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# Combat Motivation: The Behavior of Soldiers in Battle

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Kellett, Anthony. *Combat Motivation: The Behavior of Soldiers in Battle*. Boston: Kluwer-Nijhoff, 1982. 362pp. \$38

At one time or another during their careers, most military commanders speculate about what motivates their men to fight. George Washington, for example, wrote to the Congress that, "Three things prompt men to a regular discharge of their duty in time of action: natural bravery, hope of reward, and fear of punishment." Trotsky had the last of those three factors in mind when he wrote about the Red army that, "The command will always be obliged to place the soldiers between the possible death in the front and the inevitable one in the rear." Other military writers such as Ardant du Picq and S.L.A. Marshall have maintained that soldiers are motivated primarily by feelings of comradeship.

All of these aspects of motivation and many others are covered in *Combat Motivation*. Since much of the book goes well beyond what a behavioral scientist would call motivation, the book's subtitle, *The Behavior of Soldiers in Battle*, is actually a more accurate description of the contents than the title itself. There are, for example, sections on training, military discipline, organizational policies such as troop rotation and descriptions of combat in addition to discussions of such standard motivators as patriotism, religious beliefs, punishments and rewards.

The book is based largely on a report prepared for the Canadian Department of National Defence and

published in 1980. The purpose of the study was to review the subject of combat motivation for the purpose of improving the leadership, administration and training of the Canadian armed forces. The result is an interesting admixture of behavioral science and military history. The examples are taken largely from 20th century wars and from British, Canadian, and American actions in particular. The readers should not expect to find any startling new theories about combat motivation, but rather a thorough review of the subject.

The biggest surprise perhaps is that, except for a brief comment near the end of the book, *Combat Motivation* contains no discussion of frustration as a combat motivator. This omission is not the result of an oversight. The author explains that the study is concerned with external motivators and that such internal factors as instincts, self-actualization and frustration are not included. Although the subject of frustration has been accounted for, so to speak, its absence is unfortunate nevertheless. Frustration as a cause of aggressive behavior is a subject that has received attention by both behavioral scientists and military men. John Dollard, an authority on the subject of frustration as a producer of aggression and the author of a World War II book on the behavior of men in battle, wrote in one of his works, "This study takes as its point of departure the assumption that aggression is always a consequence of frustration." He goes on to say that the aggression "may be directed at the

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object which is perceived as causing the frustration or it may be displaced to some altogether innocent source." Compare that scientific view with that of a former Marine writing of his experiences as a young corporal during the Korean war. "The rest of the day is filled with a wide variety of interesting projects: policing the area (picking up cigarette butts, scraps of paper, etc.), rifle inspection, troop and stomp (drill, marching, etc.), personnel and tent inspections, classes, hikes, training problems, night problems. This is what is called 'harassing the troops.' It is suggested that we take out our resentment on the Chinese later."

The omission of frustration as a combat motivator notwithstanding, *Combat Motivation* is still the best overall review of the subject available. As such it deserves the attention of professional soldiers and others interested in understanding what motivates men in combat.

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Maroon, Fred J. and Beach, Edward L. *Keepers of the Sea*. Annapolis, Md.: US Naval Institute Press, 1983. 256 pp. \$45.00 (\$75.00 in a bonded leather edition)

The advertising for this volume includes quotes by Admirals Arleigh Burke and Thomas B. Hayward which use the words "amazing," "discriminating," "irresistible," "nostalgic," "exciting," "unique," "scintillating," and "action-packed." Not being of a mind to compete with

former Chiefs of Naval Operations in a contest of superlatives, I shall resist the temptation to add to their list. This book contains the finest collection of photographs of the operating Navy and Marine Corps ever published. Fred Maroon is not only the finest of technicians with a "lens" but a true artist at capturing naval forces against the vastness of the sea and sky. His portfolio is held in place by the sort of consistent mortar one would expect of Captain Beach.

More than haze gray ships, black submarines and silver aircraft, the US Navy of today is truly reflected in the faces of the officers, crews and trainees as captured by the camera of Fred Maroon. There is the self-choreographed ballet of the carrier's flight deck crew to the accompaniment of screeching jets, slamming catapults and compressing landing gear. There is the concentration and stress in the faces of USS *Richmond K. Turner* crewmen on the manila highline during a personnel transfer at sea. The determination of Naval Academy plebes completing their year-long rite of passage by climbing Herndon Monument to place a cap at the peak. You can feel the bewilderment on the faces of young Marines as "the gunny" explains why they are hunkered in the mud with rain drenched ponchos—the tired concentration of watchstanders in the control station of a submarine, in the CIC of a destroyer or in the ready room of a carrier. And most of all, the pride and necessary cockiness that make men in their teens and early twenties the masters of machines costing hundreds of millions