CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter defines the state of readiness and discusses in detail the various variables that contribute towards combat motivation of soldiers. It also discusses the characteristics of parachute soldiers based on available literatures. Finally the findings of previous research especially those of the American Army would be subsequently discussed.

Definition of State of Readiness

The state of readiness or combat readiness in the military context can be defined in two broad terms. Firstly, *The Facts on File: Dictionary of Military Science*, describes it as, "applied to the organisation or equipment, that are available for combat operations". In a more refined meaning of this statement, Sarkesian (1980) refined the meaning by describing it as the technical proficiency of a unit and the operational state of tools like weapons and vehicles as well as the logistics required to perform missions. Secondly the state of readiness can be defined as, "applied to personnel, qualified to carry out combat operations in the unit to which they are assigned." Sarkesian (1980) explains it as the attitudes and commitment of individual soldiers to the integrity of the unit the “will” to fight and degree to which these are in accord with societal values and expectations. In essence, for a unit to be ready for combat, it must demonstrate both technical proficiency and "will" to fight.
Theories on Combat Behaviour

The theories of combat behaviour are best examined from some of the research and studies conducted by military sociologists. The research conducted by Brown and Maskos (1976) was based on the findings of Ardent du Pieq’s (1942) in his book entitled, *Battle Studies: Ancient and Modern Battle*. Pieq (1942) introduced the notion that a soldier's *morale* had the widest influence over the development of military theory and speculation about combat behaviour prior to World War II. The fact remains that without good morale, no Army can successfully fight and win a war. Some of the factors that have direct consequences on morale are bad leadership, lack of team spirit and lack of discipline.

The duo had also based their research on the study conducted by Stouffer (1949) who wrote a book entitled, *The American Soldier: Combat and its Aftermath*. Stouffer had strongly emphasised on the role of a "primary group". What it means is that the motivation of the individual soldier in combat is a function of his solidarity and social intimacy with fellow soldiers at a small group level. In any Army, the smallest fighting unit is the two-men team, followed by Sections and Platoons. It is with people in these units that a soldier usually identifies himself with.


Both of their contributions are considered landmark studies on a soldier’s attitude towards combat. They had examined soldiers’ combat...
behaviour empirically by conducting after-battle interviews and based on the results of World War II.

Little (1964) in Brown and Moskos (1976), observed that combat troops during the Korean War also confirmed the role of primary groups. In his study he also noted the salient organisational factors such as Army personnel policies that had contributed towards combat motivation. The US Army's policy on hair length for example, was at one time thought to be of no significance to volunteers as compared to their drafted counterparts. However, close to two-thirds of those surveyed had opposed it.

During the Vietnam War, Moskos (1970), a leading military sociologist in the US, had gathered data on combat motivation based on his stay with combat units between 1965 and 1967. His study was compiled in his book entitled, *The American Enlisted Man: The Rank and File in Today's Military.* Among his notable findings is the rotation system. This system means that soldiers in the front line tend to look forward to be relieved or posted to the reserve units. He emphasised that what is important to soldiers is to have attainable goals before them and they would battle on to attain them.

He also recognised the importance of the underlying value of commitment. He postulates that soldiers generally fight for reasons only known to them. That specific reasons or commitment could be to uphold the sovereignty of their countries or to a larger system such as to prevent the spread of communism as in the case of the Vietnam War.

Of more contemporary studies on combat behaviour is by Dinter (1985) in his book entitled, *Hero or Coward: Pressures Facing The Soldiers in Battle.*
His study was based on the experiences of combatants mainly from a psychological point of view. Among his major findings that are consistent with those discussed earlier are the primary group relationship and rotation systems. He had also identified the significance of training and belief. He strongly emphasised that with good training it would reduce fear of the unexpected and the unknown. Belief, on the other hand, he said it is related to a sense of patriotism. It is about loyalty to the country and people they are fighting for.

The factors that motivate soldiers in combat are not exhaustive. However, the findings mentioned above are about the notable ones and have been advocated by most scholars as it has a strong relationship with combat performance of an individual soldier. The following discussions will focus on each of the factors and determine how they would influence soldiers.

Morale

Morale refers to the mental attitude or bearing of a person or a group of individuals. A soldier or group of soldiers with high morale will have the moral courage to carry out any tasks assigned to him or them. Copeland (1960) describes it as the secret weapon of individuals. Napoleon best sums it all when he said that, "the man who was armed with it was worth three men who were not".

More than ever before, armies today are in need of morale. The morale that has been found from training will not stand up for long periods against the
violence of modern war. If men are to face such horrors and overcome them, training alone is not enough (Sarkesian, 1980).

There can be no morale where there is no self-confidence. A well-trained and well-equipped soldier will naturally feel morally and physically superior to an ill-trained and ill-equipped opponent.

According to Copeland (1960), the greatest handicap a man feels on joining the Army is the loss of his personal liberty. He is forced to live up to a timetable drawn up by somebody else. Even his evenings, when he might reasonably expect to feel at liberty, are often intruded upon by established authority. He no longer feels free to dress as he pleases, or to go where he wants. He can be ordered to do things against his will. His whole life is regulated without his wishes and hence his personality is merged in that of the group.

Copeland (1960) also postulates that high state of morale can be acquired by an incalculable number of factors. Such factors are good leadership, discipline, training, equipment, a record of success, physical condition, mental condition, moral condition, patriotism, honour, self-respect, self-control, loyalty, the will to win and a host of other factors. However it must be stressed here that morale is not merely a sum of the cumulative effect of these factors. In battle for example, bad leadership may easily destroy morale though the other factors such as training, equipment and past successes are still there. It is to say that when we deal with morale it is not finite but infinite.
Primary Group Relationship

So important is the factor of primary group relationship that in any military organisation in the world they will never fail to introduce the concept of buddy system (two-men team) during the initial phase of recruit or cadet training. Advancement in the training of primary group relationship saw the introduction of sections (with a ten-man team each) and platoons (with a team of three sections each).

Marshall (1964) posits that primary group relationship is an important factor in determining combat motivation. He states that man is a gregarious animal and needs the company of his buddies. For without one he will feel lonely, confused and lose direction. According to him, in the hour of greatest danger a man's instinct drives him towards his group. It is a source of comfort to him to be close to another man. It makes danger more endurable.

Stouffer (1949) in his research, postulated that in intense battle situation, the soldier could count on being looked after by his buddies. If he was wounded, he could count on both his buddies and the medics to take care of him. He further stressed that this is one of the reasons why men are reluctant to be transferred from the unit they know intimately because they are aware that they would be taken care of if they are wounded.

Organisational Factors

It is absolutely essential that every soldier thoroughly understands why a system of discipline is necessary in any military organisation. Henderson (1965) in Copeland (1960), best describes what discipline is all about when he
states that, "war is not merely a blind struggle between mobs of individuals, without guidance or coherence, but a conflict of well-organised masses, moving with a view to intelligent co-operation, acting under impulse of a single will, and directed against a definite objective."

Thus the real purpose of discipline is to bind together a number of vastly different individuals into an organised group that could work as one unit. In modern times, when battles are more widespread and violent than ever before, it is inevitable that individuals would find themselves left to their own judgement.

This is most evident in parachute operations where the tendency for regrouping within sections and platoons at the instance of landing is most unlikely. Hence it is vital that parachute soldiers possess the quality of self-disciplined.

It is also often claimed that modern soldiers, who are better educated and more intelligent than their predecessors, do not require a rigorous standard of discipline. However, Copeland (1960) explains that no matter how high the standard of intelligence, no army can possibly become efficient till obedience has become an instinct. Experience proves that in the stress of a battle even intelligence is a less valuable quality than discipline. This is proven during the Vietnam War when the less educated but well-discipline North Vietnamese managed to secure success against the much educated American soldiers. In essence, discipline is the foundation of morale.
Underlying Value of Commitment

As mentioned earlier, one of the important factors that determines combat motivation is the underlying value of commitment. This means that the specific purpose of war and the reasons why they have to fight must be made known to the soldiers. This finding is consistent with that of Noyes (1989) who argues that the main factors that had contributed to the failure of the Americans in Vietnam was the lack of belief in the war objectives of the United States.

Rotation System

The rotation system as a combat motivation is most evident during World War II and Vietnam War. During World War II, soldiers were given false hopes when the media told the people back home that the soldiers who had served for two years in the front line were returning home. This was because the soldiers knew that it was impossible to rotate the entire division (a division consists of about 8,000 to 10,000 men) within two years and most men actually gave up hope of going home and hence lost their morale.

The Americans waged the war in Vietnam for almost 10 years. Generally the soldiers posted to Vietnam would have a tour of duty between one to three years. Unlike World War II, the American soldiers in Vietnam generally knew when they would be relieved and hence had looked forward towards that goal.

Whatever circumstances the soldiers were in during World War II and Vietnam War, the fact remains that soldiers, regardless of where they are
stationed, would look forward to be transferred to the reserve unit to rest and recuperate near to their homes.

Training

Training according to Sarkesian (1980), constitute good training. Its main effect is reduction of the fear of the unexpected and unknown. Such characteristics are very common in any parachute operation. Most targets are far away and little is known about the ground (drop zone) and enemy’s disposition. One classic example is the, “Operation Market Garden” which took place in 1942 whereby the allied paratroopers were not only dropped far from the designated drop zone but right on top of the German soldiers. Hence, military drills, which facilitate weapon-handling by an acquired routine, or which enables a team to co-operate smoothly in small tactical tasks, will encourage success not only through efficiency, but the confidence that any kind of routine inspires. Training is also an excellent means of achieving group integration, strengthening personalities and improving physical fitness.

Patriotism and Idealism

There are many examples from history of men fighting in wars that supports the role of patriotism and idealism. Some related questions worth pondering on the role of patriotism and idealism are as follows:

Why did the Russian soldiers resist so indomitably the invasion of their homeland by Napoleon and later by Hitler?
Why did the Israeli troops fight with such incredible ferocity on the Golan Heights in 1973?

How could the Iraqis hold out for so long against such great odds and still fought hard against the American soldiers in 1990?

World War II had demonstrated how a war could be fought hard. Noyes (1989) asserted that during war, men who fought do not quit easily. Hence there is little doubt about the role of patriotism and idealism in motivating soldiers to fight.

**Characteristics of Paratroopers**

Various studies were conducted on parachute soldiers and one of such studies was by Aran (1974), as cited in McCollum (1976). He said that paratroopers have the characteristics of self-confidence, determination, self-reliance, self-discipline, aggressiveness, courage and others. These are very important characteristics that soldier especially those in the parachute units need.

One significant characteristic of a paratrooper is self-discipline, which according to Newman (1968), is the result of several parachute jumps. According to him, jumping in reality is to test and harden a soldier’s stress in a way nothing short of battle can do. By jumping, they repeatedly face danger and hence develop self-discipline that conquers all fears.

Paratroopers are also said to have developed a strong sense of belonginess and group cohesion as a result of the training that they undergo.
The tough training in an airborne school has all the element of stress that one would only experience in a battle.

As cited by McCollum (1976), the theory why soldiers have a strong sense of group belongingness is due to the fact that they had undergone stressful conditions together. This was supported by studies conducted by Elliot Aronson of Stanford University and Judson Mills of the US Army's Human Resources Research Organisation in 1959. Aronson and Mills (1959) had described a situation in which a severe initiation ceremony was given to a group of soldiers; another group was given a mild initiation; while a third group was not given any initiation at all. After listening to the groups' discussions on the headphones, the subjects were asked to rate the group and their own feelings on being a part of the group. Those who received no initiation at all and mild initiation rated the group statistically lower than those who had received the severe initiation.

The results support the hypothesis that soldiers who undergo a severe initiation tend to perceive the group as being significantly more cohesive than those who undergo only a mild or no initiation at all. The initiation ceremony described by Aronson and Mills (1959) lasted for a few hours. Contrast that to the four weeks of intensive training to groom paratroopers in Malaysia, one cannot help but wonder if the impacts are similar. The binding effect of longer initiation exercises may perhaps be magnified many times more.

Based on the experiment conducted by Aronson and Mills (1965), we can deduce from their findings that paratroopers tend to have a high degree of
group cohesion as compared to those from the standard combat units. This may perhaps be due to continuous stress test that they undergo. In addition, because they are closely knitted, they would do anything to protect and care for the well-being of their colleagues in peace and war situations. Thus this may be a possible explanation to the incident at Kg. Mortem, in Melaka. One way of verifying this view is to measure the paratroopers' attitudes towards combat. If they show positive attitudes towards combat then we can assume that they do have a strong "will" to go into combat.

**Conceptual Models of Human Behaviour**

Based on the discussion above as well as the review of literature on Army leadership and training, the model of a heuristic combat behaviour as shown in Figure 1 can be used to explain the factors that influence combat behaviour of soldiers.

Brown and Moskos (1976) fully supported the model on the major influences of combat behaviour by Kast and Rosenzweig (1970). The model, as shown in Figure 1, describes the different organisational and environmental factors that could affect combat behaviour of soldiers. According to them, organisational factors include: discipline, leadership and training. Social influences, group relationships and the combat situation constitute the environmental factors.
FIGURE 1
MAJOR INFLUENCES ON COMBAT BEHAVIOUR


However a more contemporary model and comprehensive understanding of human behaviour can be found in the theory introduced by Bandura (1986) as reported by Baron (1992). His theory on human behaviour is an improvement of that proposed by Kast and Rosenzweig (1970). It is said to have provided the elements of consistency and uniqueness in understanding the theory.
Bandura (1986) in Baron (1992) introduces the Social Cognitive Theory, as shown in Figure 2. According to him, internal factors such as cognition and personal dispositions as well as external factors which include reinforcement contingencies and features of the social or physical world, all interact and influence one another in a reciprocal manner.

FIGURE 2
THE SOCIAL COGNITIVE THEORY

In the military context, there is evidence of such internal and external factors acting in tandem. During World War II for example, it was found that platoon relationship formed the basis for group cohesion but during the Korean War (1952) it was a two-man or “buddy” relationship.
Theories by other social psychologists share similar perspectives. For example, Baron (1992) reported a theory proposed by Rotter (1982), who suggested that a given behaviour would likely occur in a specific situation based on an individual's expectations of the resulting outcomes and reinforcement of values attached to such results. Baron (1992) argues that at present these theories seemed to capture the sophisticated nature of modern psychology. As such, they certainly add to the understanding of many aspects of human behaviour.

All the variables discussed earlier impinged on the core value system of soldiers. It includes their subjective perceptions of external factors and cognition of their soldierly role. In concert, all these factors would determine their combat attitudes, motivation and eventually the combat behaviour of soldiers.

Previous Research

One interesting research on combat motivation was conducted by Brown and Moskos (1976) entitled, The American Volunteer Soldier: Will He Fight? The focus of the study was on the junior enlisted personnel who had direct combat responsibilities.

Attitudes on Army Life

Results from a survey by Brown and Moskos (1976) on what had motivates the US soldiers to join the Army are listed below, based on their level of importance:

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1. Chance to learn a skill or getting an education.
2. Chance to serve the country.
3. Chance to travel and get away from home.
5. Civilian unemployment.
7. Military career.

On the preference of location for employment (related to the factor of rotation system), majority (78%) of the 400 soldiers wanted to be closer to their hometowns. Less than one-forth of the soldiers preferred their current stations of assignment. However, 27% of them were interested in going to Korea and even fewer (7.2%) were interested to leave for Germany. The feedback received during the interviews indicated that this adversity to overseas duty was based on rumours about the poor living conditions, status, and the lack of mobility in some countries as well as boredom and poor morale in the units.

On the question of satisfaction with the Army, half of the soldiers surveyed in the US liked the Army life and slightly over one-third disliked it. The rest were undecided. Respondents from the infantry battalion disliked the Army most, followed by those from the tank and airborne battalions, in that order. On the other hand, the rangers seemed to like the army most. Majority
If the soldiers in the survey also felt that their squad and platoon leaders spent too much on threats or harassment to get things done. This feeling was most prevalent among members of the infantry and tank battalions as indicated. About 70% and 64% of them supported this view respectively. About 50% of those in the airborne and 45% from the ranger units had agreed on this matter. On whether the soldier’s best friend could be found in the army, less than one-third replied affirmatively.

Social Attitudes

The study by Brown and Maskos (1976) indicated that close to three-quarters of the soldiers who were surveyed in the US had opposed the regulation on Army hairstyle. The issue of haircuts was expected to be resolved when the US Army did away with conscripts and introduced the recruitment of volunteers. When comparing the views of individuals from different military units on this matter, the rangers were found to be the most conservative. They favoured shorter haircuts compared to those from the other units. However, majority of them had said that they wanted the right to choose their own hairstyles. The survey also found that soldiers who had college education were slightly more conservative in their attitudes about hairstyles as compared to their lesser-qualified peers.

The study also reported that the elite units had more positive attitudes towards Army regulation. When the respondents were asked on whether the US Army should try to maintain as many traditions as possible to make it different from civilian life, the result of the survey was evenly split between...
hose who agreed and those who disagreed. The differences were fairly uniform among all the units except for the rangers who favoured the idea that the Army should continue with its distinguished traditions.

When the respondents were asked on whether they believed that America was the best country in the world, majority responded with a resounding "yes". Similarly they were strongly supportive of the proposition that America ought to have the best military in the world. The result goes to indicate that there is a profound reservoir of patriotism among the combat soldiers in the U.S.

**Attitude on Combat Assignments**

On the subject of trust and respect for fellow soldiers in combat, the respondents were asked on what they thought of their peers in combat assignments. The study by Brown and Maskos (1976) revealed a diverse range of opinions on what they thought about fellow soldiers who attempt to avoid any combat duties. Those in the elite units for example felt that combat shirkers should be grossly punished while others did not agree. When the respondents were asked if they would trust members of their units in combat, mixed responses were received. However, members of the elite units had again indicated their highest trust and respect for their fellow soldiers.

To measure their readiness to participate in combat, the respondents' attitudes towards a variety of stressful situations were enquired in the survey. For example, when asked if they would volunteer or go to war only if ordered to do so, three-quarters of the troops indicated that they would do so
voluntarily. Again the highest percentage of support on this matter come from members of the elite units. A general question was asked on whether they would go into combat, ninety-nine percent stated they would volunteer to do so if ordered. Again ninety percent of those in the elite units responded positively as compared to 69 percent of those in the infantry and other units.

On the whole, results from the survey by Brown and Moskos (1976) revealed that members of the elite units would generally indicate a positive attitude towards combat.