

Research on Unit Cohesion: Articles and Papers

Annotated Bibliography

- **Alderks, Cathie E.** “Relationships Between Vertical Cohesion and Performance in Light Infantry Squads, Platoons, and Companies at the Joint Readiness Training Center.” Alexandria, VA: United States Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, Human Factors Technical Area, 1992.
- **Alderks, Cathie E.** “Vertical Cohesion Patterns in Light Infantry Units.” *Proceedings of the 32nd Annual Conference of the Military Testing Association*. Orange Beach, AL, 1990, 432-437.



Bassford, Christopher. “Cohesion, Personnel Stability and the German Model.” *Military Review*, October 1990, 73-81.

Personnel stability in the Wehrmacht strengthened units. The U.S. Army should follow these practices. COHORT is a peacetime-only program that failed. The strong German community concept translated from civilian life into their army. Americans, with our independent streak, do NOT share the community concept. Our evaluation systems rate individuals, not their contributions to unit success.

- **Beveridge, J.R.** “In Defence of the Regimental System.” *Canadian Defence Quarterly*, Vol 4, No 3, 1974, 45-47.
- **Braun, Daniel G.** “Cohesion: A New Perspective.” Monterey, CA: Naval Postgraduate School, 1983.



Brinkerhoff, John R. “A History of Unit Stabilization.” *Military Review*, May-June 2004, 27-36.

Brinkerhoff describes Army stabilization efforts from 1899-1980, and then from 1981-1996. The COHORT program is explained in detail. The author suggests that the U.S. Army should move to universal stabilization, including NCOs and officers. Rotation of units stabilizes soldiers by default.

- **Canby, Steven, Bruce Gudmundsson and Jonathan Shay.** “Commandant, United States Marine Corps Trust Study: Final Report.” Dumfries, VA: ACS Defense, Inc., 29 September 2000.

The Marine Corps needs an alternative to the individual replacement system. The goal of the program should be to support unit cohesion, maximize progressive training, and increase leadership development. Multiple manpower concepts, used by armies around the world, may work in the Marine Corps.

- **Canby, Steven L.** “Personnel Stability in the United States Marine Corps: Implications and Blueprint for Action.” Trust Study – Course of Action I, January 2001.

Canby advocates a standardized life-cycle for Marine units. Cohesion would be achieved by stabilizing units for years at a time. Deployment and training schedules, and regeneration phases, are tied directly to manpower fills.



Cushman, Robert E. “Battle Replacements.” *Marine Corps Gazette*, November 1947, 46-50.

A future commandant argues for overstrength units training prior to operations. Marine individual replacements in combat during WWII *increased* casualties among leaders attempting to lead these new men. Replacements should be organized and sent forward as squads and platoons, not individuals. Teamwork is why men fight.



Daddis, Gregory A. “Understanding Fear’s Effect on Unit Effectiveness.” *Military Review*, July-August 2004, 22-27.

Fear in combat is mitigated through multiple tools: battle drills, realistic training, leadership and the comradeship resulting from strong unit bonds.

- **Gabriel, Richard and Reuven Gal.** “The IDF Officer: Linchpin in Unit Cohesion.” *Army*, January 1984, 42-49.
- **Gal, Reuven.** “Unit Morale: From a Theoretical Puzzle to an Empirical Illustration – An Israeli Example.” *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, Volume 16, No 6, 549-564, 1986.
- **Gal, Reuven.** “Unit Morale: Some Observations on Its Israeli Version.” Washington, DC: Department of Military Psychiatry, Division of Neuropsychiatry, Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, 1983.



Gal, Reuven and Franklin D. Jones. “A Psychological Model of Combat Stress.” Chapter 6 of *War Psychiatry. Textbook of Military Medicine*. Russ Zajtchuk, editor. Falls Church, VA: Office of the Surgeon General of the U.S. Army, 1995, 133-148.

How unit cohesion is one of the many factors that reduce stress on soldiers in combat. There are many others. Israeli Defense Force and U.S. in Vietnam examples are used.

- **Gebicke, Mark E.** “Military Readiness: Observations on Personnel Readiness in Later Deploying Army Divisions.” Washington, DC: General Accounting Office National Security and International Affairs Division, GAO/T-NSIAD-98-126, 1998.
- **Griffith, James.** “The Measurement of Group Cohesion in U.S. Army Units.” *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, Volume 9, 149-171, 1988.
- **Griffith, James.** “Group Cohesion, Training, Performance, Social Support and the Army’s New Unit Replacement System.” Washington, DC: Department of Military Psychiatry, Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, April 1987.
- **Gudmundsson, Bruce I.** “The Combat Replacement Problem.” *Tactical Notebook*, April 1992.



Hooker, R.D. “Building Unbreakable Units.” *Military Review*, July-August 1995, 25-35.

Small-unit excellence matters in a smaller army. To increase the quality and combat power of the U.S. Army, we need unit cohesion. Future battlefields, with smaller and more dispersed units, require small-unit leadership and unit cohesion. The regimental and COHORT plans, which were adopted in the early 1980s to stabilize units, did not last five years. Problems with current individual replacement systems have been well-recognized since WWII.



Ingraham, Larry H. and Frederick J. Manning. “Cohesion: Who Needs It, What Is It and How Do We Get It to Them?” *Military Review*, June 1981, 2-12.

Modern soldiers require more cohesion. Isolated soldiers are bad for units. Soldiers who leave their unit early, many times for drug use, have little attachment to their buddies. Families benefit from cohesive units

and communities. The first requirement is interaction. Unit families should live in the same neighborhoods. Personnel turbulence undermines interactions. Interaction outside primary duties, such as sports teams, helps unit cohesion. Defining “us” versus “them” is important. Distinctive unit identity strengthens airborne and cavalry units.

- **Kirkland, F.R.**, et al. “Unit Manning System Field Evaluation: Technical Report No. 5.” Washington, DC: Walter Reed Army Institute of Research (WRAIR), Division of Neuropsychiatry, Department of Military Psychiatry, 1987.
- **Kozumplik, Peter W.** “Marine Corps 1995. Supporting Paper for Colonel Collins Unit Cohesion Project. The Historical Perspective of Wartime Manpower or Replacements.” 18 March 1993.

Five case studies, from five different nations, examine combat replacement practices during high-intensity combat. Replacement systems, designed to sustain combat power, are key combat enablers for any army. An individual replacement system, designed to fill a unit to a given strength number, is the least effective method to build combat power. Recommendations are made to reorient Marine Corps manpower philosophies.



Krulak, Charles C. “ALMAR 454/96 Unit Cohesion - Commander’s Intent.” Washington, DC: Headquarters United States Marine Corps, 23 December 1996.

The Commandant’s guidance to his Manpower managers was to enhance cohesion and stability. Two initiatives, Team Integrity and Synchronization, were approved in this message. Progressive training was to be enabled by staffing units eight to sixteen months prior to deployment.



Lawson, Stephen A. “The Effects of Marriage on the Cohesion of Fleet Marine Force Units: An Officer’s Perspective.” Monterey, CA: Naval Postgraduate School, December 1996.

Barracks life for single Marines in three-man rooms does NOT increase cohesion as much as single squad bays. Married Marines do bond with unmarried Marines.



Lowe, J.L. “t’Hell with Rotation” *Marine Corps Gazette*, June 1955, 19.

The author argues vehemently against individual rotation of Marines serving in the Pacific. A unit must train and fight as a whole, from the training cycle through the campaign. Troops have to be stabilized in their units. Unit commanders need to serve long enough to understand their units’ capabilities. Rotate battalions, not individuals.

- **Mael, Fred A.** “Measuring Leadership, Motivation, and Cohesion Among U.S. Army Soldiers.” Alexandria, VA: United States Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, December 1989.

What tools measure and predict small-unit effectiveness? The relative impact of cohesion, motivation, and leader performance was sought from two surveys, one of 252 soldiers, and one of 474 soldiers.



Mangelsdorff, A. David. “Maintaining the Fighting Force: Cohesion and Support Systems.” Fort Sam Houston, TX: United States Army Health Services Command, October 1985.

To prepare for the stress of combat, the services need to address the cohesiveness of units and identify high-risk populations. Preventive efforts by four services are examined.

- **Manning, F. J. and L.H. Ingraham.** “An Investigation into the Value of Unit Cohesion in Peacetime.” In *Contemporary Studies in Combat Psychiatry*. G. Belenky, editor. Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1987, 47-67.

- **Manning, F.J. and R. Trotter.** “Cohesion and Peacetime Performance by Selected Combat Units.” Paper presented at the VII Corps Battalion Commander’s Conference. Nuremberg, West Germany: April 1980.



Meloy, Guy S. “General Ridgway’s Personnel Management Policy.” *Army*, November 2002.

During WWII, General Ridgway froze all officer reassignments in the 82nd Airborne Division. Reassignments were only made if absolutely required, most-times due to casualties. The only moves were up – platoon to company command, company to battalion command. No lateral transfers were permitted, from one company to another or from one battalion to another. By the time the division jumped into Normandy, every man in every company could identify every other man from a hundred yards away; just by the way he walked. Stable leadership is a requirement for unit cohesion and combat effectiveness.



McBreen, Brendan B. “Improving Unit Cohesion: The First Step in Improving Marine Corps Infantry Battalion Capabilities.” Quantico, VA: 23 May 2002.

Unit stability and cohesion is a prerequisite for all other improvements. In combat, men fight for their comrades, their primary group. There are four types of cohesion. Cohesive units fight better, suffer fewer casualties, train better, do not disintegrate, require less support, and provide members with a higher quality of life. Cohesion requires stability. A stability index should be measured and reported. The Marine Corps needs to stabilize Marines, NCOs, and officers for four-year periods. Units should be overfilled. A reconstitution window should be scheduled every two years.



McBreen, Brendan B. “The Strength of the Wolf is the Pack.” *Marine Corps Gazette*, February 2004, 47-49.

Improving infantry unit cohesion is more important than any combination of doctrinal, organizational, training or equipment improvements. It costs nothing. The author describes the benefits of unit cohesion and how it is built. Current Marine Corps manning practices are described as well as ideas on new manning practices that should be adopted.



McBreen, Brendan B. “One Year To Train.” Okinawa, Japan: 15 April 2000.

Marine Corps infantry battalions need one year, eighty training days, to prepare for combat. The training-deployment cycle should be two years long, including a six-month deployment. The battalion needs the same Marines, NCOs, and officers stabilized during the entire two-year cycle.

- **Meyer, E.C.** “The Unit.” *Defense*, February 1982.

General E.C. Meyer, as Army Chief of Staff, instituted two cohesion programs in the early 1980s: The Regimental System (TRS) and COHORT.

- **Nelson, P.D. and N.H. Berry.** “Cohesion in Marine Recruit Platoons.” Washington, DC: Navy Medical Neuropsychiatric Unit, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, Department of the Navy, Report No 66-26, 1968.



Oliver, Laurel W. “The Relationship of Group Cohesion to Group Performance: A Research Integration Attempt.” Alexandria, VA: United States Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, 1988.



Phipps, Jeremy J.J. “Unit Cohesion: A Prerequisite for Combat Effectiveness.” Washington, DC: National Defense University Research Directorate, 1982.

A British officer describes the strengths of the British regimental system, and what aspects may benefit the U.S. Army.

- **Rush, Robert S.** “The Individual Replacement System: Good, Bad or Indifferent? Army Replacement Policy, Cold War and Before.” Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society, Biennial International Conference. 26 October 2003.

A study of the 22nd Infantry Regiment during WWII and U.S. Army replacement policies following the war. The author believes that individual replacements were critical to keeping units battle-ready. Commanders would rather have a full unit with some combat veterans, not a well-trained and cohesive unit with no combat experience.

- **Senate Staffer.** “Trip Report: 10th Mountain Division, Ready or Not?” Washington, DC: 2000.
- **Shils, Edward A. and Morris Janowitz.** “Cohesion and Disintegration in the Wehrmacht in World War II.” *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Volume 12, Spring 1948, 280-315.

German units did not collapse, even under enormous pressure. The authors attribute this to Wehrmacht manpower policies that significantly strengthened the bonds of the primary group. Rotation practices, leadership selection and training, military traditions, and other practices are examined in this classic article.

- **Skull, Kenneth C.** “Cohesion: What We Learned from COHORT.” Carlisle Barracks, PA: United States Army War College, 2 April 1990.



Stewart, Nora Kinzer. “South Atlantic Conflict of 1982: A Case Study in Cohesion.” *Military Review*, April 1989, 31-40.

A case study that highlights the importance of unit cohesion on the relative success or failures of the British and Argentine forces during the Falklands War. This article is a synopsis of a U.S. Army Research Institute (ARI) study. The strength of the British Army was not weapons or technology, but men. Leaders must love their men and develop an open command climate. British forces have a 400-year tradition of this. Argentine conscripts in cohesive units did fight well.



Straub, Christopher C. *The Unit First: Keeping the Promise of Cohesion*. Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1988.

- **Tillson, John, et al.** *Alternative Concepts for Organizing the Total Force*. Alexandria, VA: Institute for Defense Analysis, 28 November 1990.

A proposal for life-cycle units: stabilize individuals in units for long periods, establish affiliations between individuals and units, replace casualties and transfers with blocks of replacements, and organize reserve units from cohorts of people who have already served together. These measures would reduce turbulence, increase familiarity, and thereby increase the combat strength of units.

- **Thurman, Max.** “TRADOC Assessment of the Unit Manning System.” Memorandum for the Chief of Staff of the Army, 4 March 1989.



Towell, Pat. “Forging the Sword: Unit Manning in the U.S. Army.” Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, September 1994.



United States Marine Corps. *Marine Corps Order 3500.28. Marine Unit Cohesion Program Standard Operating Procedures*. Washington, DC: Headquarters, United States Marine Corps, May 1999.

- **Van der Schee, Wyn.** “The Regimental System: Outdated Anachronism or Adaptive Institution?” Calgary, Canada: The University of Calgary, The Centre for Military and Strategic Studies, 12 April 2000.

An examination of the regimental system in the Canadian army and its effect on military effectiveness. The author uses his own experiences in two specific Canadian regiments as examples, dating from 1964 through 1975.

- **Wainstein, Leonard.** “The Relationship of Battle Damage to Unit Combat Performance.” Arlington, VA: Institute for Defense Analysis, Paper P-1903, April 1986.



Wong, Frederick G. “A Formula for Building Cohesion.” Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 1985.



Wong, Leonard, Thomas A. Kolditz, Raymond A. Millen and Terrence M. Potter. “Why They Fight: Combat Motivation in the Iraq War.” Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, July 2003.

During OIF, the true strength of U.S. forces was not technology, but the individual soldier. This survey reaffirms historical findings: soldiers fight for each other. U.S. soldiers fight well when they trust each other and trust their leaders.

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Research on Unit Cohesion: Books

Annotated Bibliography

- **Baynes, John C. M.** *Morale: A Study of Men and Courage. The Second Scottish Rifles at the Battle of Neuve Chapelle 1915.* New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1967.

An examination of the collective resilience of a single British battalion during the six-day battle of Neuve Chapelle in 1915. Long-service professionals, bonded together by strong regimental traditions and pre-war training, continued to fight even when down to one officer and 150 soldiers.

- **Beevor, Anthony.** *Inside the British Army.* London: Chatto & Windus, 1990.

- **DePuy, William E.** "Letter to General Creighton Abrams from General DePuy, 14 January 1974." In *Selected Papers of General William E. DePuy.* Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1994.

General DePuy's letter explains the tremendous combat potential of stabilized, cohesive tank crews. DePuy's collected writings are invaluable. Every article and letter emphasizes his career-long efforts at improving how the U.S. Army prepares for combat.

- **Doubler, Michael D.** *Closing With the Enemy: How GIs Fought the War in Europe, 1944-45.* Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1994.

Well-written examination of the small-unit tactical actions – the training, the learning, the mistakes, and the successes – fought by the U.S. Army during the last year of World War II.

- **Fraser, George MacDonald.** *Quartered Safe Out Here.* Pleasantville, NY: Akadine Press, 2001.

A hugely entertaining and well-written memoir of a British NCO who fought in Field Marshall Slim's XIV Army in Burma during WWII. The cohesive bonds of his squad are tremendous: one squad, from one battalion of one territorial regiment, all from one home county, fighting for the duration of the war.

- **Gorman, Paul.** *The Secret of Future Victories.* Alexandria, VA: Institute for Defense Analysis, IDA P-2653, 1992.

The "Secret of Future Victories" is realistic training. General Gorman traces U.S. Army training efforts from World War II through the creation of TRADOC in the 1970s. Three key individuals, George Marshall, Lesley McNair, and William DePuy, had huge influence on how the U.S. Army trains today.

- **Greenfield, Palmer and Wiley.** *The Organization of Ground Combat Troops. United States Army in World War II: The Army Ground Forces.* Washington, DC: Historical Division, United States Army, 1947.

The official U.S. Army WWII history series contains a wealth of top-level data and insights on building the U.S. Army. Difficult personnel policy decisions are described within the context of the challenges at the national level and the immediate requirements of the war.

- **Henderson, William D.** *Why the Vietcong Fought: A Study of Motivation and Control in a Modern Army in Combat.* Westport CT: Greenwood Press, 1979.

- **Henderson, William D.** *Cohesion, The Human Element in Combat: Leadership and Societal Influence in the Armies of the Soviet Union, the United States, North Vietnam, and Israel.* Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1985.

A comparison study of four armies. The author contends that North Vietnam was the best at promoting small-unit cohesion and fighting power. Israel and the Soviet Union were next, and the U.S. Army is dead last.

- **Johns, John H., editor.** *Cohesion in the U.S. Military.* Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1984.

- **Kreidberg, Henry.** *History of Military Mobilization in the United States Army, 1775-1945.* Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1955.

- **Krepinevich, Andrew.** *The Army and Vietnam.* Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988.

The Army in Vietnam failed to see the counterinsurgency for what it really was. Krepinevich especially criticizes the decisions and policies established by senior leaders, particularly General Westmoreland.

- **Luttwak, Edward N. and Daniel Horowitz.** *The Israeli Army, 1948-1973.* Cambridge, MA: Abt Books, 1983.

The development of the Israeli Army is described by linking its wartime battlefield performance to its philosophies, doctrine, and training. Conscription, training, leader selection, unit stability, reserve practices, and personnel policies are critical national decisions that shape and define the Israeli Army.

- **Mansoor, Peter R.** *The G.I. Offensive in Europe: The Triumph of American Infantry Divisions, 1941-45.* Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1999.

A great study by an active-duty U.S. Army officer that does much to counter-balance many of the cohesion criticisms usually leveled at the U.S. Army fighting in Europe. U.S. Army units fought well, won battles, and prevailed against the Germans.

- **Marshall, S.L.A.** *Men Against Fire: The Problem of Battle Command in Future War.* New York: William Morrow Company, 1950. (Reprinted in Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1978.)

Chapter 9 is "Tactical Cohesion." Chapter 10 is "Why Men Fight." "If [the soldier] is serving among men whom he has known for a long period...he will strive to hide his terror."

- **Office of the Chief of Military History.** *The Replacement System in the U.S. Army: An Analytical Study of World War II Experience.* Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 14 September 1950.

- **Palmer, Wiley and Keast.** *The Procurement and Training of Ground Combat Troops. United States Army in World War II: The Army Ground Forces.* Washington, DC: Historical Division, United States Army, 1948.

- **Sarkesian, Sam Charles, editor.** *Combat Effectiveness: Cohesion, Stress, and the Volunteer Military.* Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1980.

- **Stewart, Nora Kinzer.** *Mates & Muchachos: Unit Cohesion in the Falklands / Malvinas War.* Washington, DC: Brassey's U.S., 1991.

A comparison between the strong regimental ties that bound British units and the loose discipline shown by the conscript Argentinean army, and how these factors affected combat performance. Some Argentinean units, those with unique traditions and strong comradeship, fought very well.

- **Thayer, Thomas C.** *War Without Fronts: The American Experience in Vietnam*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1985.
- **United States Army.** *FM 100-9 Reconstitution*. Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 1992.
- **Van Crevald, Martin** *Fighting Power: German and U.S. Army Performance, 1939-45*. Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1982.

One of the strongest criticisms of the U.S. Army's personnel policies during WWII. Van Crevald cites the superiority of the German army in all areas but victory.

- **Watson, Bruce.** *When Soldiers Quit: Studies in Military Disintegration*. Westport, CN: Praeger, 1997.

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