

Training the Citizen Army

by Lt. Romeo A. Solina



"ONLY that nation is secure which is prepared at any given moment to defend its independence sword in hand."

With this concept of preparedness for war in time of peace comes the need for the development of the essential qualities of a military organization; namely, an aggressive eagerness for combat, a proper training and independence of the leaders in time of peace, a remarkable ability for foot movement by troops, and a capability for thorough utilization of all the means of transportation and communication afforded by modern science. These quali-

ties can come only from training — rigid and relentless training.

Defects cannot be condoned in time of combat, nor is this time the proper one during which to correct defects. The costs of defects are always in terms of blood and lives, and, worse, defeat. The correction of defects is too late if it is done in combat. To prevent these great and unwanted sacrifices, there 'must be a thorough screening of men and materials. This insures that only the best are at hand. Not only must officers and men of good judgment and actions in time of peace be appointed, but also

they must be developed as well as supplied and trained with right equipment. Any nation having a military organization with these qualities is assured of security. As Von der Goltz said: "Mobilization takes today all intellectual and material resources of the country in order to insure success." Without these resources, there can be neither an armed force nor efficiency. From the lack of efficiency alone results ultimate defeat.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines, which is entrusted with the mission of maintaining the security and defense of the na-

tion, cannot afford to fail in its responsibility. In order to insure the accomplishment of its mission, it embarked upon a vast program of training and activated the 3rd Infantry Training Division. One of the units of this Division is the 9th Infantry Regiment, which was the first to be activated and with which this article deals.

Leaders

In any military organization, success depends in a large measure upon the qualities of the leaders. A well-trained militia with a poor leader is like a body with well-developed muscles but a



20-year old trainees receive last-minute briefing before firing 57 Recoilless Rifle.



A 20-year old trainee with SCR 300 coordinates with others before an attack. A team leader of the attacking force issues orders by radio.

weak eyesight. But a group of ill-trained men, even if endowed with good leaders, is worse, because the success of any venture depends upon how well a plan, brilliant it may be, is carried out. Ill-trained men cannot be relied upon to carry out a plan efficiently. However, it may be stated that an army of well-trained men

with a poor leader has more chances of success than an army with a good leader but half-baked personnel. This is so because there is still the possibility of a change of leadership overnight. On the other hand, efficient men cannot be had at the flick of the fingers.

The fact emphasizes the im-

An officer briefs trainees on map reading.





Photo above shows an officer demonstrating to the trainees at a bivouac area in Lamesa Dam how to load the 2.36 rocket launcher.

portance of leadership, especially in the early stages of training. Good leadership will impress itself well on the plastic minds of the men undergoing training. Training is largely the foundation of success in battle.

The 9th Infantry Regiment is headed by Col. Antonio V. de Veyra, who was with the 2nd Battalion Combat Team sent to

Korea. With him are Lt. Col. Eduardo P. Soliman, commander of the 1st Battalion, Lt. Col. David A. Pelayo, commander of the 2nd Battalion, and Lt. Col. Melchor Acosta, commander of the 3rd Battalion. These commanders are lately engaged in a friendly competition as to who trains the best unit in the regiment.

Most of the subordinate officers

Shown below are pup tents set up by trainees.



of the Regiment came from the field where they gained wide experience combatting dissidents. Others came from the reserve force. In the Regiment, all these officers impart their knowledge on warfare and in turn they imbibe the latest intricacies of the art and science of war.

Method And Concept Of Training

The concept of training is in line with the United States Army standard to which the AFP has been accustomed since its inception. Great efforts are exerted

to adopt the men to local conditions and terrain. Masses of men are brought to a common place of instruction to undergo training on the same subject under one instructor and his assistants. Instructors are required to make detailed lesson plans and attach manuscripts thereto. Rehearsals are part of the instructional activities. The cadre enlisted personnel comprise the demonstration group. All instructions are centralized. Standards are maintained and instructions are made uniform. In these are employed the

"B" Co and "C" Co, 1st Bn, 9th Inf Regt, on target firing at the 57 RR range.



methods of instruction, the most common of which is the conference method.

A new, revolutionary idea of responsibility was thought of by Col. Tirso G. Fajardo, 3rd Infantry Division vice commander. "The platoon leaders," he said, "must be answerable for the state of training of their own men?" Brig. Gen. Alfonso Arellano, the Division Commander, said "the platoon leaders must know everything about their men, even their smell." This necessitated closer contacts by platoon leaders with

their men. They are expected to handle actually all instructions pertaining to their respective platoons. Training under this concept became decentralized. Lesson plans took an outline form in order not to tax the platoon leaders too much.

This concept is a good one. Platoon leaders realized their responsibility. They are also forced to study all the subjects involved in the training of their own men. The situation is conducive to effective training because the size of the class warrants concen-

Elements of a training unit on a long march approaching the bivouac area. This teaches terrain evaluation, proper formation and maximum control of the men.





The trainees, being young, respond eagerly to drills, combat formation exercises, bayonet training, confidence courses, and other activities involving physical exertion.

tration on individuals lagging behind.

Bleachers are considered obsolete. Instructions are conducted in the field. Emphasis is put on practical work. The men learn by doing what is taught them. The instructor sweats it out with his men in the field.

The shift to decentralized training was temporary. After a team of the Division arrived from an observation tour of a training unit in Hawaii, the centralized system of instruction, seen to have its great advantages, was reverted to.

Refresher Courses

The regular officers pulled out from the field and assigned to the Regiment underwent refresh-

er courses in basic military skills so as to prepare themselves for their role as instructors.

The officers underwent retraining on map reading, military leadership, military instructorship, signal communication, and intelligence. They took up even high-level subjects like the Fire Support Coordination Center. The officers in turn are imparting to the cadre enlisted men the basic military skills.

The reserve officers called to active duty were made to undergo instructions even on the most basic one, dismounted drill. They were instructed on the fundamentals. While the reserve officers were under training, the trainees started pouring in. The plans of

the Regiment included a stage of pre-cycle training in order to compensate for the low educational level of the new arrivals. This was designed to give additional time for more important subjects in actual training time.

Since the educational attainment of most of the trainees is quite low on the average, most instructors remedy this by conducting lectures in the vernacular. All except the more technical subjects like signal communication and also mechanical functioning of weapons are conducted in Tagalog.

The result of the work of instructors who took up refresher courses is remarkable. The train-

ees, being young, respond eagerly to drills, combat formation exercises, bayonet training, confidence courses, and other activities which involve physical exertion.

They also took up firing of different infantry weapons, both individual and crew-served. Results of qualification firing were very satisfactory, in comparison with the record attained by previous training units. While before a 60 percent qualified firers was considered good enough, now even 85 percent qualified shooters per unit is considered poor.

Competitions

An organization will strive hard to improve itself if it is provided

Reserve officers called to active duty are made to undergo refresher courses on map reading, leadership, instructorship, signal communication, and intelligence





Combat drills and combat exercises include training in simple tactical movement, maneuvers offensive action, reorganization, defensive action and withdrawal.

with incentives, or if it has other units to compete with. The Regiment has initiated the system of company competition in order to determine the best unit for the month.

The bases of judgment are both administrative work and actual training. Lately, the regimental inspectors were concerned mainly with how companies administer their troops, including the beautification of company areas.

Aside from company competitions, the regiment sponsors battalion contests. When the regimental colors was presented to the regiment, there was a contest held as to which unit was the

best marching unit during the occasion. The judges gave the laurels to the 1st Battalion.

Other Activities

Other activities involved are athletics and socials. In athletics, the system of intramural games was initiated. The different battalions put up their own basketball teams and pitted them against each other.

Socials are sponsored from time to time in order to bring together the officers and also in order to get them acquainted with each other. The social side of military life is stressed as a necessity in the big family of the army organization.

The 1st Battalion has put out an official organ called "The Spearhead." Two junior officers were assigned officers-in-charge of the publication. The battalion commander, Lt. Col. Soliman, said that the idea is to give the trainees an outlet for their ideas and also to give them a chance to voice their opinions through the paper.

Conclusion

Whatever were the difficulties

encountered in the training unit have been remedied. With everything seemingly against training at the start — low educational attainment of trainees and lack of equipment and facilities—now after remedial measures the situation is bright. The training goes on progressively as new lessons are learned in the preparation of the youth for national defense.

Prior to instruction in combat exercises, the trainees are taught to be aggressive, to fire from all positions, to move by stealth and make the best use of cover.

