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INFANTRY IN SUPPORT OF
PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE OPERATIONS

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PREFACE

With the close of World War II many individuals became fully aware of the unexploited potential of psychological warfare as a formidable weapon of war. Many of these individuals have written extensively on the subject, emphasizing however, only the strategic application of psychological warfare. Conversely few experienced individuals in this field have devoted sufficient attention to a practical analysis of tactical psychological warfare as a supporting weapon for combat infantry units.

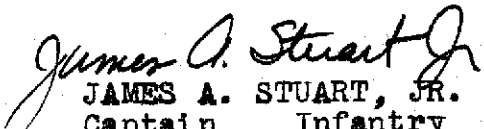
It is sincerely hoped that this study will provoke further thought and investigation on the part of those infantry commanders who are continuously seeking additional tactical weapons for use in day-to-day combat operations.

Appreciation is expressed to the members of the staff of The Infantry School Library for their kind assistance during the progress of the research for this study. In addition, the author wishes to thank Major Samuel V. Wilson, 036566, USA, for his assistance in giving, through personal experience, a thorough insight into the temperament and personality of the Communist soldier.

This monograph contains information of no higher classification than Restricted, Security Information. Those references noted in the bibliography which have higher classifications were used only for background information.

The ideas and opinions expressed herein, except as indicated in footnotes, are those of the author, and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Department of the Army or The Infantry School.

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INTRODUCTION

The average American soldier today, regardless of his branch assignment or background, has a tendency to associate the term "psychological warfare" only with such high level agencies and events as the "Voice of America" and the "Cold War." Few of these soldiers appear to realize that tactical psychological warfare can play a definite part as an offensive weapon in the combat arms. This weapon, employed with imagination at the right time and under the proper circumstances, can be expected to provide material assistance to the combat infantryman in accomplishing his tactical mission.

The purpose of this monograph is threefold: (1) to examine the potential of psychological warfare as a supporting weapon for use by front line troops; (2) to investigate the requirement for combat troops to maintain the maximum tactical pressure on the enemy as a means of contributing to the psychological warfare efforts of higher headquarters, and further, to determine a number of methods and means by which tactical pressure may be exploited for psychological warfare purposes; and (3) to clarify the requirement for and the methods of obtaining the proper staff coordination of psychological warfare operations at the infantry regimental and battalion levels.

Conclusions herein will cover: (1) the means by which combat troops can gain a thorough understanding of the potential of psychological warfare in support of combat operations; and (2) the methods by which this potential can be exploited by infantry units of regimental and battalion size.

DISCUSSION

Prior to undertaking any detailed examination of the field of psychological warfare, it is first necessary to establish an accurate definition of the term. Special Regulation 320-5-5, Dictionary of United States Military Terms for Joint Usage, dated April 1953, defines psychological warfare as follows: "The planned use of propaganda and related informational measures designed to influence the opinions, emotions, attitudes, and behavior of enemy or other foreign groups in such a way as to support the accomplishment of national policy and aims, or a military mission."¹

The word "propaganda" appears to be the most critical in the above definition; therefore, its meaning, too, must be unquestionably clear. Again SR 320-5-5 defines this term as:

A planned dissemination of news, information, special arguments, and appeals designed to influence the beliefs, thoughts, and actions of any given group.

black--Covert propaganda which purports to emanate from a source other than the true one.

grey---Propaganda which avoids identification either as of enemy or friendly origin.

white--Overt propaganda disseminated and acknowledged by a government or an accredited agency thereof.²

These definitions were chosen for the reason that future psychological warfare operations at any level may well find their roots in joint combat operations, and in such cases joint definitions must necessarily apply.

For the purposes of this monograph tactical psycho-

1. Special Regulation 320-5-5, Department of the Army, April, 1953, p. 75.

2. Ibid., p. 75.

logical warfare is defined as: "The planned use of propaganda and other related measures adjunct to physical combat which are designed to destroy, in time, the enemy's combat effectiveness to the degree that he surrenders when faced with the minimum tactical pressure."

The problem of infantry support of psychological warfare operations will be discussed from the standpoint of three factors: (1) understanding of potential based on past experience in the overall field of psychological warfare; (2) tactical pressure as a means of promoting the psychological warfare efforts of higher headquarters; and (3) the requirement for detailed staff coordination within the infantry regiment so necessary for the successful implementation of psychological warfare operations at that level. Considering these three factors in the light of the foregoing definition of tactical psychological warfare, the problem is reduced to determining the methods which combat infantry units can best use to make the enemy soldier susceptible to surrender or capture. With the problem clearly in mind, then, the next step is an examination of the first factor, that of understanding the potential of psychological warfare in combat operations.

Psychological warfare in one form or another has been used by nearly all successful combat leaders since the beginning of written history. Numerous examples of well conceived and brilliantly executed operations of this type can be taken directly from Biblical and medieval history, the most outstanding of which can be said to be those exploits of Xerxes, Hannibal, and Ghengis Khan. These commanders used as a strategic weapon the psychological effects

of rumor, fear, and the reputation of their forces for diabolic ferocity in battle. Shrewd use of this weapon enabled these commanders to destroy to an impressive degree the combat efficiency of their enemies even prior to engaging them on the battlefield.³

The first outstanding example of success in the large scale use of psychological warfare in modern history, however, came with the conduct of World War I. During this war, the Allies utilized propaganda as a strategic weapon so effectively that many German military leaders blamed their country's defeat upon the undermining of civilian morale as a whole rather than upon Allied superiority on the battlefield.⁴ Such an analysis by a group of defeated generals cannot be considered wholly valid. Nevertheless students of psychological warfare must give some credence to this line of reasoning if only because Germany later adopted certain propaganda techniques to further her national aims.

During the period between World Wars I and II Germany refined and perfected many known mass propaganda techniques to such an extent she was able to annex Austria and Czechoslovakia without a single noteworthy skirmish.⁵ During the years immediately following his assumption of power, Hitler painstakingly built up the theme of the invincibility of the German Army. Since the Allies and those countries associated with them were prepared neither militarily nor psychologically to risk war at that time, Hitler was able to proceed with his program of territorial expansion against Germany's weaker neighbors without effective interference.

3. Margolin, Leo J., Paper Bullets (New York, 1946) p. 20.

4. Ibid., p. 23, 28, 66.

5. Ibid., p. 20.

The Allies, especially the United States, did not gain headway in the field of psychological warfare during World War II until after the landings in North Africa. As the war progressed, however, more and more significant successes became evident, both on the strategic and tactical levels. Since this monograph deals essentially with the tactical level in psychological warfare operations, some specific examples of these successes are noteworthy.

During the closing days of the Tunisian campaign, one Air Corps aircraft dropped one thousand surrender leaflets on Italian positions. On the following day, an Italian captain led one thousand infantry soldiers into American lines to surrender. These prisoners had not known until they had read the leaflets that the United States was in the war.⁶ The entire circumstances surrounding this particular incident are of course exceptional, and would represent the ideal results of any given psychological warfare effort. The more normal ratio of the number of delivered leaflets to the number of actual defectors is many, many thousands to one. It is well to note at this time that over eight billions leaflets were used against the Axis in Europe alone during World War II.⁷ The total number of Axis defectors was of course much smaller.

For several months preceding the invasion of Southern France in 1944, leaflets were distributed wholesale to the troops guarding this critical coast. These soldiers were largely impressed Poles and Russian POW's, and were con-

6. Leo J. Margolin, "A Paper Bullet is No Spitball," The Infantry Journal, (February, 1947), p. 46.

7. Advance Sheet 6956, Military Aspects of Psychological Warfare, Staff Department, The Infantry School, (4 September 1953), p. 1.

sidered second rate troops. So effective were these leaflets in their appeal to these soldiers that on the day of the landing the coast was substantially clear. Two thousand "defenders" waited to surrender to our forces. One psychological team leader is said to have stated that these leaflets assisted greatly in allowing the invasion forces to cover in three days the ground that had, during the planning stages of the operation, been thought would require seventy days.⁸ Such a conclusion by what appears to be an enthusiastic supporter of psychological warfare is admirable, and undoubtedly has some merit. However, it is believed that many other military factors were involved in the speed of the Allied advance inland. The point to be remembered here is that propaganda leaflets did make an important contribution to the successful landing of Allied troops in Southern France.

In the battle for L'Orient, France, during World War II an American unit captured a domestic mail bag which was to have been delivered to the German garrison in that city. A loud-speaker team broadcast a message stating that if a certain Sergeant Hans Schmitz would come into the American lines he would be given a letter from home. After several repetitions Sergeant Schmitz crossed into our lines and received his letter.⁹

Many more specific examples of successful psychological warfare techniques can be taken from all theaters of World War II. Without delving further into these examples, it may be stated conclusively that psychological warfare does have

8. Margolin, "A Paper Bullet is No Spitball," op. cit., p. 49-50.

9. Ibid., p. 45.

a potential as a weapon in our military arsenal which should not be overlooked in the actual conduct of day-to-day combat operations. The problem facing the tactical commander in a given combat situation is that of determining the susceptibility of the enemy to psychological attack. Only by accurately gauging the enemy's frame of mind at the specific time can the tactical commander determine the degree of success to be realized from a psychological attack. At this time it is appropriate to examine several corollary factors which indicate this degree of susceptibility to psychological attack.

Knowledge of the temperament of the individual enemy soldier is one of the key factors here. It may be said that any individual, imbued with the history and culture of his native country, quite commendably experiences an obstinate, undying pride in his fatherland and what it purports to stand for. The individual brings this pride with him into the military service, and with it, he is invested with the additional intangible of loyalty to his unit and to the service. The problem of breaking down these emotional ties in the enemy soldier, of making him defect against all he holds dear, and then bringing him into our own lines, is quite obviously enormous. The problem is again compounded when the soldier is highly disciplined. Basically the requirement is to separate the soldier from his "cause" without belittling his culture, his courage, his unit, or his race. Linebarger's statement is considered unquestionably valid: "Unless you can sympathize with your enemy just long enough to be able to imagine why he should be willing to risk death to kill you, you will never, come

the moment of crisis, or peril, be able to reach into his mind, or twist his thoughts, feelings, dreams to your purposes."¹⁰ It is believed that the discerning commander can and should evaluate each psychological warfare theme presented to him in the light of whether or not such a theme serves to separate the enemy soldier from his national aim without discrediting him. To this end each theme under consideration should be subjected to a most critical analysis to determine its appropriateness at the given time. It is well to keep in mind one very successful tactical theme used during World War II. "A favored target of the users of 'black' propaganda is the malingerer. Suspicion of successful malingering inevitably hurts the morale of an outfit and even if a man is a genuine psychoneurotic he may be suspected of faking...."¹¹

Detailed analysis of psychological warfare operations in World War II by generally recognized authorities on the subject has led to several conclusions on their part. These conclusions represent lessons learned with respect to the potential of psychological warfare in future operations, and are considered valid and applicable here. First among these conclusions is that "Psychological warfare is a function of command. If a command chooses to exercise it, it will succeed; if a command neglects it, or if it is operated independantly of military command, it will either interfere with the conduct of the war proper, or it will be wasted."¹² Second, "Intelligence is a most important factor in the use

10. Paul M. Linebarger, "Psychological Warfare in World War II, Part II, The Infantry Journal, (June, 1947), p. 46.
11. Ibid., p. 43.
12. Ibid., p. 41.

of propaganda on the tactical level."¹³ Third, propaganda must be built on truth: "Leaflets have been used as a scare weapon, increasing the terror of what is to come at some definite or indefinite time in the future. However, promises of something about to happen must always come true or the next leaflet will be disbelieved."¹⁴ Fourth, "Propaganda must be built on victory, not defeat....If the enemy is losing and you remind him of that unpleasant fact, adding a few additional facts he didn't know before and call his attention to his inability to win, that's psychological warfare at its most effective."¹⁵ This particular conclusion warrants some clarification before it can be considered wholly valid. It is believed that psychological warfare is waged most successfully by the belligerent who is winning on the strategic level, or at least by the belligerent who has thwarted his enemy's national goal. Local tactical successes by one belligerent or another may or may not make a substantial contribution to the psychological warfare efforts of either side.

Since these conclusions represent a number of lessons learned as a result of World War II, they may now be considered as a few of the basic principles by which tactical psychological warfare must be applied against an enemy on the battlefield. With these principles in mind, it is now appropriate to examine the second factor in this discussion, that of the use of tactical pressure as an instrument of psychological warfare.

The problem of inducing the enemy soldier to surrender

13. Margolin, "A Paper Bullet Is No Spitball," op. cit., p. 47.

14. Ibid., p. 50.

15. Ibid., p. 45.

in the face of tactical pressure must be analyzed from two standpoints: (1) dishonor; and (2) fear. With respect to dishonor, it is important to consider again the temperament of the Communist soldier, whether he be Russian, Chinese, or a native of any satellite nation. He is extremely nationalistic, and in the outward display of this emotion, he eclipses completely his American counterpart. Through extreme indoctrination he has absorbed the communist credo to the point where he is potentially fanatic. Unlike the American soldier, who has gained certain ineradicable beliefs in his "cause" which are based upon moral and spiritual independence, the Communist soldier has been imbued with certain rote-learned tenets lacking the foundation of truth. If our psychological attacks can be geared to penetrating that credo, without creating dishonor as an issue with the enemy soldier, we stand to gain tremendously when the breakdown has begun. If it is possible to separate the Communist soldier from his "cause," to disillusion him, the only things he will have left to fight for will be his unit and his personal honor. Therefore a successful propaganda theme against the highly disciplined but egregiously disillusioned soldier might be the assurance that surrender in the face of tactical pressure does not, in fact, dishonor him or his unit, but rather, in actuality his surrender assists in overthrowing his tyrannical, self-constituted leaders. This theme must be handled delicately, and must necessarily find its basis in psychological warfare operations at the strategic level. However, the proper time and circumstances for the delivery of leaflets or loud-speaker broadcasts using this theme can largely be deter-

mined by unit commanders in contact with the enemy in the front lines. In this case, applied tactical pressure serves to provide the immediate opportunity for the enemy soldier to surrender, once he has been convinced that his actions will not dishonor him. In situations where the enemy is known to be illiterate, care must be taken to insure that leaflets, if that is the medium used, portray the message graphically and simply. Although the use of simple sketches and pictures in leaflet form is already common practice in the United States Army, it is well to emphasize their use for the particular theme described above.

The second factor, the use of fear through the application of tactical pressure as a means of destroying the enemy's combat effectiveness, has been substantiated time and time again throughout the course of history. Its use can reasonably be expected to be worthwhile again in the future. By utilizing fear as a psychological weapon we have a specific field open to us for use by combat infantry commanders.

If psychological warfare can be accepted as a supporting weapon, it is logical that in order to attain the maximum results, it should be applied in consonance with all accepted principles of war: objective, simplicity, unity of command, offensive, mass, maneuver, economy of force, surprise, and security. While it is rare that the victorious commander used all the above principles of war in a given campaign, it is nevertheless true that no commander ignored or violated any of these principles to any great extent and yet emerged the winner. Let us examine those principles of war which have been applied in this discussion so far.

First, by definition we inferred the objective of

tactical psychological warfare to be that of inducing the enemy soldier to surrender when faced with the minimum combat effort by front line troops.

Second, we have seen simplicity applied when we stated that simple sketches, pictures, or photographs were necessary to convey messages when the enemy was illiterate.

Third, we accepted the principle of unity of command when we stated that psychological warfare was a function of command, and that to be most effective it was necessary to keep the conduct of psychological warfare operations within the sphere of command or else it would either be wasted, or interfere with the conduct of the war proper.¹⁶

Fourth, we also accepted the principle of the offensive when we stated that psychological warfare is at its most effective when employed on the side that is winning on the strategic level.

Fifth, the principle of mass was inferred when it was demonstrated that billions of leaflets were required to carry out the psychological warfare aims during World War II. It is reasonable to assume that future psychological warfare operations will require extremely high numbers of leaflets, as well as large scale continuous use of other propaganda media in order to penetrate the shell of Communist credo.

By this process of elimination we have seen either the direct or indirect application of all principles of war with the exception of maneuver, economy of force, surprise, and security. Let us examine these particular principles with a view toward their psychological application in inducing fear.

16. Ibid., p. 41.

The use of maneuver and its corollary of mobility as a means of attaining battlefield success does not appear to be limited to physical combat alone. Our ability to strike swiftly and violently by means of the vertical envelopment has an inherent psychological potential which should be exploited fully in the future. By making an entire theater of operations a battlefield through delivery of infantry task forces on both deep and shallow targets, the Communist soldier, particularly the rear area soldier, is ripe for the divisive theme. Propaganda directed toward the rear area soldier could well point out that not only is he expected to supply his front line comrades, but also that he is expected to fight to safeguard the supply installations which he operates. Propaganda directed toward the front line soldier could point out that he cannot be expected to fight without the supplies his rear area comrades are supposed to deliver. In order to exploit this ready made theme it is believed that the United States Army should follow up its capability of high strategic mobility characteristic of our airborne forces with smaller, shorter range, tactically employed task forces delivered on key targets located within the enemy's rear areas. These operations would be conducted as raids, with the primary objective of destroying key enemy installations. The secondary objective would be the full exploitation of the potential of a ripe psychological theme. Once the rear area soldier can be put in doubt as to his comparative personal safety from ground combat forces, the degeneration of his efficiency has begun. The United States Army in the near future will have the capability of delivering infantry task forces of battalion and

regimental size on tactical missions of this type through the medium of the transport helicopter. At such time we will have the means of delivery of both short and long range penetrations; such a capability should be fully exploited for psychological warfare purposes as indicated.

By utilizing vertical envelopment as maneuver in the manner described above, it can be said that this principle of war can produce successful psychological results. The principles of economy of force and surprise are indirectly related to the psychological warfare effort here, primarily because they pertain to the tactical aspects of such an operation as described above. Surprise is largely a psychological effect in any tactical operation, and is one of the outstanding characteristics of any type of airborne operation. Hence this principle more nearly is satisfied with respect to the operation just described than is economy of force. The remaining principle of war to be discussed is that of security.

Security in the tactical psychological warfare field is believed to encompass our ability to withstand and to counteract the enemy's propaganda efforts. This problem can conceivably be real. An oversimplified answer to this requirement lies in the field of training. The onus here is placed directly upon every infantry commander regardless of echelon to insure that his troops are kept informed of the various propaganda tricks the enemy is using at any given time, or might employ in the future. In the final analysis the answer is believed to lie in the field of individual leadership, and it cannot be passed off lightly; however, the problem is not new.

Thus far this discussion has presented an analysis of two of the three major factors set forth in the problem of infantry support of psychological warfare operations: (1) understanding of potential; and (2) tactical pressure in the psychological warfare role. The remaining factor to be discussed is that of the requirement for detailed staff coordination of the psychological warfare effort within the infantry regiment necessary to further the parallel efforts of higher headquarters.

As has been stated previously, the commander should evaluate if possible the indicators which would lead to the assumption that the enemy is vulnerable to psychological attack. To assist him in making this evaluation, the commander relies on his S2 and S3. It is believed that the greatest contribution unit staffs can make in this field appears to be that of alertness to the change of attitude among prisoners, and to the numbers of prisoners who voluntarily surrender as a result of leaflets or other media. These changes should be reported promptly through command channels in order that higher staffs can provide and implement plans to exploit whatever advantage has become evident. Active participation in the production of new themes seems rather limited as far as the infantry regiment is concerned. It appears more practical for such a unit to implement the psychological warfare programs of higher headquarters much in the same manner as it complies with the operations orders and other directives of higher headquarters. Unit staffs are not provided with psychological warfare personnel per se; conversely, the general staffs at corps level and above are provided with personnel whose sole duty is the ^{coordination of} the

psychological warfare operations. The basic requirement for unit staffs in the field of psychological warfare is believed to be that of understanding just exactly what psychological warfare can and cannot do under given conditions. If commanders and their staffs within the infantry regiment are fully aware of its potential as well as its limitations, these officers can better apply it to advantage. The only way in which this requirement can be completely fulfilled is, again, by the thorough training of every individual concerned with the subject.

CONCLUSIONS

Combat troops will gain a thorough understanding of the capabilities and limitations of tactical psychological warfare only through an adequate training program. Such a training program should emphasize the fact that tactical psychological warfare is a supporting weapon designed to assist the front line soldier in accomplishing his combat mission. Further, this program should stress the conditions under which tactical psychological warfare can be expected to achieve worthwhile results. Regimental and battalion commanders should be made aware of past successes in the use of leaflets, loudspeaker broadcasts, and other propaganda media, and in addition, they should be encouraged to employ them tactically when the proper conditions exist.

It is believed that the key to the successful employment of tactical psychological warfare lies in a thorough knowledge of the Communist soldier. Therefore a training program designed to teach our combat troops the potential of such operations should first devote a proportionate share of its overall time to a study of the history, culture, and national philosophy of each of those countries now embracing Communism. With such a study as a background, it would then be possible to demonstrate how the Communist soldier can be separated from his "cause."

There are two methods by which the enemy soldier can be encouraged to surrender. The first method is to allay his instinctive fear of bringing dishonor upon himself and upon his unit if he should surrender. This method will require a long period of continuous restatement of the thesis that surrender to the Allies is far more honorable than fighting

for the tyrannical masters of his fatherland. Such an approach belongs at the strategic level initially; however, combat units can exploit it when proper conditions exist.

The second method of bringing about defection is that of inducing fear in the enemy soldier to the point where he is paralyzed into submission. By employing battalion and regimental size units in the shallow and deep vertical envelopment, we have a ready made means of producing divisive type propaganda. In addition to the tactical missions given these combat units for the destruction of targets, the secondary mission of such operations should be the complete exploitation of the inherent psychological potential of these type operations.

World War II amply demonstrated that psychological warfare can play a successful role in assisting our country to achieve its strategic goal. All indications point to the definite possibility that psychological warfare can also be successfully employed at the tactical level.

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