty and to make the sacrifice that may be called from you. It is the will-power that forces you to take the initiative, to make the plan, to do what is required, and to see it through: and that will-power must be "undaunted", it must never allow itself to be overcome or subdued. It is the will-power that is superior, that can wrest victory in the teeth of odds - that is the type of will-power that has got to be developed in a leader on the battlefield.

Now I would like you to notice not only the qualities that I have mentioned, but the adjectives I have applied to them, because in those adjectives are implied a great many of the other qualities. I spoke of "absolute" fitness, of "complete" integrity, of "enduring" courage, of "bold, daring initiative", and of "undaunted" will-power; and there is a great deal of meaning in the adjectives as well as in the nouns which I would like you to remember.

There are other requirements that are needed as well. There are many of them, but there are three that I would like to mention to you here this afternoon. The first is *knowledge*. If you are to have the courage to take the initiative, to produce the will-power that is needed, you must have knowledge. You must know more than those under your command - a good deal more. You must know the power and the capabilities of the weapons at your disposal. You must know how the other resources that you can rely on to help you can best be used. You must know how much you can ask of your men. You must know what the enemy's capabilities are. You must know how best all arms can cooperate and combine to gain success on the battlefield. You must know how

to use the ground and any other aids there may be. You must know what support you can count on from the air and other supporting weapons. All that requires a great deal of study and thought, and practice and experience.

The next quality that I wish to mention is *judgement*. You have got to have judgement. You have got to be able to assess values, and assess them quickly and under difficult circumstances, and that calls for judgement, and judgement is only learned by experience and practice. You will never learn to judge and to assess value if you are afraid of making mistakes - never. So don't be afraid of making mistakes. You will find the principles of war are frequently in conflict in any particular problem which you may be faced, and you have to weigh up and decide which in the particular circumstances is the more important of the principles - which you can stick to, which you can discard - and that needs judgement. That judgement only comes from knowledge, practice and experience.

The third thing I would like to mention this afternoon is the *team spirit*, because you cannot get success on the battlefield by yourself; you have got to work with other people. You have got, in the first place, to get the full confidence of the men under your command; you have got to train them to work as a team, and you have got to lead them as a team leader. Then your team has to fit in with other teams, and so on all the way up, and throughout the whole business of life, and training, and war. The Army - throughout every part of it - has got to work as a number of teams, and these teams have got to work together to one common end, and so the team spirit becomes of supreme importance: and it is only as a member - as a leader - of a well-trained, confident, highly skilled team that you can exercise successful leadership on the battlefield.

Success in battle really comes from a combination of the skill and daring of the leader and the skill and confidence of the led, and we, the British nation, have produced in the past many great and splendid leaders. The one that is outstanding in my mind as an example of what I have been trying to say to you this afternoon in regard to skill and daring and confidence is Nelson. You will wonder why I have quoted a sailor to an audience of soldiers, but it doesn't matter what service he comes from - the three Services have got to work together. If you study Nelson's battles you will see that in every case he gained his victory by his skill, his knowledge, his boldness, and by the confidence that everyone who served

under him had in his judgement and in his decisions: and that is the standard at which we have all got to aim to obtain victory in battle.

There is one other thing that I would like to say to you. As British officers, you will never have all you want, all you need. You will be short of this, or that, or the other. Sometimes you will be short of men; at other times your equipment or weapons may not be as good as you think they ought to be, nor will you have as many as you would like. You may be short of ammunition. You may also be short of food and water, or other necessary things. When these circumstances arise - as they will do often throughout your service, both in peace and war - there is only one motto, and that is to make certain that you do the very best you can with what you have got. Don't bellyache about what you have not got, but get on and make certain that you do your utmost with what you have got. It is very important for British officers, in whatever arm or branch of the Service they may be, to make up their minds that that is what they will always do: and that is what I hope all of you here will always make your motto in the years to come.

Now, to sum up what I have tried to say to you this afternoon, I would like to put it like this. First, keep fit - absolutely fit. Then, be honest - honest with yourselves and honest with all those with whom you work. Then, have courage - and make it an enduring courage. Next, be bold, be daring, and when there is a choice take the bold and daring course. Make the very most always of what you have got. And never, never, never give in.

Field Marshal The Lord Harding of Petherton, addressing the Senior Division when C.I.G.S., July 1953.

# Leadership, Learning and Intellectual Development

## Theory Before Practice

Officers are here reminded, that it is only by the theory and just reading that the first principles of all professional subjects are in general attained by the majority of mankind. The practical part may be afterwards successfully pursued.

Sir John Moore (1803)

## Great Military Genius

‘Intellectual power makes up a large part of what we term “great military genius”, and for this reason the officer who is training for high position in war should endeavour to develop his reasoning powers. But he must do this through constant critical examination of the past and present, rather than through metaphysical speculation...

Generalmajor Hugo Baron von Freytag-Loringhoven *The Power of Personality in War* (1911).

## A Little Learning

‘At a university a student only comes to post-graduate research after he has a general grounding in history as a schoolboy, and then, as an undergraduate, has developed this background by the study of the constitutional and economic aspects, and of special periods. Yet the military student, who comes late to his subject, when his mind is less supple than in adolescence, is expected to begin at a point corresponding with post-graduate research’.

Basil Liddell Hart’s *The Decisive Wars of History* (1929).

## The Little Grain of Mustard Seed

The officer must, of course, have the knowledge and qualities of a leader, which are defined in the text-books; these, I think, we all know well and recognise. But he must also, as our Training and Manoeuvre Regulations wisely enjoin, have a broad outlook and wide general education; and this is where the average officer at present is apt to fail. The new system of education at the Royal Military College and at the Royal Military Academy will undoubtedly tend to eliminate this weakness, if the little grain of mustard seed implanted there is kept watered during early military life, and weeded later on.

Colonel Archibald Wavell, Royal United Services Institute (15 Feb 1933).

## Too Clever By Half?

But I slowly realised that I was going against the Army tide of the time, which emphasised older commanders and de-emphasised education and broadening experiences. It was a time of the “country-boy” and “jes’ plain soldierin’”. Lots of people with fancy masters degrees and PhDs kept it quiet if they could. It was the Vietnam backlash, though it took a long time to develop. I couldn’t help what I had already done or how I had worked my way up. After the Rhodes scholarship and finishing at the top of the class in the Command and General Staff College, I had gotten an Army-wide reputation, and I was stuck with it, for better or worse.

General Wesley K Clark Waging Modern War (2001).

## TRAINING

### Trained in Peace to Use Their Wits

Success in war cannot be expected unless all ranks have been trained in peace to use their wits. Generals and Commanding Officers are therefore not only to encourage their subordinates by affording them constant opportunities of acting on their own responsibilities, but they must also check all practices which interfere with the free exercise of their judgement, and will break down by every means in their power the paralysing bait of an unreasonable and mechanical adherence to the letter of orders and to routine.

Lord Roberts (1902).

### A Wee Bit Puzzled

*In 1903 Major Ernest Swinton, a 35 year old engineer officer wrote the first instalment of *The Defence of Duffer's Drift* for *Blackwood's* magazine. Based on his own experiences in the Boer War, Swinton condemned his anti-hero Lt 'Baksight Forethought' (BF - bloody fool in polite Edwardian parlance) to relive the same tactical disaster each day until he finally gets it right. In the following sequence Lt BF muses on the inadequacies of his military education as he prepares for his disastrous first action.*

Between you and me, I was really relieved to be able to put off my defensive measures till the morrow, because I was a wee bit puzzled as to what to do. In fact, the more I thought, the more puzzled I grew. The only "measures of defence" I could recall for the moment were, how to tie "a thumb or overhand knot", and how long it takes to cut down an apple tree of six inches diameter. Unluckily neither of these useful facts seemed quite to apply. Now, if they had given me a job like fighting the battle of Waterloo, or Sedan, or Bull Run, I knew all about that, as I had crammed it up and been examined in it too. I also knew how to take up a position for a division, or even an army corps, but the stupid little subaltern's game of the defence of a drift with a small detachment was, curiously enough, most perplexing. I had never really

considered such a thing. However, in the light of my habitual dealings with army corps, it would, no doubt, be child's-play after a little thought.

'Backsight Forethought' (Lt Col Ernest Swinton) *The Defence of Duffer's Drift* (1903).

## The Worst Instructed Youths

Their methods, whereby the majority of the candidates for the Army, as is clearly proved by the last Qualifying Report, are the worst instructed youths of their rank and means in any civilized community, have recently been criticized with amazement and shame by the Public Press.

In regard to the Promotion Courses in Military History, the fantastic fashion in which they trifle with a subject of the first importance to officers, is an insult to the intelligence of our race. They enact that a fragment of a campaign, at most five weeks out of four years in America, and less than five weeks out of six months in France, shall serve for two examination papers, a "general" and a "special" for lieutenants and captains of our army. I need scarcely say that such a course for any one examination would be laughed at by a West Point cadet, or by a German one-year volunteer. It is simply preposterous. The Courses are altered every year in a whimsical fashion, with utter indifference to the interests of military literature, and with ruinous results to the enterprise of publishers.

Thomas Miller Maguire *The Franco-German War* (1909).

## Dysfunctional Training

*In the inter war period of the last century training at Britain's premier military institutions fell behind the demands of modern war.*

The Royal Military College at Sandhurst and the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich produced young officers who were physically fit, who could perform polished drill, and who felt themselves to be members of an elite. 'Life at

Sandhurst', according to a cadet who graduated in 1929, 'was tough but it was exhilarating and the cadets were a dedicated corps d'elite'. The constant hustling to which the cadets were subjected ensured that they could work satisfactorily under pressure. What the colleges did very imperfectly was to encourage cadets to use their initiative and think for themselves, or to train them in leadership skills as tacticians. It was only when they arrived at their regiment that young officers began to learn how to lead men, usually under the benign tutelage of their platoon or troop sergeant. The purely educational content of the syllabus was increased in the 1920s at the expense of military training but, even so, a cadet who passed through Sandhurst in 1935 recorded that 'Independent thinking is frowned on as heresy - no divergence from official view allowed. The initiative and intellectual curiosity that was supposed to be imparted by the educational syllabus was largely nullified by too much time spent on the parade ground. A Staff Sergeant curtly informed a cadet who tried to express an opinion that 'You are not allowed to think, Sir!'. Out of a total of 1,350 training hours, no less than 515 hours were spent 'producing the private soldier cadet'. This was a dysfunctional approach to training. It ill-fitted officers to deal with the unexpected calls which were going to be made on them on the battlefield.

David French Raising Churchill's Army: The British Army and the War Against Germany 1919-1945 (2000).

*The training received by British Officers left them at a distinct disadvantage when they engaged in combat with the Germans.*

When manoeuvre is required, so is speed and imagination and initiative. I never thought our system was perfect for breeding those qualities. Individuals possessed them - splendidly. But the system itself was differently designed.

Peter Carrington Reflect on Things Past: The Memoirs of Lord Carrington (1989).

## A Grim Price in Blood

Possibly, like most of our infantry, they (the battle school directing staff) suffered from the consequences of the pre-war shortage of creatively intelligent regimental officers. Too few of them were professionally dedicated to the extent that they could visualise how battles would be fought and identify the problems that might arise when planning them. They seemed to lack the capacity to think relentlessly through these things until solutions were found. Much of their time had been spent policing the British Empire. Also, unlike the Germans, we British instinctively avoid displays of keenness. The enthusiast, particularly if he is innovative, is an embarrassment. Thus the battlefield became our teacher and, inevitably, it exacted a grim price in blood and time.

Sydney Jary MC 18 Platoon (1987).

## TRAINING: FIVE QUESTIONS

The Leadership Qualities of Commanders. Commanders at all levels must be placed in circumstances where they must make Decisions and live with the consequences. They must know they have the confidence of their superiors to make honest mistakes. In War, leaders are killed at a greater rate than subordinates and the service expands. In peace, training should be organised so that at every possible opportunity those suitable to take greater responsibilities are identified. To do this training should give an opportunity for judgements to be made of one, some, or all, of the following factors. Has the Commander in question :

- (1) The moral and physical courage to carry greater responsibilities? In battle the successful commander is not seeking a consensus.
- (2) Calmness and decision in a crisis?
- (3) The necessary balance of professionalism, intelligence and practicality to carry the added breadth and weight of the responsibilities that go with promotion?
- (4) The ability to innovate successfully and confidently rather than implement another plan? This factor is of increasing importance as the subject rises in rank.
- (5) The willingness, of more importance at higher ranks, to delegate and work through others? We have all seen the officer who by working very hard produces an excellent performance but on promotion fails to maintain his promise. He reached that rank because he was clever enough not to need to delegate, he failed because he did not have the sense or character to know that he should.

Major General Rupert Smith GOC 1<sup>st</sup> British Armoured Division 1991 Gulf War.

# INTEGRITY

## A Few Honest Men

I beseech you be careful what captains of horse you choose, what men be mounted; a few honest men are better than numbers ... If you choose Godly honest men to be captains of horse, honest men will follow them, and they will be careful to mount such ... I had rather have a plain russet-coated captain that knows what he fights for, and loves what he knows, than that which you call a gentleman and is nothing else. I honour a gentleman that is so indeed.

Oliver Cromwell, (1643).

## Being Straight

“There is one trait in the character of a leader that above all things really counts, and it perhaps counts in the war even more than in peace. Being straight. No amount of ability, knowledge, or cunning, can ever make up for not being straight. Once those under him find out that a commander is absolutely straight in all his dealings with them, and free from the slightest trait of self-interest, other than the self-interest of which we are all guilty when striving for the victory of causes we believe to be right, they will love him as their leader, trust him, work for him, follow him - and should occasion arise die for him, with the fundamental ability of the British soldier which comes to the surface when things are at their worst”.

“Basilisk” Talks on Leadership.

## Being Crooked - A Sickening Story

That summer of 1970, the Army War College issued a scathing report - commissioned by General William Westmoreland, who was now Chief of Staff - explained a great deal of what we were seeing. Based on a confidential survey of 415 officers, the report blasted the Army for rewarding the wrong people. It described how the system had been subverted to condone selfish behaviour and tolerate incompetent commanders who sacrificed their subordinates and distorted facts to get ahead. It criticised the Army's obsession with meaningless statistics and was especially damning on the subject of body counts in Vietnam. A young captain had told the investigators a sickening story: he'd been under so much pressure from headquarters to boost his numbers that he'd nearly gotten into a fistfight with a South Vietnamese officer over whose unit would take credit for various enemy body parts. Many officers admitted they had simply inflated their reports to placate headquarters.

General H Norman Schwarzkopf *It Doesn't Take a Hero* (1992).

## Yes Sir, Yes Sir, Six Bags Full

*The promotion policies of the US Army in the Vietnam era bedevilled post war attempts at reform.*

The practice of purging the ranks of "difficult" subordinates - people who question the wisdom of conventional thinking, who challenge their superiors, who do not automatically salute and say "yes sir, yes, sir, six bags full", when their superiors speak - over the years has produced a crop of senior officials long on form and short on substance. The long-term result of stifling dissent and discouraging unconventional views, while rewarding those who conform, is an officer corps that is sterile, stagnant, and predictable. Promoting clones, while purging mavericks, is tantamount to incest. We all know the possible long-term effect of generations of incest - feeble-mindedness, debilitation, and insanity'.

Colonel James G Burton, *The Pentagon Wars* (1992).

# Taking Responsibility

## The Men May Lose Confidence

You cannot fight machine-guns plus wire, with human bodies. Without the wire to check them the men would have tackled machine-guns in spite of their losses. As it was, they tried heroically to tackle both. This was humanly impossible.

The Division only took over at 10 o'clock on the 11th and attacked at dawn on the 12<sup>th</sup>. Whatever the obstacles might have been on our front, it was too late to deal with them by artillery preparation. We as a Divisional Staff, assumed that the wire had been cut. Assumption in war is radically wrong if by any means in your power you can eliminate the uncertain ...

In this case I got sufficiently accurate information as to the state of affairs, but 24 hours too late to be of any use. Had it been received 24 hours earlier one would have been in a position to ask for an extension of time before attacking to deal with the difficulty ...

We cannot always expect to succeed, but I feel very sorry about it all when I think of the numbers of men who were lost. My chief fear is that the men may lose confidence in the arrangements made for them as they had always been taught that, provided the Staff arrangements are good, they are able to do anything that is asked of them.

In these days of Parliamentary criticism, questions may be asked as to the operations I refer to. The somewhat bald and concise statement I have made above accurately represents the position.

Major General Sir Andrew Russell to Colonel James Allen New Zealand Minister of Defence 7 Nov 1917. From Peter H Liddle (ed) Passchendaele In Perspective: The 3<sup>rd</sup> Battle of Ypres (1997).

## The Tongue-tied Soldier

‘The culmination of the day was a field firing exercise on Hohne ranges. On arrival at what was clearly a pre-rehearsed event, I was shown a section of Royal Highland Fusiliers being briefed by a Lance Corporal for an attack. On completion of his orders he asked a young Fusilier to confirm the simple instructions that he had received. The young soldier had been clearly overwhelmed by the presence of so many senior officers and could remember nothing of what he had been told by his section commander. He went red in the face, and looked shamefully at the ground - no doubt thinking that he was letting down his section and his Regiment. Instead of censuring or humiliating him - as so many of us would have done - his section commanders looked at the next man with an encouraging grin and said “Go on, help him out”. In doing this, he showed himself to be a true leader who was not interested in covering his own position, and by asking another member of the section to help the unfortunate young man, he was also able to strengthen the trust between members of the section’.

General Sir Michael Rose

## I felt so Responsible

In her small desert boots with a red Arab scarf on top of her camouflage gear, short, dark, tousled hair, and wearing sunglasses, Lieutenant Smart just about reached the chest height of some of the men she commanded. In guts, she probably equalled them. Certainly, her staying power for three months so far as second-in-command of headquarters company of The Royal Scots in the desert showed that. On G-Day, 24 February, the day the groundwork began, she was in charge of the lead vehicle in a convoy of food and water trucks which followed a few miles behind the front-line fighting troops and tanks into Iraq. They travelled through the breach in the enemy’s defences in their chemical warfare suits and gas masks in the dark and rain, avoiding cluster bombs and anti-personnel mines littering the track, hearing the roar of battle a few miles ahead, watching the flash of explosives ripping across the black sky, feeling the vibrations through the ground. Sometimes the trucks behind would get bogged down in the soft sand and they would have to wait for them to catch up. ‘I had a grid point on the map where we

were supposed to be and a compass, and if I got the distance and bearing wrong, we could have ended up in enemy lines. So it was on my head'. She had been too anxious to sleep for more than one or two hours as her convoy travelled almost non-stop for four days and nights. 'I worried more about the boys than myself. I felt so responsible'.

From Kate Muir, *Arms and the Woman* (1992).

## It's About People

Nothing more radical is suggested here than that the leader who would make certain of the fundamental soundness of his operation cannot do better than concentrate his attention on his men. There is no other worthwhile road. They dupe only themselves who believe that there is a brand of military efficiency which consists in moving smartly, expediting papers, and achieving perfection in formations, while at the same time slighting or ignoring the human nature of those who they command. The art of leading, in operations large or small, is the art of dealing with humanity, of working diligently on behalf of men, of being sympathetic with them, but equally, of insisting that they make a square facing toward their own problems. These are the real bases of a commander's major calculations. Yet how often do we hear an executive praised as an "efficient administrator" simply because he can keep a desk cleared, even though he is despised by everyone in the lower echelons and cannot command a fraction of their loyalty!

SLA Marshal *Men Against Fire* (1947).

## Take The Men Into Our Confidence

*The popular image of British generals in the First World War is that they were insensitive, incompetent and stupid - the donkeys. The following document, written in the summer of 1918 by General Sir Ivor Maxse, the Inspector General of Training, suggests that the stereo-type needs to be revised.*

I have already given out the lines on which I want training carried out. You must remember that the men are tired after a trying time in the trenches - as a rule they don't look forward to a spell out of the line because they think they will never be left in peace, and that each day and all day will be spent in some tiresome or boring drill or exercise which they have done over and over again - how are you going to get over this? Have any of you thought it out? There is only one way in which we can put this nightmare out of the men's minds. Take the men into our confidence - explain to them the reason why we do every exercise, let them know that each item will only last a short time and that it is up to them to pay attention to their work and think out what they are doing. When they do anything well - tell them so. If they do not do it well, explain how they could have done it better, and put them at it again. Don't make any scheme too long - knock off as soon as you see that the men have got the hang of it - then go on with something else.

John Baynes *Far From A Donkey: The Life of General Sir Ivor Maxse* (1995).

## He Treated Them With Warm Consideration

*A new commanding officer, Wing Commander Leonard Cheshire, arrives at 617 Squadron RAF in 1943.*

The aircrews had to face action day after day, week after week, virtually alone, with only their consciences as monitors. The ground crews, on the other hand, were liable to frustrations which could only be soothed if they could be assured of their value, and Cheshire delicately gave them those assurances.

When he landed in the early morning after a raid his driver usually found him under the wing sharing cocoa and sandwiches with his ground crew. As anxiously as they asked him how he had got on he would be asking them if they had managed to get any sleep while he was away, or thanking them for the performance of the aircraft, all with a friendly touch and a few jokes thrown in.

With flying or ground crew he was a leader and never a driver, never bullying, overbearing or petty, though his tongue could be quite devastating if you merited it. His aircrews almost worshipped him, and the ground crews' feelings were probably deeper because he treated them with warm consideration, and they were not used to it.

Paul Brickhill The Dam Busters

## SHARE THE BURDEN

Soteridas' Shield - an incident during the Anabasis 398 BC

Soteridas, a man from Sicyon, said: 'We are not on a level, Xenophon. You are riding on horseback, while I am wearing myself out with a shield to carry'.

When Xenophon heard this, he jumped down from his horse, pushed Soteridas out of the ranks, took his shield away from him and went forward on foot as fast as he could, carrying the shield. He happened to be wearing a cavalry breastplate as well, so that it was heavy going for him. He kept on encouraging those in front to keep going and those behind to join up with them, though struggling along behind them himself. The other soldiers, however, struck Soteridas and threw stones at him and cursed him until they forced him to take back his shield and continue marching.

Xenophon, Anabasis (400BC).

## HMS Centurian arrives at Tinian 28 August 1742

*After a nightmarish voyage around Cape Horn and operations against Spanish colonies along the Pacific coast of South America, the Centurian reached the island of Tinian in the central Pacific with a crew reduced to 199, of who 128 were desperately ill.*

Numbers of these (the sick) were so very helpless that we were obliged to carry them from the boats to the hospital upon our shoulders, in which humane employment the Commodore himself (Anson), and everyone of his officers, were engaged without distinction.

Anson's Voyage Around the World (1776).

## Know Your People

### An American Message to the British

The High Command can do no more than to put you in action in the best possible way, under the best possible conditions, and to make sure that you are well supplied, well cared for, and everything is done for you in the way of getting you ammunition, food, clothing and everything that you need. But upon your shoulders rests the real responsibility.

You young men have this war to win. It is small unit leadership that is going to win the ground battle and that battle must be won before that enemy of ours is finally crushed. It is up to you men to give your units - whether it is a tank crew, platoon, or becomes a company - leadership, every hour of the day, every day of the week. You must know every single one of your men. It is not enough that you are the best soldier in that unit, that you are the strongest, the toughest, the most durable, and the best equipped technically. You must be their leader, their father, their mentor even if you are half their age. You must understand their problems. You must keep them out of trouble. If they get in trouble, you must be the one to go to their rescue. That cultivation of human understanding between you and your men is the one art that you must

yet master and you must master it quickly. Then you will be doing your duty and you will be worthy of the traditions of this great school and of your great country.

To each one of you I wish Godspeed and Good Luck. If I could have my wish as I stand here today, feeling honoured as I do in the tribute paid me, I would say this: If I could only meet you all somewhere east of the Rhine and renew the acquaintanceship of this pleasant morning.

Good Luck

General Dwight D Eisenhower. Sandhurst 11 March 1944.

## A British Message to the Americans

You will soon have bars on your shoulders; I've got things on mine that you've never seen before - but they both mean that we are officers. We have no business to set ourselves up as officers unless we know more about the job in hand than the men we are leading. If you command a small unit, like a platoon, you ought to be able to do anything you ask any man in it to do better than he can. Know the bolts and nuts of your job, but above all know your men. When you command a platoon you ought to know each man in it better than his own mother does. You must know which man responds to encouragement, which to reasoning, and which needs a good kick in the pants. Know your men.

Field Marshal Sir William Slim, West Point 1953.

## INSPIRATIONAL LEADERSHIP

*Little is known about William Shakespeare's life. There is no absolute proof that he saw active service, but there is considerable internal evidence from his plays that he served in one of the English expeditions to the Netherlands in the early or mid 1580s. For more than 400 years the speech Shakespeare put into the mouth of Henry V has inspired British Servicemen - whether they were facing the French in 1692, 1757 and 1805 - the Germans in 1944 - or the Iraqis in 1991.*

Agincourt 25 October 1415.

What's he that wishes so?

My cousin Westmoreland? No, my fair cousin:

If we are marked to die, we are now

To do our country loss; and if to live,

The fewer men, the greater share of honour.

God's will, I pray thee wish not one man more.

By Jove, I am not covetous for gold,

Nor care I who doth feed upon my cost:

It yearns me not if men my garments wear:

Such outward things dwell not in my desires.

But if it be a sin to covet honour,

I am the most offending soul alive.

No, faith, my coz, wish not a man from England:

God's peace, I would not lose so great an honour,

As one man more, methinks, would share from me,

For the best hope I have. O, do not wish one more:

Rather proclaim it, Westmoreland, through my host,

That he which hath no stomach to this fight,

Let him depart, his passport shall be made,

And crowns for convoy put into his purse:

We would not die in that man's company,

That fears his fellowship, to die with us.

This day is called the feast of Crispian:

He that outlives this day, and comes safe home,

Will stand a tip-toe when this day is named,  
And rouse him at the name of Crispian.  
He that shall live this day, and see old age,  
Will yearly on the vigil feast his neighbours,  
And say, "Tomorrow is Saint Crispian".  
Then will he strip his sleeve, and show his scars,  
And say, "These wounds I had on Crispian's day".  
Old men forget; yet all shall be forgot,  
But he'll remember, with advantages,  
What feats he did that day. Then shall our names,  
Familiar in his mouth as household words,  
Harry the king, Bedford and Exeter,  
Warwick and Talbot, Salisbury and Gloucester,  
Be in their flowing cups freshly remembered.  
This story shall the good man teach his son;  
And Crispin Crispian shall ne'er go by,  
From this day to the ending of the world,  
But we in it shall be remembered;  
We few, we happy few, we band of brothers,  
For he today that sheds his blood with me  
Shall be my brother: be he ne'er so vile,  
This day shall gentle his condition.  
And gentleman in England, now a-bed,  
Shall think themselves accursed they were not here:  
And hold their manhoods cheap, whiles any speaks  
That fought with us upon Saint Crispian's day.

Shakespeare, King Henry V's speech before Agincourt.

## A Weak and Feeble Woman

“I know I have the body of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king, and of a king of England too; and think foul scorn that Parma or Spain, or any prince of Europe, should dare to invade the borders of my realm”.

Queen Elizabeth I address to her Army at Tilbury as the Armada sails up the channel. August 1588.

## Alte Fritz - Frederick the Great

“Dogs! Would you live forever!?”

Frederick the Great of Prussia to soldiers reluctant to advance.

## Old Nosey - Wellington

The sight of his long nose among us on a battle morning was worth ten thousand men, any day of the week.

Captain John Kincaid, quoted in Thomas Gilby ed Britain at Arms.

## Where's Arthur?

A comrade of his, tells Cooper also, as they were beginning the fight, called out: “Where's Arthur?”. He meant Wellington. The answer was given: “I don't know - I don't see him!”. Rejoined the first private: “Aw wish he wr here!”. “So do I”, comments Sergeant Cooper.

Edward Fraser The Soldiers Who Wellington Led.

## Duro, Duro!

We had continued this arduous journey during five hours, when, on reaching the summit of an isolated green hill, at the back of the ridge already described, four mounted officers crossed us, one of them riding a little ahead of the rest, who, on the contrary, kept together. He who rode in front was a thin, well-made man, apparently of the middle stature, and just past the prime of life. His dress was a plain gray frock, buttoned close to the chin; a cocked hat, covered with oilskin; gray pantaloons, with boots, buckled at the side; and a steel-mounted light sabre.

There were in the ranks many veterans, who had served in the Peninsula during some of the earlier campaigns; these instantly recognised their old leader, and the cry of “Duro, Duro!” the familiar title given by the soldiers to the Duke of Wellington, was raised. This was followed by reiterated shouts, to which he replied by taking off his hat and bowing.

As I had never seen the great Captain of the day before, it will readily be imagined that I looked at him on the present occasion with a degree of admiration and respect, such as a soldier of seventeen years of age, devoted to his profession, is likely to feel for the man whom he regards as its brightest ornament. I felt, as I gazed upon him that an army under his command could not be beaten; and I had frequent opportunities afterwards of perceiving, how far such a feeling goes towards preventing a defeat. Let the troops only place perfect confidence on him who leads them, and the sight of him, at the most trying moment, is worth a fresh brigade.

George Robert Gleig *The Subaltern* (1825).

## Don't Leave Us Major!

‘The men in the square were a difficult problem, and so jaded it was pathetic to see them. If one only had a band, I thought! Why not? There was a toyshop handy which provided my trumpeter and myself with a tin whistle and a drum and we marched round and round the fountain where the men were lying like the dead, playing the British Grenadiers and Tipperary and beating the drum like

mad. They sat up and began to laugh and even cheer. I stopped playing and made them a short exhortation and told them I was going to take them back to their regiments. They began to stand up and fall in, and eventually we moved slowly off into the night to the music of our improvised band, now reinforced by a couple of mouth organs. When well clear of the town I tried to delegate the function to someone else, but the infantry would not let me go. “Don’t leave us, Major”, they cried, “or by God we’ll not get anywhere”. So on we went, and it was early morning before I got back to my squadron’.

Major Tom Bridges of the 4<sup>th</sup> Dragoon Guards recalling events at St Quentin on 28<sup>th</sup> August 1914, during the retreat from Mons from his memoirs *Alarms and Excursions*.

## We Were in a Mess!

*In 1915 Antarctic explorers found themselves in a desperate situation when their ship, the Endurance, became trapped and crushed in an ice floe. Stranded on the ice sheet, their chances of survival were virtually non-existent. Fortunately the expedition was commanded by Ernest Shackleton.*

The men had expected to be working in relative comfort in a base camp, or to be doing ship’s work. Instead, they were stranded on a vast, unstable layer of ice that was their only refuge from the depths of the Weddell Sea or, even worse, the jaws of a killer whale or a sea leopard. And it was -16 degrees Fahrenheit. The Boss (Shackleton) gathered the whole group around him and spoke to his men from the heart. He kept his message simple. As he spoke, he appeared calm, confident, and strong. Years later, several of the men would recall how much his words meant to them at that time. ‘There was nothing in the nature of a set speech’, RW James recalled. ‘He spoke to us in a group, telling us that he intended to march the party across the ice to the west... that he thought we ought to manage five miles a day, and that if we all worked together it could be done. We were in a mess and the Boss was the man who could get us out. It is a measure of his leadership that this seemed almost axiomatic’.

Margot Morrel and Stephanie Capparell *Shackleton’s Way* (2001).

## It's Not Over Yet!

Look, we've done bloody well today. Okay, we've lost some lads; we've lost the CO. Now we've really got to show our mettle. It's not over yet, we haven't got the place. We're about 1,000 metres from D Company; we're on our own and enemy has landed to our south and there's a considerable force at Goose Green, so we could be in a fairly sticky position. It's going to be like Arnhem - Day 3!

Major John Crossland addressing B Company 2 PARA on the night of 28/29 May 1982 just to the south west of the Goose Green settlement. Spencer Fitz-Gibbon Not Mentioned in Despatches (1995).

## A Brave Face

*Officers sometimes find themselves in circumstances which are so dire that they judge it advisable not to tell their troops the whole truth. In effect, they put a "brave face" on the situation. .*

If, when covering an army during the night, an officer should hear that the army he is covering has decamped, he should not inform his men of this fact, as it might lower their confidence and courage. In other words, he must do nothing to lower the morale of his troops and ever strive to increase it.

Colonel Coote Manningham. A lecture to the Officers of Shorncliffe Camp March 1803. From JFC Fuller Sir John Moore's System of Training (1924).

*Shortly after arriving at Tinian in August 1742, a storm blew the Centurion, manned only by a skeleton crew, out to sea. Believing themselves stranded on the island, and at the mercy of the Spaniards who would treat them as pirates, some of the Centurion's complement gave way to despair. The Centurion's commander, Commodore George Anson, though privately agreeing with their assessment, decided to do some fast talking.*

He (Anson) represented to them how little foundation there was for their apprehensions of the Centurion's being lost: that he should have presumed they had been all of them better acquainted with sea affairs than to give way to the impression of so chimerical a fright: that he doubted not but if they would seriously consider what such a ship was capable of enduring, they would confess there was not the least probability of her having perished: that he was not without hopes that she might return in a few days; but if she did not, the worst that could be imagined was, that she was driven so far to the leeward of the island that she could not regain it.

Anson's Voyage Round the World (1776).

*Commando Officer Major Peter Young earns his first MC.*

"What's the matter with you! Everyone knows six yards of standing corn will stop machinegun bullets - come on - get up - follow me!"

Major Peter Young, Dieppe 18 August 1942.

*A General Briefs A President*

It is a grim fact that there is not an easy, bloodless way to victory in war and it is the thankless task of the leaders to maintain their firm outward front which holds the resolution of subordinates. Any irresolution in the leaders may result in costly weakening and indecision in the subordinates.

General George Marshall to President Harry S Truman 18 June 1945.

### *Lt Barry Advances Through A Minefield*

By now Lieutenant Jim Barry's [12 Platoon] were up and moving. Someone shouted in his platoon, 'We're in a minefield!' Jim contradicted him, 'No we're not, keep going!'. In fact he knew that they were, but it was too late now but to continue. An anti-tank mine suddenly exploded, knocking over Sergeant Meredith, Corporal Barton, Spencer and Curran. Spencer had apparently walked straight into a tripwire. He sat up, dusted himself and continued.

Lt Jim Barry D Company 2 PARA. Darwin-Goose Green early afternoon on 28 May 1982, from Spencer Fitz-Gibbon, Not Mentioned in Dispatches (1995).

### *The General Showed No Nerves*

In The Residency, Lieutenant General Rupert Smith was calmly keeping track on the final preparations. Some of his staff were shocked when he declared that he expected that the Bosnian Serbs would attempt to level the UNPROFOR Headquarters as soon as the first NATO bombs started landing. Ivanko remembers General Smith telling the RRFOs at Kiseljak that they were to take over running the battle if smoke was seen rising from the Residency. Many of his staff said the General showed no nerves, despite his misgivings about the uncertain political objectives of the coming operation. These he kept to himself and his close advisors. The die had been cast and he was determined to play to win.

Tim Ripley Operation Deliberate Force. The UN and NATO Campaign in Bosnia 1995 (1999).

*I gave the group something else to think about.*

*On 25 August 2000 a small patrol of the Royal Irish Regiment on a Peace Support Operation in Sierra Leone was forced to surrender to the 'Westside Boys', a heavily armed gang notorious for its brutality. The Royal Irish's senior officer, Captain John Laverty, had to keep his 'mask of command' firmly in place. Otherwise they might not survive.*

We could hear screams from an adjoining cell. They went on all night, but it wasn't until the following morning that we first saw the victims. There were six left. They had been burnt, badly beaten and sliced by machetes. At dusk the previous evening one had broken free but was shot dead outside the barred window of our cell. I had reached the window first, just in time to see his corpse being dragged away. The men asked me if I had seen anything but I said no. That way while everybody knew there had been a shot, no one knew there had been a killing.

It was a dreadful night. I thought that at any moment the door would open and one of us would be dragged out to become the next victim. As I was lying next to the door I felt particularly vulnerable. We were all physically and emotionally exhausted but we couldn't sleep. When the men asked me what was going on I did my best to reassure them. I said I thought the West Side Boys had grouped their many malaria victims together, which would account for the wild screams and the frequent calls for a doctor. I am not sure how many believed me at the time and all found it to be untrue the following morning but I'd given the group something else to think about. I do believe that some of the soldiers found it just plausible enough to allow them to get some sleep. I did my best to sleep but failed. However, I pretended to sleep in the hope that the others would follow suit.

Captain John Laverty Royal Irish Regiment

## THE REALITY

### Disbelief and Mental Paralysis

'Leading in battle is not merely an exam to be passed or failed. A vast majority of soldiers' first reactions on coming under fire is disbelief and mental paralysis. This has always been the case. This reaction can never be truly replicated by training. What mitigates against the consequences of this reaction is good training, sound knowledge of one's profession and confidence in one's self. Accept that your reactions are likely to be less than perfect and concentrate on giving yourself these positive attributes, so that the next thing you say or do will go a long way to overcome your nervousness and provide encouragement to those you lead'.

Major JC Stuart, Scots Guards.

## Chaos Reigns

Just before we cross-decked to HMS INTREPID, I had quoted Brigadier James Hill, Commander of 3<sup>rd</sup> Para Bde in Normandy in 1944, to my Battalion. “Gentlemen, despite your excellent training and briefing, do not be daunted if chaos reigns. It undoubtedly will”.

The Bn Log reads - “26 May 2100hrs, CO received warning order for future tasks. There would be a Battalion raid by 2 PARA into Darwin/Goose Green settlement. They would then withdraw to San Carlos as Brigade reserve. 45 Cdo would advance on foot to Douglas settlement and 3 PARA would move through them at Douglas to secure Teal Inlet”.

After five days of constant interference by enemy air attack with logistic unloading into the Bridgehead - the essential prerequisite to a general advance - the Atlantic Conveyor is hit by an Exocet. Only one Chinook escapes. “No move from the Bridgehead can be contemplated for some days” is the steer you get from your Brigade Commander. Late that night comes a warning order to advance east as soon as possible after first light. You are wrong-footed, and many men are already tired after intensive patrolling in awful weather. Another upheaval at dead of night, another test for the flexibility of your battle procedure. You find the need to challenge the Brigade plan for an advance via Douglas Settlement, yet you must also make your own plans, issue orders, and get the show on the road with everyone briefed, equipped and bombed-up for a journey of unknown duration. As you stumble eastwards the following night in driving rain and sleet, over rock, bog and tussock, the thumps and flashes of violence intermittently reach across the night sky, from 2 PARA’s first action at Camilla Creek. You are struck, as never before, by how profoundly reliant you are upon the cohesion of each fire team of four, each section of eight, and especially upon their leaders - tough, determined, confident, youthful corporals. “The first quality of the soldier is fortitude in resisting hardship and fatigue” wrote Napoleon, “bravery but the second”. This first quality was never more severely tested than on that long haul from Port San Carlos to Teal Inlet, and on again to Estancia House. To add to our discomfort, intelligence was little better than guesswork. We knew very little of what the enemy might do, where and in what strength. Hardship - fatigue - uncertainty. These were our constant companions, the

constant, insidious threats to confidence, which must be overcome if the enemy himself was to be beaten in battle.

Lieutenant Colonel Hew Pike, address to the Army Staff College on the 1982 Falklands Conflict.

## Snatching Success from Utter Chaos

The battlefield is no place for the perfectionist. Common sense, which develops a finely tuned sense of proportion and balance, must prevail. Snatching success from utter chaos is the name of the game and you may not recognise success when it comes.

Imagine a situation where some of those who you anticipate will perform well go to pieces. On the ground you discover your maps are not accurate. Your supporting armour is delayed for reasons unknown to you. The opposition's fire power is far greater than you anticipated. General chaos exists. If your school and university record has been one of unparalleled success, giving you no experience of failure, you will find yourself at a disadvantage. 'If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster and treat those two impostors just the same'. Never have Rudyard Kipling's words been more appropriate.

Sydney Jary MC The British Army Review No 29.

## SIMPLE MATHS

"Ten good soldiers wisely led  
Will beat a hundred without a head".

Euripides.

# MORALE

‘The spirit that seeks to triumph in adversity and arms a man against the shock of battle is called Morale. The Morale of an individual or a group is not of necessity a measure of happiness or contentment; it is a measure of the cohesion and power of that individual’s or group’s resolve to pursue its object come what may’.

General Sir Rupert Smith.

# THE ESSENTIALS OF MORALE

*Between 1943 and 1944 Lieutenant General William Slim transformed the utterly defeated British Eastern Army into the ever victorious Fourteenth Army. Here he describes how he helped the men to believe in themselves*

Morale is a state of mind. It is that intangible force which will move a whole group of men to give their last ounce to achieve something, without counting the cost to themselves; that makes them feel they are part of something greater than themselves. If they are to feel that, their morale must, if it is to endure - and the essence of morale is that it should endure - have certain foundations. These foundations are spiritual, intellectual, and material, and that is the order of their importance. Spiritual first, because only spiritual foundations can stand real strain. Next intellectual, because men are swayed by reason as well as feeling. Material last - important, but last - because the very highest kinds of morale more often met when material conditions are lowest.

I remember sitting in my office and tabulating these foundations of morale something like this:

1. *Spiritual*
  - (a) There must be a great and noble object.
  - (b) Its achievement must be vital.
  - (c) The method of achievement must be active, aggressive.
  - (d) The man must feel that what he is and what he does matters directly towards the attainment of the object.
2. *Intellectual*
  - (a) He must be convinced that the object can be attained; that is not out of reach.
  - (b) He must see, too, that the organisation to which he belongs and which is striving to attain the object is an efficient one.
  - (c) He must have confidence in his leaders and know that whatever dangers and hardships he is called to suffer, his life will not be lightly flung away.

3. *Material*
- (a) The man must feel that he will get a fair deal from his commanders and from the army generally.
  - (b) He must, as far as humanly possible, be given the best weapons and equipment for his task.
  - (c) His living and working conditions must be made as good as they can be.

It was one thing thus neatly to marshal my principles but quite another to develop them, apply them, and get them recognised by the whole army.

At any rate our spiritual foundation was a firm one. I use the word spiritual, not in its strictly religious meaning, but as a belief in a cause. Religion has always been and still is one of the greatest foundations of morale, especially of military morale. Saints and soldiers have much in common. The religion of the Moslem, of the Sikh, of the Gurkha, and of the Hindu.... can rouse in men a blaze of contempt for death. The Christian religion is above all others a source of that enduring courage which is the most valuable of all the components of morale. Yet religion, as we understand it, is not essential to high morale. Anyone who has fought with or against Nazi paratroopers, Japanese suicide squads, or Russian Commissars, will have found this; but a spiritual foundation, belief in a cause, there must be.

We had this ..... If ever an army fought in a just cause we did. We coveted no man's country; we wished to impose no form of government on any nation. We fought for the clean, the decent, the free things of life, for the right to live our lives in our own way, as others could live theirs, to worship God in what faith we chose, to be free in body and mind, and for our children to be free. We fought only because the powers of evil had attacked these things .....

The fighting soldier facing the enemy can see that what he does, whether he is brave or craven, matters to his comrades and directly influences the result of the battle. It is harder for the man working on the road far behind, the clerk checking stores in a dump, the headquarters' telephone operator monotonously plugging through his calls .... the Quartermaster's orderly issuing bootlaces in a reinforcement camp - it is hard for these and a thousand others to see that they

too matter. Yet everyone ... in the army ... had to be made to see where his task fitted into the whole, to realise what depended on it, and to feel pride and satisfaction in doing it well.

Now these things, while the very basis of morale, because they were purely matters of feeling and emotion, were the most difficult to put over, especially to the British portion of the army ... I felt there was only one way to do it, by a direct approach to the men themselves. Not by written exhortations, by wireless speeches, but by informal talks and contacts between troops and commanders. There was nothing new in this; my Corps and Divisional commanders and others right down the scale were already doing it.

We, my commanders and I, talked to units, to collections of officers, to headquarters, to little groups of men, to individual soldiers casually met as we moved around. And we all talked the same stuff with the same object. Whenever I could get away from my headquarters, and that throughout the campaign was about a third of the time, I was in these first few months more like a parliamentary candidate than a general - except I never made a promise.

I learnt, too, that one did not need to be an orator to be effective. Two things only were necessary: first to know what you were talking about, and, second and most important, to believe it yourself. I found that if one kept the bulk of one's talk to the material things the men were interested in, food, pay, leave, beer, mails, and the progress of operations, it was safe to end on a higher note - the spiritual foundations - and I always did.

To convince the men in the less spectacular or less obviously important jobs that they were very much part of the army, my commanders and I made it our business to visit these units, to show an interest in them, and to tell them how we and the rest of the army depended upon them. There are in the army, and for that matter any big organisation, very large numbers of people whose existence is only remembered when something for which they are responsible goes wrong. Who thinks of the telephone operator until he fails to get his connection, of the cipher officer until he makes a mistake in his decoding, of the orderlies who carry papers about a big headquarters until they take them to the wrong people, of the cook until he makes a particularly foul mess of the interminable bully? Yet they are important ...

We played on this very human desire of every man to feel himself and his work important, until one of the most striking things about our army was the way the administrative, labour, and non-combatant units acquired a morale which rivalled that of the fighting formations. They felt they shared directly in the triumphs of the Fourteenth Army and that its success and its honour were in their hands as much as anybody's. Another way in which we made every man feel he was part of the show was by keeping him, whatever his rank, as far as was practicable in the picture of what was going on around him ...

It was in these ways we laid the spiritual foundations, but that was not enough; they would have crumbled without others, the intellectual and the material. Here we had first to convince the doubters that our object, the destruction of the Japanese Army in battle, was practicable ... It had to be demonstrated practically ... a victory in a large scale battle was, in our present state of training, organisation, and confidence, not to be attempted. We had first to get the feel through the army that it was we who were hunting the Jap, not he us.

All commanders therefore, directed their attention to patrolling. In jungle warfare this is the basis of success. It not only gives eyes to the side that excels at it, and blinds its opponent, but through it the soldier learns to move confidently in the elements in which he works. Every forward unit, not only infantry, chose its best men, formed patrols, trained and practised them, and then sent them out on business ... These patrols came back to their regiments with stories of success ... The stories lost nothing in the telling, and there was no lack of competition for the next patrol ...

In about 90 per cent of these tiny patrol actions we were successful. By the end of November our forward troops had gone a long way towards getting that individual feeling of superiority and that first essential in the fighting man - the desire to close with his enemy ...

Having developed the confidence of the individual man in his superiority over the enemy, we had now to extend that to the corporate confidence of units and formations in themselves. This was done in a series of carefully planned minor offensive operations, carried out as the weather improved, against enemy advanced detachments. These were carefully staged, ably led, and, as I was always careful

to ensure, in greatly preponderating strength ... Besides, we could not at this stage risk even small failures. We had very few, and the individual superiority built up by more successful patrolling grew into a feeling of superiority within units and formations. We were then ready to undertake larger operations. We had laid the first of our intellectual foundations of morale; everyone knew we could defeat the Japanese; our object was attainable.

The next foundation, that the men should feel that they belonged to an efficient organisation, that Fourteenth Army was well run and would get somewhere, followed partly from these minor successes ... Rations did improve, though still far below what they should be; mail began to arrive more regularly; there were even signs of a welfare service. An innovation was to be the publication of a theatre newspaper - SEAC ...

One of the greatest weakeners of morale had been the state of the rest and reinforcement camps. In these camps on the line of communications all reinforcements to the various fronts were held often for weeks until required ... Almost without exception I found these places depressing beyond words. Decaying tents, or dilapidated bashas, with earth floors, mosquito ridden and lacking all amenities, were the usual accommodation; training and recreation were alike unorganised; men were crowded together from all units. No wonder spirits sank, discipline sagged, and defeatist rumours spread. Worst of all, the commandants and staffs, with a few notable exceptions, were officers and NCOs who were not wanted by units or who preferred the rear to the front. This lamentable state of affairs had to be taken in hand at once. The first step was to choose an officer with energy, experience, and organising ability to take overall charge ... The next step was to select really good officers to command and staff the camps ... Each camp was allotted to a forward division. That division provided its officers and instructors; the divisional flag was flown and its sign worn. Divisional commanders were encouraged to visit their camps, and from the moment a man arrived he was made to feel that he belonged to a fighting formation in which he could take pride. Training became real, discipline was re-asserted, and in a few months the Fourteenth Army reinforcement camps ... were clean, cheerful, active parts of the Army.

A most potent factor in spreading this belief in the efficiency of an organisation is a sense of discipline. In effect, discipline means that every man, when things pass

beyond his own authority or initiative, knows to whom to turn for further direction. If it is the right kind of discipline he turns in the confidence that he will get sensible and effective direction. Every step must be taken to build up this confidence of the soldier in his leaders. For instance, it is not enough to be efficient; the organisation must look efficient. If you enter the lines of a regiment where the Quarter Guard is smart and alert, and the men you meet are well turned out and salute briskly, you cannot fail to get an impression of efficiency. You are right; ten to one that unit is efficient. If you go into a Headquarters and find the clerks scruffy, the floor unswept, and dirty tea mugs staining fly-blown papers on office tables, it may be efficient but no visitors will think so.

We tried to make our discipline intelligent, but we were an old-fashioned army and we insisted on outward signs ... We expected soldiers to salute officers and officers to salute in return - both in mutual confidence and respect. I encourage all officers to insist whenever possible, and there were few places where it was not possible, on good turn out and personal cleanliness. It takes courage, especially for a young officer, to check a man met on the road for not saluting properly or for slovenly appearance, but, every time he does, it adds to his stock of moral courage, and whatever the soldier may say he has a respect for the officer who does pull him up ...

[Thus] the intellectual foundations of morale were laid. There remained the material ... Material conditions, though lamentably low by the standards of any other British army, were improving.

Yet I knew that whatever had been promised ... from home, it would be six months at least before it reached my troops. We would remain, for a long time yet, desperately short ...

These things were frankly put to the men by their commanders at all levels and, whatever their race, they responded. In my experience it is not so much asking men to fight or work with inadequate or obsolete equipment that lowers morale but the belief that those responsible are accepting such a state of affairs. If men realise that everyone above them and behind them is flat out to get the things required for them, they will do wonders, as my men did, with the meagre resources they had instead of sitting down moaning for better.

I do not say that the men of the Fourteenth Army welcomed difficulties, but they grew to take a fierce pride in overcoming them by determination and ingenuity. From start to finish they had only two items of equipment that were never in short supply; their brains and their courage. They lived up to the unofficial motto I gave them, "God helps those who help themselves". Anybody could do an easy job we told them. It would take real men to overcome the shortages and difficulties we should be up against - the tough chap for the tough job ...

In these and many others ways we translated my rough notes on the foundations of morale, spiritual, intellectual, and material, into a fighting spirit for our men and a confidence in themselves and their leaders that was to impress our friends and surprise our enemies.

Field Marshal Sir William Slim *Defeat into Victory* (1956).

## THE SINGLE BIGGEST ASSAULT UPON MORALE

*In Spring 1943 a Chindit column penetrated deep behind Japanese Lines in Northern Burma. Unfortunately its logistics soon snapped and the Chindits suffered the worst physical deprivation experienced by British troops in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.*

I don't think I shall ever grumble about food again. Certainly our men became thoroughly self-sufficient, even the worst of them, whether at cooking, at washing their clothes or anything else. I was immoderately pleased at the tribute of a Commodore of Convoys, who on three separate voyages had brought home Chindits finishing their time. He said that he had never known men so cheerful, so willing, and so well able to look after themselves to their own satisfaction; and he contrasted them favourably with troops drawn from the same kind of homes and environment whom he had taken to south-east Asia each time on his outward voyage, and who, he said, were both helpless and discontented. I suggested that the reason might be partly due to the fact that the Chindits were homeward bound, and the others war-ward; but he insisted that the difference was more profound than that: it was the difference between men who had been used to having everything done for them and men who had learned the fundamentals.

I would say without hesitation that lack of food constitutes the biggest single assault upon morale. It is rarely noticed in the many books that have been written, and the many speeches delivered, upon that subject. Lord Moran, whose lectures on the subject of courage over many years lately culminated in a book, makes no mention of it. Apart from its purely chemical effects upon the body, it has woeful effects upon the mind. One is the dismal condition of having nothing to look forward to. Man is still an animal, and consciously or unconsciously he is always looking forward to his next meal. In this state, one finds oneself saying: "I'm looking forward to something: what is it?". Then comes the cynical answer, "Eating; and there is nothing to eat, and there isn't going to be anything to eat". Then sets in a dreadful gloom; one wrenches the mind away from it, but in a few minutes the question asks itself again, and the same answer chills the spirit. At last the thought is there all the time, and only now and then is a new question asked, "Is there no hope of food?". To this there is one triumphant and tyrannical answer, "None".

When the hope of food is gone, a new assault develops upon the defences of the mind. This takes the form of a growing dread that soon your weakness may reach the pitch where it will overwhelm you. There is no more heart-rending sight than the man who finally falls, or the man whose struggles to resume his feet are fruitless. You can either remain with him and share his fate, or you must leave him where he lies, assert your leadership, rally your men and push on, one fewer. Your job is to get as many men to safety as you can. There can surely be no greater burden on the narrowing shoulders of leadership than this experience. I will write of it no more; but I think it proper that the race to which these men belonged should know what they suffered without complaining on its behalf. Of all the men whom I have had to leave wounded, sick or starving, no one reproached me, or made the dreadful duty harder than it already was.

Brigadier Bernard Fergusson *The Wild Green Earth*.

## Defences Are Bad For Morale

I was determined not to give way at this vital meeting and the debate and argument went on for two and a half hours - well into the early hours of December 27. I repeated - once again - all my arguments and the previously mentioned historical parallels, and emphasized the special urgency now of doing everything possible to help the tired, dispirited and (in anti-tank work) inexperienced troops of the Third Indian Corps who had fought and retreated for hundreds of miles before a better trained, better equipped and numerically stronger enemy. Moreover, the enemy were inspired by an unbroken series of victories. I pointed out too that time was rapidly running out for the construction of permanent field defences on the north shore of Singapore Island; because once any area came under enemy fire civilian labour would vanish.

General Percival still refused to order the construction of defence works. I strongly urged him to reconsider this decision as it appeared to me to go directly against all the military thinking, teaching and experience of the history of fortresses; and said that in none of our several previous discussions on the subject had he ever given me a reason why he was against defence works. I reminded him too that I had been sent to Malaya for the express purpose of creating such works which had been considered necessary by the War Office and that a fortress without defences was a contradiction in terms. General Percival gave me an explanation. He said, 'Defences are bad for morale - for both troops and civilians.'

The speaker was the General Officer Commanding in Malaya, and he was speaking not in jest but in all seriousness. Like other commanders, General Percival was a graduate of the Staff College and had also attended other courses for senior officers. It was fair for me to assume therefore that he and many other commanders who were opposed to defence works, had absorbed a view which did not apply to Malaya at that time. Somewhere in their military education such a dictum on morale had been impressed upon them. At this critical stage and because of our apparent weaknesses in every branch of adequate resistance, the GOC.'s statement, quite frankly, horrified me.

From Brigadier (Ret'd) Ivan Simson: Singapore: Too Little Too Late (1970).

## BASIC FACTORS OF MORALE

*Like Slim in Burma, General Montgomery had to infuse a baffled Eighth Army with confidence in its own ability. Immediately after the war he set down his thoughts on the problems of sustaining morale in conscript armies of citizen soldiers.*

### The Quality of Morale

Morale is a mental and moral quality. It is that which in battle keeps men up on humanity's level. But humanity's level is not enough, because the strongest instinct is the instinct for survival. Morale is also that which develops man's latent heroism so that he will overcome his desire to take the easy way out and surrender to fear. The quality which maintains human dignity in battle and at the same time develops man's heroism is high morale. It is necessary now to make clear what high morale is not. It is not contentment or satisfaction bred from ease or comfort of living. Both of these contain a hint of complacency, and acceptance of luxury as an end in itself. High morale is far more than any of these; for it implies essentially the ability to triumph over discomforts and dangers and carry on with the job.

Nor is high morale achieved through fitness or healthiness alone. It is important not to confuse the idea of physical happiness with morale. The happy faces of men after a good game of football are not necessarily the faces of men with good morale. Morale is a mental rather than a physical quality, a determination to overcome obstacles, an instinct driving a man forward against his own desires. High morale is not happiness. Happiness may be a contributory factor in the maintenance of morale over a long period, but it is no more than that. High morale is not toughness. Some very tough men in war have turned out to be very disappointing in action. Toughness is a physical and not a mental asset. Tough men will occasionally perform an isolated act of bravery. Morale, however, is not a quality which produces a momentary act. It influences behaviour *at all times*.

In brief, high morale is a quality which is good in itself and is latent in all men. It maintains human dignity. It enables fear and fatigue to be overcome. It is

involved with the idea of conscience, but it should not be confused with fitness or happiness or toughness.

## Basic Factors of Morale

We must now consider what factors constitute the morale of the soldier in the heat of battle. Certain factors may be described as essential conditions without which high morale cannot exist. These four basic factors are: (1) leadership, (2) discipline, (3) comradeship, and (4) self-respect. A fifth factor, devotion to a cause, must exist but need not necessarily influence all the soldiers. Finally, there are numerous contributor factors which are of great importance but are not essential conditions.

## Leadership

Morale is, in the first place, based on leadership. Good morale is impossible without good leaders. Human beings are fundamentally alike in that certain common characteristics apply to all men in varying degrees. In battle the most important of these characteristics is fear. All men are afraid at one time or another to a greater or lesser extent. In moments of fear they band together and look for guidance; they seek for a person to give decisions; they look for a leader.

In times of war the leader has opportunities denied to him in peace. The difficulties, dangers and discomforts inseparable from the battlefield make men cry out for leadership they can do without in peace. At such moments men are too weak to stand alone; they find the burdens too great to bear and their own selves unequal to the task. The leader himself accepts the burdens of others and by doing so earns their gratitude and the right to lead them. The men recognise in their leader some quality which they themselves do not possess; that quality is "decision". Fear makes men sluggish and indecisive, unable to decide or act for themselves. The leader's power over his men is based on his ability to cut through this "fear paralysis" and in so doing enable others to escape from it. The rightness of the decision taken by the leader is irrelevant. What matters is that the decision should be taken and that the leader should shoulder the responsibility for that decision. The leader must

convince his men of its rightness even though he himself may be uncertain of his own judgement. If the leader will decide, the men will follow and will fight. If there is indecision they will hesitate and will flee. In short, “fight and survive”, “fear and be slain”; the leader decides.

The leader’s power of decision results from his ability to remain imperturbable in the crisis. His greatest asset is the ability to act normally in abnormal conditions, to continue to think rationally when his men have ceased to think, to be decisive in action when they are paralysed by fear. The object of training must be, first, to select those who possess within them the potentialities of leadership, and, secondly, to develop these potentialities. This is accomplished by giving the leader responsibility. A leader’s character will develop in proportion to the responsibility with which he has been entrusted. His position as the man responsible for the lives and well-being of his men must be impressed upon him. In battle his preoccupation with his men’s affairs will give him less time to think of his own fears. The mere fact of responsibility will increase the leader’s powers of decision and make him confident of his ability to handle any crisis. The two vital attributes of a leader are: (a) decision in action, and (b) calmness in crisis. Given these two attributes he will succeed; without them he will fail. Our great problem in peace is to select as leaders men whose brain will remain clear when intensely frightened; the yardstick of “fear” is absent.

## Discipline

The object of discipline is the conquest of fear. There are two aspects of fear. Fear can suddenly attack a man through his imagination. A corpse in a ditch or a grave by the side of the road will remind him of his position. He will suddenly realise that he himself is liable to be killed. It is a function of discipline to fortify the mind so that it becomes reconciled to unpleasant sights and accepts them as normal everyday occurrences. Fear can also creep upon a man during periods of monotony in the line. At such a time he will have the opportunity to appreciate the dangers which beset his life. Fear acting through his thoughts can so reduce the man’s hard core courage that he will become nervous and fearful. Discipline strengthens the mind so that it becomes impervious to the corroding influence of fear. It teaches men to confine their thought within certain definite limits. It instils the habit of self-control.

The basis of fear is the awareness of danger. Man becomes aware of danger when he feels himself opposed to something more powerful than himself. It is important for a man to lose his individual feeling and to become an integral part of the battalion, division and army to which he belongs. It is here that discipline shows its value, for it can help a man to lose his own identity and become a part of a larger and stronger unit. It is in this way that discipline will conquer fear. This corporate sense which discipline creates helps men to face the unknown.

The method by which the conquest of fear is achieved is the unifying of men into a group or unit under obedience to orders. Men require to be united if they are to give of their best. Discipline seeks to instil into all ranks a sense of unity by compelling them to obey orders as one man. This obedience to orders is the indispensable condition of good discipline. Men learn to gain confidence and encouragement from doing the same thing as their fellows; they derive strength and satisfaction from their company; their own identities become merged into the larger and stronger identity of their unit. Men must learn to obey orders when all their own instincts cry out for them not to be obeyed. They must learn to obey orders in times of stress so that they will do so in times of danger. They must learn to carry out their tasks under any conditions and despite all difficulties. In this way the mass of loose individuals, with their fears and weaknesses, can be welded into a united whole, ready to act on the word of a leader.

Discipline implies a conception of duty. Nothing will be accomplished in the crisis by the man without a sense of duty. The sentry in an outpost holds his ground in the face of an attack because he has a sense of duty to those behind him. This sense is instilled by discipline because it teaches men to obey orders as a matter of course, to know that it is wrong not to obey them, and right - that is, their duty - to do so. For the soldier this conception of duty does not embrace abstractions such as freedom or empire or democracy. In battle a soldier's sense of duty extends only to the friends who are around him. It is the job of the junior leader to encourage this sense of duty. In brief, discipline seeks to conquer fear by welding men into a cohesive whole, united by obedience to orders. It aims to create a body strong enough to carry each of its members through dangers and difficulties which they themselves would be unable to face alone. In this way it promotes comradeship, which is the third factor morale.

## Comradeship

Morale cannot be good unless men come to have affection for each other; a fellow-feeling must grow up which will result in a spirit of comradeship. An army is made up of human beings, so that however much a leader may inspire his men, however perfect the discipline, the morale will be hard and unsympathetic if the warmth of the comradeship is not added to it. War, though a hard business, is not necessarily a grim one. Men must laugh and joke together, must enjoy each other's company, and must get fun out of life even in times of danger. Comradeship is based on affection and trust, which between them produce an atmosphere of mutual goodwill and a feeling of interdependence. Men learn to have faith in each other and to depend on each other according to the abilities of each. Comradeship is a great antidote to fear because it gives a man friends. If he has friends he will derive strength from their presence and will be anxious not to let them down in battle. All men have within them a streak of generosity and unselfishness - a touch of nobility - and these qualities will be brought out in their attitude to their friends. Friendship causes men to give of their best.

In conclusion, comradeship is vital to high morale because it surrounds a man with an atmosphere of warmth and strength at the very moment when he is feeling cold and weak. It encourages his finest instincts, and the demands of friendship serve to strengthen him in battle. These demands are also a challenge to his self-respect - a quality which must now be considered.

## Self-Respect

No man can be said to possess high morale if the quality of self-respect is lacking. Soldiers must be encouraged to respect themselves at all times and under all conditions. Self-respect implies a determination to maintain personal standards of behaviour. A man who respect himself will allow neither himself to become slovenly nor his quarters dirty; even in action he will take care to see that his personal appearance suffers as little as possible. It is the job of the non-commissioned officer to maintain this aspect of discipline; it is the function of the officer to encourage and instil self-respect.

Efficiency is inseparable from self-respect. Men must take pride in their ability to carry out all jobs allotted to them. They must feel that they are good soldiers and are therefore of value to other people. Men can be persuaded of this fact by being trusted. A man who feels he is trusted will feel that he is efficient, and he will at once begin to respect himself. He will have confidence in his own ability to fight. Men who are trusted gain self-confidence. It is the job of the officer to convince his men that he trusts them. Self-respect is a quality which will develop inevitably if the three essential factors already considered are present. It is true to say that without self-respect good morale is impossible; it is equally true to say that if the standards of leadership, discipline and comradeship are high, the quality of self-respect will also be high.

## Devotion to a Cause

It is impossible to make devotion to a cause either a basic or a contributory factor to good morale. It must stand by itself between these two categories. I do not believe that soldiers are greatly influenced by “cause”; they do not advance over dangerous and fire-swept ground in the conscious pursuit of an ideal; they fight for reasons which have little obvious connection with freedom or democracy. There are, of course, exceptions. But rhetorical statements which assert that the soldier

“... must know what he fights for  
And love what he knows”

must not be allowed to confuse the issue. The fact is that the soldier, instead of having “fire in his belly”, advances into battle with a cold feeling inside him. These statements must be qualified.

No nation could fight an unpopular war; the war must be accepted by the people, since a democracy cannot oppose the will of the majority of its citizens. The soldier, as a citizen, must therefore be convinced of the rightness of the cause. At least his reaction to the declaration of war must be acquiescence, even if this is only passive: he must not be hostile to it. The way to change this passive acceptance to active enthusiasm in battle has already been given in the four basic factors. Nevertheless, nothing which I have said must be interpreted as minimising the

influence of “cause” on those officers and men who are moved by it. For these few, “cause” will be a sustaining and strengthening factor and may be of greater importance to them than any of the four factors.

## Contributory Factors

There are certain contributory factors which powerfully assist morale but do not themselves constitute essential conditions for it. It is possible to have high morale without any of these contributory factors must be present. There are many of them and only a few are considered here.

*Success* - High morale is possible in defeat but not during a long period of defeat. On such occasions confidence in the leaders will inevitably wane and the first basis will be undermined. Success will aid good morale by creating confidence in the leader and in the command.

*Regimental Tradition* - The regimental spirit can be a powerful factor in making for good morale. The more a soldier feels himself to be identified with his regiment the higher will be his morale if the four essential conditions have been fulfilled. There is a difference between comradeship and regimental spirit. Comradeship is the spirit of fellow-feeling which grows up between a small group of men who live and work and fight together. Regimental spirit is the soldier’s pride in the traditions of his regiment and his determination to be worthy of them himself. Nothing but good can result from this spirit, which should be constantly encouraged; it is now, however, a basic factor of morale, because in the crisis of battle the majority of men will not derive encouragement from the glories of the past but will seek aid from their leaders and comrades of the present. In other words, most men do not fight well because their ancestors fought well at the Battle of Minden two centuries ago, but because their particular platoon or battalion has good leaders, is well-disciplined, and has developed the feeling of comradeship and self-respect among all ranks on all levels. It is not devotion to some ancient regimental story which steels men in crises; it is devotion to the comrades who are with them and the leaders who are in front of them.

*Personal Happiness* - A man should be happy in the sense that his personal life should be in order. Nothing weakens a man more than trouble at home; it encourages him to think of home, and all that it implies, when he should be occupied

with the enemy. It turns his mind to peace and his desire to live at the moment when it is necessary for him to steel himself to face the possibility of death. He must never be allowed to forget that his job is to fight. His function is to kill the enemy and in so doing he must expose himself to danger.

*Administration* - A man's ordinary day-to-day life must be well organised. Thus, hard conditions imposed on him in training to inculcate discipline do not rule out the desirability of good living quarters; and in the line a soldier's morale will be much improved if the administrative arrangements are good and if he is assured of proper conditions, with a reasonable amount of leisure and comfort when he leaves the front. But here a warning must be given. There is a danger today of "welfare" being considered as an end in itself and not as a means to an end, one of the means of maintaining morale. Welfare by itself will not produce good morale because it is essentially soft; and it has already been stated that morale cannot be good unless it contains a quality of hardness. Hardness and privation are the school of the good soldier; idleness and luxury are his enemies. Men will endure great hardships if they know why and are convinced of the necessity. "Blood, toil, tears and sweat" is not for nothing one of the great rallying calls of the English race. Goering's cry, "Guns before butter", expressed the same truth. If men believe in the need, hardships are in themselves a stimulant to morale. But the opposite is also true. Let there be any suggestion that butter can come before guns and some men will at once choose the butter. If this happens there will be no morale in the sense of this definition.

*Propaganda* - The uplifting effect of modern propaganda on a soldier is perhaps a new development. A man's morale is raised immensely by feeling that his efforts are appreciated and applauded, not only by his comrades and officers but by the world at large. Remarkable results can be achieved by the use of modern publicity methods.

In brief, high morale has been defined as the quality which makes men endure and show courage in times of fatigue and danger. The cultivation of morale depends upon the training of leaders, the inculcations of discipline, the encouragement of comradeship, and the infusing of self-respect. The leaders must have a belief in their cause, and they must pay attention to numerous contributory factors of considerable but secondary importance.

We live today in a scientific age. But we soldiers have to remember that the raw material with which we have to deal is “men”. Man is still the first weapon of war. His training is the most important consideration in the fashioning of a fighting army. All modern science is directed towards his assistance, but on his efforts depends the outcome of the battle. The morale of the soldier is the most important single factor in war.

Field Marshal The Viscount Montgomery of Alamein.

### **They Held Themselves Together Remarkably Well**

*During their captivity by Sierra Leone’s West Side Boys in August 2000, Capt John Laverty concentrated on sustaining the morale of his men.*

On many occasions our chances did not look good. I felt this as much as the soldiers. The men counted on me because I had attended negotiations and had developed a rapport with some of our captors. I never allowed myself to talk about the possibility that we might be killed, although deep down I knew it could easily happen. When soldiers shared their fears with me, I reassured them, telling them that the more time that passed the better our situation became, because our people would be negotiating our release or planning our rescue. Some said they didn’t know how much longer they could take it. I said that they would have to take it for as long as it lasted and that they could handle it. It seemed to work as they held themselves together remarkably well.

Capt John Laverty Royal Irish Regiment.

# DISCIPLINE

‘Discipline is the glue that holds men together when threatened; it is the primary antidote to fear. Men of all ranks must be trained to obey their orders under the worst conditions of war and to do so with imagination and resource’.

General Sir Rupert Smith.

## PAY WELL AND PUNISH SOUNDLY

‘For what most commonly keeps an army united is the reputation of the general, that is, his courage and good conduct; without these, neither high birth nor any sort of authority is sufficient. Now the chief thing incumbent upon a general, in order to maintain his reputation, is to pay well and punish soundly; for if he does not pay his men duly, he cannot punish them properly when they deserve it. Suppose, for instance, a soldier should be guilty of a robbery; how can you punish him when you give him no pay? And how can he help robbing when he has no other means of subsistence? But if you pay them well and do not punish them severely when they offend, they will soon grow insolent and licentious; then you will become despised and lose your authority; later, tumult and discord will naturally ensue in your army; and will probably end in its ruin’.

From Book Six of Machiavelli’s *The Art of War* (1521).

## A FIERCE AND SANGUINARY RABBLE

*Badajoz April 1812*

It was nearly dusk, and the few hours while I slept had made a frightful change in the condition and temper of the soldiery. In the morning they were obedient to their officers, and preserved the semblance of subordination; now they were in a state of furious intoxication - discipline was forgotten - and the splendid troops of yesterday had become a fierce and sanguinary rabble, dead to every touch of human feeling, and filled with every demonic passion that can brutalize the man.

WH Kingston *The Bivouac; or Stories of the Peninsular War* (1837).

## All Order and Discipline Were Abandoned

*San Sebastian 1813*

The houses were everywhere ransacked, the furniture wantonly broken, the churches profaned, the images dashed to pieces; wine and spirit cellars were broken open, and the troops, heated already with angry passions, became absolutely mad by intoxication. All order and discipline were abandoned. The officers had no longer the slightest control over their men, who, on the contrary, controlled the officers; nor is it by any means certain, that several of the latter did not fall by the hands of the former, when they vainly attempted to bring them back to a sense of subordination.

GR Gleig *The Subaltern* (1825).

## Discipline and Good Order 1829

*The Duke of Wellington had seen the parts of the army collapse into a drunken, blood thirsty mob at Badajoz in 1812 and San Sebastian in 1813. Throughout his life he resisted all attempts by reformers to abolish flogging soldiers with the cat-of-nine-tails.*

I confess that I have always considered this desire to alter the system of discipline of the army as one of the morbid symptoms of the times. It is like the notion that thieves ought not to be punished, which has, at last, peopled London and its neighbourhood with thieves in thousands, who will now be driven forth, and, after plundering the country, will fall victims to the law.

We forget what the army is, and what it may become, if not kept in order; and how ready the people of the country are to cry out if, by accident, they should suffer by any act of its indiscipline; or if, for want of discipline, the army should fail in obtaining successes, as it certainly will fail, as it always has failed, if not in a state of discipline and good order.

Colonel Gurwood (ed) *Wellington's Despatches* (1829).

## A Magazine Charged with Firey Death

It is incalculable what, by arranging, commanding, and regimenting you can make of men. These thousand straight-standing firmset individuals who shoulder arms, who march, wheel, advance, retreat; and are, for your behoof, a magazine charged with firey death, in the most perfect condition of potential activity. A few months ago, till the persuasive sergeant came, what were they? Multi-form ragged losels, runaway apprentices, starved weavers, thievish valets; an entirely broken population, fast tending towards the treadmill. But the persuasive sergeant came; by tap of drum enlisted, or formed lists of them, took heartily to drilling them; and he and you have made them this!

Thomas Carlyle Past and Present (1836).

## To Suffer Without Struggle

*In February 1852 the troop ship Birkenhead ran onto a reef off Point Danger on the south east coast of South Africa. The troops paraded on deck, standing at attention with the band playing, while the sailors filled the few available lifeboats with the women and children, all of who survived. Only a handful of the British soldiers managed to swim ashore through shark infested waters.*

Waterloo gave a specimen of the same kind of British disciplined self-devotion; but this transcends it, in the absence of hostile passion, or the glory of the conquest to win. Here was the calm readiness to suffer without struggle, even when struggle might have availed somewhat for the individual though at another's expense.

Weekly Despatch 11th April 1852.

## Here We Go, Here We Go, Here We Go

*On the eve of the First World War, the historian of the British Army Sir John Fortescue reflects on the influence of Association Football.*

Sixty years ago, if not longer, officers and men were playing in the same regimental team at cricket, but football was confined to schools and universities. Since then football has grown into a national pastime, in which the Army eagerly takes part; and the officers, not content with working with their men, have steadily played with them. In other armies such an association of all ranks on a common footing might be regarded as dangerous to discipline. In the British Army an officer who has led his men to victory in a football match will be the more devotedly followed by them in a sterner field.

Sir John Fortescue *A History of the British Army* (1912).

## Pride in Oneself

Discipline is teaching which makes a man do something which he would not, unless he had learnt that it was the right, the proper, and the expedient thing to do. At its best, it is instilled and maintained by pride in oneself, in one's unit, in one's profession; only at its worst by a fear of punishment.

Field Marshal Earl Wavell *The Good Soldier* (1945).

## Overcoming Instincts

Foreign visitors sometimes talk of our 'natural' discipline. Of course it is not natural! You might as well talk of the 'instincts of a gentleman'. A man becomes a gentleman only by overcoming his instincts. It is the same with discipline.

Field Marshal Sir William Slim *Courage and Other Broadcasts* (1957).

## True Discipline

By “true discipline”, I do not mean a mere muscular response to orders. The latter comes from the training of body and wits; the former derives from a decision of the intellect which is based largely upon self-interest. I think that one of the general mistakes made by the military body is that because soldiering is a patriotic calling, it is regarded as somehow base to put self-interest foremost in appealing to the judgement and imagination of the soldier. Yet it is undeniable that a willingness to accept the system is the first step in the soldier’s personal advancement. As his success enhances his appreciation of the military life, he grows in knowledge and in a willing ability to apply it. These are the constituent elements of the true discipline upon which an army is finally dependent.

SLA Marshall Men Against Fire (1947).

## Self Discipline

The basis of this training must be self-discipline. A man must learn to be master of himself and to keep in subjection the bad qualities in his make-up. Self-discipline can be developed by training in such things as conception of duty, self-control, self-respect, endurance, and so on.

We then have collective discipline and there is no doubt that the initial training in this subject is best carried out by drill. Men must be taught instinctively to obey orders, whatever they are. I do not believe men will fight voluntarily for a cause without the iron bonds of discipline. The best form of discipline is the subordination of self for the benefit of the community.

Discipline is the backbone of the efficiency of an army; no changes in methods of warfare or in scientific developments will affect this truth.

Discipline in the soldier becomes loyalty in the officer.

I would like to give you my general views on the subject of discipline. It is important that our young officers should think rightly on this vital subject, since discipline is the essence of an army.

The word “discipline” has a somewhat nasty smell to some people. I do not think that is right. Possibly many people do not understand what is meant by it. I believe that the idea of discipline, properly understood, underlies civilian life in the same way as it is the basis of military life. In other words, discipline is both a civilian and a military necessity.

The basis of all discipline is self-discipline. This self-discipline may come from within a person, or it may be imposed upon him from without. Whatever its source, it involves the idea of self-control and self-restraint. This conception of self-restraint underlies the whole of Christian teaching on personal conduct, and it is impressed on every child from nursery days onwards. Obedience to the Ten Commandments means that we submit ourselves to the necessary self-discipline to enable ourselves to carry them out. I maintain that discipline has a moral foundation, and none of us need to be afraid to admit it.

Discipline has also what I call, for lack of a better word, a social basis. All civilised communities demand a degree of self-control from their people. In the interests of the community as a whole, each of us willingly submits to the supremacy of the law, and the authority of its agents, the police. We all recognise that the interests of the community as a whole make demands on us as individuals and, in order that all of us may live happily and freely together, we voluntarily impose upon ourselves a certain restraint.

In Britain we believe in a subordination of self for the benefit of the community. This involves a voluntary self-discipline which recognises and respects the rights of others, and, in so doing, enables us all to enjoy freedom of thought and speech. And at the same time we believe in a state which, recognising the importance of the individual, only imposes those restraints upon him which are necessary for the communal good.

Therefore discipline has both a moral and a social foundation. There can be no doubt of its military significance. It is the backbone of an army, and no

changes in methods of warfare, or in scientific developments, will affect this truth.

Therefore, the youth of today must receive discipline training. How is this done?

All of us have in our make-up good points and bad points. Training in self-discipline consists in analysing a man's character and then in developing the good points whilst teaching him to hold in subjection the bad points. This leads on, automatically, to collective discipline, in which the outstanding factor is the subordination of self for the benefit of the community. We must work on these lines in the Army.

Field Marshal The Viscount Montgomery of Alamein.

## Discipline and Confidence

FC Bartlett describes discipline as 'enforced obedience to external authority'. This is too rigid a definition, for the most effective discipline is that which is self-imposed, which springs from the 'tribal' structure of small groups and from mutual confidence between leaders and led. Richard Simpkin is right to suggest that 'the nub of successful discipline is team spirit'. It is this sort of discipline which the members of good units recall with pride. 'We all knew one another very well,' wrote an officer in the Queen's Regiment of the platoon he commanded from January 1938 to January 1940, 'and there was a natural discipline which needed very little enforcement'. For another platoon commander, the end product of this sort of discipline was: 'A mutual confidence that what has to be done will be done whatever the circumstances. It enables rank barriers to be bridged without loss of respect'.

R Holmes Firing Line. (1985).

*In August 1942 the 39<sup>th</sup> and 53<sup>rd</sup> Battalions of the Australian Militia, composed of 18 year old conscripts, collided with a Japanese brigade advancing south across Papua New Guinea's Kokoda Trail. The 53<sup>rd</sup> battalion turned and ran. The 39<sup>th</sup> battalion, which a few weeks earlier had received an influx of experienced officers and NCO's, stood its ground and over the next month fought the Japanese to a standstill. This action is regarded as a test in laboratory conditions of the impact of leadership on fighting performance.*

It's a confidence business; all war is a confidence business. If there isn't confidence in your mates and your leadership, and your weapons and your training, you're not good soldiers.

Lt Col Ralph Honner 39<sup>th</sup> Bn AMF quoted in Peter Bruen: Those Ragged Bloody Heroes. (1991).

## Liberty Implies Discipline

If you get up from that chair you are sitting in and take out your car or bicycle, you can choose where you want to go, your own destination. That's liberty! But, as you drive or ride through the streets towards it, you will keep to the left of the road. That's discipline! You will keep to the left without thinking very much about it, but if you do think for a moment, you will find that there is a connection between liberty and discipline.

First of all, you will keep to the left for your own advantage. If you insist on liberty to drive on any side of the road you fancy, you will end up, not where you want to be, but on a stretcher. And there's not much liberty about that! So you accept discipline, because you know that in the long run it is the only way in which you can get to where you want to go quickly and safely.

Other people have as much right to go where they want to as you have. If you career all over the road you will get in their way, delay them, and put them in danger. So for their sakes as well as your own you keep to the left.

But it will be no use your keeping to the left if others on the road don't do the same. You will expect them to. You will trust to their common sense. You will rely on their discipline.

Lastly, even supposing you are tempted to go scooting about on the wrong side, you probably won't. At the back of your mind will be the thought "If I do the police will be after me". In the last resort there must be some force which can punish disobedience to the law.

There are thus four reasons why you keep to the left:

- (i) Your own advantage
- (ii) Consideration for others
- (iii) Confidence in your fellows, and
- (iv) Fear of punishment.

Whenever we put a curb on our natural desire to do as we like, whenever we temper liberty with discipline, we do so for one or more of those reasons. It is the relative weight we give to each of these reasons that decides what sort of discipline we have. And that can vary from the pure self-discipline of the Sermon on the Mount to the discipline of the concentration camp - the enforced discipline of fear.

Field Marshal Sir William Slim *Courage and Other Broadcasts*. (1957).

# THE BRITISH SOLDIER

‘Some people talk of their enlisting from their fine military feeling - all stuff - no such thing. Some of our men enlist from having got bastard children - some for minor offences - many more for drink; but you can hardly conceive such a set brought together, and it really is wonderful that we should have made them the fine fellows they are’.

Wellington on the British Soldier (1815).

## The Soldier

“ ... To dare boldly,  
In a fair cause, and for their country’s safety:  
To run upon the cannon’s mouth undaunted;  
To obey their leaders, and shun mutinies;  
To bear with patience the winter’s cold  
And summer’s scorching heat, and not to faint  
When plenty of provision fails, with hunger,  
Are the essential parts that make up a soldier”.

Philip Massinger (1583-1640).

## THE SOLDIER’S LOT - ALL TIMES

Our God and soldiers we alike adore  
Ev’n at the brink of danger; not before;  
After deliverance, both alike required,  
Our God’s forgotten, and our soldiers slighted

Francis Quarles Epigram (Circa 1642).

## Veterans of Waterloo land in Kent Autumn 1815

‘We were barbarously treated at Ramsgate, overcharged by the innkeeper at Margate, misled by our guide, and wrongly directed by a ploughman on our road to Sandwich... As to the peasantry a civil word could not be extracted from them.

United Service Magazine III (Sept 1852). Extracts from the Journals of Major Edward Macready.

## Pte Atkins

It's Tommy this an' Tommy that, an 'Chuck him out, the brute!'  
But it's 'Saviour of 'is country' when the guns begin to shoot.

Rudyard Kipling Tommy

## The Mark of Greatness

*Field Marshal Sir William Slim made this broadcast in 1951, after the Imjin River Battle in Korea. He subsequently confessed to a friend that he had engaged in excessive self-congratulation, though this was unavoidable because the talk was, at least in part, designed to reconcile the British people to the deaths of National Servicemen in Korea and Malaya. Although the army of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is composed of professionals who have volunteered, much of what Slim said is still applicable. His speech was published in the *Wishstream* in the same year and in a foreword Slim used the following words. "This is a talk I gave on the wireless. If you read it, think how lucky you will be to lead such soldiers. Remember, too, that even the best soldiers are of little use without good officers - and our soldiers deserve the best. It's up to you to see that you are the best you can be".*

The soldier I want to talk about, the greatest soldier I have met - and, believe me, I have met a lot of all sorts - is the ordinary British soldier.

Think for a moment of the soldier's job. In war he has not only to fight but, in order to be able to fight, he has continually to perform every activity that goes on in a civilian community, and do it under the most uncomfortable, nerve-racking, and dangerous conditions. In peace he is often called upon to restore order or carry on essential services when these tasks have proved too difficult for the civil authorities.

What qualities does he need for all this? He must have courage, lots of it; endurance, moral and physical; skill with his weapons and at the techniques

of his trade - for soldiering these days is a highly skilled trade. He must be adaptable and he must have discipline.

A formidable list that - but if he fails in one of them he cannot be a good - let alone a great - soldier.

As to courage, our people, whatever its faults has never failed for want of courage. From the days of Joan of Arc down to the British soldier today, our friends and, what's perhaps more to the point, our enemies have picked out the British soldier as the staunchest of comrades and most formidable of foes.

It is not that the British soldier is braver than other soldiers. He is not - but he is brave for a bit longer, and it's that bit that counts. Endurance is the very fibre of his courage and of his character. He stays where he is until he has won. He did it at Gibraltar two hundred years ago; a few years back he was doing it at Kohima. He has done it since.

Many years ago, when I was a young officer, my battalion was hard pressed and I was sent with a couple of men to get in touch with a unit which we hoped was still on our left. Worming our way from one bit of cover to the next, we eventually dropped into a trench that had been badly smashed by shellfire. Pistol in hand, I scrambled over the fallen earth, through bay after bay, finding nothing but wreckage and the dead. I think I would have turned back then, but I was frightened to go back as to go on. So I went on. At last, round a traverse I heard voices. My heart in my mouth, I strained my ears to listen. An agitated voice was proclaiming that another attack was coming and they'd all be wiped out. There was a pause and then one of those creamy West Country voices drawled, "Aw, don' 'ee worry. Us'n 'll beat they!" I'd found the Glosters.

The British soldier in his long career has suffered so many disasters, won so many victories, that neither the one nor the other unduly depresses or elates him. Come what may, he holds to his inflexible confidence in ultimate victory. It may take a long time, it may mean all sorts of grim things, but - "Us'n 'll beat they!"

Unlike most others, the British Army has to be ready to fight or serve anywhere. Western Europe or farthest Asia, desert or jungle, it's all in the day's work. A

few hundred years of that have bred in the British soldier an adaptability to climate, terrain and conditions that is one of his most valuable assets.

Any soldier who has courage, endurance, skill at arms, adaptability and discipline, will be a very efficient soldier but he will not be the British soldier, for he has something more.

It may seem strange to talk of gentleness as a soldierly quality, but it is - and he has it. Time and again the British soldier has combined real toughness in hardship and battle with gentleness to the weak, the defeated, the unhappy. Our bitterest enemies would rather be occupied by British troops than by any others. The British soldier is, bless him, a grim fighter but a bad hater.

He moves amid strange peoples and surroundings with an unarrogant assurance that radiates confidence. In famines, epidemics, earthquakes, floods, he has earned the dumb gratitude of millions. Thousands he has protected against their own violence and fanaticism - often with poor reward.

One sweltering afternoon, in the Red Fort at Delhi a company of British infantry was hurriedly falling in. There was a riot in the city, Hindu against Moslem. Heads were being broken, men stabbed, shops looted and burned. As the troops struggled into their equipment an officer said, "Now remember, in this quarrel you are neutral". A young soldier turned to his Sergeant, "Wot die 'e mean by nootral, Sergeant?" he asked. "Nootral my lad", replied the NCO, "Nootral means that when you go down that adjectival bazaar, you're just as likely to be 'it by a Mo'amedan brick as by a 'Indue brick".

Unruffled by brickbats or bouquets, the soldier has marched across history, dominating the scene. Success that might turn another's head he greets with studied understatement; disaster that would appal most he meets with a jest, for his courage is always laced with humour. With his own brand of humour that is part of him and that he has kept, quite topical, and good-natured through the centuries.

There was a Grenadier at Fontenoy who, as the French presented their muskets for a devastating volley, intoned, "For what we are about to receive may the Lord

make us truly thankful”. He must have been brother to the freezing British fighting man, crouching under a Korean blizzard, who exclaimed, “I wish to Heaven the Iron Curtain was windproof”.

Many countries produce fine soldiers, whose achievements rival those of our own. It is character that the British soldier shows beyond others the marks of greatness. Courage, endurance, skill, adaptability, discipline they may have, but none blends these qualities together as he does with this leaven gentleness and humour. Nor has any other soldier his calm unshakeable confidence of victory.

The character of the British soldier is his own but in his achievements he has owed much to his officers. The regimental officers of the British Army have in all soldierly qualities, in self-sacrifice and in leadership been worthy of their men. They could not have, nor would they covet, higher praise.

Field Marshal Sir William Slim *Courage and Other Broadcasts* (1957).

## The PBI

### Fortitude

‘The first quality of a soldier is fortitude in resisting hardship and fatigue. Bravery is but the second’.

Napoleon.

## The Last Ounce of Mental and Physical Energy

They marched back from the battle in the way of infantry, their feet scarcely leaving the ground, their bodies rocking mechanically from side to side as if that was the only way they could lift their legs. You could see that it required the last ounce of their mental and physical energy to move their legs at all. Yet they looked as if they could keep on moving like that for ever.

Fred Majdalany *The Monastery*. (1945).

## Get The Job Done

“My experience both as someone who has pressed a trigger and as someone who has commanded officers who have yet to do so is that we have little to worry about. Most soldiers fall into the category, once battle is confronted, of “resigned competence”. This is expressed in a desire to be somewhere else but a determination to get the job done!”.

Major JD Stuart Scots Guards.

## Stoicism: Afghanistan Pre Deployment Briefing - All Times

When you're wounded and left on Afghanistan's plains,  
An' the women come out to cut up what remains,  
Jest roll on your rifle an' blow out your brains  
An' go to your Gawd like a solder.

Rudyard Kipling, *The Young British Soldier*.

## Old Soldier's Secrets

'He had the old soldier's knack of making himself comfortable anywhere. The rest of us used to crawl between our blankets in our shirts and trousers. Not Harry. He never slept in anything but crisp white pyjamas. And he slept between sheets. And in spite of the general squalor, the sheets and the pyjamas always appeared to be spotless. In the early morning he always shaved long before anyone else, and appeared spruce and fresh as if straight from a shower; his trousers were invariably well creased, and his boots shiny. How he kept this up, no one ever knew. Old soldiers have their secrets which are not divulged to lesser mortals'.

Fred Majdalany *The Monastery*. (1945).

## The One Principle of War

War remains an art and like all arts whatever its variation, will have its enduring principles. Many men, skilled either with sword or pen and sometimes with both, have tried to expound these principles. I heard them once from a soldier of experience of whom I had a deep and well-founded respect. Many years ago, as a cadet hoping some day to be an officer, I was pouring over "The Principles of War", listed in the old Field Services Regulations, when the Sergeant Major came upon me. He surveyed me with kindly amusement. "Don't bother your head about all them things, me lad", he said. "There's only one principle of war and that's this. Hit the other fellow as quick as you can and as hard as you can, where it hurts him most, when he ain't looking"."

Field Marshal Sir William Slim *Defeat into Victory*. (1956).

## Dressed to Kill

The better you dress a soldier, the more highly will he be thought of by the women, and consequently by himself.

Field Marshal Lord Wolseley *The Soldier's Pocketbook*.

... let me applaud the leaders [of the British Army] here today for adopting more liberal policies with respect to wearing uniforms. I think it is wonderful that your people can now see what your troops look like kitted out. We had the same problem in the United States until 1981: after Vietnam we stopped using our uniforms, and then ... I remember ... the Secretary of Defense coming into the Pentagon and saying, "Why aren't people in uniform?". We said, "well, we wear it on Wednesday to make sure they still fit". And he said, "that's the end of that, you are soldiers and you are sailors, you are airmen and you are marines, so you wear them every day". And we did, we got back in uniform. We started to show the American people who we were, what we are and what we did for them; and it was a major step up in re-bonding between the Armed Forces and the American people ... pride being restored to the Armed Forces as the people could see that we truly were a people's army, and we were of them, for them, by them'.

General Colin Powell KBE speaking in London 10 November 1998.

## Phlegmatic Veteran

WOOLWICH February 26 1793

Dear Mother, Brother, Sister and aquentices

This is the last from us in England. I have just received orders for Germany under the command of the Duke of York, with 2200 foot guards. We expect to embark tomorrow with 1 Captain, 4 subalterns, 8 non-commissioned Officers and 52 gunners to go with His Royal Highness as a Bodyguard of British Heroes. We are to lead the Dutch Prushen and Hanover Troops into the field, as there is none equal to the British Army. We are chosen troops sent by His Majesty to show an example to the other Troops, to go in front, & lead the combined army against the French which consists of 150,000 able fighten men. You may judge if we shall have anything to do. I had the pleasure to conquer the French last war; but God knows how it will be this war. I cannot exspeck to escape the Bullets of my enemies much longer, as non has ever entred my flesh as yet. To be plain with you and not dishearten you, I don't expect to come off so cleare as I did last war. But is death or honour. I exspeck to be a Gentleman or a Cripel. But you never shall see me to destress you. if I cannot help you, I never shall destress you.

Dear Mother, I take my family with me. Where I go, they most go. If I leave them, I should have no luck. My wife and 2 children is in good health, & I in good spirits. Fear not for us. I hope God will be on our side.

Your Loven Son & Daughter,  
GEO & MARY ROBERTSON

## Too Old a Soldier

Ruthven Redoubt 30 August 1745

Hon General - This goes to acquaint you that yesterday there appeared in the little town of Ruthven about three hundred of the enemy, and sent proposals to me to surrender the redoubt upon Condition that I should have liberty to carry off bags and baggage. My answer was, "I am too old a soldier to surrender a garrison of such strength without bloody noses!". They threatened to hang me and my men for refusal. I told them I would take my chance. This morning as they attacked me about twelve o'clock with about one hundred and fifty men; they attacked the fore-gate and sally-port. They drew off about half an hour after three. I expect another visit this night, but I shall give them the warmest reception my weak party can afford. I shall hold out as long as possible.

I conclude, Honourable General, with great respects,

Your most humble servant

J Molley, Sergt 6<sup>th</sup> [Foot]

## Dig and Dig

I bade farewell to my right leg, and to my career as a soldier outside a trench at Gheluvelt, near Ypres, on 29<sup>th</sup> October, 1914. In the first Battle of Ypres, the British were outnumbered by seven to one. On the previous evening we took over trenches - not deep or elaborate ones - from an English regiment. I cannot say which regiment we relieved. Our Sergeant, on entering the trench, heard the last man as he was doing a hurried exit, say: "So long, Jock - not 'arf a nice place. Jack Johnson all bleeding day".

On that night there was no sleep as we had to dig and dig to improve the trench, and were being fired at all night. At 5am a group of us were standing in the open - everything had turned peaceful- admiring our now almost perfect trench, when hell seemed let loose. All the guns in Flanders seemed to have suddenly concentrated on our particular sector of the British front. When the artillery fire subsided, Germans sprang from everywhere and attacked us. My Platoon

held fast; we lost some good comrades. Then we were ordered to evacuate the trench, and assist to hold a trench on the flank where the fighting was fiercest. I was a sergeant, and was told to take and hold a certain part of the trench where the occupants had just been driven out. On rushing the trench, and leaping into it, I found that the dead were lying three deep in it. After taking bearings, I told the men to keep under cover and detailed one man, Ginger Bain, as “look-out”. After what seemed ages Ginger excitedly asked “How strong is the German Army?”. I replied “Seven million”. “Well”, said Ginger, “here is the whole bloody lot of them making for us”.

Sergeant Bell (1914).

The British Soldier must be driven to digging himself in the moment he occupies an area, and not to waste time in sightseeing, souvenir hunting and brewing tea.

Commander 36<sup>th</sup> Division (1944).

## Uncle Bill

But the biggest boost to morale was the burly man who came to talk to the assembled battalion by the lake shore - I’m not sure when, but it was unforgettable. Slim was like that: the only man I’ve ever seen who had a force that came out of him, a strength of personality that I have puzzled over since, for there was no apparent reason for it, unless it was the time and the place and my own state of mind. Yet others felt it too, and they were not impressionable men.

His appearance was plain enough: large, heavily built, grim-faced with that hard mouth and bulldog chin; the rakish Gurkha hat was at odds with the slung carbine and untidy trouser bottoms; he might have been a yard foreman who had become managing director, or a prosperous farmer who’d boxed in his youth. Nor was he an orator. There have been four brilliant speakers in my time: Churchill, Hitler, Martin Luther King, and Scargill; Slim was not in their street. His delivery was blunt, matter-of-fact, without gestures or mannerisms, only a lack of them.

He knew how to make an entrance - or rather, he probably didn't and it came naturally. Frank Sinatra has the same technique, but in his case it may well be studied: no fanfare, no announcement, simply walking onstage while the orchestra are still settling down, and starting to sing. Slim emerged from under the trees by the lake shore, there was no nonsense of "gather round" or jumping on boxes; he just stood with his thumb hooked in his carbine sling and talked about how we had caught the Jap off-balance and were going to annihilate him in the open; there was no exhortation or ringing clichés, no jokes or self-conscious use of barrack-room slang - when he called the Japs "bastards" it was casual and without heat. He was telling us informally what would be, in the reflective way of intimate conversation. And we believed every word - and it all came true.

I think it was that sense of being close to us, as though he were chatting offhand to an understanding nephew (not for nothing was he "Uncle Bill") that was his great gift. It was a reminder of what everyone knew: that Slim had enlisted in 1914, fought in the trenches and at Gallipoli, and risen, without advantages, on his own merits; his accent was respectable, no more, and he couldn't have talked down if he'd tried. You knew, when he talked of smashing Jap, that to him it meant not only arrows on a map but clearing bunkers and going in under shell-fire; that he had the head of a general with the heart of a private soldier. A friend of mine, in another division, thoughtlessly decorated his jeep with a skull he'd found: Slim snapped at him to remove it, and then added gently: "It might be one of our chaps, killed on the retreat". He thought, he knew at our level; it was that, and the sheer certainty that was built into every line of him, that gave Fourteenth Army its overwhelming confidence; what he promised, that he would surely do. And afterwards, when it was over and he spoke of what his army had done, it was always "you", not even "we", and never "I".

Perhaps the most revealing story, not only about Slim but about what his army thought of him, tells how he was addressing a unit preparing to go into action. The magic must have worked again, for some enthusiast actually shouted: "We'll follow you, general!". And Slim, with one of his rare smiles, called back: "Don't you believe it. You'll be a long way in front of me"

George MacDonald Fraser Quartered Safe Out Here.

## Them and Us

'I look back on my time in the Army with some pride, and I deem it a privilege to command soldiers - gaining enormous satisfaction whenever I was able to help them. There are many things I learned through out my service, but it was in the early years that the simplest proved to be the most important to me. I overheard some young Parachute regiment soldiers discussing why they should respect officers. They were quiet, calm, serious young men what the term "them and us" (officers and ORs) was all about. They concluded that an officer was someone that you could trust, in that he was invariably honest and would try to help you. I've never forgotten that and have used it as a beacon to guide me through so many aspects of my life.

Major Bill Wiseman, on retirement from the Army.

## Horrid Officers - West Indies 1796

The composition of the officers is horrid. They wished to be advanced to have more pay and less duty. I see none, or at least very few, who have the smallest ambition to distinguish themselves. Little can be expected from men formed and led by such officers. They neither look up to them as officers, nor do they respect them as gentlemen. I see this so strongly that I fear, if the war continues much longer in this country, we shall be beaten by equal numbers of the blacks.

Diary of Sir John Moore (July 1796).

## Caste System

It is, indeed, singular, how a man loses or gains caste with his comrades from his behaviour, and how closely he is observed in the field. The officers, too, are commented upon and closely observed. The men are very proud of those who are brave in the field, and kind and considerate to the soldiers under them. An act of kindness done by an officer has often during the battle been the cause of his life being saved.

Ed H Curling Recollections of Rifleman Harris (1847).

## Windy Officers

‘Windy’ officers were usually regarded with some disgust. Both senior and junior non-commissioned ranks felt contempt for an officer of 1/13 Londons ‘for showing his fear in front of the men he was supposed to be leading’, by ducking on hearing shells explode, the RSM going so far as to shout at him to ‘keep his head up’. An officer of 22/R Fusiliers was once found cowering at the bottom of a trench at the beginning of an attack; his platoon sergeant swore at him, and physically bundled him over the parapet. George Coppard (37<sup>th</sup> MG Coy) mingled his disgust for an officer who refused to emerge from a dugout with pity for his physical and mental condition. Although one ex-ranker wrote of men covering up the ‘deficiencies’ of ‘dud’ officers, this attitude does not seem to have been typical. Many soldiers appeared to have shared Lord Moran’s view that courage was very much a matter of character and willpower, that everyone felt fear, but only cowards gave way to it. Officers were expected by their men to set an example of courage. Cowards had, in the eyes of the Other Ranks, forfeited all right to commissioned status, and the privileges that went with it.

GD Sheffield Leadership in the Trenches Officer-Man Relations, Morale and Discipline in the British Army in the Era of the First World War (2000).

## Intelligence In Their Superiors

‘Soldiers can endure hardship. Most of their training is directed toward conditioning them for unusual privation and exertion. But no power on earth can reconcile them to what common sense says is unnecessary hardship which might have been avoided by greater intelligence in their superiors. The more intelligent the soldier, the more likely it is that he will see that as a sign of indiscipline up above and will answer it in the same way.

Colonel SLA Marshall Men Against Fire (1947).

## Faith in the Regiment

Just “certain knowledge” ... The men did not expect every officer to be a brilliant leader, and they strongly hoped he would not be a “pusher”, but they expected him to put more than the next man into the general reservoir of courage. They did not look to him for ringing words of inspiration, but they liked to be reminded that they were the best mob in the line. No subaltern on the Western Front had read, or heard of, Wolseley’s Pocket Book, but all grew to recognise the truth which Wolseley set out; “The soldier is a peculiar being that can along be brought to the highest efficiency by inducing him to believe that he belongs to a regiment that is infinitely superior to the others round him”. That was the Old Army’s source of strength; and that faith in the regiment could be agreed through twenty battalions with very little dilution.

ES Turner *Gallant Gentlemen* (1956).

## Lost in the System

*A Royal Irish Hussar writes to his Commanding Officer.*

Sir

I have been in the rear party now for 7 days, since my return from hospital in England. I am fully fit and expected to be returned to duty at once. However, there seems to be a problem with this. The rear party are doing a fine job, but do not share my sense of urgency about my return to theatre. I seem to be ‘lost in the system’ and this has become a source of great anguish to me.

Sir, I put myself completely at your disposal and offer my services in any position that you see fit. I have given this much thought and I can see no other way to convey my feelings on this matter. I realise that you are extremely busy at this time and that this is an unorthodox method but I must try all possible means to rejoin my squadron or at the very least the regiment.

I hope that I have not irritated you by bypassing proper channels but I feel that I must return to my job with the regiment asap. I hope also that I have made myself clear and that you know that I am here, waiting and ready.

Yours, faithfully

L/Cpl Harrington

D Harrington (signed)

L/Cpl Dennis Harrington to Lt Col Arthur Denaro 14 Feb 1991.

## No Bloody Ammunition?

Mount Tumbledown - 13/14 June 1982.

We were all doing this first aid job while Guardsman MacKenzie was guarding us. I said to him, 'You watch out'.

'Sir', he said, 'I haven't got any ammunition'.

'What!' I said. 'What a fucking time to run out of ammunition'. He had an SMG, all the others had SLRs. 'How long have you been without ammunition?'

'Since the bottom of the hill, Sir'.

'Did you know that?' I said.

'Yes, Sir'.

'Well, why did you come on up with me if you had no bloody ammunition?'

'You asked me to, Sir'.

What a brave man! He was an extraordinary chap, because right at the bottom of the hill, when I'd gone forward and said, 'Come on, come on with me', I'd found myself with nobody with me. So I'd shouted out, '15 Platoon, are you with me?' There was no reply. So I thought 'Kiszely, you've really blown it this time'. I shouted out again and this voice right beside me said, 'Aye, Sir, I'm with you', and it was MacKenzie, who had no ammunition! Amazing boy. There was this lad, without any ammunition at all who had decided he was going to come because he was there, and because the Company Commander was asking.

From Max Arthur (ed) Above All Courage (1985).

## What More Can A Boy Platoon Commander Ask For?

*The respect and affection which can develop between an officer and an NCO can last a lifetime.*

In an infantry platoon in battle you will find a small band of brothers - about fifteen to twenty per cent of the platoon - who create an atmosphere that gets things done and wins battles. Without exception they are an aristocracy of those who can always be trusted to put others, particularly those under their command, before themselves. Whatever their rank they are the true leaders.

Doug led his section from the Normandy beachhead until he was wounded on 12 February 1945. He was evacuated from the battlefield tended by a kindly German stretcher-bearer who he had just captured.

What can I say about this wonderful NCO? He was unflappable with loads of that rare quality, common sense. He had a firm grip on his soldiers. There was no nonsense with Doug, they all trusted him implicitly. If ever a soldier deserved to be awarded the Military Medal it was Doug but, as in so many cases it was not to be.

18 Platoon, being a good one, with sound personal relationships, got more than its fair share of patrols. Doug and his close friend Serjeant Jim Kingston accompanied me on all of them. There is simply no room for any but the best to be taken on patrol, the risks are too great. His temperament ideally suited him for this.

Finally I would like to express my own appreciation of Doug's kindly perceptive. When I took command of 18 Platoon I was just twenty years old, inexperienced and without much self-esteem. Doug and Jim Kingston, despite being older and more mature made me feel wanted by my NCOs and soldiers. What more can a boy platoon commander ask for?

Sydney Jary MC. Funeral Oration for Corporal Douglas Proctor (1917-2002).  
18 Platoon, 4<sup>th</sup> Bn The Somerset Light Infantry.

## The British Soldier Has No Match In The Field Of Peace Support Operations

*Corporal Mills of the 1st Bn Duke of Wellington's Regiment, was the first corporal to receive the MC.*

### Goradze 1993

A feature of what are currently called Peace Support Operations is that soldiers, and in particular junior commanders, can often find that their actions conducted at the tactical level can have a direct and immediate effect at the operational or indeed strategic levels. A definition of this anomaly was jokingly described (by General Sir Michael Jackson) thus "If the consequences of your actions at the tactical level are the subject of discussion in Downing Street, you are having an effect at the strategic level!".

During the first few days of the deployment of elements of the First Battalion, The Duke of Wellington's Regiment into the besieged Muslim enclave of Goradze in 1993, Corporal Mills had been tasked to go into the hills surrounding the town with a 6-man team to confirm the withdrawal of the Serb forces outside an established exclusion zone. Whilst operating in a narrow wooded ravine his patrol came upon a group of Serb Irregular troops of approximately platoon strength. Within a few minutes of the two sides acknowledging each other's presence, the Serbs began firing at the British patrol prior to mounting an attack against the Dukes' hastily established position. Corporal Mills immediately ordered the withdrawal of his patrol while he covered their move down the valley and across some open ground. During the ensuing fighting withdrawal conducted by Corporal Mills, including a snap ambush, he killed several Serbs and wounded others. The remainder were unwilling to press home their attack. The patrol regrouped and returned unharmed to report the incident to their Company Headquarters.

The British soldier is often at his best when working within the clear but flexible parameters of Mission Command. Given appropriate training in an atmosphere that encourages initiative, confidence and mutual trust, the British

soldier has no match in the field of Peace Support Operations. However this quality is only acquired through training. It is inherently fragile so it must be carefully nurtured and encouraged.

Colonel DM Santa-Olalla.

## The Dangers of Underestimation

Never underestimate your soldiers. Never underestimate their capacity to scale the heights, to achieve far more than could ever reasonably be expected. Never underestimate their capacity to let you down, to disappoint and frustrate you. Never underestimate their desire to be praised, thanked and comforted. Never underestimate their ability to take your criticism, even your anger, on the chin when it is deserved. Never, in short, underestimate the humanity of your soldiers, nor the very special place that they should have in your heart.

Major General ASH Irwin, on his experiences in Northern Ireland.

## A TRUISM - ALL TIMES

The British soldier can stand up to anything except the British War Office.

George Bernard Shaw, *The Devil's Disciple* Act III.

# DUTY AND SERVICE

‘Go, tell the Spartans, thou who passest by,  
That here obedient to their laws we lie’.

Simonides - Inscription carved at  
Thermopylae 478BC.

## Neglect of Duty St Pe 14<sup>th</sup> November 1813

The Commander of the Forces cannot sufficiently express his disapprobation of the conduct of Lieut - - - - - . The duties required from the junior ranks of the officers in the army, however easy of execution, are highly important to the welfare of the soldier, and are essential to the public interest, and they cannot be neglected without injury to both.

The Commander of the Forces trusts, that what has happened to Lieut - - - - - will be a warning to others, to consider their professional duty their first object, and not to allow any idle pursuit to induce them to stay away from their regiment and neglect their duty.

Lieutenant Colonel J Gurwood (ed) Wellington's Dispatches. (1829).

## Binding Them To Their Duty!

*Going down on the Birkenhead..*

Nothing could be more sublime than the spectacle of that number of men meeting their fate, face to face, devoted to great principles binding them to their duty. Discipline, it is said, makes machines; discipline at a time when death itself is present and unloosening the bonds of compulsion, demands the general concurrent will of each man. Machines have not a will, nor a conscience, nor a soul.

Leader 10 April 1852.

## The Prisoner of War

**The George Cross.** Lieutenant Terence Edward Waters (463718) (deceased), The West Yorkshire Regiment (The Prince of Wales's Own), attached The Gloucestershire Regiment.

Lieutenant Waters was captured subsequent to the Battle of the Imjin River, 22-25 April 1951. By this time he had sustained a serious wound in the top of the head and yet another most painful wound in the arm as a result of this action.

On the journey to Pyongyang with other captives, he set a magnificent example of courage and fortitude in remaining with wounded other ranks on the march, whom he felt it his duty to care for to the best of his ability.

Subsequently, after a journey of immense hardship and privation, the party arrived at an area west of Pyongyang adjacent to PW Camp 12 and known generally as "The Caves" in which they were held captive. They found themselves imprisoned in a tunnel driven into the side of a hill through which a stream of water flowed continuously, flooding a great deal of the floor, in which were packed a great number of South Korean and European prisoners-of-war in rags, filthy, crawling with lice. In this cavern a number died daily from wounds, sickness, or merely malnutrition: They fed on two small meals of boiled maize daily. Of medical attention there was none.

Lieutenant Waters appreciated that few, if any, of his numbers would survive these conditions, in view of their weakness and the absolute lack of attention for their wounds. After a visit from a North Korean Political Officer, who attempted to persuade them to volunteer to join a prisoner-of-war group known as "Peace Fighters" (that is, active participants in the propaganda movement against their own side) with a promise of better food, of medical treatment and other amenities as a reward for such activity - an offer that was refused unanimously - he decided to order his men to pretend to accede to the offer in an effort to save their lives. This he did, giving the necessary instructions to the senior rank with the British party, Sergeant Hoper, that the men would go upon his order without fail.

Whilst realising that this act would save the lives of his party, he refused to go himself, aware that the task of maintaining British prestige was vested in him. Realising that they had failed to subvert an officer with the British party, the North Koreans now made a series of concerted efforts to persuade Lieutenant Waters to save himself by joining the camp. This he steadfastly refused to do. He died a short time after.

He was a young, inexperienced officer, comparatively recently commissioned from The Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, yet he set an example of the highest gallantry.

London Gazette 9 April 1954.

## ‘Ere We Fight and Here We Die

The late temporary Lieutenant Colonel Wilfred Elstob, DSO, MC, 16<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Manchester Regiment.

For most conspicuous bravery, devotion to duty and self-sacrifice during operations at Manchester Redoubt, near St Quentin, on the 21 March 1918.

During the preliminary bombardment he encouraged his men in the posts in the Redoubt by frequent visits, and when repeated attacks developed controlled the defence at the points threatened, giving personal support with revolver, rifle and bombs. Single-handed he repulsed one bombing assault, driving back the enemy and inflicting severe casualties.

Later, when ammunition was required, he made several journeys under severe fire in order to replenish the supply.

Throughout the day Lieutenant Colonel Elstob, although twice wounded, showed the most fearless disregard of his own safety, and by his encouragement and noble example inspired his command to the fullest degree.,

The Manchester Redoubt was surrounded in the first wave of the enemy attack, but by means of the buried cable Lieutenant Colonel Elstob was able to assure his Brigade Commander that “The Manchester Regiment will defend Manchester Hill to the last”.

Some time after, this post was overcome by vastly superior forces, and this very gallant officer was killed in the final assault, having maintained to the end the duty which he had impressed on his men - namely, “ere we fight and here we die”.

He set throughout the highest example of valour, determination, endurance, and fine soldierly bearing.

London Gazette 9 June 1919.

## The Commander

*Sir Ian Hamilton in describing Lord Roberts' powers of personal leadership and writing of his “affection - a very deep affection - for mankind, and especially for those for whom he was or had been responsible”, gives an example:*

‘Thus, after an exhausting march, Lord Roberts reaches camp with a sharp go of fever on him. Do you suppose he would go to his tent and lie down? Not much! There he would sit, half-dead, his staff simply writhing in their saddles with fatigue whilst he watched the long column march in for four long hours and exchanged kindly greetings with any particularly exhausted’.

General Sir Ian Hamilton The Commander (1957).

## The Adjutant

He was open-hearted, manly, friendly, and independent, a most gallant and zealous officer, and much devoted to his own corps. He neither cringed to, nor worshipped any man, but did his duty manfully, and with impartiality - two qualities inestimable in an adjutant.

Lieutenant Colonel J Leech.

## I Can't Go

Nearby, I met Bob (the RMO) returning to the Regimental Aid Post from a talk with the Colonel. The signallers had already destroyed their sets, and Harry was stamping on the ashes of the codebook he had just burnt. We were all ready to move. In small groups, the Headquarters split up and ran over the ridge. When they had gone, I, too, came up on to the ridge crest and prepared to descend the others side. Bob was standing alone by the path that led to the steep slopes below us.

“Come on, Bob,” I said. “We’re about the last to go - you ought to have gone before this. The Colonel will be off in a minute and that will be the lot”. He looked at me for a moment before saying:

“I can’t go. I must stay with the wounded”.

For a few seconds I did not comprehend this meaning: we were all making our way out - there seemed a very fair chance that some of us would make it: to stay here was to stay certainly for capture, possibly for death, when the Chinese launched their final assault on the position. And then I realised that he had weighed all this - weighed it all and made a deliberate choice: he would place his own life in the utmost jeopardy in order to remain with the wounded at the time when they would need him most. Somewhere, the words appear, “Greater love hath no man than this ...”. I knew now exactly what those words meant. Too moved to speak again, I clapped my hand upon his shoulder and went on.

General A Farrar-Hockley *The Edge of The Sword* (1985).

## They Won't Get Me

*On 14<sup>th</sup> February 1942 the commander of the Australian 8<sup>th</sup> Division, Major General Gordon Bennett, abandoned his division in Singapore and escaped to Sumatra. On his return to Australia Bennett claimed that he had been motivated by patriotism of the highest order; he knew that his country was about to be invaded and that it would need his military expertise. Others regarded Bennett's behaviour as one of the most shameful incidents in Australian military history. Here one of his staff officers weighs up the arguments.*

In the calm atmosphere of civilian comfort, so conducive to a logical assessment, it is difficult to explain such behaviour from a man in Bennett's position. However, when he made his resolve to escape conditions were far from calm and towards the end, as the position continued to deteriorate, there were signs that Bennett's resolve strengthened and finally became an obsession overriding all other considerations. This is the only way I can explain his actions during the closing stages of the campaign.

From the time he left the palace in Johore where he had spend most of the day in a farewell visit to the Sultan and his wife, Bennett's attention became focused upon his escape in the event of an ultimate defeat. This possibility was looming daily, bringing an end to all his dreams and ambitions of attaining the supreme command of the whole of the AIF. When the surrender order came his only hope of realising these aims lay in eventual escape. His remark to the Sultan of Johore and also to Billy Kent Hughes is indicative enough of the way he was thinking when he said, 'They won't get me'.

In my opinion, there seems to be strong evidence that this obsession of Bennett's had a profound effect upon his leadership and direction of the fighting during the latter part of the campaign. For example, why were our gunners ordered not to fire on the Sultan's palace and his administrative buildings when we could see the enemy using them to observe our positions from across the narrow strait? Also, why was Percival's order limiting our artillery to 20 rounds per gun per day not disputed when we were being pounded by up to 1000 rounds per gun from the Japanese? I am certain it would have been

hotly resisted by the belligerent Bennett of our earlier days in Malaya. We had 6000 tons of much needed ammunition in our area so there was little reason for Malaya Command to limit its use. It was much too late when eventually these huge stocks were released to us, and in the end nearly all of it had to be destroyed.

John Wyett Staff Wallah At the Fall of Singapore. (1996).

## None Was To Be Seen

I once had under me a battalion that had not done well in a fight. I went to see why. I found the men in the jungle, tired, hungry, dirty, jumpy, some of them wounded, sitting miserably about doing nothing. I looked for the CO - for any officer; none was to be seen. Then as I rounded a bush, I realised why that battalion had failed. Collected under a tree were the officers, having a meal while the men went hungry. Those officers had forgotten the tradition of the Service that they look after their men's wants before their own. I was compelled to remind them. I hope they never again forgot the integrity and unselfishness that always permeate good leadership. I have never known men fail to respond to them.

Field Marshal Sir William Slim, address to the Australian Institute of Management, 4 April 1957.

## LOYALTY TO MR SO AND SO

In the half-forgotten defence of Calais in 1940 one British brigade and the elements of one other regiment delayed the advance of an entire wing of the Germany Army for three days, holding the pressure off Dunkirk and enabling the greater part of the British Expeditionary Force to bring off the miracle of escape to Britain. This was the classic appeal to heroism that a few hold the pass and save the many. The brigade and the fractions of a regiment thus met annihilation in a situation which might have exalted the spirit of any army. Its sacrifice saved the cause of Britain.

But the brigade did this unknowingly. The message from headquarters in London telling it to hold on at all costs because of the high stakes at Dunkirk was never delivered and the men died at their posts believing that their action had almost no meaning in the war. As to the incentive motivating the defenders of Calais, Erik Linklater has written: 'It rather appears that this staunch courage was inspired by obedience to the very fine regimental tradition. Six or eight men in a shell-rocked house full of tawdry French furniture would fight as if they were defending the Holy Sepulchre because the corporal in command has told them, "This is where Mr (Lieutenant) So-and-So said we were to go". And Mr So-and-So had spoken with the voice of the regiment'.

Mr Linklater comes pretty close to the uttering of a complete truth about esprit. But if I were reconstructing this tale of high courage and seeking the ultimate explanation of why things happened in just the way they did, I would say somewhat less about obedience to the fine regimental tradition and somewhat more about loyalty to Mr So-and-So and to the corporal who gave his orders.

It is expressing it in too-little terms to say that this pair spoke with the voice of the regiment. In the realest sense they were the regiment in the eyes of the men who they commanded during the crisis of battle. There can be only one explanation of how the regiment and its fine traditions inspired these men to the extreme point where they were willing to be annihilated in a hopeless battle from which nothing could be saved (as they thought) except the regimental honour; it was because the men who died in the ruins of the shell-rocked house and the debris of the tawdry French furniture had previously discovered the characters of the men who led them.

Colonel Munson Leadership for American Army Leaders (1947).

## Never Have In One Of Those People Again

*The enforced marriage of the Cavalry and the RTC in 1939 was necessary for the creation of effective all arms formations. Unfortunately it was a marriage made in hell.*

Some senior Cavalry officers were openly hostile to an association, as one RTC subaltern (a future Director of the RAC) heard in the aftermath of being invited to dine in Mess by a Cavalry friend. Next morning the CO of that Cavalry regiment instructed his subordinate 'never to have in one of those people again'. The Regimental Histories of both Cavalry and RTR units show little or no enthusiasm for the new Corps. Each regiment of Cavalry clung to its own identity and the battalions of RTR continued to look to its old connections for guidance. None wished to change badges.

Kenneth Macksey A History of the Royal Armoured Corps (1983).

## Now Herbert Was A Cavalry Officer

*In the middle of the Second World War competing tribal loyalties were still very much in evidence, even at the highest levels. As a result of the behaviour described below a large part of the Afrika Korps was able to escape westward after the Battle of El Alamein.*

Now Herbert (Lumsden) was a cavalry officer and wanted to get away from Monty, to be out of touch with him, and every time we stopped I tried to stick up my aerial, but before I had a chance to transmit the message we'd be off again. You see, I was complaining, saying 'we've got to get this back, Monty'll be furious'. And he'd say, 'I was taught by Monty at the Staff College that it was the duty of the senior officer to come up to the junior officer when there's a battle on. It's not for me to go back to him'. And I said, 'But you've got to keep in touch with him, send a message back, he must know what's happening' - and Herbert got very sort of stubborn. He said, 'It's his job to keep in touch with me, not me with him'. I said, 'Well, look, that's what I'm supposed to be doing, you must let me do it'. But he wouldn't.

It was Herbert's fault. I was the person responsible for sending that information back, and the moment I was ready to send it back, off we went. I think he definitely intended to be out of touch with Monty. He had his own plan for what he'd do.

Interview with Sir William Mather, Lumsden's Liaison Officer 23 Jan 1980 cited in Nigel Hamilton Monty Master of the Battlefield 1942-44 (1983).

## Smile in Adversity

*An Arab prince becomes an Officer Cadet at Sandhurst in 1967.*

When I had graduated from high school, my father said to me, 'Now is the moment of choice. You can give up the idea of Sandhurst if you like, and go to university. No one is forcing you. It is something you have chosen to do yourself. But if you do go to Sandhurst, make sure you stay to the end. If you quit, I never want to see your face again!

I want you to think of Sandhurst as a horse with a mind of its own. If it runs away from you, run after it. Whatever the difficulties, chase after it!'

Many times in my first weeks at Sandhurst I wanted to give up the chase, but my father's words kept me going ... During that first term at Sandhurst I learned to survive. I managed to look as if I were in no trouble at all. In other words, I learned to smile in adversity - an extremely valuable lesson which I have needed to remember at various times of my life .

Sandhurst, I am told, is no longer what it was. The two-year course has been drastically cut, the juniors are no longer humiliated, the dreaded cadet government is no more, training and discipline are now entirely in the hands of Guards officers and NCOs. But from what I saw of British officers during the [1991] Gulf War, the essential virtues of Sandhurst evidently continue to flourish.

HRH General Khaled bin Sultan of Saudi Arabia, *Desert Warrior* (1995).

# COURAGE

‘Courage is rightly esteemed the first of human qualities... because it is the quality which guarantees all others’.

Sir Winston Churchill.

## THE FORCE THAT MAKES STRONG MEN DETERMINED

The mind tells man that boldness is required, and thus gives direction to his will. This particular cast of mind, which employs the fear of wavering and hesitating to suppress all other fears, is the force that makes strong men determined. Men of low intelligence, therefore, cannot possess determination in the sense in which we use the word. They may act without hesitation in a crisis, but if they do, they act without reflection; and a man who acts without reflection cannot, of course, be torn by doubt. From time to time action of this type may even be appropriate; but, as I have said before, it is the average result that indicates the existence of military genius. The statement may surprise the reader who knows some determined cavalry officers who are little given to deep thought: but he must remember that we are talking about a special kind of intelligence, not about great powers of meditation.

Carl von Clausewitz On War (1832).

## A Cold Choice Between Two Alternatives

Courage is a moral quality; it is not a chance gift of nature like an aptitude for games. It is a cold choice between two alternatives, the fixed resolve not to quit; an act of renunciation which must be made not once but many times by the power of the will. Courage is willpower.

Likewise in the trenches a man's willpower was his capital and he was always spending, so that wise and thrifty company officers watched the expenditure of every penny lest their men went bankrupt.

I contend that fortitude in war has its roots in morality; that selection is a search for character, and that war itself is but one more test - the supreme and final test if you will - of character. Character as Aristotle taught is a habit, the daily choice of right instead of wrong; it is a moral quality which grows to

maturity in peace and is not suddenly developed on the outbreak of war ...  
Man's fate in battle is worked out before the war begins.

Lord Moran *The Anatomy of Courage* (1946).

## For God's Sake Die Like a Man

The desire to display bravery in the company of brave men is at least part of the reason for this sort of behaviour. This can be interpreted in terms of Adlerian psychology, with bravery as the soldier's Goal of Superiority, or it can be seen as the result of a cultural conditioning which emphasises courage as the ultimate manly quality. Showing resolution and stoicism was regarded as important by officers and men alike. Sergeant Michael Connelly of the 95<sup>th</sup> (Rifles) admonished a wounded man for groaning in the presence of French wounded. 'Hold your tongue, ye blathering devil', he snapped, 'and don't be after disgracing your country in the teeth of these 'ere furriners, by dying hard ... For God's sake die like a man before these 'ere Frenchers'. At Waterloo, Ensign Leeke heard only one man cry out when wounded, 'but on one of the officers saying to him, "Oh man, don't make a noise", he instantly recollected himself and was quiet'.

Richard Holmes *Firing Line* (1985).

## FEAR

The first duty of a man is still that of subduing fear.

Thomas Carlyle Lecture Heroes and Hero Worship (1840).

## I Must Give Up. I Am Grown So Nervous

Lieutenant-General Sir Thomas Picton was reluctant to serve on the Waterloo campaign, and his letter to Wellington paints a sad picture of a man exhausted by the strain of command in an era when generals shared the risks of close-range battle with their troops. 'My Lord', wrote Picton, 'I must give up. I am grown so nervous that when there is any service to be done it works upon my mind so that it is impossible for me to sleep at nights. I cannot possibly stand it, and I shall be forced to retire'. But Sir Thomas did not retire: he accompanied his old chief to Waterloo, where he was shot through the head while commanding the 5<sup>th</sup> Division.

Richard Holmes Firing Line (1985).

## The Valour of Simple Men

Captain Thomas Kettle, Royal Dublin Fusiliers 8 Sept 1916

We are moving up tonight into the battle of the Somme. The bombardment, destruction and bloodshed are beyond all imagination, nor did I ever think the valour of simple men could be quite as beautiful as that of my Dublin Fusiliers. I have had two chances of leaving them - one on sick leave and the other on a staff job. I have chosen to stay with my comrades. I am calm and happy but desperately anxious to live.

John Catton ed Letters from the Front (1973).

## To Go Again With Eyes Open

It is by no means sure that because a fellow volunteers for a dangerous job he will be good at it; it is not even sure that his heart will be in it. The motive that impels him may be one of a dozen. One can have nothing but sympathy for a lad, young keen and fit, who feels that he is missing the war, and volunteers for anything that comes his way. Brought up on tales of gallant deeds, he wants to assure himself that he too can stand discomfort and fear, and be capable of endurance through hardship and privation. But nobody can tell, until he has had experience of these things, what they will really be like; he may be sure that they are quite unlike whatever he has pictured. I interviewed many officers who volunteered for Chindit duty between the two Expeditions. A high proportion were young and keen, but wholly without experience. Of those I took, some turned out well; a few, whose imagination had built them a false picture of what endurance means, failed badly. The most useful type is that which has had some experience, didn't like it much, but wants to go again with eyes open, knowing something of what war is like, yet confident that he can stand another helping. The man who really enjoys hardship is a rarity and a freak.

Brigadier Bernard Fergusson *The Wild Green Earth*.

## The Sergeant's Dead

*Major John Kiszely on Mount Tumbledown 13/14 June 1982*

The youngsters were very brave. For example, this young Platoon Commander, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant James Stuart, who was only nineteen, had arrived in my company straight from Sandhurst in April. There he was a month later in the Falklands. He was aged nineteen, green behind the gills, and within the first five minutes of coming under fire he'd had his Platoon Sergeant killed - Platoon Sergeant dead in his arms - this other man killed, two other people wounded and his Company Sergeant-Major shot in the hand. But he did extremely well, this young boy. In many ways it was proof of the system. You think, how could someone like that possibly cope? You know, he's way out of his depth,

obviously very frightened, but knew what he had to do and got on with it. Right the way through the night he commanded his platoon, really under fire all the time, clearing right the way through Tumbledown. But you know, a young boy like that, I just wonder when I was nineteen whether I could have done that. You think, could I have done it? An adult experience for a teenager. And yet he commanded his platoon right the way through it, with all these disasters. Just imagine having your Platoon Sergeant being shot right beside you! When you come to a platoon, the Platoon Sergeant's a pretty key guy, keeps you straight, says, 'Look, Sir, don't do that, best do it this way'. When that is taken out of your life and disaster is all around you, you think - why me? I think he related quite closely to the casualties at the time too. It hit him. He came up on the air to me and said, 'What do I do?'. So I just talked in a very calm matter-of-fact voice and said, 'Well done, one or two things are going wrong, but it's not a disaster. You're doing well; keep plugging on with it and we'll be up alongside you again. You're winning through, well done, keep going'. He probably thought I was mad, but he went on doing it, and did a bloody good job. He soon steadied them down. He got a Mention in Despatches.

Max Arthur (ed) *Above All Courage* (1985).

## What is Courage?

I don't believe there's any man who, in his heart of hearts, wouldn't rather be called brave than have any other virtue attributed to him. And this elemental, if you like unreasoning, male attitude is a sound one, because courage is not merely a virtue; it is the virtue. Without it there are no other virtues. Faith, hope, charity, all the rest don't become virtues until it takes courage to exercise them. Courage is not only the basis of all virtue; it is its expression. True, you may be bad and brave, but you can't be good without being brave.

Courage is a mental state, an affair of the spirit, and so it gets its strength from spiritual and intellectual sources. The way in which these spiritual and intellectual elements are blended, I think, produces roughly two types of course. The first, an emotional state which urges a man to risk injury or death - physical

courage. The second, a more reasoning attitude which enables him coolly to stake career, happiness, his whole future on his judgement of what he thinks either right or worth while - moral courage.

Now, these two types of courage, physical and moral, are very distinct. I have known many men who had marked physical courage, but lacked moral courage. Some of them were in high positions, but they failed to be great in themselves because they lacked it. On the other hand, I have seen men who undoubtedly possessed moral courage very cautious about physical risks. But I have never met a man with moral courage who would not, when it was really necessary, face bodily danger. Moral courage is higher and a rarer virtue than physical courage.

To be really great, a man - or a nation - must possess both forms of courage. In this the Japanese were an interesting study. No army has ever possessed massed physical courage as the Japanese did; its whole strength lay in the emotional bravery of the individual soldier. The Japanese generals shared their men's physical bravery to the full, but they lacked, almost to a man, moral courage. They had not the moral courage to admit when their plans had failed and ought to have been changed; to tell their superiors that their orders could not be carried out and retreat while there was still time. We played on this weakness and by it the Japanese commanders lost their battles and destroyed their armies.

All men have some degree of physical courage - it is surprising how much. Courage, you know, is like having money in the bank. We start with a certain capital of courage, some large, some small, and we proceed to draw on our balance, for don't forget courage is an expendable quality. We can use it up. If there are heavy, and, what is more serious, if there are continuous calls on our courage, we begin to overdraw. If we go on overdrawing we go bankrupt - we break down.

You can see this overdraft mounting clearly in the men who endure the most prolonged strains in war; the submarine complement, the infantry platoon, the bomber crew. First there comes a growing impatience and irritability; then a hint of recklessness, a sort of "Oh to hell with it chaps, we'll attack!" spirit;

next, real foolhardiness, what the soldier calls, “asking for it”; and last, sudden changes of mood from false hilarity to black moroseness. If before that stage is reached the man’s commander has spotted what is happening and pulled him out for a rest, he will recover and in a few months be back again as brave and as balanced as ever. The capital in his bank of courage will have built up and he can start spending again.

There are, of course, some people whose capital is so small that it is not worth while employing them in peace or war in any job requiring courage - they overdraw too quickly. With us these types are surprisingly few. Complete cowards are almost non-existent. Another matter for astonishment is the large number of men and women in any group who will behave in emergency with extreme gallantry. Who they will be you cannot tell until they’re tested. I long ago gave up trying to spot potential VC’s by their looks, but, from experience, I should say that those who perform individual acts of the highest physical courage are usually drawn from one or two categories. Either those with quick intelligence and vivid imagination, or those without imagination and with minds fixed on the practical business of living. You might almost say, I suppose, those who live on their nerves and those who haven’t got any nerves. The one suddenly sees the crisis, his imagination flashes the opportunity and he acts. The other meets the situation without finding it so very unusual and deals with it in a matter-of-fact way.

Long ago, in the First World War, when I was a bit more irresponsible, I served under an officer of vivid imagination. He was always fussing about dangers that usually didn’t exist. Once after a day and half a night of his constant alarms I was so fed up that I disconnected the telephone in the advanced post I was holding. I wanted some sleep. I didn’t get it. Within half an hour his imagination had painted the most frightful pictures of my position overrun by the enemy. He arrived with the reserve company to retake it. As he was my commanding officer I had some rather difficult explaining to do! I thought he was just windy. A few days later he won the VC by a superb example of leadership and courage.

In this last war in Burma a young Gurkha won the VC. At a critical moment when Japanese medium tanks had broken through our forward positions, he

took his Piat anti-tank grenade discharger - and leaving cover moved forward over the open towards the tanks. He was shot in the hand, the shoulder and again badly in the leg, but he got to within thirty yards of the tanks and bumped off two of them. Later, when I saw him in hospital, I asked him why he had walked forward in the open like that. He replied: 'I'd been trained not to fire the Piat until I was certain of hitting. I knew I could hit at thirty yards, so I went to thirty yards!' He had had only one thought in his head - to get to thirty yards. Quite simple if you are not bothered by imagination.

Can courage be taught? I am sure in one sense physical courage can. What in effect you must do is train the man not to draw too heavily on his stock of courage. Teach him what to expect, not to be frightened by bogeys - by the unknown. If you send an untrained British soldier on patrol in the jungle, every time a branch creaks, every time there is a rustle in the undergrowth when an animal slinks across the track, when a bush moves in the wind, he will draw heavily and unnecessarily on his stock of courage. And he will come back a shaken man, with a report of no value. But if you train that man beforehand, let him live in the jungle, teach him its craft, then send him on patrol, he will come back with his balance of courage unimpaired and probably a couple of enemy helmets into the bargain.

To teach moral courage is another matter - and it has to be taught because so few, if any have it naturally. The young can learn it from their parents, in their homes, from school and university, from religion, from other early influences, but to inculcate it in a grown-up who lacks it requires not so much teaching as some striking emotional experience - something that suddenly bursts upon him; something in the nature of a vision. That happens rarely, and that is why you will find that most men with moral courage learnt it by precept and example in their youth.

Now, I suppose because I am a soldier, I have talked most of courage in men at war, but the fighting man is the last to claim a monopoly in courage. Many a soldier in this last war has steeled himself in battle with the thought of what his civilian fellow-countrymen and women were enduring and how they were enduring it. Whether women are braver than men I don't know, but I have always found them, when really tested, at least equally brave.

In the retreat from Burma in 1942, I was deeply proud of the troops who staggered into India, exhausted, ragged, reduced to a remnant, but carrying their weapons and ready to turn again and face the enemy. Yet the outstanding impression of courage I carried away from that desperate campaign was from the Indian women refugees. Day after day, mile after mile, they plodded on, through dust or mud, their babies in their arms, children clinging to their skirts, harried by ruthless enemies, strafed from the air, shelterless, caught between the lines in every battle, yet patient, uncomplaining, devoted, thinking only of their families - so very brave.

We, the British, have our own special kind of courage, the courage that goes on - and endurance is the very essence of courage. Courage is a long-term virtue. Anyone can be brave for a little while. The British are no braver than the Germans, the French, the Italians or anybody else, but they are brave for a bit longer. This going on being brave when most others would have given up has been the racial characteristic of our courage.

It is interesting to speculate how we have developed this particularly practical and effective kind of courage. I am inclined to think that, like so much in the world, it has been a matter of geography and history. We draw our racial stock almost wholly from Northern Europe, one of the good areas for natural courage, and our intellectual and cultural heritage almost entirely from the Mediterranean, the great source of enlightened thought and imagination. At any rate, in the great moments of our history, we have based our natural courage on faith, a belief that we worked or fought for the things that mattered - a decent life, the freedom of spirit. That has been our strength. And it remains our strength for the same courage which has seen us through the crisis of war is needed now to see us through the hardly less formidable difficulties of peace. How fortunate are we, then, that we come of a race that, whatever its faults, has never failed for want of courage!

Field Marshal Sir William Slim *Courage and Other Broadcasts* (1957).

## Moral Courage

The moral courage to do what is right in the face of provocation, threats, bribes and manifest hatred. Especially in situations where those making the threats are in overwhelming superiority, and one is junior and far from one's unit.

Major General Julian Thompson, Commander, 3 Commando Brigade Falklands 1982

## His Moral Courage Was Defective

As MacArthur advanced in seniority, increasingly he became the victim of his own ego and sense of infallibility, to the degree that he could not accept that it was human to err or to fail. His performance on Corregidor showed that his physical courage remained undiminished but, as the historian Thaddeus Holt observed, 'it was his moral courage that was defective'. He became a reclusive and remote man whose own reflections on his inadequacy and failure made him so uncomfortable in the presence of his own troops that he eschewed their company.

Chynoweth wrote how 'he (MacArthur) never visited his troops and his tactical judgement was nil. He was the poorest judge of subordinates that I ever knew yet he achieved greatness. Lieutenant Ramsey of the 26<sup>th</sup> Cavalry recorded how on Bataan

the commander's absence began to be felt. Though the Filipino soldiers clung to their devotion to MacArthur, the Americans more and more began deriding him. As ammunition and food ran out, and as the weeks passed with none of the promised relief, they made up derisive songs and jokes about the general, whom they called "Dugout Doug".

Richard Connaughton MacArthur And Defeat In The Philippines (2001).

## Aren't You Going To Lead Us, Sir

As a platoon commander at Salerno I had to take part in a daylight attack on a strongly defended hill. I was fresh out of from England, where we had learned a very intelligent 'battle drill' which taught that in the attack a 'point section' should be sent ahead to draw enemy fire with the platoon commander following immediately behind. Once it came under fire the platoon commander had to decide whether to lead the rest of the platoon on a flanking attack, to attempt an encirclement, or to call down covering fire and withdraw. I had met my platoon only two days earlier: it consisted of Eighth Army veterans who had never heard of battle drill. When I gave the leading section its orders the sergeant in charge asked incredulously "Aren't you going to lead us, sir?". The look of amazed contempt that he gave me when I said that I was not is something that I shall never forget. The other platoon commanders did lead their platoons. All were killed or badly wounded.

By the middle of the war the lesson had sunk in, but old habits die hard. I have always complained that public schools (I was at Wellington, so I should know) taught their pupils to die, or 'lay down their lives', for their country, but never taught them to kill for their country, which was what was needed. In my barrack room when I was learning the soldier's trade there was a poster showing a gruesome SS man advancing with grenades and sub-machine-gun. The text read 'He is ready to die for his country. MAKE SURE THAT HE DOES!'. That got priorities right.

The German Army was professional from top to bottom, and took war seriously. Officers were too valuable to get themselves killed unnecessarily. I would like to feel that we have caught up with them, but I doubt it. Colonel H Jones got himself a posthumous VC in the Falklands doing a platoon commander's job, and is regarded as a role-model.

Professor Sir Michael Howard MC (former Chichele Professor of the History of War and Regis Professor of Modern History University of Oxford).

## Then You Must Pay The Penalty

*Nancy Wake (SOE) Orders An Execution. Occupied France, June 1944.*

The German girl was practically naked, wild-eyed and filthy dirty. She had quite obviously been savagely misused. At once Nancy passed her some of her own clothing and said simply:

‘Here, put them on’. Sullenly the girl dressed.

‘How long has this been going on?’ Nancy demanded.

‘All the time’.

‘You were not willing?’

‘Never’.

‘Where are you kept prisoner?’

‘In a pig pen’.

‘Is it clean?’

‘No’.

‘Are you being fed?’

‘No’.

Nancy paused to crush back her own instincts of pity and revulsion. She had a soldier’s duty to perform - this was not a woman before her, it was a spy; an active, enemy spy.

‘You know you’ve been convicted of espionage?’

‘Yes’.

‘And you know the penalty? It would be the same if your people had caught me’.

‘Yes’.

‘Are you a spy?’

‘Yes’.

‘Then you must pay the penalty. But I promise you’, she said earnestly, ‘that this torture will stop. Is there anything you want to say? Any message I can send to anyone for you when France is free?’

‘Nothing’.

The girl was defiant, sullen and unafraid. Nancy called the escorting guard. ‘Tell your leader’, she instructed, ‘that either the sentence on this woman must be put into immediate effect or I personally shall come over and set her free. I will not allow women to be tortured by the Maquis’. The man nodded. ‘You must go’, she said gently to the other woman. ‘I’m sorry’.

The girl spat and tore off the clothes that Nancy had so recently given her. Flinging them on to the floor of the bus, she stepped, half-naked and contemptuous, out into the wet morning air of the forest. Nancy watched her as she was marched away, but she didn’t look back; and, in a group twenty yards distant, the British and American officers watched their leader anxiously, knowing the torment she was enduring.

She sat down and soon her breakfast was brought to her. Mechanically she began to eat, knowing that she must give no sign of weakness. A volley of shots rang out in the distant shade of the forest. Only for a second did her eyes flicker up from her plate: then she continued eating stolidly until all the meal was gone.

Russell Braddon Nancy Wake: The Story Of A Very Brave Woman (1956).

## Sir, I’m Convinced That It’s Impossible

### *Saying No To Schwarzkopf*

At the conclusion of my presentation, Schwarzkopf turned to me and said, ‘Gus, we can’t move the troops before the 16<sup>th</sup> of January, after the UN deadline expires. We want all of the necessary supplies in place by February 1<sup>st</sup> to support them out west and up north. Can you deliver on that schedule?’.

I looked at the proposed flanking maneuver - it entailed movements of thousands of miles by light and heavy armored divisions, mechanized divisions, and infantry. We would have fourteen days to transport hundreds of thousands of troops, several million tons of supplies, and billions of gallons of fuel, and to set up an effective structure for orderly distribution and resupply.

‘Sir’, I replied after a moment, “in two weeks we may possibly be able to get the logbases in some semblance of order - using every available soldier and truck in the theater, and working around the clock on all eight cylinders. But, considering the amount of supplies we’re moving and the distances we have to travel, I would strongly advise that we start the operation before the 16<sup>th</sup>”.

‘That’s not possible’, he said flatly. ‘The entire plan hinges on surprise and deception. If you started relocating your log bases tomorrow, we’d run a great risk of being detected. Hussein would shift his defences westward. Or worse, he’d order his forces to attack before the deadline and pre-empt our strategy’.

The atmosphere in the room was charged. Within the Army, General Schwarzkopf was well known for his blunt talk. He was not one to coddle his logisticians.

“Sir, given your proposed deadline of February 1<sup>st</sup>, I’m convinced that it’s impossible to create new log bases adequate to support two Army Corps in the field”.

Lieutenant General William G Pagonis *Moving Mountains* (1997).

## Thank You General, For Giving Me Your Guidance

Working in the midst of the Americans every day, Tim Sullivan got to know them much better than I did and saw more of their strengths and weaknesses. In particular, he saw how autocratic was the exercise of command and what an inhibiting effect this had on the free thinking of the staff. He saw how often Norman Schwarzkopf bawled out members of his staff, but he also observed with admiration the special tactics which one man had developed for dealing with the C-in-C's outbursts. Brigadier General Arnold, the G3 from Third Army, an exceedingly good-natured and efficient officer, who did a great deal for Anglo-US relations, had evolved a perfect method of coping with Stormin' Norman: whenever the C-in-C went ballistic and machine-gunned one of his proposals, Arnold would stand his ground and say with perfect dignity, 'Thank you, General, for giving me your guidance'.

General Sir Peter De La Billiere Storm Command (1992).

## I Plan to Hold You To This

On the way back to Dhahran, John Carr and I began the reshuffling of our "to do" list. Over the next two frantic days, my team identified every single logistical act we could possibly perform between December 28<sup>th</sup> and January 16<sup>th</sup> without tipping our hand to Saddam Hussein. Pushing the limits of our potential and the calendar, the log cell used every precious minute - reshuffling and reshaping, cutting and pasting the plan. By early morning, December 29<sup>th</sup>, we were tired and punchy, but optimistic: we had come up with a feasible plan that would set up the logistical structure in 21 days, complete with numbers and timetables.

On the morning of December 29<sup>th</sup>, the group reconvened in Riyadh to discuss the end run strategy. General Schwarzkopf opened the session with an announcement that immediately raised the stakes of the meeting. In the two days that had elapsed since our last meeting, General Powell and Mr Cheney had briefed the President on the plans that had been presented and discussed, and on that basis the President approved the concept for the ground war. No more practices and scrimmages, we were told; this was the real thing.

This briefing followed a format similar to that of the earlier meeting - after the CINC's introduction, staff representatives presented the details of each command's plan. There was a new strain emerging, though. Here and there during the briefing, stray comments were casually slipping out: "Of course, we'll need 200 more trucks than we've projected ..."; "This assumes that we'll have 1000 more people...". With each successive verbal hedge, I could see the CINC's hackles rising. The room became more and more tense.

Finally, it was my turn, and I presented our 21-day plan. General Schwarzkopf stood, turned to the assembled group, and asked, "Does everyone agree that Pagonis's plan can work?" Not one person raised a hand.

Schwarzkopf looked around the room, openly frustrated, and said, "Look. This is not a game. We're getting ready to kick off a major tactical operation for a war. Studying time is over. You know your resources - we will not be getting more. I need your assurance that we can successfully work this mission right now!".

At that point, still standing at the front of the room with a pointer in my hand, I interjected, "Sir, this logistical plan can happen, and we will make it happen".

Schwarzkopf turned and fixed a meaningful stare on me. "OK, General Pagonis", he responded. "How about signing something to that effect?". The tension in the room was palpable. It seemed to me that Schwarzkopf was using me to make a point to those in the room who had been hedging: fish or cut bait. I took the chart I had been briefing - which included maps and a 21-day timetable of division, corps, and logistics movement - and wrote along the bottom, "Logisticians will not let you or our soldiers down. William G Pagonis. 29 December 1990".

The CINC took the chart, placed it under the sheet of glass on his desktop, and told me, "I plan to hold you this".

Lieutenant General William G Pagonis *Moving Mountains* (1992).

## I Cancelled The Contract

Although the airmen were under my command I seemed to have no authority over the number of people they could bring with them, and inevitably they brought more than they had originally said they would. I was incensed to hear that their excellent commander had signed a million-pound contract to hire air-conditioned cabins for his pilots. And this at a time when the American helicopter pilots were quite literally living in holes in the ground next to their aircraft. Despite his bitter protestations, I cancelled the contract.

Major General Patrick Cordingley In *The Eye Of The Storm* (1996).

## The CNN Effect

During these difficult negotiations to restore the flow of aid, NATO proceeded to undermine the UN effort, by inexplicably flying bombers very low and aggressively over Pale. The purpose of this manoeuvre was not clear, but the effect was to make the Serbs extremely nervous, for there were ammunition bunkers in Pale, and an important communication site located not far away at Jahorina. I had previously urged Adm. Leighton Smith to cease flying in this hostile way, and asked him to put the same faith in the peace process as the UN had.

My plea went ignored. Exasperated, I told Wg-Cdr Tim Hewlett, the RAF officer commanding the NATO air cell in Sarajevo, that I would brief CNN on the negative effect the NATO air action was having on the peace process. Within seconds of making this threat, all communications between Naples and Sarajevo were cut off. Adm. Leighton Smith's liaison officer, a US Marines colonel, had overheard me and immediately reported my words to Smith, who had taken them literally. I wrote a letter of apology to Smith, regretting what I had said and explaining that this had not been a reflection of my true intentions. A week later I received a charming reply saying that we had never allowed our professional disagreements to spill over into personal animosity. This was true, but only just.

General Sir Michael Rose *Fighting For Peace* (1998).

## I'm Not Starting World War III For You

'SACEUR, can I have a word with you in my office now?'. Jackson said as we were leaving the briefing.

He closed his office door, leaving us and our aides alone in the room. My military assistant, Colonel Dennis Dimengo, moved off to the side, sensing an approaching problem from Jackson's body language but waiting to be dismissed.

'I won't do it! SACEUR, I just won't do it', Jackson said. 'I won't deploy the Apaches to block the runways at Pristina airfield'. He said this abruptly, in almost a temper, as he was turning away from me, his head hanging down.

With his back to me he moved across the room. This wasn't to be the beginning of a discussion, apparently, but an opening shot and, perhaps he hoped, the closing shot as he moved to increase the distance between us.

"Mike, let's talk about this", I tried to begin.

"Sir, I'm not taking any more orders from Washington", Jackson said.

"Mike, these aren't Washington's orders, they're coming from me".

"By whose authority?"

"By my authority, as SACEUR".

"You don't have that authority".

"I do have that authority. I have the Secretary General behind me on this".

"Sir, I'm not starting World War III for you....".

General Wesley K Clark Waging Modern War (2001).

# **AND HERE IS THE SHORT VERSION**

‘Unselfishness, as far as you are concerned means simply this - you will put first the honour and interests of your country and your regiment; next you will put the safety, well-being and comfort of your men; and last - and last all the time - you will put your own interest, your own safety, your own comfort’.

Field Marshal Sir William Slim Courage and other Broadcasts (1957).

## Selected Further Reading

John Adair Not Bosses But Leaders (Kogan Page, London, 1991)

Mike Brearley The Art Of Captaincy (Channel 4 Books, London 2001)

John Downey Management In The Armed Forces (McGraw-Hill, London 1997)

John Keegan The Face Of Battle (Penguin Books, London 1976)

John Keegan The Mask Of Command (Jonathan Cape Ltd, London 1987)

Andrew Leigh & Michael Maynard The Perfect Leader (Arrow Business Books, London 1996)

Dandridge M Malone Small Unit Leadership - A Commonsense Approach (Presidio Press, Novato CA 1983)

Lloyd J Mathews & Dale E Brown The Challenge of Military Leadership (Pergamon-Brassey's, Washington 1989)

Sir John Smyth Leadership In War 1939-1945 (David & Charles, London 1974)

Nick Skellon Corporate Combat - The Art Of Market Warfare On The Business Battlefield (Nicholas Brealey, London 2000)