

Defeating the Enemy's Will: The Psychological Foundations of Maneuver Warfare

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The will to fight is at the nub of all defeat mechanisms ... One should always look for a way to break the enemy's will and capacity to resist.

Brig. Gen. Huba Wass de Czege

Defeating the enemy's will. That is the essence of maneuver warfare, that you defeat the enemy's will to fight rather than his ability to fight. But how do you defeat a man's mind?

We *can* measure and precisely quantify the mechanics of defeating the enemy's ability to fight, and it is this tangible, mathematical quality that makes attacking the enemy's physical *ability* to fight so much more attractive than attacking the enemy's psychological *will* to fight. At some level none of us can truly be comfortable when we dwell on the fact that our destiny as soldiers and military leaders ultimately depends on something as nebulous and unquantifiable as an enemy's "will," and we are tempted to ignore such aspects of warfare. But somewhere in the back of our minds, a still, small voice reminds us that ultimately the paths of victory run not through machinery and material, but through the hearts and minds of human beings.

So what is the foundation of the will to fight and kill in combat and what are the vulnerable points in this foundation? In short: what are the psychological underpinnings of maneuver warfare? To answer these questions, students of maneuver warfare must truly understand, as we have never understood before, the psychological responses of that hungry, frightened, cold individual soldier in combat. "Of the maimed, of the halt and the blind in the rain and the cold, of these must our story be told."¹

S.L.A. Marshall, John Keegan, Richard Holmes, and Ardant du Picq are but a few of the perceptive individuals who have made significant contributions to the enormous task of piecing together a host of individual observations into a coherent fabric, but the work of most observers and researchers has the flavor of the reports made by the proverbial blind men groping at the elephant. Past observers have identified many important and valid aspects of the beast, but a consistent shortcoming seems to have been their inability to integrate their own observations with those of others. Thus, while one grasps a leg and declares the creature to be a tree, another finds a flank and calls the beast a wall, and still another proclaims the trunk to be a snake. In a way, all are correct, but the magnitude of the beast we call "war" is even greater than the sum of its parts.

The analogy of blind men is really quite appropriate, for we are all truly blinded when we attempt to look too closely into the searing flames of pain and denial that surround combat. Many observers have noted the millennia-old institution of repression and denial which makes understanding the psychological responses to combat so difficult. "There is," wrote the psychologist-philosopher Peter Marin, "a massive unconscious cover-up in which both those who fought and those who did not hide from themselves the true nature of the experience."² And, based on his own self-observation, the philosopher-soldier Glenn Gray concluded that: "few of us can hold on to our real selves long enough to discover the real truths about ourselves and this whirling earth to which we cling. This is especially true of men in war. The great god Mars tries to blind us when we enter his realm, and when we leave he gives us a generous cup of the waters of Lethe to drink."³

Thus, in its horrified and revolted response to the enormity of war, the human consciousness has traditionally scattered and buried the pieces of the beast that we seek. Like archaeologists, we must exhume each piece from whence it has been entombed in layers of denial. Like paleontologists, we must piece together each fragment brought out into the bright light of understanding and comprehension, and carefully fit it with all the others so as to understand fully the magnitude of the beast.

The task is daunting. We human beings are extraordinarily complex creatures, and when considered in groups, our potential complexity grows exponentially. And the numbers of the pieces of our collective psyche that lie buried in the minds of living veterans—in the fields of military science, history, psychology, sociology, and philosophy—are legion. One veteran I interviewed referred to such scientific study of men in combat as “A world of virgins studying sex, with nothing to go on but porno films.” British Gen. Shelford Bidwell comes to the same general conclusion when he states that the union soldier and scientist must always lay on “dangerous ground.”⁴ The objective of this study is to form such a union, to tread that dangerous ground and apply the skills of a soldier, a historian, and a psychologist in order to form a first, tentative framework of understanding that others may build upon.

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL PRICE OF WAR

Nations customarily measure the “costs of war” in dollars, lost production, or the number of soldiers killed or wounded. Rarely do military establishments attempt to measure the costs of war in terms of individual suffering. Psychiatric breakdown remains one of the most costly items of war when expressed in human terms.

Richard Gabriel
*No More Heroes*⁵

Defeating the enemy’s will is not too far removed from the process of inflicting psychiatric casualties on the enemy’s soldiers. In fact it would come very close to the mark to say that maneuver warfare (as opposed to attrition warfare) seeks to inflict psychic as well as physical damage upon the enemy, and a brief examination of the psychological price of modern war would be an appropriate place to begin our study of the psychological underpinnings of maneuver warfare.

In his book, *No More Heroes*, Richard Gabriel outlines the staggering “psychic” costs of war. “In every war in which American soldiers have fought in this century, the chances of becoming a psychiatric casualty . . . were greater than the chances of being killed by enemy fire.”⁶ In World War II, America’s armed forces lost 504,000 men from the fighting effort because of psychiatric collapse—enough to man fifty divisions! We suffered this loss despite efforts to weed out those mentally and emotionally unfit for combat by classifying 970,000 men as unfit for military service due to psychiatric reasons.⁷ At one point in World War II, psychiatric casualties were being discharged from the U.S. Army faster than new recruits were being drafted in.⁸ Swank and Marchand’s World War II study determined that after 60 days of *continuous* combat, 98 percent of *all* surviving soldiers will have become psychiatric casualties of one kind or another.⁹ (Swank and Marchand also found that the 2 percent who are able to endure sustained

combat had as their most common trait a predisposition toward “aggressive psychopathic personalities.” The importance of this statistic will be addressed later.)

In order to fully understand what it is that unravels the “will” of the individual fighting soldier and turns him into a psychiatric casualty, we need to identify *all* of the major factors that interact to cause this tremendous psychic burden.

The Soldier’s Dilemma: Dogged by Shadows on Either Hand

The man who ranges in No Man’s Land
Is dogged by the shadows on either hand
“No Man’s Land”¹⁰
James H. Knight-Adkin

Observers who have reported on the nature of the psychological trauma associated with combat keep coming up with different answers. Each of these observers seems to have come up with a piece of the truth, but the full magnitude of the physiological and psychological impact of war is greater than the sum of its parts, and the soldier is dogged by shadows at every turn. Some of the diverse factors that need to be incorporated into a complete understanding of the combat soldier’s circumstance are outlined below, and all of these factors add relentlessly to be the burden of that horrible catch-22 at the core of combat, that heart of darkness at the center of all combat processes: to kill or not to kill ... and the price thereof.

? The impact of physiological arousal and fear. Appel and Beebe¹¹ are but a few of many, many observers in the field of the behavioral sciences who hold that fear of death and injury is the primary cause of psychiatric casualties. Richard Gabriel is among many who make a powerful argument for the impact of physical exhaustion caused by extended periods during which the sympathetic nervous system is activated in a continuous “fight or flight” response.

? The weight of exhaustion. Among actual veterans, many accounts seem to focus on the fatigue and exhaustion they experienced in combat. The psychologist Bartlett states definitively that “there is perhaps no general condition which is more likely to produce a large crop of nervous and mental disorders than a state of prolonged and great fatigue.”¹² The British General Bernard Fergusson stated that “lack of food constitutes the single biggest assault upon morale.”¹³ And Guy Sager, a German veteran of the eastern front in World War II, is one of the many veterans who learned that cold was the soldier’s first enemy. “We urinated into our hands to warm them, and, hopefully, to cauterize the gaping cuts in our fingers ... each movement of my fingers opened and closed deep crevices, which oozed blood.”¹⁴

? The stress of uncertainty. The initial results of extensive research on the 1991 Gulf War indicates that one of the major stressors on individual combatants was the tremendous uncertainty of war.¹⁵ This constant state of uncertainty, which is a major part of what Clausewitz referred to as the “friction of war,” destroys the soldier’s sense of control over his life and environment, and eats away at his limited stock of fortitude.

? The burden of guilt and horror. Richard Holmes, on the other hand, spends a chapter of his superb book, *Acts of War*, convincing us of the horror of battle, and the impact of the guilt associated with it: “Seeing friends killed, or, almost worse, being unable to help them.” And Peter Marin accuses the field of psychology of being ill prepared to address the guilt caused by

war and the attendant moral issues. He flatly states that, “Nowhere in the [psychiatric and psychological] literature is one allowed to glimpse what is actually occurring: the real horror of the war and its effect on those who fought it.”¹⁶

? An aversion to hate and killing. In addition to these more obvious factors of fear, exhaustion, uncertainty, guilt, and horror, the less obvious but absolutely vital factors represented by the average human being’s aversion to hate and killing have been added here. These two factors are the most difficult to observe, but the very fact that they are not intuitively obvious makes them in many ways more important. These interpersonal aggression processes are the riddle that lies deep in the heart of darkness that is war.

For the purposes of a study of maneuver warfare, let us gain perspective by looking first at the impact of physiological arousal and fear on the battlefield, and then contrast this with the impact of being confronted with manifest, close-range, interpersonal hatred on the battlefield. The rest of this study will then focus on the dilemma associated with killing circumstances in combat—i.e., the average human being’s powerful resistance to killing and those processes and circumstances that can be manipulated to enable aggression in combat.

The Role of Physiological Arousal and Fear: “Sarge, I’ve Pissed Too”

And then a shell lands behind us, and another over to the side, and by this time we’re scurrying and the Sarge and I and another guy wind up behind a wall. The sergeant said it was an .88 and then he said, “Shit and shit some more.”

I asked him if he was hit and he sort of smiled and said no, he had just pissed his pants. He always pissed them, he said, just when things started and then he was okay. He wasn’t making any apologies either, and then I realized something wasn’t quite right with me, either. There was something warm down there and it seemed to be running down my leg. I felt, and it wasn’t blood. It was piss.

I told the Sarge, I said, “Sarge, I’ve pissed too,” or something like that and he grinned and said, “Welcome to the war.”

A veteran’s account of World War II,
As recorded by Barry Broadfoot
*Six War Years, 1939-1945*¹⁷

To comprehend fully the intensity of the body’s physiological response to the stress of combat, we must understand the mobilization of resources caused by the body’s sympathetic nervous system, and then we must understand the impact of the body’s parasympathetic “backlash,” which occurs as a result of the demands placed upon it.

Sympathetic and parasympathetic processes: Cooks and clerks in the front line

The sympathetic nervous system mobilizes and directs the body’s energy resources for action. It is the physiological equivalent of the frontline soldiers who actually do the fighting in a military unit.

The parasympathetic system is responsible for the body's digestive and recuperative processes. It is the physiological equivalent of the cooks, mechanics, and clerks that sustain a military unit over an extended period of time.

Usually these two systems sustain a general balance between their demands upon the body's resources, but during extremely stressful circumstances the "fight or flight" response kicks in and the sympathetic nervous system mobilizes *all* available energy for survival. This is the physiological equivalent of throwing the cooks, bakers, mechanics, and clerks into the battle. In combat this very often results in nonessential activities such as digestion, bladder control, and sphincter control being completely shut down. This process is so intense that soldiers very often suffer stress diarrhea, and it is not at all uncommon for them to urinate and defecate in their pants as the body literally "blows its ballast" in an attempt to provide all the energy resources required to ensure its survival.

It doesn't take a rocket scientist to guess that a soldier must pay a heavy physiological price for an enervating process this intense. The price that the body pays is an equally powerful backlash when the neglected demands of the parasympathetic system become ascendant. This parasympathetic backlash occurs as soon as the danger and the excitement are over, and it takes the form of an incredibly powerful weariness and sleepiness on the part of the soldier.

The criticality of the reserve

He, general or mere captain, who employs every one in the storming of a position can be sure of seeing it retaken by an organized counterattack of four men and a corporal.

Ardant du Picq¹⁸

Napoleon stated that the moment of greatest danger was the instant immediately after victory, and in saying so he demonstrated a remarkable understanding of the way in which soldiers become physiologically and psychologically incapacitated by the parasympathetic backlash that occurs as soon as the momentum of the attack has halted and the soldier briefly believes himself to be safe. During this period of vulnerability, a counterattack by fresh troops can have an effect completely out of proportion to the number of troops attacking.

It is basically for this reason that the maintenance of an "unblown" reserve has historically been essential in combat, with battles often revolving around which side can hold out and deploy their reserves last. The reserve has always played a vital role in combat, but du Picq was one of the earliest advocates not only of "holding out a reserve as long as possible for independent action when the enemy has used his own," but he also insisted on the revolutionary concept that this process "ought to be applied downward" to the lowest levels. He also perceived the technological process of increasing lethality on the battlefield which continues today. "There is more need than ever to-day, for protecting...the reserves. The power of destruction increases, the morale [of human beings] stays the same." Clausewitz further understood and put great emphasis on the danger of reserve forces becoming prematurely enervated and exhausted when he cautioned that the reserves should always be maintained out of sight of the battle.

These same basic psycho-physiological principles explain why successful military leaders have historically maintained the momentum of a successful attack. Pursuing and maintaining contact with a defeated enemy is vital in order to completely destroy the enemy (the vast majority of the killing in historical battles occurred during the pursuit, when the enemy

turned his back), but it is also valuable to maintain contact with the enemy as long as possible in order to delay that inevitable pause in the battle which will result in the “culmination point.” The culmination point is usually caused as much by logistical processes as anything else, but once the momentum of the pursuit stops (for whatever reasons) there are severe physiological and psychological costs to be paid, and the commander must realize that his forces will begin to immediately slip into a powerful parasympathetic backlash and become vulnerable to any enemy counterattack. An unblown reserve force ready to complete the pursuit is a vital aspect of maneuver warfare and can be of great value in ensuring that this most destructive phase of the battle is effectively executed.

Fear and loathing in the bomb shelter

In continuous combat the soldier roller-coasters through a seemingly endless series of these surges of adrenaline and their subsequent backlashes, and the body’s natural, useful, and appropriate response to danger ultimately becomes extremely counterproductive. Unable to flee, and unable to overcome the danger through a brief burst of fighting, posturing, or submission, the bodies of modern soldiers quickly exhaust their capacity to rejuvenate and slide into a state of profound physical and emotional exhaustion of such a magnitude and dimension that it appears to be almost impossible to communicate it to those who have not experienced it. As Gabriel puts it, “A soldier in this state will inevitably collapse from nervous exhaustion—the body simply will burn out.”¹⁹

Most observes of combat lump the impact of this physiological arousal process under the general heading of “fear,” but fear is really a cognitive or emotional aspect of nonspecific physiological arousal. The impact of fear and its attendant physiological arousal is significant, but the part it plays in creating psychiatric casualties needs to be placed in perspective.

The “role” of fear on the battlefield would be held by many researchers to be more appropriately termed the “reign” of fear, since their sole explanation for combat psychiatric casualties is fear of death and injury in combat. But is fear (and its attendant physiological arousal) the only or even the most important factor in the causation of combat psychiatric casualties? Although fear of death and injury is undoubtedly a significant factor, I submit that it is *not* the only and possibly not even the most significant factor. This becomes most evident if we examine the results of strategic bombing in World War II.

Consider the carnage and destruction caused by the months of continuous “Blitz” in England or years of Allied bombing in Germany during World War II. Day and night, in an intentionally unpredictable pattern, for months and even years on end, relatives and friends were mutilated and killed all around these people, and these civilian populations suffered fear and horror of a magnitude few humans will ever experience. This unpredictable, uncontrollable reign of fear is exactly what most experts hold responsible for the tremendous percentages of psychiatric casualties suffered by soldiers in battle. And yet, incredibly, the incidence of psychiatric casualties among these individuals was very similar to that of peacetime. The Rand Corporation Strategic Bombing Study published in 1949 found that there was only a very slight increase in the psychological disorders in these populations as compared to peacetime rates, and that these occurred primarily among individuals already predisposed to psychiatric illness. Psychologically, these bombings appear to have served primarily to create a loathing for the enemy: to harden the hearts and increase the willingness to fight among those who endured them.

The impact of fear and physiological arousal in combat should never be underestimated, but it would appear that something more than just fear is required to defeat the enemy's will. Close examination indicates that we can identify several other factors that add to the psychological burden of the soldier in combat. For the purposes of maneuver warfare, one of the most important of these in the role of interpersonal hatred manifested in the enemy's close-range, aggressive actions on the battlefield.

The Role of Hate

My first reaction, rooted in the illusion that anyone trying to kill me must have a personal motive, was: "Why does he want to kill *me*? What did I ever do to *him*?"

Phillip Caputo
Author and Vietnam veteran²⁰

Through roller coasters, action and horror movies, drugs, rock climbing, whitewater rafting, scuba diving, parachuting, hunting, contact sports, and a hundred other methods, our society pursues danger. Danger in and of itself is seldom a cause of trauma in our everyday peacetime existence, but facing aggression and hatred in our fellow citizens is a horrifying experience of an entirely different magnitude.

The ultimate fear and horror in most modern lives is to be raped or beaten, to be physically degraded in front of our loved ones, to have the sanctity of our homes invaded by aggressive and hateful intruders. Death or debilitation is statistically far more likely to occur by disease or accident than by malicious action, but the statistics do not calm our basically irrational fears. More than anything else in life, intentional, overt *human* hostility and aggression assaults our self image, our sense of control, our sense of the world as a meaningful and comprehensible place, and (ultimately) our mental and physical health.

The soldier in combat is no different. He resists the powerful obligation and coercion to engage in aggressive and assertive actions on the battlefield, and he dreads facing the irrational interpersonal aggression and hostility embodied in the enemy soldier.

Maneuver Warfare Applications of the Role of Hate

If we understand the role of hate in the soldier's dilemma then we can use it to obtain a greater understanding of the psychological underpinnings of maneuver warfare. Airpower advocates persist in their support of strategic bombing campaigns (which are rooted in an attrition warfare mentality), even in the face of evidence such as the post-World War II Strategic Bombing Survey, which, in the words of Paul Fussell, ascertained that: "German military and industrial production seemed to increase—just like civilian determination not to surrender—the more bombs were dropped."²¹ Historically, aerial and artillery bombardments *are* psychologically effective, but *only* in the front lines when they are *combined* with the Wind of Hate as manifested in the threat of the physical attack that usually follows such bombardments.

This is why there were mass psychiatric casualties resulting from World War II artillery bombardments, but World War II's massed bombing of cities was surprisingly counterproductive in breaking the enemy's will. Such bombardments without an accompanying close-range assault,

or at least the threat of such an assault, are ineffective and may even serve no other purpose than to stiffen the resolve of the enemy!

This is why putting friendly troop units in the enemy's rear is infinitely more important and effective than even the most comprehensive bombardments in his rear, or attrition along his front. This argues strongly for a doctrine similar to the World War II German principle of the *Kesselschlacht* (i.e., a constant striving for decisive action in the enemy rear) as an essential element in obtaining decisive victory. In this doctrine the *Aufrollen* (i.e., rolling up the flanks after making a penetration) becomes a secondary operation which is conducted solely to support the *Schwerpunkt* or the main thrust, which is flexibly directed into the enemy's center of gravity by the commander's intent.

In the Korean War the U.S. Army experienced the psychological effectiveness of an enemy who directed penetrations and surprise attacks behind our own lines. During the early years of that war, the rate of psychiatric casualties was almost seven times higher than the average rate for World War II. Only after the war settled down, lines stabilized, and the threat of having enemy forces in the rear areas decreased did the average incidence of psychiatric casualties go down to slightly less than that of World War II.²² Later, when U.N. forces were able to penetrate and threaten the enemy's rear area during the Inchon landing, these same processes began to work in their favor.

Even in the ideal bombing grounds of the barren deserts of the 1991 Gulf War, where for over a month the full weight of American, British, French, Canadian, and Italian airpower was brought to bear on the conscript soldiers of a Third World despot, enemy units did not and would not surrender in large numbers until faced with maneuver units on the ground and in their rear. (In fact, recent evidence indicates that these bombings were significantly ineffective. Initial reports were of more than 100,000 Iraqi casualties inflicted in the war, the vast majority from air strikes. But recent, authoritative reports indicate that "as few as 8,000 Iraqi soldiers may have been killed in the Kuwait Theater of operations during the 43 days of combat."²³ If all of these casualties were inflicted from the air, that would be less than eight deaths resulting from each sortie of a multi-million-dollar aircraft loaded with the latest multi-million-dollar smart munitions.) The simple, demonstrable fact is that the *potential* for close-up, *interpersonal* hatred and aggression is more effective and has greater impact on the will of the soldier than the *presence* of *impersonal* death and destruction.

THE EXISTENCE OF THE RESISTANCE

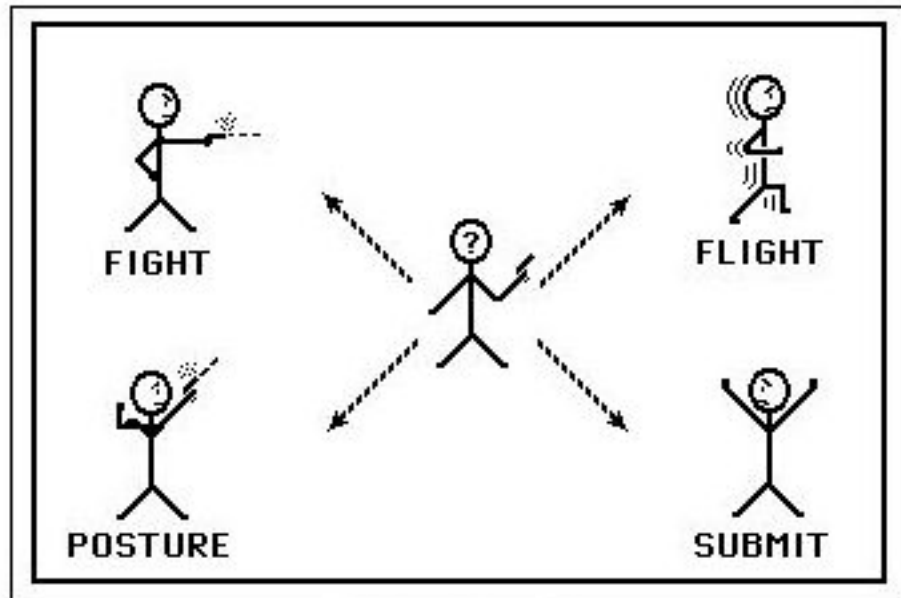
Studies by Medical Corps psychiatrists of the combat fatigue cases in the European Theater . . . found that fear of killing, rather than fear of being killed, was the most common cause of battle failure in the individual.

S.L.A. Marshall²⁴

Having established a foundation for an understanding of the dilemma that faces the soldier in combat, we must next look at the nature of the individual combatant's responses to his environment (Figure 1). In the animal world, when two creatures of the same species come in conflict, their combat is almost never to the death. Rattlesnakes use their poisonous fangs on other creatures, but they wrestle each other; piranha fish bite anything that moves, but fight each other with flicks of their tails; and animals with antlers and horns attempt to puncture and gore

other species with these natural weapons, but meet their own species in relatively harmless head-to-head clashes. Against one's own species the options of choice in nature are to "posture" before and during mock battle, to "submit" by making oneself harmless or exposing oneself to a killing blow, or to take "flight" from the aggressor. The "fight" option is almost never used, thus ensuring the survival of the species.

It is widely held that only man has no such resistance to killing. But does he? World War II Gen. S.L.A. Marshall, veteran and the Official Historian of the European Theater during World War II, first brought to the attention of the world the fact that only 15 to 20 percent of the riflemen in combat would fire their weapons at an exposed enemy.²⁵ Marshall was the first person in history to conduct systematic interviews with individual soldiers immediately after combat, and, although his methodological procedures have recently been reexamined, his basic concept of a majority of soldiers failing to actively pursue the "fight" option withstands close scrutiny.



The Warrior's Options

© 1996 by Dave Grossman
Author, *On Killing*

Figure 1: The soldier's response options upon being confronted with interpersonal aggression.

"Posturing"

Man does not enter battle to fight, but for victory. He does everything that he can to avoid the first and obtain the second.

Ardant du Picq²⁶

The anthropologist Irenaus Eibl-Eibesfeldt tells us that "One threatens [postures] by making oneself bigger—whether by raising one's hackles, wearing combs in one's hair or putting on a bearskin...."²⁷ Such plumage saw its height in modern history during the Napoleonic era, when soldiers wore high, uncomfortable shako hats that served no purpose other

than to make the wearer look and feel like a taller, more dangerous creature. In the same manner, the roars of two posturing beasts are exhibited by men in battle. For centuries the war cries of soldiers have made their opponents' blood run cold. Whether it be the battle cry of a Greek phalanx, the "Hurrah!" of the Russian infantry, the wail of Scottish bagpipes, or the rebel yell of our own Civil War, soldiers have always instinctively sought to daunt the enemy through nonviolent means prior to physical conflict, while encouraging one another and impressing themselves with their own ferocity, and simultaneously providing a very effective means of drowning the disagreeable yell of the enemy.

With the advent of gunpowder, the soldier has been provided with one of the finest possible means of posturing. Paddy Griffith points out that soldiers in battle have a desperate urge to fire their weapons:

Time and again we read of regiments blazing away uncontrollably, once started, and continuing until all ammunition was gone or all enthusiasm spent. Firing was such a positive act, and gave the men such a physical release for their emotions, that instincts easily took over from training and from the exhortations of officers.²⁸

Ardant du Picq became one of the first to document the common tendency of soldiers to fire harmlessly into the air simply for the sake of firing. Du Picq made one of the first thorough investigations into the nature of combat with a questionnaire distributed to French officers in the 1860s. One officer's response to du Picq stated quite frankly that "a good many soldiers fired into the air at long distances," while another observed that "a certain number of our soldiers fired almost in the air, without aiming, seeming to want to stun themselves, to become drunk on rifle fire during this gripping crisis."²⁹

"Submission" and "Flight"

It is to be noted that when a body [of troops] actually awaits the attack of another up to bayonet distance (something extraordinarily rare), and the attacking troop does not falter, the first does not defend itself.

Ardant du Picq³¹

A quest for further understanding of this process brings us to an examination of those individuals in combat—80 to 85 percent of the individual riflemen, according to S.L.A. Marshall's research—who would not kill or even "posture" in combat. Griffith states that:

Even in the noted "slaughter pens" at Bloody Lane, Marye's Heights, Kennesaw, Spotsylvania and Cold Harbor an attacking unit could not only come very close to the defending line, but it could also stay there for hours—and indeed for days—at a time. Civil war musketry did not therefore possess the power to kill large numbers of men, even in very dense formations, at long range. At short range it could and did kill large numbers, *but not very quickly* (emphasis added).³²

Griffith estimates that the average musket fire from a Napoleonic or Civil War regiment firing at an exposed enemy regiment at an average range of 30 yards would usually result in hitting *only one or two men per minute!* Such firefights “dragged on until exhaustion set in or nightfall put an end to hostilities. Casualties mounted because the contest went on so long, not because the fire was particularly deadly.”

This does not represent a failure on the part of the weaponry. John Keegan and Richard Holmes in their book, *Soldiers*, tell of a Prussian experiment in the late 1700’s, “in which a battalion of infantry fired [smoothbore muskets] at a target one hundred feet long by six feet high, representing an enemy unit, resulted in 25 percent hits at 225 yards, 40 percent hits at 150 yards, and 60 percent hits at 75 yards.” This represented the potential killing power of such a unit. The reality is demonstrated in their account of the battle of Belgrade in 1717, during which “two Imperial battalions held their fire until their Turkish opponents were only thirty paces away, but hit only thirty-two Turks when they fired and were promptly overwhelmed.” Sometimes the fire was completely harmless, as in Benjamin McIntryre’s observation of a totally bloodless nighttime firefight at Vicksburg in 1863:

It seems strange however that a company of men can fire volley after volley at a like number of men at not over a distance of fifteen steps and not cause a single casualty. Yet such was [sic] the facts in this instance.³³

(Cannon fire, like machine-gun fire in WWII, is an entirely different matter, sometimes accounting for over 50 percent of the casualties of the black powder battlefield, and artillery fire has consistently accounted for the majority of combat casualties in this century. There is reason to believe that this is as much due to the enhanced psychological effectiveness of these systems—due to group accountability processes at work in a cannon, machine gun, or other crew-served weapons firing—as it is to their increased mechanical killing potential, i.e., their contribution to what artillery officers like to call the “metal density of the air.” This critical point will be addressed in detail later.)

Recent historical reenactments also verify this trend. A 1986 study by the British Defense Operational Analysis Establishment’s field studies division used historical studies of more than 100 19th- and 20th-century battles, and test trials using pulsed laser weapons to determine the killing effectiveness of these historical units. The analysis was designed (among other things) to determine if Marshall’s non-firer figures were correct in other, earlier wars. A comparison of historical combat performances with the performance of their test subjects (who were not actually killing anyone with their weapons and were not in any physical danger from the “enemy”) determined that the killing potential in these circumstances was much greater than the actual historical casualty rates. The researchers’ conclusions openly supported S.L.A. Marshall’s World War II findings, pointing to “unwillingness to take part [in combat] as the main factor” which kept the actual historical killing rates significantly below the laser-trial levels.

In addition to the obvious options of firing over the enemy’s head (posturing), or simply dropping out of the advance (a type of flight), and the widely accepted option of loading weapons and otherwise supporting those who were willing to fire (a compromise between the demands of submission and fighting), evidence exists that during blackpowder battles, thousands of soldiers elected to passively “submit” to both the enemy and their leaders through “fake” or “mock” firing. The best indicator of this tendency toward mock firing can be found in the salvage of multiply loaded weapons after Civil War battles. According to Lord, after the battle of

Gettysburg, 27,574 muskets were recovered from the battlefield; of these, 24,000 were loaded. Twelve thousand of these loaded muskets were found to be loaded more than once, and 6,000 of the multiply loaded weapons had from three to ten rounds loaded in the barrel. One weapon had been loaded 23 times.³⁴

The practical necessity for muzzleloaders to be loaded from a kneeling or standing position, combined with the shoulder-to-shoulder massed firing line of this era, presents a situation in which—unlike that studied by Marshall—it was very difficult for a man to disguise the fact that he was not shooting, and what du Picq called the “mutual surveillance” of authorities and peers must have created an intense pressure to fire in this type of battle. Many leaders took advantage of the endless training hours their soldiers had spent in firing drill by having the men fire “by the numbers” in a volley fire in which every man fired and loaded together. There was not any of what Marshall termed the “isolation and dispersion of the modern battlefield” to hide nonparticipants during volley fire. Their every action was obvious to those comrades who stood shoulder-to-shoulder with them. If a man truly was not able or willing to fire, even to fire over the enemy’s heads as we have seen is so common, the only way he could disguise his lack of participation was to load his weapon (tear cartridge, pour powder, set bullet, ram it home, prime, cock), bring it to his shoulder, and then *not actually fire*, possibly even mimicking the recoil of his weapon when everyone else fired.

Here was the epitome of the industrious soldier. Carefully and steadily loading his weapon in the midst of the turmoil, screams, and smoke of battle, no action of his could be criticized by his superiors and comrades. But secretly, quietly, at the moment of decision, just like the 85 percent observed by Marshall, he finds that he is unable to pull the trigger and kill his fellow man.

The Battle of Cold Harbor deserves a close look here, since its instance of “thousands” of casualties occurring in mere “minutes” is the example most casual observers of the American Civil War would hold up to refute the assertions made by Griffin. Bruce Catton, in his definitive, multivolume account of the Civil War, debunks the very common misconception that 7,000 casualties occurred in “Eight Minutes at Cold Harbor.” It is quite correct that most of the isolated, disjointed Union charges launched at Cold Harbor were halted in the first ten to twenty minutes, but once the attackers’ momentum was broken, the attacking Union soldiers did not flee, and the killing did *not* end. Catton notes that:

...the most amazing thing of all in this fantastic battle is the fact that all along the front the beaten [Union soldiers] did not pull back to the rear. They stayed where they were, anywhere from 40 to 200 yards from the confederate line, gouging out such shallow trenches as they could, and kept on firing . . . all day long the terrible sound of battle continued. Only an experienced soldier could tell by the sound alone, that the pitch of the combat in mid-afternoon was any lower than it had been in the murky dawn when the charges were being repulsed.³⁵

Actually, it took up to eight *hours*, not eight minutes, to inflict those horrendous casualties on U.S. Grant’s Union soldiers. And, as in most wars from the time of Napoleon to today, it was not the infantry but the *artillery (in this case firing grapeshot at close range) that inflicted most of these casualties.*

Maneuver Warfare Applications of the Soldier's Options

If we can clear away the fog of the battlefield and grasp the concept that the average soldier in combat has a strong predisposition toward the options of posturing, submission, and flight, and a powerful resistance toward engaging in killing activity, then we have gained vital knowledge about the nature of the individual on the battlefield. And, more so on the battlefield than anywhere else in life, knowledge is power.

Developing superior posturing

[T]here is in every one an animation, a natural ardor that is instilled by the onset of combat. Generals ought not to check but to encourage this ardor. It was for this reason that, in older times, troops charged with loud shouts, all trumpets sounding in order to frighten the enemy and encourage themselves.

Ardant du Picq³⁶

If we accept that the ultimate objective of combat should be to break the enemy's will, then it can be more specifically stated that, within the framework of the "Soldier's Options" model, the objective is to foster submission or flight responses in the enemy. In conflicts in the animal kingdom, this is usually accomplished through superior displays of posturing.

Noisemaking is probably one of the most important aspects of posturing. Griffith quotes an account of yelling in its finest form in the thick woods of the American Civil War's Wilderness Battle:

...the yellers could not be seen, and a company could make itself sound like a regiment if it shouted loud enough. Men spoke later of various units on both sides being "yelled" out of their positions.³⁷

In these instances of units being "yelled" out of positions, we see posturing in its most successful form, resulting in the opponent's selection of the flight option without even attempting the fight option. And, of course, this is the biological objective in posturing during intraspecies conflicts: it prevents the males of a species from killing themselves off during ritualistic confrontations.

As soldiers we posture primarily through firepower, and the value of artillery as a means of psychological domination should not be underestimated by the maneuverist. Firepower *can* have a psychological effect that is far greater than the physical attrition it inflicts upon the enemy, but such firepower-based posturing *must* be accompanied by a physical manifestation of close-range, human aggression in order for it to cause the enemy to submit or flee.

If we consider firepower to have a significant psychological or "posturing" value, then we may need to carefully consider such factors as the decibels put out by our artillery rounds and our close-support weapon systems (i.e., is it a good idea to replace 7.62mm, M60 machine guns—a truly daunting noisemaker—with the 5.56mm Squad Automatic Weapon in the light infantry platoon?), the realism of the volume put out by blank adapters (could it be that part of the initial resistance to the M16 vs. the M14 was the "wimpy" way it sounds when fired with its distinctive blank adapter?), and the nuances of using a new generation of electronic hearing protection on the battlefield. That is, is it feasible to build an ear plug-type device that would make it possible to hear friendly commands while shutting out most of the sounds of the enemy's

fire, and still have the soldier feel that his fire is a daunting presence on the battlefield? An important element in such a decision may be the degree to which the concussion of a weapon's firing signature can be "felt" by the firers; anyone who has fired an M60 or has been next to one when it is firing will understand what I mean by "feeling" a weapon fire.

Fostering flight and submission

Xenophon says . . . "Be it agreeable or terrible, the less something is foreseen, the more does it cause pleasure or dismay. This is nowhere better illustrated than in war where every surprise strikes terror even to those who are much stronger..."

A man surprised, needs an instant to collect his thoughts and defend himself; during this instant he is killed if he does not run away.

Ardant du Picq³⁸

Superior posturing, however, is not always the most effective means of daunting an opponent in the animal world. Indeed, too much investment in face-to-face, ceremonial posturing confrontations can simply result in a stylized, set-piece approach to warfare. A more applicable approach to conflict in nature would observe the circumstances in which a small assailant can catch a larger, more powerful opponent by surprise and thereby cause it to submit or flee by virtue of the unexpected ferocity of its attack.

Human beings generally need to be emotionally prepared in order to engage in aggressive behavior. The combat soldier, in particular needs to be "psyched up" for a confrontation. An attack launched at a time and place when the soldier thought he was safe takes advantage of the stress of uncertainty, destroys his sense of being in control of his environment, and greatly increases the probability that he will opt for flight (i.e., a rout) or submission (i.e., mass surrender). A highly mobile, fluid enemy who can launch surprise attacks in what the enemy believes is his rear area is particularly daunting and confusing, and the presence of such interpersonal hostility can be disproportionately destructive to the will to fight.

Viewed in another way, attacking at an unexpected and unprepared location results in the defender's inability to orient himself. The defender's observation-orientation-decision-action cycle, or his "OODA Loop," has thus been stalled, and he cannot respond. Having been caught off balance, the defender panics and attempts to gain time by fleeing, or simply submits by surrendering in confusion to his assailant.

Psychological research in the area of information processing and human decision making has established a broad base of understanding of normal psychological responses to an "information overload" environment. As too much information comes in, the typical reaction is to fall back initially on heuristic, or "rule of thumb," responses. These heuristic responses involve processes such as: "anchoring" on early information to the exclusion of later, possibly conflicting, or more accurate data; making decisions based on their "availability" or the ease with which a particular response comes to mind (e.g., repeating a recently executed maneuver); or falling into a "conformational bias" in which only information that confirms or supports the current working hypothesis is processed and contrary information is filtered out of consciousness. If these heuristic responses fail (as they are quite likely to), then the normal human response is to become trapped into a "cascading effect" in which he reacts with increasingly inappropriate actions and either fails completely (i.e., is destroyed by the enemy) or

completely stops trying and falls into a paralyzed state sometimes referred to by psychologists as “learned helplessness” but always referred to by soldiers as “surrender.”

A classical example of this kind of maneuver warfare operation can be observed in Nathan Bedford Forrest’s campaign against William Tecumseh Sherman’s forces during Sherman’s march to the sea in the American Civil War. Forrest, with only a few thousand cavalry, forced Sherman to leave more than 80,000 men to guard his supply centers and his 340-mile-long supply line. On several occasions Forrest fell on unprepared units three times his size and inflicted disproportionate casualties upon his hapless enemies. His primary weapon was surprise. The rear-echelon units he was attacking were not humanly capable of maintaining a fighting pitch at all times, while Forrest’s troops entered battle having already attained “morale superiority” since they had plenty of time to prepare themselves emotionally prior to launching their surprise attacks.³⁹

Enabling killing

The final, and perhaps most obvious, application of our understanding of the average soldier’s aversion to close-range killing is to manipulate the soldier’s training and the variables of his combat environment in such a way as to psychologically “enable” him to kill the enemy. This “killing enabling process” is essential to the understanding of what is happening to the soldier on the battlefield, and is therefore the next area to be examined as we look at how to defeat the enemy’s will.

THE PROCESS OF “ENABLING KILLING”

I shot him with a .45 and I felt remorse and shame. I can remember whispering foolishly, “I’m sorry” and then just throwing up . . . I threw up all over myself. It was a betrayal of what I’d been taught since a child.

William Manchester, novelist and World War II veteran
Describing his response to killing a Japanese soldier⁴⁰

The magnitude of the trauma associated with killing became particularly apparent to me in an interview with one old soldier. He was the commander of a VFW Post where I was conducting some interviews, and had served as a sergeant in the 101st Airborne Division at Bastogne in World War II. He talked freely about his experiences and about comrades who had been killed, but when I asked him about his own kills he stated that usually you couldn’t be sure who it was that did the killing. Then tears welled up in his eyes and after a long pause he said, “But the one time I was sure . . .” His sentence was stopped by a little sob, and pain wracked the face of this noble and respected old gentleman. “It still hurts, after all these years?” I asked in wonder. “Yes,” he said, “after all these years.” And he would not speak of it again.

The next day he told me, “You know, Captain, the questions you’re asking, you must be very careful not to hurt anyone with these questions. Not me you know, I can take it, but some of these young guys are still hurting very badly. These guys don’t need to be hurt any more.” And I was profoundly struck by the certainty that I was picking at the scabs of terrible, hidden wounds in the minds of these kind and gentle men.

Killing in close combat is, unquestionably, a profoundly traumatic experience. Years of research in this field have convinced me that there is a powerful resistance in most individuals to

killing their fellow human beings. I have become equally convinced that there is a set of circumstances and pressures that can cause most human beings to overcome this resistance.

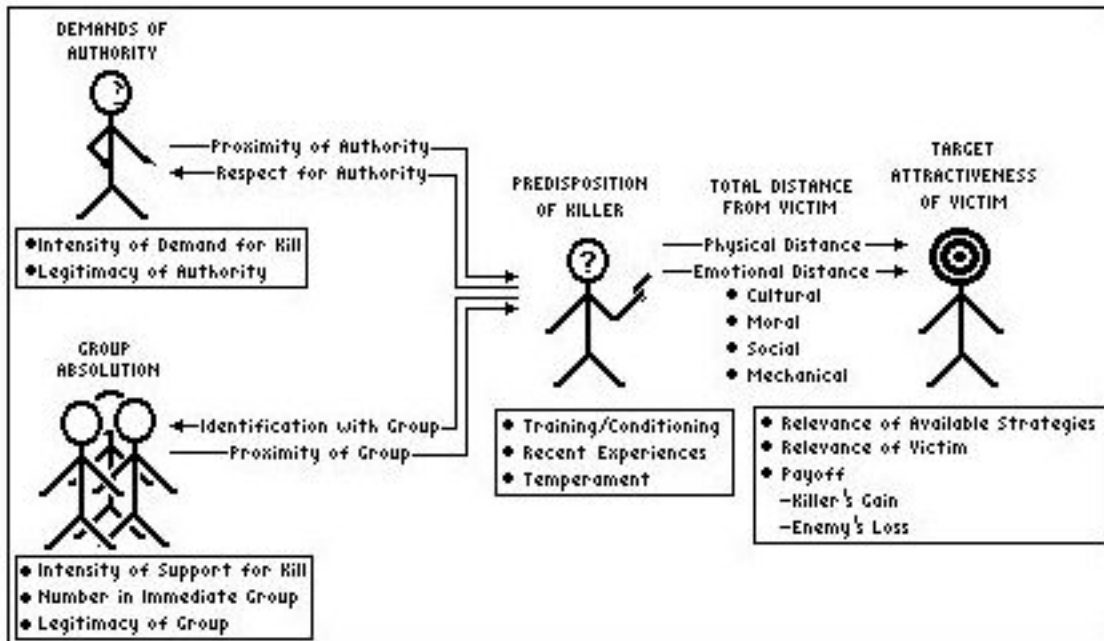
Having established the nature of the soldier's dilemma, and having established the presence of the soldier's natural, preferred responses to aggression, the next and most important step is to understand the circumstances and pressures that can be brought to bear on the individual soldier to "enable" him to overcome this reluctance to killing. The objective of this study is to attempt to understand the psychological underpinnings of maneuver warfare, and I submit that these factors are the basic, underlying psychological forces which are effectively manipulated in maneuver warfare to: (1) empower the will of one's own forces and (2) undermine or attack the enemy's will to fight.

The Milgram Factors: The Killer's Relationship to Group, Authority, and Victim

I observed a mature and initially poised businessman enter the laboratory smiling and confident. Within 20 minutes he was reduced to a twitching, stuttering wreck, who was rapidly approaching a point of nervous collapse . . . At one point he pushed his fist into his forehead and muttered: "Oh God, let's stop it." And yet he continued to respond to every word of the experimenter and obeyed to the end.

Stanley Milgram⁴¹

In the 1960s, Dr. Stanley Milgram's famous studies of obedience and aggressive behavior under laboratory conditions at Yale University found that, in a controlled, laboratory environment, over 65 percent of his subjects could be readily manipulated into inflicting a lethal electrical charge on a total stranger. The subjects sincerely believed that they were causing great physical pain to a total stranger whom they had just met. Despite their victim's pitiful pleas for them to stop, 65 percent continued to obey orders and increase the voltage and inflict the shocks until long after the screams stopped and there could be little doubt that their victim was dead.⁴² This research by Milgram (which has since been replicated many times in half a dozen different countries) combines with that of other psychologists to identify the three major interactions incorporated in Figure 2 as (1) the Distance from the Victim, (2) the Demands of Authority, and (3) Group Absolution. Analysis indicates that each of these variables can be further operationalized into subcategories as indicated in Figure 2.



Killing Enabling Processes

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Figure 2: Killing enabling factors

Physical distance

To fight from a distance is instinctive in man. From the first day he has worked to this end, and he continues to do so.

Ardant du Picq⁴³

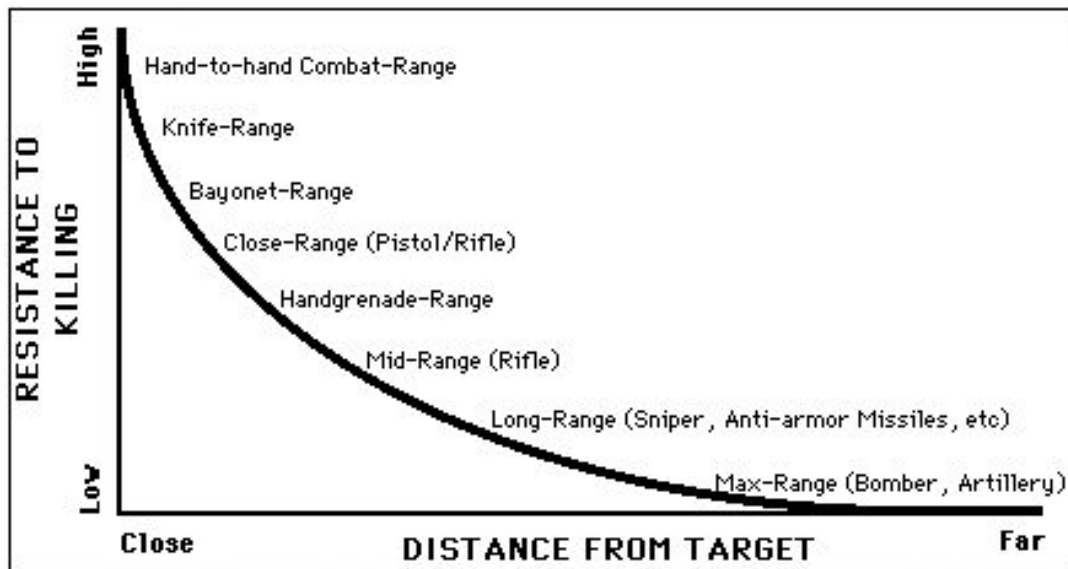
The physical distance between the actual aggressor and the victim was created in Milgram's studies by placing a barrier between the subject and the individual he was shocking. This same process can be generalized to and observed in historical combat circumstances, as portrayed in Figure 3. John Keegan in *The Face of Battle* notes that "only a fraction of one percent of all wounds" at the Battle of the Somme in World War I were inflicted with edged weapons—and most of those in the back.⁴⁴ Interviews and research reveal countless incidents in which combatants confronted with an enemy soldier at close range did not fire, but when faced with an enemy who could be attacked with a hand grenade, or who could be engaged at medium range or long range, the incidence of nonfiring behavior goes down significantly. At the greatest range, among high-altitude bombers or artillery crews, incidents of refusal to fire are extraordinarily rare.

Units with a history and tradition of close-combat, hand-to-hand killing inspire special dread and fear in an enemy by capitalizing upon this natural aversion to the "hate" manifested in this determination to engage in close-range interpersonal aggression. The British Gurkha

battalions have been historically effective at this (as can be seen in the Argentines' dread of them during the Falklands War), but any unit that puts a measure of faith in the bayonet has grasped a little of the natural dread with which an enemy responds to the possibility of facing an opponent determined to come within "skewering range."

What these units (or at least their leaders) must understand is that actual "skewering" almost *never* happens; but the powerful human revulsion to the threat of such activity, when confronted with superior posturing represented by a willingness or at least a reputation for participation in close-range killing, has a devastating effect upon the enemy's morale. This powerful revulsion to being killed with cold steel could be observed when mutinous Indian soldiers captured during the Sepoy Mutiny "begged for the bullet," pleading to be executed with a rifle shot rather than the bayonet.

The combination of closeness with uncertainty (especially at night) helps explain why flank and rear attacks shatter the enemy's will to fight. The assumption that the enemy is *very* close raises the level of uncertainty. This closeness and uncertainty combine and conspire with the darkness' lack of mutual surveillance in such a manner as to erode and destroy the enemy's will to fight.



Killing Distance/Resistance Relationship

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Figure 3: Relationship between distance from target and resistance to killing

Emotional distance: blindfolds and bayonets in the back

Combat at close quarters does not exist. At close quarters occurs the ancient carnage when one force strikes the other in the back.

Ardant du Picq⁴⁵

One of the more interesting processes to occur in the area of emotional distance is the psychological leverage gained by not having to see the victim's face. Israeli research has determined that hooded hostages and blindfolded kidnapping victims have a significantly greater chance of being killed by their captors.⁴⁶ This demonstrates the difficulty associated with killing an individual whose face you can see, even when that individual represents a significant threat by being able to later identify you in court.

This same enabling process explains why Nazi, communist, and gangland executions are traditionally conducted with a bullet in the back of the head, and individuals being executed by hanging or firing squad are traditionally blindfolded or hooded. Not having to look at the face of the victim provides a form of psychological distance which enables the execution party and assists in their subsequent denial and/or rationalization and acceptance of having killed a fellow human being.

In combat the enabling value of psychological distance can be observed in the fact that casualty rates increase significantly *after* the enemy forces have turned their backs and begin to flee. Clausewitz and du Picq both expound at length on the fact that the vast majority of casualties in historical battles were inflicted upon the losing side during the pursuit that followed the victory. In this vein du Picq holds out the example of Alexander the great, whose forces, during all his years of warfare, lost fewer than 700 men "to the sword."⁴⁷ They suffered so few casualties simply because they never lost a battle and therefore had to endure only the very minor casualties inflicted by reluctant combatants in close combat and never had to suffer the very significant losses associated with being pursued by a victorious enemy.

The killing during the pursuit has also traditionally been conducted by cavalry, chariot, or tank units, and these have their own form of psychological distance, which enables their killing activity. In combat a good horseman becomes one with his mount and is transformed into a remarkable new species. He is no longer a man, but is instead a ten-foot tall, half-ton, four-legged, centaur-like "pseudospecies" that has no hesitation to slay the lesser creatures that scurry about beneath him—especially if these lesser beings are being pursued and have their backs turned.

The category of emotional distance also addresses such processes as:

? Cultural distance, such as racial and ethnic differences, which permits the killer to dehumanize the victim.

? Moral distance, which takes into consideration the kind of intense belief in moral superiority and vengeful/vigilante actions associated with many civil wars.

? Social distance, which considers the impact of a lifetime of practice in thinking of a particular class as less than human in a socially stratified environment.

? Mechanical distance, which includes the sterile "Nintendo Game" unreality of killing through a TV screen, a thermal sight, a sniper sight, or some other kind of mechanical buffer that permits the killer to deny the humanity of his victim.

The demands of authority

The mass needs, and we give it, leaders who have the firmness and decision of command proceeding from habit and an entire faith in their unquestionable right to command as established by tradition, law and society.

Ardant du Picq⁴⁸

In Milgram's study the demands of authority were represented by an individual with a clipboard and a white lab coat. This authority figure stood immediately behind the individual inflicting shocks and directed that he increase the voltage each time the victim answered a series of (fake) questions incorrectly. When the authority figure was not personally present but called over a phone, the number of subjects who were willing to inflict the maximum shock dropped sharply. This process can be generalized to combat circumstances and operationalized into the following sub-factors:

? Proximity of the authority figure to the subject. Marshall noted many specific World War II incidents in which almost all soldiers would fire their weapons while their leaders observed and encouraged them in a combat situation; when the leaders left, however, the firing rate immediately dropped to 15 to 20 percent.

? Killer's subjective respect for authority figure. To be truly effective, soldiers must bond to their leader just as they must bond to their group. Compared to an established and respected leader, an unknown or discredited leader has much less chance of gaining compliance from soldiers in combat.

? Intensity of the authority figure's demands for killing behavior. The leader's mere presence is not always sufficient to ensure killing activity. The leader must also communicate a clear expectancy of killing behavior.

? Legitimacy of the authority figure's authority and demands. Leaders with legitimate, societally sanctioned authority have greater influence on their soldiers; and legitimate, lawful demands are more likely to be obeyed than illegal or unanticipated demands. Gang leaders and mercenary commanders have to work carefully around their shortcomings in this area, but military officers (with their trappings of power and the legitimate authority of their nation behind them) have tremendous potential to cause their soldiers to overcome individual resistance and reluctance in combat.

Groups: accountability and anonymity

Whenever one surveys the forces of the battlefield, it is to see that fear is general among men, but to observe further that men commonly are loath that their fear will be expressed in specific acts which their comrades will recognize as cowardice. The majority are unwilling to take extraordinary risks and do not aspire to a hero's role, but they are equally unwilling that they should be considered the least worthy among those present.

I imagine that those versed in the sciences would see in these statements simple proof that the ego is the most important of the motor forces driving the soldier, and that if it were not for the ego, it would be impossible to make men face the risks of battle. From that point, one could go on to say that social pressure, more than military training, is the base of battle discipline, and that when social pressure is lifted, battle discipline disintegrates. But I would prefer the simple statement that personal honor is the thing valued more than life itself by the majority of men.

S.L.A. Marshall⁴⁹

In the area of group processes, a tremendous volume of research indicates that the primary factor that motivates a soldier to dangerous and difficult deeds during combat is not fear of death, but a powerful sense of accountability toward his comrades on the battlefield. Ardant du Picq referred to this as “mutual surveillance.” It is this process of mutual surveillance that ensures that crew-served weapons such as cannon or machine guns will almost always fire effectively in combat.

Marshall noted that a single soldier falling back from a broken and retreating unit will be of little value if pressed into service in another unit, but if a pair of soldiers, or the remnants of a squad or platoon, is put to use, they can generally be counted upon to fight well.⁵⁰ The difference in these two situations is the degree to which the soldiers have “bonded” or developed a sense of accountability to their comrades. Du Picq sums this matter up when he says that “Four brave men who do not know each other will not dare to attack a lion. Four less brave, but knowing each other well, sure of their reliability and consequently of mutual aid, will attack resolutely. There,” says du Picq “is the science of the organization of armies in a nutshell.”⁵¹

One of the important things that occurs in groups is the empowering of killing processes. Conrad Lorenz tells us that “Man is not a killer, but the group is.” Psychologists have long understood that a “diffusion of responsibility” can be caused by numbers. It has been demonstrated in literally dozens of studies that bystanders will be less likely to interfere in a situation in direct relationship to the numbers who are witnessing the circumstance. Thus, in large crowds, horrendous crimes can occur with low likelihood of a bystander interfering, but if the bystander is alone, faced with a circumstance in which no one else shares the responsibility, then the probability of the intervention is very high.

In the same way, groups can provide a diffusion of responsibility or a kind of anonymity that will enable mobs to commit acts they would never dream of doing as individuals. Among groups in combat, this same combination of accountability and anonymity is a significant factor in enabling killing.

These group factors are a key part of the process that has made chariots and tanks so effective on the battlefield. Chariots and tanks engage in the same form of pseudospeciation as cavalry, but they are also a crew-served weapon and are enabled by the same group processes that have made artillery and machine guns the major killers on so many battlefields for so many years.

The Shalit Factors: Victim Characteristics and Tactical Circumstance

Man taxes his ingenuity to be able to kill without running the risk of being killed.

Ardant du Picq⁵²

Israeli military psychologist Ben Shalit has developed a model revolving around the nature of the victim, which has been modified slightly and incorporated into this model. The Shalit factors consider the nature of the victim and the tactical circumstances associated with a combat kill.⁵³ On this level the soldier conducts a personal assessment of his available options and their potential “payoff” in terms of the relevance of the victim and the relevance and effectiveness of available strategies for killing the victim.

Although somewhat obvious, such factors as, “Will I do the enemy any harm by killing this poor slob, and will I be able to get away with it without getting killed myself?” should not be overlooked as critical factors in the potential killer’s decision to engage in a specific killing circumstance.

The Predisposition of the Killer: Training/Conditioning of the Soldier

Marshall felt that his contributions to the U.S. Army’s training program increased the firing rate of the individual infantryman from 15 to 20 percent in World War II to 55 percent in Korea⁵⁴ and 80 to 95 percent in Vietnam.⁵⁵ The way he did this was by making a simple application of operant conditioning to the training of the soldier. Although he might not have called it such, there is little doubt that this is what was happening.

World War II-era training was conducted on a grassy firing range (a known-distance or “KD” range) on which the soldier shot at a bull’s-eye target. After he fired a series of shots, the target was checked and he was then given feedback telling him where he hit. Modern training uses what is essentially operant conditioning techniques to develop a firing “behavior” in the soldier.

When operant conditioning is taught to psychology students at West Point, the modern army marksmanship range is used as a classical example of “Skinnerian” operant conditioning. In this training, or “shaping,” process everything comes as close as possible to simulating actual combat conditions. The soldier stands in a foxhole with full combat equipment, and man-shaped, pop-up targets appear in front of him, becoming “discriminative stimuli.” The “target behavior” is to immediately and unhesitatingly shoot those pop-up targets, and “positive reinforcement” is given in the form of immediate feedback when the target drops if it is hit. In a form of “token economy” these hits are then exchanged for marksmanship badges which usually have some form of privilege or reward (praise, public recognition, three-day passes, etc.) associated with them. Several independent studies indicate that this powerful conditioning process has dramatically increased the firing rate of American soldiers since World War II. We can’t be sure that the *killing* rate has gone up, since much of the increase in firing may be “posturing,” but the powerful impact of modern training/conditioning techniques is a major factor in enabling aggressive behavior on the battlefield.

Richard Holmes has noted the ineffectiveness of an army trained in traditional World War II methods as opposed to an army whose soldiers have been “conditioned” by modern training methods. Holmes interviewed British soldiers returning from the Falklands War and asked them if they had experienced any incidence of non-firing similar to that observed by Marshall in World War II. They replied that they had not seen any such thing in their soldiers, but they most definitely had observed it in the poorly trained Argentineans, whose only effective fire had come from machine guns and snipers.⁵⁶ [Modern snipers are enabled by group processes since they are almost always teamed with a “spotter” who provides mutual accountability and turns the sniper into a crew-served weapon. In addition, snipers are enabled by: (1) the physical distance at which they fire, (2) the mechanical distance created by viewing the enemy through a scope, and (3) the fact that they are predisposed by temperament due to their careful selection by command and “self-selection” through their willingness to volunteer for the job.]

The Predisposition of the Killer: Temperament

Swank and Marchand's World War II study noted the existence of 2 percent of combat soldiers who are predisposed to be "aggressive psychopaths" and apparently do not experience the normal resistance to killing or the resultant psychiatric casualties associated with extended periods of combat. The negative connotation associated with the term "psychopath" or its modern equivalent, "sociopath," is inappropriate here, since this behavior is a generally desirable one for soldiers in combat, but there does seem to be some foundation for a belief that a very small percentage of all combatants are doing a tremendously disproportionate amount of the killing.

The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* (DSM-III-R) of the American Psychiatric Association (APA) indicates that the incidence of "antisocial personality disorder" (i.e., sociopaths) among the general population of American males is approximately 3 percent.⁵⁷ Armies over the centuries have become very good at utilizing such highly aggressive individuals during wartime, so if only a third of this 3 percent were compatible with military life, a hypothetical 1 percent of soldiers would, by the APA's DSM-III-R definition, "have no remorse about the effects of their behavior on others."

Like most personality disorders, this one is a continuum which contains many individuals who, while not meeting the full diagnostic criteria are on the "borderline" of antisocial personality disorder. The DSM-III-R tells us that some individuals "who have several features of the disorder [but not enough to be diagnosed with it] achieve political and economic success," and it may be that this small percentage also needs to be taken into consideration.

But this is not a complete answer, and as a psychologist I believe that we have just begun to come to the nub of this matter. There is strong evidence that there exists a genetic predisposition for aggression. In all species the best hunter, the best fighter survives to pass on his biological predispositions to his descendants. There are also environmental processes that can fully develop this predisposition toward aggression; when we combine this genetic predisposition with environmental development we get aggression. But there is another factor, and that factor seems to be the presence or absence of empathy for others. Again, there may be biological and environmental causes for this empathic process, but whatever its origin, there is undoubtedly a division in humanity between those who feel and understand the pain and suffering of others, and those who cannot. The presence of aggression, combined with the absence of empathy, results in sociopathy. The presence of aggression, combined with the presence of empathy, results in an individual completely different from the sociopath.

One veteran I interviewed told me that he thought of most of the world as sheep: gentle, decent, kindly creatures who are essentially incapable of true aggression. In this veteran's mind there is another human subspecies (of which he was a member) that is a kind of dog: faithful, vigilant creatures who are very much capable of aggression when circumstances require. But, according to his model, there are wolves (sociopaths) and packs of wild dogs (gangs and aggressive armies) abroad in the land, and the sheepdogs (the soldiers and policemen of the world) are environmentally and biologically predisposed to be the ones who confront these predators.

I have met these men, these "sheepdogs," over and over again as I interviewed veterans. They are men, like one U.S. Army lieutenant colonel, a Vietnam veteran, who told me: "I learned early on in life that there are people out there who will hurt you if given the chance, and I have devoted my life to being prepared to face them." These men are quite often armed, and always vigilant. They would not misuse or misdirect their aggression any more than a sheepdog

would turn on his flock, but in their hearts many of them yearn for a righteous battle, a wolf upon whom to legitimately and lawfully turn their skills.

Some may think of them as sheepdogs, and that is a good analogy, but I prefer another term, another analogy. There is a model, an “archetype,” which, according to Jung, exists deep in the “collective unconscious”—an inherited, unconscious reservoir of images derived from our ancestors’ universal experiences and shared by the whole human race. These powerful archetypes can drive us by channeling our libidinal energy. They include such Jungian concepts as *the mother*, *the wise old man*, and *the hero*. I think that Jung might refer to these people as heroes not as sheepdogs.

According to Gwynne Dyer, United States Air Force research concerning aggressive killing behavior determined that 1 percent of USAF fighter pilots in World War II did nearly 40 percent of the air-to-air killing, and the majority of their pilots never even tried to shoot anyone down.⁵⁸ This 1 percent of World War II fighter pilots, Swank and Marchand’s 2 percent, Griffith’s low Napoleonic and Civil War killing rates, and Marshall’s low World War II firing rates can all be at least partially explained if only a small percentage of these combatants were actually willing to actively kill the enemy in these combat situations. Call them sociopaths, sheepdogs, or heroes as you please, but they exist, they are a distinct minority, and in time of war our nation needs them desperately.

Application to Maneuver Warfare

In terms of maneuver warfare this model permits us (among many other things) to understand the psychological value of maneuver over firepower, and the enabling processes that are created through granting discretion and authority to subordinates in an *Auftragstaktik*, or “mission orders,” environment.

Maneuver

Frederick liked to say that three men behind the enemy were worth fifty in front of him.

Ardant du Picq⁵⁹

One of the most powerful forms of “distance” on the battlefield is created by placing subordinates between the subject and the victim. Thus, a leader who does not have to do the killing himself is enabled (by physical and psychological distance) to “demand” aggressive behavior of his subordinates, and subordinates are enabled by the leader’s demands. A commanding general is just one more individual, a human being who is subject to the same stresses and demands as the rifleman, and he is equally susceptible to empowering or undermining through manipulation of the variables outlined in this model. The leader may have training, experiences, and predispositions, which differentiate him from his subordinates, and we can and should attempt to influence those on the battlefield, but what we must also always strive to influence (through maneuver) is the leader’s links to his higher authority and group absolutism processes.

Within this model it can be observed that maneuver can be psychologically more effective than firepower since maneuver cuts off or threatens to cut off the enemy’s source of legitimacy and authority by isolating large elements from their link to group and authority enabling processes. Firepower can kill members of the group, but the group is still in contact

and the group still enables its members. Firepower can kill leaders but the leader's subordinates and staff can leap into the breach, and the chain of command, *and* its vital link to the legitimacy of the soldier's society, still exists. As a corollary to maneuver, we can note that the objective of maneuver should ultimately be the pursuit, and can establish a psychological explanation for the tremendous increase in killing that occurs during the pursuit and rout, which *usually has resulted from maneuver*.

Auftragstaktik

Today there is a tendency . . . on the part of superiors to infringe on the authority of inferiors It goes very high and is furthered by the mania for command It results in lessening the authority of subordinate officers. . . . The tendency is to oppress subordinates; to want to impose on them, in all things the views of the superior. . . . A colonel . . . thus takes all initiative from subordinate officers, and reduces them to a state of inertia. . . .

[When] this firm hand which directs so many things is absent for a moment subordinate officers are like a horse, always kept on a tight rein, whose rein is loosened or missing. They cannot in an instant recover that confidence in themselves, that has been painstakingly taken from them.

Ardant du Picq⁶⁰

With *Auftragstaktik*, or “mission orders,” the leader disseminates his authority with the mission, and the piece of authority that is passed down with the mission empowers subordinates at all levels. Patton understood this concept when he directed his subordinates to tell their men *what* to do but not *how* to do it, and then to “let them amaze you with their ingenuity.” A subordinate leader who is told precisely *how* to do something no longer has any obligation, accountability, or even legitimacy in accomplishing the task by an alternative method when the initial plan becomes impractical. *Auftragstaktik* empowers aggressive behavior by:

?Increasing the proximity and number of authority figures. Ideally, under *Auftragstaktik*, every soldier becomes an obedience-demanding authority. The last line of the U.S. Army Ranger Creed is “I will go on to accomplish the mission, though I be the lone survivor.” That mentality, and the cultivation of subordinate leaders and soldiers who can make it come alive, is the ultimate objective of *Auftragstaktik*.

?Increasing a subordinate's subjective respect for the authority figure, since the authority and initiative of the highest commander have been passed to the lowest subordinate.

?Increasing the authority figure's demands for killing behavior. Since the subordinate leader becomes the originator of his own set of mission orders, which are built upon the framework of his superior's mission orders (as opposed to being an errand boy simply passing down messages from on high), he accepts ownership of the mission and becomes strongly invested in demanding mission accomplishment from his subordinates.

?Increasing the legitimacy of the authority and the demands of subordinate leaders by institutionalizing a process in which it is the norm for subordinates to assume broad discretion and flexibility. Only then will you have a true, pervasive, mission orders environment.

The Last Three Inches:

The Battle within the Mind of the Commander

Ultimately, the final and most important battle takes place, not in the last 300 meters, nor even in the last 30 meters, but in the last three inches: inside the mind of the commander. Maneuver warfare, a “thought process” directed at the enemy’s “mind,” must win that battle above all others, and this study of the psychological underpinnings of maneuver warfare would be deficient if it did not examine those psychological factors that can constrain the commander from using maneuver-oriented operations.

The Quest for Order

There are plenty of small-minded men who in time of peace are inexorable in matters of equipment and drill, and perpetually interfere in the work of their subordinates. They thus acquire an unmerited reputation, and render the service a burden, but above all do mischief in preventing development of individuality, and in retarding the advancement of independent and capable spirits.

Archduke Charles

What the Archduke is talking about here, and what Ardant du Picq was talking about in the quote at the beginning of the earlier section on *Auftragstaktik*, is recognized today as an overwhelming desire for control, practitioners of which are sometimes referred to as having a “controlling” personality. There is in every human being a need for order, and each of us continually strives to maintain order in our environment so as to maintain the necessary degree of control over our lives. When faced with stress and loss of control, we all have an inclination toward a particular response. Some respond with direct aggression, others by becoming passively aggressive (the Mahatma Gandhi approach), or by becoming overly dependent upon and submissive to higher authority, or by becoming “histrionic” with great displays of emotion and posturing, or by becoming avoidant and withdrawing within themselves. And some respond by compulsively seeking control of every aspect of their environment.

All of us generally have an inclination toward one or another of these responses, and by training and through pure force of intellect we usually channel it into a pool of various responses from which we can select the appropriate one for each situation. The “controlling” response is very common in the military because it is so effective in peacetime, and those who are good at it seldom learn to constrain it until it is too late.

It is essential to note that this is *not* an “obsessive compulsive” or an “anal retentive” individual. At its greatest extreme, when it has caused someone’s interaction with their daily environment to become completely dysfunctional, this controlling tendency may manifest itself as an obsessive compulsive personality disorder, just as a preference for direct, overt, aggressive responses, when taken to the extreme, can manifest itself as an antisocial personality disorder—i.e., a sociopath. What we are discussing here is a normal personality type which has an inclination toward a specific type of response.

Individuals too closely attached to other types of responses to stressful situations (e.g., aggression, passive aggression, dependence, histrionics, avoidance, etc.⁶¹) are generally weeded out by the demands of the military system, but a good, hardworking micromanager can flourish. While these commanders can overcontrol in garrison and in training and will generally prosper in doing so, in the swirling maelstrom of the battlefield such micromanagement becomes impossible. In combat these individuals may respond to stress and loss of control in the only way

they know, in the same manner that has been so successful for them in the past: by taking an ever tighter grip on the reins of command. If you tighten the reins on a “beast” (in this case the military organization), it simply slows down and is increasingly unable to respond to the demands of its environment. More stress is responded to with more control, which results in less responsiveness to the demands of combat, which creates more stress, which is responded to with even more draconian control measures . . . and so on, in an ever tightening cycle of inappropriate responses that can ultimately lead to defeat and despair.

The motivation for overcontrol is not always rooted in controlling personality. Sometimes it is motivated by a kind of narcissism or egoism. These individuals are driven by their ego to centralize control. Narcissism is quite common in professions such as politics and the military. The perks, the awards and decorations, and the “ruffles and flourishes” that come with military rank are a major source of reward for the commander (we sure don’t do it for the money), and all good commanders probably have a healthy vein of narcissism, but the true narcissist is driven by this as his only motive. His ego can sometimes motivate him to achieve tremendous deeds on the battlefield, but he is generally not capable of receiving vicarious reinforcement from the autonomous achievements of his subordinates. In the eyes of a narcissist, the achievements of an autonomous subordinate are not his achievements. To him his force is an extension of his ego, and he derives great power from that fact; but to release control of any element is to diminish himself, and the very thought of decentralized, maneuver-based operations is abhorrent.

Whether motivated by narcissism or by a need to micromanage, these “controllers” are absolutely and unequivocally opposed to maneuver warfare and its decentralization of command; they sense that within an army that has truly internalized maneuver warfare doctrine, their *modus operandi* would have to be modified into a more well-rounded pool of responses, or else they will soon go the way of the mighty megalosaurus.

The forces of egoism and micromanagement have worked for many leaders for their entire military careers, and when faced with a doctrine that looks like an invitation to chaos, they can become quite hostile. But maneuver warfare is not chaos; it is simply decentralization guided by the intent of the commander and intelligently executed by carefully trained subordinates. In this synergistic effort there is greater “control” than any one human could ever achieve. Sun Tzu wrote of the deceptive appearance of chaos that occurs when a commander who is “skilled in war” executes maneuver warfare. “In the tumult and uproar,” he said, “the battle seems chaotic, but there is no disorder; the troops appear to be milling about in circles but cannot be defeated. Apparent confusion is a product of good order.”⁶²

The Quest for Honor and Glory

When you subdue your enemy without fighting who will pronounce you
valorous?

Sun Tzu⁶³

In the same passage quoted at the end of the last section, Sun Tzu goes on to say that in warfare “apparent cowardice [is a product] of courage; apparent weakness of strength.” Herein lies another psychological cause for opposition to maneuver warfare: to the warrior motivated by a desire for honor and glory, this “dancing around the enemy” smells of weakness and cowardice.

While getting my graduate degree in psychology, I fulfilled my practicum requirement by serving as a junior high school counselor. I worked in group sessions with many troubled young men, and one thing they consistently wanted from me was help in getting their way with the adults—parents, teachers, and others—whom they saw as “the enemy” on their adolescent battlefields. I told them that I knew a way to increase their “charisma,” a “charm spell” that was guaranteed to increase the probability of having things go their way by 10 to 20 percent or more.

They were eager, they were excited. “Charm spells” and “charisma” were terms from “Dungeons and Dragons-type” role-playing and video games, and they wanted to learn this piece of psychological magic. The trick is, I told them, to appropriately use the magic words “please, sir, and ma’am.”

A few were excited and convinced by these mercenary and manipulative application of the old “magic word,” but most were disgusted. They would never do such a thing. They could never debase themselves in such a weak and cowardly manner. Their self-esteem, their image, was so weak that they could not permit themselves to say these hateful words of appeasement. They wanted the “enemy” to submit before the superior force of their will power, but they did not have sufficient will to use the means available to them. The only method they could conceive of using was some form of physical posturing or brute strength: to out-yell, out-pout, or out-hit their opponents. But in this as in all human interactions, the victory goes most often not to the strong, nor to the swift, but to the sly.

We must never underestimate the power of the desire to maintain one’s self-image. In the case of these children (and of many adults), it prevents them from using simple courtesy as a social stratagem. In combat, the desire not to be seen as a coward in the eyes of others is the single most powerful motivating force on the battlefield, a force sufficient to overcome the instinct for self-preservation and make men face certain death without wavering. But, in addition to sustaining men on the battlefield, the demands of the self-image also have a long history of constraining combatants.

A friend of mine was the sponsor for a visiting Central African officer who was attending the U.S. Army’s Infantry Officer Advance Course. This experienced, intelligent, and articulate African officer almost failed the tactics portion of the course because he could not and would not devise any plan nor select any answers that involved a flank or rear attack. To even imagine doing so would be profoundly dishonorable and was simply unthinkable.

It is easy to feel superior to such an officer today, but he is only an obvious aspect of a long heritage. From the ancient Greeks, who preferred “manly” face-to-face combat and refused to use projectile weapons, to the French, who were offended and shocked that the Germans refused to meet them in honorable World War I-style combat and came around their Maginot line, history is full of sacrifices made on the altar of the “warrior” self-image. Today that legacy of self-inflicted constraint can be seen in the resistance to the use of maneuver concepts.

The ancient Chinese soldier-scholar, Sun Tzu, recognized this problem almost two and a half millennia ago in *The Art of War*. “Generally,” wrote Sun Tzu,

in war the best policy is to take a state intact; to ruin it is inferior to this. Do not put a premium on killing. To capture the enemy’s army is better than to destroy it . . . for to win one hundred victories in one hundred battles is not the acme of skill. To subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill.⁶⁴

Who can argue with this as a goal? To do this is the true mark of “a master of war.” But, adds Sun Tzu,

The victories won by a master of war gain him neither reputation for wisdom nor merit for valor. A victory gained before the situation has crystallized is one of the common man does not comprehend. Thus the author gains no reputation for sagacity When you subdue your enemy without fighting who will pronounce you valorous?⁶⁵

This is the problem. There is no glory, certainly not glory as Americans perceive it, in an ideal maneuver victory. There is a real reluctance to drive around the enemy and have a bloodless victory. It seems contrary to the warrior mentality that resides in all of us. It’s just not “cricket.”

“Therefore,” concludes Sun Tzu,

the general who in advancing does not seek personal fame, and in withdrawing is not concerned with avoiding punishment, but whose only purpose is to protect the people and promote the best interests of his sovereign, is the precious jewel of the state.

But, adds Tu Mu, an ancient commentator on Sun Tzu of over a thousand years ago, “Few such are to be had.”

Americans in particular are inclined to deify the brand of glory personified in the prizefighter or the football team. These precisely measured and matched activities exemplify the American concept of “glory” in a “fair fight.” To such individuals maneuver warfare can seem like “dancing around the enemy,” and those who practice or promote it are thought of in the same way that old-fashioned boxing fans considered the “float like a butterfly, sting like a bee” style of Muhammad Ali: “What’s all this ‘science’ baloney? Stand up and fight, ya coward!” But maneuver warfare has absolutely no intention of fighting fair and will “stand up and fight” only as a last resort. Maneuver warfare is not an old-fashioned prizefight, but a bullfight in which the bull, a huge and deadly opponent, is first worn down and confused by opponents with superior mobility—the picadors—before the matador finally comes in and, with grace and skill, pierces his opponent’s heart with one, single, clean sword thrust. But Americans are repulsed by bullfighting. And perhaps it is appropriate to leave it behind us as a form of entertainment; as a form of warfare, however, when we face an opponent intent on killing our sons and daughters, nothing else is acceptable. The military leader who eschews the matador’s *coup de grace* in an endeavor to attain the “glory” and “honor” of a boxer’s toe-to-toe slugfest must never be given responsibility for American lives.

This does not mean that there will never be times when we must meet the enemy head-on in equal combat. Far worse than a leader who has no spirit for maneuver is a leader who has no stomach for fighting at all. In the American Civil War, McClellan seems to have suffered from such a character flaw. Sun Tzu recognized a need for “ordinary” units that would hold the line while “extraordinary” units would maneuver to unhinge the enemy. At least U.S. Grant had the spirit to grapple with his opponent in order to apply his superior numbers and industrial resources to crush his opponent—and he was, arguably, capable of some pretty fair maneuvering upon occasion. A true “master” of war, in the sense of Sun Tzu and in terms of maneuver

warfare, is one who can use both attrition and maneuver, both the ordinary and the extraordinary, and, most importantly, who knows how to properly balance the two.

MacArthur had to fight bloody, sustained battles in New Guinea in order to lay a base for his “island hopping” maneuver campaign of bypassing enemy strong points in the Pacific, and in Korea MacArthur had to fight a desperate holding battle at the Pusan perimeter in order to execute the decisive maneuver operation at Inchon. Someone has to, in Patton’s colorful words, “Hold’em by the nose” while the maneuver element “kicks ‘em in the ass.” The leader responsible for American lives must be the matador who distracts and frustrates the enemy with an elusive and flexible cape while striving for the opportunity to not just “kick” the enemy but quickly and cleanly pierce deep into his heart. But he must also be *capable* of courageously facing the enemy in mortal combat, while not preferring to do so.

There is in each individual who holds himself to be a warrior an atavistic, primal force that craves a special kind of domination glory, a force that desires to grapple with and best the enemy. It can be seen in those teenage boys who could not say please; it can be seen in the ceremonial, head-butting combats of goats and other horned and antlered creatures during mating season; and it can be seen in even the greatest maneuverists when their will power runs low and the hindbrain gains control over the intellect.

When worn down and exhausted deep in the enemy’s country, Napoleon and Robert E. Lee, two great maneuverists, both hit a point at which they seemed to be no longer willing to maneuver, no longer able to fight with the intellect. In a kind of moral exhaustion, like a weary Muhammad Ali in the fifteenth round of a hard match, Napoleon at Borodino and Lee at Gettysburg could not bring themselves to “will” their forces into one last flanking movement and seemed to almost fatalistically, unconsciously decide that “Today is the day I will come to grips with my enemy, today is as good a day as any to die.” Lee, without Stuart and his cavalry “eyes,” and deep in enemy territory, resigned himself to a blind grappling with the enemy at Gettysburg. Napoleon, his forces eroded by the long march deep into Russia, and frustrated by his inability to decisively defeat his elusive enemy, did the same at Borodino. And in both cases, when they stopped maneuvering they lost.

Future commanders, exhausted and frustrated by seemingly endless maneuvering against their enemy, will reach the point at which they cannot go on and come to feel that they must risk all on one last roll of the dice. In their staff and amongst their subordinates are the Pickets and the Murats: clamoring for glory, eager to lunge into the jaws of death, lusting for the honor of coming to grips with the enemy. These valuable and aggressive subordinates may give unspoken or even spoken messages of frustration or thinly veiled contempt and disgust for the failure of their leader to come to grips with the enemy. They are pistols full of impotent rage quivering in the commander’s hand. At some point their moral force may outweigh that of the commander, and he can no longer hold them back. He lets slip his dogs of war in equal battle, and the victory goes, not to the sly, nor to the swift, but to the strong in a bloody battle on equal terms.

Winning the War in the Commander’s Mind

If maneuver warfare is “a thought process which seeks to pit strength against weakness to break the enemy’s will,” then, as a thought process, it must exist first and foremost in the mind of the commander, and it is there that it must be nurtured and supported. What we must ask ourselves is, how can this thought process, as manifested in an organization that has embraced maneuver warfare as a fundamental doctrine, provide psychological support mechanisms that will develop and sustain the commander’s moral force, his “will to maneuver”?

This question is deserving of another paper completely, one focusing on the potential contributions of: (1) the military education and officer development system, and (2) the staff system. Suffice it to say here that the education and professional development system should nurture subordinates who have the capacity for both aggression action *and* maneuver. These subordinates, who will later become commanders, must become Longstreets who encourage their commander to maneuver and who envision for themselves the glory of the matadors first, and that of the prizefighting “slugger” only as a last resort. And their reading and study of the military arts must support a world view; it must enable a *Weltanschauung*, which believes, as Sun Tzu put it, that “the best policy is to take a state intact; to ruin it is inferior . . . To capture the enemy’s army is better than to destroy it To subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill.”

In the same way, the staff system must develop and nurture professional staff officers who are imbued with the spirit of maneuver and will put aside aspirations for command and the direct glory of physical confrontation. This was the strength of the German general staff in World War II, and there is a desperate need for those who would be von Mellenthins to future Balcks. The subordinate and the staff officer, combining to support the moral force of the commander in maneuver as well as in direct, bloody confrontation, can be a vital source of support for the battle that is constantly being waged in the commander’s mind.

SEEING THE ELEPHANT

Battle is the final objective of armies and man is the fundamental instrument in battle. Nothing can wisely be prescribed in an army—its personnel, organization, discipline and tactics, things which are connected like fingers of a band—without exact knowledge of the fundamental instrument, man, and his state of mind, his morale, at the instant of combat.

Ardant du Picq⁶⁶

During the American Civil War the soldier’s first experience in combat was called “seeing the elephant.” Success in future wars may depend on our not just seeing, but knowing, controlling, and directing the beast called war. Centuries of soldiers and scholars have been like the proverbial blind men groping at the elephant. When any of us examines the individual’s response to war our gropings will probably be equally blind, for we do truly wander in a land where “the great god Mars tries to blind us when we enter” and “gives us a generous cup of the waters of Lethe” when we leave. But by having collected and assembled the reports of those who have gone before us, we can come to a deeper understanding of the nature of the beast and the underlying psychological processes associated with maneuver warfare.

Warfare is the ultimate “survival of the fittest” environment, and the evolution of warfare within this environment has traditionally occurred through a kind of unconscious, Darwinian, natural selection. Today we have, perhaps for the first time, the capacity to begin to understand, anticipate, and consciously control that evolutionary process in one very important way. That is what maneuver warfare is all about.

NOTES

1. This is a paraphrasing of John Masefield's great poem, "A consecration." John Masefield, *Poems* (New York: Macmillan, 1947), p. 1.
2. Peter Marin, "Living in Moral Pain," *Psychology Today*, November 1974, p. 72.
3. J. Glenn Gray, *The Warriors: Reflections on Men in Battle* (London: Frank Cass and Co., 1970), p. 16. Lethe is the mythical river of forgetfulness in Hades.
4. Shlford Bidwell, *Modern Warfare* (London: 1972).
5. Richard A. Gabriel, *No More Heroes: Madness and Psychiatry in War* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1987), p. 88.
6. Gabriel, p. 77.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 72.
8. Richard Holmes, *Acts of War: The Behavior of Men in Battle* (New York: Free Press, 1985), p. 260.
9. R. L. Swank and W. E. Marchand, "Combat Neuroses: Development of Combat Exhaustion," *Archives of Neurology and Psychology*, vll. 55, [[. 236-247.
10. This is an excerpt from WWI veteran James H. Knight-Adkin's "No Man's Land," a powerful poem which does a superb job depicting the horror of the soldier's dilemma. James H. Knight-Adkin, "No Man's Land," in *A Treasury of War Poetry: British and American Poems of the World War 1914-1917*, ed. George Herbert Clarke, (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1917), pp. 158, 159.
11. J. W. Appel and G. W. Beebe, "Preventive Psychiatry: An Epidemiological Approach," *Journal of the American Medical Association*, vol. 131, August 18, pp. 1469-1475.
12. Holmes, p. 115.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 126.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 235.
15. Presented by representatives of the Walter Reed Army Institute for Research at the Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society, Baltimore, MD, October 11-13, 1991.
16. Marin, p. 68.
17. In Paul Fussell, *The Norton Book of War* (New York: Norton & Company, 1991), p. 466.
18. Ardant du Picq, *Battle Studies* (Harrisburg, PA: Military Service Publishing Co., 1946), p. 167. Col. Charles Ardant du Picq is arguably the earliest and greatest of those soldier/scholar/psychologists upon whose shoulders modern soldiers and scholars have the privilege to stand. Du Picq was killed in the Franco-Prussian war in 1870, and his book, *Battle Studies*, was published in France after his death. His "Studies" are based on the personal knowledge and keen observations of a career soldier, a firm understanding and study of the classics, and an extensive survey (probably the first of its kind) soliciting observations and input from his fellow officers in the French Army.
19. Gabriel, p. 80.
20. Holmes, p. 147.
21. Paul Fussell, *Wartime: Understanding and Behavior in the Second World War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 16.
22. Gabriel, p. 75.
23. *U.S. News and World Report*, January 20, 1992, p. 44.

24. S.L.A. Marshall, *Men Against Fire: The Problem of Battle Command* (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1978), pp. 78, 79.
25. Ibid., p. 54.
26. du Picq, p. 43.
27. Irenau Eibl-Eibesfeldt, *The Biology of Peace and War: Men, Animals, and Aggression* (New York: Viking Press, 1975), p. 32.
28. Paddy Griffith, *Battle Tactics of the Civil War* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1989), p. 112.
29. Holmes, p. 173.
30. Ibid.
31. du Picq, p. 125.
32. Griffith, p. 149.
33. Ibid, p. 121.
34. F. A. Lord, *Civil War Collector's Encyclopedia* (Harrisburg, PA: Stackpole Company, 1976), p. 86.
35. William B. Catton, *Bruce Catton's Civil War* (New York: Fairfax Press, 1984), p. 556.
36. du Picq, p. 21.
37. Griffith, pp. 159, 160.
38. du Picq, pp. 43, 82.
39. William McElwee, *The Art of War, Waterloo to Mons* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1974), pp. 156, 157.
40. William Manchester, *Goodbye, Darkness* (London: Penguin Books, 1981), p. 366.
41. Quoted in Camille B. Wortman and Elizabeth F. Loftus, *Psychology*, 3d ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981), p. 508.
42. Stanley Milgram, *Obedience to Authority* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974).
43. du Picq, p. 112.
44. John Keegan, *The Face of Battle* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1976), pp. 278, 279.
45. du Picq, p. 149.
46. Ben Shalit, *The Psychology of Conflict and Combat* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1988), p. 565.
47. du Picq, p. 133.
48. Ibid., p. 95.
49. Marshall, p. 149.
50. Ibid, p. 151.
51. du Picq, p. 110.
52. Ibid, p. 46.
53. Shalit, p. 56.
54. Marshall, p. 9.
55. Holmes uses the figure of 80 percent (p. 325). A recent survey of veterans by R. W. Glenn ("Men and Fire in Vietnam," *Army*, April, 1985, pp. 18-27), indicates a 95 percent firing rate.
56. Holmes, p. 326.
57. American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Third Edition, Revised* (Washington, DC: APA, 1987), pp. 342-345.
58. Gwynne Dyer, *War* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1985), p. 22.

59. du Picq, p. 114.

60. Ibid., p. 210.

61. For an excellent study of these basic personality disorders (including the narcissistic personality mentioned later) see Theodore Millon, *Disorders of Personality: DSM-III, Axis II* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1981). Of particular interest is Millon's concept that everyone has an inclination toward one or another of these responses, but it is only in their more severe manifestations of these that they become true personality disorders.

62. Sun Tzu, *The Art of War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 92.

63. Ibid., p. 87.

64. Ibid., p. 77.

65. Ibid., p. 87.

66. du Picq, p. 39.