

CHAPTER 1

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE 1ST ROYAL MALAY REGIMENT

The Malay Regiment was founded at the insistence of the Malay Kings. From July 1913, the Malay Sultans led by Sultan Alang Iskandar Shah (Perak), Sultan Alaudin Sulaiman Shah (Selangor), Yam Tuan Tuanku Muhammad Shah (Negeri Sembilan) and Sultan Abu Bakar (Pahang) frequently expressed their desire to have a Malay Regiment in the Federated Malay State (now Malaysia). The proposal was to replace the Indian Battalion with a body of Malay troops who would share responsibility of military defence and protection of their homeland. However, it was not until 1933 that British colonial administration responded to this proposal. British hesitated to arm and train local Malays because of the fear that this might increase the existing trouble and disorder among the Malay Feudal states. However under continuous pressure from the Sultans, and faced with new developments in the East, especially the political tension with Japan and the threat of communist expansion, the proposal was finally approved. Chronology following the establishment of Royal Malay Regiment are shown at Table 1:

TABLE 1 : CHRONOLOGY OF ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ROYAL MALAY REGIMENT

Ser	Date/Years	Events	Remarks
1.	1 Mac 33	First squad was formed comprising of 25 Malays	High Lines, Port Dickson
2.	17 Mac 33	Malay Sultans with the British 'Yang DiPertua Majlis Mesyuarat Persekutuan', Cecil Clementi signed and approved the Law No 11 is (The Malay Regiment Enactment 33)	Warta Kerajaan Negeri-Negeri Melayu Bersekutu No 7 Jilid XXV Siaran No, 2019 dated 24 Mac 33'

Ser	Date/Years	Events	Remarks
3.	1 Jan 38	Establishment of 1 st Royal Malay Regiment	
4.	30 Jul 38	First squad expanded. Lt Col G.M.C Bruce MC was the first Commanding Officer and Lt Col Tengku Ahmad in 1960 was the first Malay Officer to become the Commanding Officer in this battalion.	17 British Officers and 763 Other Ranks.

The battalion that has expanded now became the backbone of combat power in the Malaysian Armed Forces. The battalion played an important role in defending Malaya during World War II, particularly in the battle of Singapore, where it set an example that was to become the tradition and pride of the battalion. Big name such as the late Lt Dato' Adnan bin Saidi that fought the battle in Bukit Candu on 19 Feb 1942 and was killed by the Japanese. He was the example of a Malay soldier that according to Lt Gen A. E. Percival:

When war broke out in the Far East, the Regiment was in the process of expansion...In consequence.... like many other units of our imperial forces, (it) was not fully prepared for the ordeal which it was to face. Nevertheless, these young and untried soldiers prepared acquitted themselves in a way, which bore comparison with the very best troops in Malaya. In particular, by their stubborn defence of Pasir Panjang Ridge of the battle of Singapore, they set on an example of steadfastness and endurance which will become a great tradition in the regiment and inspiration for future generation (Percival, 1949, in Dol 1963:103).

The battalion also played an important role in the 'insurgency warfare' that took place between 1948 until 1989 against the Malayan Communist Party. This long experience of insurgency was has made the battalion and the whole Royal Malay Regiment specialised and well known in jungle warfare, also known as guerrilla warfare. Based on their long experiences and the ability to be the example to other regiment in the Royal Malay Corps, the battalion currently based in Sungai Besi Camp, Kuala Lumpur, now has been appointed as the Ceremonial Battalion

that is responsible to provide the ceremonial unit for the nation. The battalion was the first unit in the Malaysian Armed Forces to be awarded with MS ISO 9002 (Services) on 11 Apr 1999 because of their excellence in the ceremonial activities.

With the end of the threat from Malayan Communist Party, marked by its surrender on 12 Dec 1989, the battalion now faced a new situation, with new problems of managing morale and *esprit de-corps*. There are some indications that under the present conditions of peacetime soldering, the morale, motivation and *esprit de-corps* of the battalion personnel are decreasing. The uniqueness of the Royal Malay Regiment tradition and pride appears to be gradually eroding. This situation leads to question such as: (1) why and how do some soldiers develop the *esprit de-corps*, high morale, motivation, loyalty and love while some do not? What make soldiers to change their attitude and behaviour toward his battalion?

This study seek to the above question and determine the level of *esprit de-corps* amongst the members of the battalion.

1:2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The objectives of this research are as follows:

- a. To identify the prevalence levels of *esprit de-corps* among the personnel in a particular unit.
- b. To determine the relationship between the demographic profiles with *esprit de-corps*.
- c. To provide recommendation on how to improve *esprit de-corps* in the units.

1: 3 RESEARCH SCOPE

The research focuses on the following questions:

- a. Expression from the serviceman showing enthusiasm for and pride in their unit.
- b. A good reputation among them.
- c. A strong competitive spirit.
- d. Willing participation by the members in unit activities.
- e. Pride in the traditions and history of the unit.
- f. Readiness on the part of the men to help one another.
- g. The belief that their unit is better than other unit in the Army.

1: 4 THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS STUDY

The aims of this study is to identify the level of *esprit de-corps* amongst the serviceman in a particular army unit - the Infantry Unit. The study focuses on the 1st RMR. In peacetime, the management of infantry personnel is closely related to the level of *esprit de-corps*. The understanding of the positive and negative attributes forms the feedback to determine the state of readiness of the particular unit at the managerial level. Therefore, this study would certainly provide impetus to the determination and development of management and personnel development policies.

1: 5 PREVIOUS RESEARCH

At this particular moment, no comprehensive internal research has been carried out on *esprit de-corps* in any of infantry unit by the Malaysian Armed Forces. As for the external research outside military organisation, there is a study conducted by Boyt, Lusch and Schuler in 1996 entitled Fostering *esprit de-corps* in Marketing.

Their study examined the importance of *esprit de-corps* or solidarity to a firm's marketing and the impact of bureaucratic structures on marketing organisations such as hierarchy of authority, division of labour, rules, procedural specification, technical competence and the impersonality of bureaucracies. Details of their findings are as at Appendix 1.

1: 6 SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Esprit de-corps is a powerful tool that can help to increase firm's marketing productivity, increase employees satisfaction and improve quality. High *esprit de-corps* allows employees to work hard to achieve common goals. It produces a team that sticks together even in the face of hardship. We can get better result by becoming part of the team through the sharing of goals and giving employees the support they need to achieve them.

Hierarchy of authority, division of labour, rules, procedural specification, technical competence and the impersonality of bureaucracies can harm the development of *esprit de-corps*. Nevertheless, some aspects of bureaucracy can be good for *esprit de-corps*, at least in the work groups to studied. Their study also determined that bureaucracy has its benefits, but businesses are finding that it is increasingly laden with hazards as well. In marketing organisations, it can inhabit *esprit de-corps*, or solidarity, between members of a work group. Their study also found that *esprit de-corps* usually is enhanced when bureaucracy is broken down; however, in some situation, certain aspects of bureaucracy actually foster *esprit de-corps*.

Even though that the study is more towards the profit-orientated organisation, but in sum most of the factors discussed and what they have determined can also be applied to the military. To enhance our study, part of the questionnaires and their finding is being used as an instrument for the measurements of *esprit de-corps* in 1st RMR.

A number of investigators emphasised that primary group solidarity in small military groups can work either to reinforce or to impede the goals of the formal military organisation. As is the cases other organisation, peer group cohesion among soldiers in small unit may take a direction that is positive or negative from the standpoint of higher military authority. Clearly, therefore social cohesion that is generated to organisation effectiveness only when the standards of behaviour they enforce are articulated with the requirements of formal authority.

1: 7 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

Esprit de-corps.

Esprit de-corps originated with the military. In Battle Studies, Ancient and Modern, the famous French Officer Colonel Ardant du Picq said that official discipline can be replaced by social controls exhibited by a small group of soldiers over time and "... includes confidence in (His) comrades and the fear of reproaches and retaliations if he (the soldier) abandons them in danger; his desire to go where others go without trembling more than they.....in a word *esprit de-corps*". *Esprit de-corps* is a concept powerful enough to make soldiers go into battle knowing their odds of survival are slim; think how powerful it can be if harnessed in your marketing organisation! (Boyt, Lusch, Schuler 1996).

They also stated that *esprit de-corps* is not dependent on who is in the group. Individuals can come and go, and not only will it remain intact, but the individuals who leave will always carry with them the *esprit de-corps* that was exhibited in the group. One individual can have *esprit de-corps* with many groups at differing levels of intensity. The intensity level is a function of the degree of threat that the individuals in the group may face. The most intense level would be that exhibited by police, fire fighters and the military when they proceed into danger knowing the risks. At lower levels, financial constraints, job security, or time might

pose the threat. Bureaucracies make the formation of ***esprit de-corps*** difficult, but their limitation can be overcome.

Esprit de-corps is a feeling that is always present among officers, a result of the very nature of the military profession. He also sees ***esprit de-corps*** as static and almost a priority feeling among officers. He thought that is best protected by being isolated from society ("objective civilian control") (Huntington 1964)

Society, technology and the organisation of the military are major influence upon the ***esprit de-corps*** or 'corporateness' as he called it (Janowitz 1971).

Huntington and Janowitz agreed about the presence of ***esprit de-corps***, but disagreed about its substantial elements. From the outset, Huntington distinguished between two types of profession, the "bureaucratic" (found among diplomats, officers and teachers") and the "associational" or client-oriented (e.g., self-employed lawyers and physicians), while Janowitz distinguished between the "heroic", and "technical" profession, all of which are eventually united in one officer's role.

Esprit de-corps is the loyalty, pride in and enthusiasm for the units shown by its members. It implies devotion to the unit, acceptance of responsibility by individuals and jealous regard for the honour of the unit. ***Esprit de-corps*** is a spirit above and beyond the total responsibilities of the individuals in a unit. It is the unit's personalities and expresses the unit's will to fight and win in spite of seemingly insurmountable. ***Esprit de-corps*** depends on the satisfaction the members get from belonging to a unit, their attitude toward other members of the unit and confidence in their leaders (Deckor 1980).

Esprit de-corps as shared feeling of comradeship, enthusiasm, or devotion to a common cause among members of a group (Jones 2003).

The six definitions have three common themes relating to (1) what energises human behaviour ? (2) what directs or channels such behaviour and ? (3) how this behaviour is maintained or sustained ?. All these can be used to understand soldier's behaviour, both in peacetime and in battle. From the above definitions, ***esprit de-corps*** often refers to the conclusion of a general picture on the state of mind and behaviour of an individuals or of a larger group in an organisation.

As for the military such as Royal Malay Regiment, soldiers should be able to play their roles as agents of unity and development while maintaining strong ***esprit de-corps*** for continued peace and stability. They could not afford to isolate themselves from society but to make deliberate and conscious efforts to unite. According to Brigadier General Grange, US Army (Retired) in his paper entitled *Readiness Is a Moral Responsibility, soldiers are more important than hardware*, but there must be a balance. Since the soldier is the strongest and weakest part of any system, developing the human dimension must come first. Developing the true ***esprit de-corps*** is much than just blurting out catch phrases when you salute. It is confident look in the eye of each soldier, the pride in the unit, the respect for leaders, the comparison for comrades in arms, and the desire to train hard. Soldiers must be shown what "right" looks is like with realistic training, which in turn comes from understanding what it takes to execute successfully a unit's critical tasks and what is expected of individuals soldiers.

1.8 THE IMPORTANCE OF *ESPRIT DE-CORPS* TO THE MALAYSIAN ARMED FORCES

The role of the Armed Forces is to defend the sovereignty of the nation and to do that the military should have the highest responsibility and discipline, skill and professionalism. Military strategy require preparation for war, the force which is stronger at the time and point of battle naturally wins. Another factor important is to maintain the keenness of spirit and soldiers spirit, which is more intangible. Like Sun

Tzu's have said ' *when soldiers are united, the brave cannot advance alone and the coward cannot withdraw alone, this is the art of handling a large army*'. The ***esprit de -corps*** and the spirit of entrepreneurship are almost similar. The army must be made invincible and this lies their own hands. The successful entrepreneurship must have a strong belief in his own capabilities and should always know that success or failure in a venture lies within himself or herself. There are many people opportuned to do businesses that often look to others for their security. When things fail they would incriminate about the loss of their security and would blame others, including so called ' competitor' and ' unfair business practice'. But the successful entrepreneur and will re-evaluate his basis judgement. In the military strategy, the tactic, resources included personnel and material is important. Nevertheless the commander ought to know how to control his men; particularly to win their loyalty. Many leaders expect loyalty from their men without providing the proper basis for their men to be loyal. Selfish, exploitative leaders can never command true loyalty (Sun Tzu 506 B.C.).

The key aspect in the military is the capability to fight in war. In peacetime they train for war. Generally, the men in the military organisation is normal human and have a same feeling like the others civilian. In managing them to become credible soldiers it is require managing by encouraging the courage. That pertinent aspect includes the development of their ***esprit de -corps***.