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DISCUSSIONS ON TRAINING AND EMPLOYING LIGHT INFANTRY

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COMBAT STUDIES INSTITUTE

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INTRODUCTION

In 1983, General John A. Wickham, Chief of Staff of the Army, announced the decision to field one or more new light infantry divisions in the Regular Army force structure in order to improve the nation's capability for strategic response world-wide. Since then, the questions of light force composition and employment have occupied a central place in the wide ranging discussions which were generated by General Wickham's decision. Historical studies, analyses, wargames, simulations, and seminars have been conducted to create and refine the structure and doctrine of the new light forces. Seemingly, no stone has been left unturned in the effort to draw the right conclusions on controversial questions. Yet, in at least one regard, significant information available from a valuable source has not been fully tapped. That source is the military experience of our allies.

In this regard, the interviews of the two British colonels contained in this report and addressing the subject of light infantry come at a most opportune time. Since World War II, no other nation can match the experience of Great Britain in terms of military intervention in low-intensity contingency operations utilizing light forces. Indeed, scrutiny of these British operations is necessary; it can only produce new, enlightening perspectives on how to train, equip, and employ American light infantry.

Colonel Neville Pughe of the British Army Parachute Regiment and Colonel Andrew Whitehead of the 3 Commando Brigade, Royal Marines, share their individual viewpoints on light infantry in the interviews which follow. Their viewpoints truly are unique. The concepts and ideas which these distinguished soldiers express may strike with a note of unfamiliarity among U.S. officers, but also with a note of truth. At the core of their comments is the notion that light infantry is a state of mind more than it is a question of equipment, mobility, structure, or capability. Being light for them does not necessarily mean having lightweight equipment and austere organization. Instead, it is a mental approach toward the battlefield, an attitude which is characterized by flexibility, adaptability, imagination, and knowing how to use terrain. If these ideas at first seem new or different, at the very least they are profitable for causing one to devote fresh thought to the meaning and purpose of light infantry.

The Combat Studies Institute is grateful to COL Pughe and COL Whitehead for their cooperation in the publication of these interviews. When they were interviewed, there was no stated intention at the time to make their comments more widely available. It should be noted, however, that the views which they express are theirs alone and in no way represent the British Army, Royal Marines, or British Government.

BIOGRAPHY - COLONEL NEVILLE MORRIS PUGHE

Colonel N. M. Pughe was born on 10 January 1936 in Plymouth, Devon son of a Royal Marine officer. He was educated at Exeter School and the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst. He is a graduate of the Royal Air Force Staff College, Bracknell, and took both a London University Engineering Degree Course and Technical Staff Training at the Royal Military College of Science, Shrivenham.

He was commissioned into the Royal Artillery on 16 December 1955 and later served in Germany and the Middle East, both with Field Artillery and Parachute units. In 1972, after commanding a Field Battery in BAOR and Northern Ireland, he was posted as Brigade Major to 16 Parachute Brigade. Promoted to Lieutenant Colonel at age 37, he served for 2 1/2 years as a member of the Directing Staff at the Army Staff College, Camberley, after which he commanded 26 Field Regiment, Royal Artillery in Germany and Northern Ireland.

From 1979 to 1981, he was Military Assistant to the Chief of Staff at HQ AFCENT in Brunssum, The Netherlands, after which he served for 2 years on the Central Operational Requirements and Policy Staff in the Ministry of Defence, London. This was his last appointment prior to arriving in Washington as the Assistant Military Attache and Deputy Commander, British Army Staff.

He is married to Linda Jane Chetwood. They have three sons.

Biography is provided courtesy of the British Liaison Office to the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College.

BIOGRAPHY - COLONEL ANDREW FRANCIS WHITEHEAD DSO

Colonel Whitehead joined the Royal Marines as a Second Lieutenant in 1958. After completing Young Officer Training, during which he served in 42 Commando Royal Marines in the Far East, he joined 40 Commando in 1961 in Malta, later deploying with the unit to Singapore and taking part in operations in Brunei and Borneo.

Returning to the United Kingdom in 1964, he joined 43 Commando in Plymouth, Devon for a two year tour of duty as a Rifle Company Second in Command and as Assistant Adjutant.

From 1966 to 1967, he commanded the Royal Marines Detachment in HMS ZEST, a Frigate on the West Indies station, following which he spent two years as an Instructor at the Officers' Wing of the Commando Training Centre at Lympstone in Devon.

From August 1970 until August 1972 he attended the Canadian Land Forces Command and Staff College at Kingston, Ontario. His first appointment after Staff College was as Staff Officer, Joint Exercise Division, Headquarters Allied Forces Northern Europe in Oslo, Norway in September 1971.

In February 1974, he was appointed to command K Company, 42 Commando, serving in Northern Ireland and on exercises in the Caribbean and Canada. In June 1975, he was promoted to Major and from 1976 to March 1978 served in the Directorate of Naval Plans in the Ministry of Defence in London.

From March 1978 to May 1980, he served as Brigade Major (Chief of Staff) of 3 Commando Brigade, Royal Marines. A further short spell in London was followed by his selection for promotion to Lieutenant Colonel and command of 45 Commando in April 1981. During this tour of duty, the Commando served a four and a half month operational tour in Northern Ireland, following which Colonel Whitehead was awarded a Mention in Dispatches. In April 1982, 45 Commando embarked for the South Atlantic, and took part in operations to recapture the Falkland Islands. On his return, Colonel Whitehead was invested as a Companion of the Distinguished Service Order. He relinquished Command in April 1982, on appointment to the British Defence Staff, Washington as Chief of Staff, Joint Warfare Representative and Assistant Defence Attache.

In April 1964 he married Diana, younger daughter of Lieutenant Colonel R. B. Adams, MBE, Royal Artillery. They have two daughters, Rachel and Naomi, born in February 1966 and March 1968 respectively. Colonel Whitehead's principal interests are sailing, skiing, squash and music.

Biography is provided courtesy of the British Liaison Office to the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College.

The following interview was conducted on 5 July 1984 at the British Embassy in Washington, D.C. The interviewed officers are COL Andrew Whitehead of the Royal Marines and COL Neville Pughe of the British Army.

MAJ McMichael: Sir, I would like to start the interview by asking either one of you to talk about the distinction between light infantry and line infantry and what makes the two different.

COL Pughe: I'll take that. The light division, so called in the British Army, is something of a misnomer in terms of light infantry as you in the American Army now look at it. Our light infantry was formed in the early part of the 18th Century; in fact, came into prominence in the Peninsula Campaign in the early 19th Century, when they formed for what was then called skirmishing. They were dressed in green, as against the red of the main infantry (line infantry), and they were used in skirmishing for the main formations. That tradition of skirmishing infantry has remained with the light division which is composed now of the light infantry, three regular battalions, three territorial battalions, and the Royal Green Jackets, which have three regular battalions and one territorial battalion. That sort of philosophy has remained with them for many years. They still march past, for example in ceremonial occasions, at an especially fast, light pace.

However, since the beginning of World War II they have been used in a number of different roles, and they have generally alternated between being used as mechanized infantry and foot infantry. They've served all over the world in various roles. One of the reasons the British infantry changes roles so frequently is that, if they were to be confined to the mechanized role, they no doubt would become very proficient at it, but they would be stuck in Germany. So every three or four years each battalion changes its role. Therefore, to a certain degree light infantry battalions and Green Jacket battalions are what I would call ordinary infantry; they have taken part in a lot of light force operations around the world but are equally proficient in mechanized infantry tactics.

The only regiment of the British infantry that I would class as light infantry--in the roles, missions, and concept of operations that you are thinking about--is really the parachute regiment and possibly the Gurkha battalions, but they are a different type of fish; perhaps we ought not to address those now. But it is in the parachute battalions' training, philosophy, outlook particularly that I think you would probably see the most important lessons for your own troops in this role.

MAJ McMichael: Sir, can you talk about each one of those in a little bit more detail?

COL Pughe: Yes, the parachute regiment is made up of three regular battalions and three territorial battalions, and all six battalions adopt the same sort of philosophy- that is, parachuting is only a means to an end, it is only a means of entry that may or may not be used. Parachuting does demand high physical standards, of course, just to avoid injury if nothing else. But really the high physical standards of parachute battalions now stem not so much from the parachuting roles as from the realization that wherever they are committed in the world they will be in, more often than not, difficult terrain and climates, high variety of terrain and climates--anything from snow to jungle and desert--and that they will almost inevitably be--and certainly have been in the past--deployed in conditions of logistical austerity. This demands considerable physical fitness, considerable self-reliance on the part of the soldiers, an adaptability--and I like that word particularly, I recommend that word to you--adaptabilty, which is not always found in what one might call ordinary infantry or other units in the army. And I would think those factors, plus the training of NCOs, which is a crucial concern, are the main characteristics that would distinguish them from ordinary infantry.

MAJ McMichael: When you say adaptability, you are talking about adaptability to different terrain, different conditions, different climates, and not being paralyzed by being in a regime that they haven't seen before or that they haven't seen for some time.

COL Pughe: Correct. But it's not only that, it's also adaptability to the physical conditions of the warfare. COL Whitehead mentioned earlier the question of lack of vehicle mobility (although they're trained to requisition vehicles and so on in theater and all those sort of ad hoc arrangements that they might be able to work out), there's no doubt about it in the long run, and certainly in the first instance, they are dependent on their feet. And they depend on their feet to carry not only themselves to the action but also very considerable logistic and ammunition loads. Therefore, they need to be adaptable to carrying heavy loads across difficult terrain of all sorts.

I think perhaps in recent years, the three campaigns I would single out as being the most illustrative of those qualities in our own light infantry are Malaya, Borneo and the Falkland Islands, where in all three, troops had to, by virtue of the terrain and logistical difficulties, travel immense distances in very adverse conditions and, in the presence of the enemy, move on their feet, carrying heavy loads.

COL Whitehead: As I'm sure you know, the Royal Navy has maintained a light infantry force, the Royal Marines, for the last 320 years, formed originally for service at sea. We still maintain that tradition, but we have in fact moved increasingly towards the land in the role of amphibious light infantry soldiers. Whilst we maintained our historical and traditional connections with the Royal Navy--and indeed we belong to the Royal Navy--we are very much light infantry soldiers, and we have never been conventional or heavy infantry.

At one stage in our recent history we moved into a very specialized version of light infantry operations, which is commando operations. The idea was conceived by Winston Churchill and Lord Louis Mountbatten at the time when Britain was at its lowest ebb in the early stages of World War II. The idea was of small, leader-intensive parties of very highly trained men who would be launched from the sea to inflict damaging and confusing casualties upon an enemy that was superior in numbers at that time. Since World War II, we have maintained many of the training techniques, organizational characteristics, and philosophies of the commando soldier, but we are more conventionally organized now to reflect our increasing interests in amphibious operations, amphibious means of delivery, and if I can use the two words together, conventional light infantry operations as distinct from strictly raiding operations, which is what we were engaged in during war. I agree with absolutely everything that Colonel Pughe has said with regard to the characteristics of the light infantry soldier. And perhaps the Royal Marines and the Parachute Regiment are indeed the only two within the British Armed Forces who can now truly call themselves light infantry.

I believe there is one single word from which stems almost all the thinking that is necessary about the light infantry soldier and that is foot, or feet. His tactical maneuvering, his appreciation of terrain, his understanding of combat support and combat service support (logistics), his comprehension of leadership and the way in which it flows from the top to the bottom and back up again, is all conditioned by what he can do on his feet. One can develop that argument almost endlessly, and I don't need to, because I'm quite sure you understand what I'm saying.

If you want three characteristics that stem from that one word, feet, that apply more vividly to light infantry operations than any others, they are probably mobility, terrain, and leadership. The light infantry unit, the Royal Marines commando unit for example, contains no indigenous troop lift transport. The only transport we have in a commando is designed to carry ammunition, spare equipment, and radio sets. And it is a very limited quantity indeed. The tactical transport that we have available to us consists of landing craft and helicopters and they actually don't belong to us, they belong to our parent Navy. The landing craft belong to the ships from which they come and the helicopters belong to naval helicopter squadrons in the commando role. So mobility needs to be thought about in terms of feet; how mobile are you on your feet, whether it be on a pair of skis or wearing a pair of jungle boots?

The next characteristic is terrain. The light infantry soldier, the commando soldier, the parachute soldier needs to have an instinctive ability to read ground, to read terrain, if he is to offset the disadvantages of firepower that being light inevitably carries with it. Those disadvantages are not as enormous as they might seem, if and only if he can use the terrain to his own advantage. That argument I believe applies whether he's attacking or defending. If he concentrates his efforts on attrition and aims his objectives at his enemy, rather than at the terrain, he will probably fail.

The third single characteristic or factor in the commando soldier or the parachute soldier that stems from the one word, feet, is leadership, the handling of people. Under that heading I would place the style of leadership from the top that understands the essential foot-borne nature of the light infantry soldier. It is a style of tactical thinking that allows him to use his flexibility and innovative manner of operating, down to the individual self-reliance of the light infantry soldier, who, though he is very much a part of a team and draws strength from that team, is not an inflexible member of a machine in quite the same way as is an APC crew, because an APC is part of a group of APCs and part of larger group and a larger group. So those I think are the essential ingredients.

MAJ McMichael: Yes, sir. It doesn't seem to me that it's an easy task to develop those characteristics. How do you go about teaching a unit or an individual or a leader to be adaptable, and how do you teach them to really appreciate terrain? Would you talk about how you create those qualities?

COL Whitehead: I'll pick it up first, and I know COL Pughe will have some views on this. Those are two different questions, of course: How do you teach him to be adaptable? and How do you teach him to appreciate terrain? To answer the easiest one first, you teach him to appreciate terrain by constantly exercising him in that practice and, from the day he joins the Royal Marines or the regiment, by bringing out in him an instinctive eye for what is or is not a piece of terrain that is suited to his particular tactical characteristics. There is no book of lessons he can learn, or at least not one that could be produced easily by any military teaching organization. What there is, of course, is several centuries of history, which, if he studies it, he will be some way down the track towards an understanding of terrain. If, for example, he reads the lessons of the Boer War, he will learn the qualities and advantages of a reverse slope, when applied to high speed mounted infantry with a very high standard of marksmanship, who were able to catch conventional British infantry (using rather rigid tactics) and cause them significant casualties for relatively small loss of life themselves.

How do you teach them to be adaptable? I believe the answer lies in training, in his initial training. It comes from a combination of a number of ideas that you might put into his head. One is elitism, and I personally dislike the word because it smacks of a kind of professional snobbery which often doesn't go with professional excellence.

But, you somehow have got to convince him that he is special. In convincing him he is special, not only have you got to reward him for being special, you have also got to make demands upon him that make it clear he is special. It is no use saying you are special and then treating him to the same range of standards as pertain to lesser mortals, ordinary folk.

MAJ McMichael: So you have got to give him higher standards to meet.

COL Whitehead: Absolutely. That is elitism.

MAJ McMichael: Before you break away from that idea, can you take an ordinary soldier and make him a light infantry soldier?

COL Whitehead: Yes, you can, because contained within the ranks of ordinary soldiers there is always that small percentage who are operating below their capacity and have the ability to go on and be something special. A classic example of that, of course, is the Special Air Service in the Army, who recruit from the Regular Army. They don't recruit from civilian life, they recruit from the Army. As far as I'm aware they are the only regiment in the British Army that does.

COL Pughe: The parachute brigade, of course, draws troops from the Regular Army, but these recruits have to take quite a severe test in order to do so. They have a thing called P Company, which is a fairly notorious selection procedure that lasts three weeks, at the end of which you know you have passed into something worth joining. I would say, also, that inevitably the selection standards for the parachute forces and the commando forces must be higher than others, and I would think this applies to light infantry in the way you consider it as well. I would think there has to be a reasonably severe selection process both with officers (particularly with officers) and with men.

There are those, and there are many, particularly in the British Army, who said, "Ah but look at the history of World War II, in which perfectly ordinary infantry battalions were converted into glider-borne, or parachute-borne troops," and that is perfectly true. But if you examine it closely, you'll see, first, that a lot of ordinary soldiers fell by the wayside, had physical problems, and second, those particular battalions were extremely well led. They had a very, very high standard of officer. I think particularly of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire light infantry, for example--who are now one of the Green Jacket battalions--who were converted into glider troops and landed on D-day. Marvelous battalion, and they always claim to this day that they weren't very special (that is their officers speaking). Their officers were very, very high-grade officers indeed. So there is a great deal of leadership in this.

We talked about adaptability to terrain, and of course as COL Whitehead said, there is no substitute for training in the sort of terrain that you are likely to be deployed in. However, in the early days of your training soldiers and NCOs, a good proportion of that early training must be in very severe conditions, in my view. For example, the parachute regiment basic recruit course is sixteen weeks, of which five are spent in the mountains of Wales, in the most rotten conditions of climate, as anyone who knows Wales will testify, and some pretty hard country. And it is not just the coping with the severity of climate and terrain that counts. It is learning to read the terrain and learning how you get from A to B, several hundreds of miles, with a pack on your back, with your section, choosing dead ground, reading

ground, reading your maps. There is a lot that goes into map reading here. Not just the section commanders, but every man in the section must be an accomplished map reader--learning to read the ground, read where dead ground is, how to use ground in that way, for approach marches, defense, attack and so on. Very, very important indeed. Don't you agree?

COL Whitehead: Yes, I do. Interesting to hear you talking about the fashion of basic training because I was about to go on to answer your question, the first of your questions. To develop from the business of elitism, to talk about the business of training. There are various philosophies that exist in the armies of the free world.

The two most common are what I call "make or break" philosophy and the philosophy that is adopted in a modified form within commando training, and that is one which has as its basic tenet, "You can do more than you think you can and we are going to demonstrate to you that that is true." In other words, instead of being a push-from-behind, it's a pull-from-in-front philosophy. It carries with it a supporting idea that is contained in what we call the commando spirit; that is, that small unit team-work is an essential ingredient of commando operations. Our enlisted recruits go through twenty-six weeks of training of which six weeks are called the commando course. At the end of that six weeks you are awarded your green beret, assuming you pass. It is essentially a physical course. Most of the time is spent out on the field engaged in various demanding physical activities, behind which lie these two basic tenets: that "you can do more than you think you can" and that the team aspect of your operations is very important. In other words, if there is a man in your team who is a slightly lesser mortal than you are, it is very much part of your responsibility to get him there, to lend him some of your strength and bring him with you, and that is something which is drummed in. If you go to our commando school you will see squads of recruits engaged in, for instance, a speed march, which involves covering one mile every ten minutes, in full fighting order, up to a maximum distance up to nine miles in ninety minutes which is the "pass out" speed march. And you will see one or two members of each squad almost being carried to get them through to the end of some of those marches.

Clearly, one has to be very careful about this, because if it were taken to extremes it would allow passengers in the organization and that is not what we are aiming for. But the value of this philosophy is not to the weaker guy who gets carried--he'll be watched very, very carefully in other fields--it is to the stronger ones who realize where their responsibilities lie in getting the team complete and ready to fight. Of course, when it comes to real operations, that philosophy spills over into recovery of wounded and the like.

MAJ McMichael: I think that is an extraordinary idea. That's the first time I have heard about that approach unit-wide.

COL Whitehead: The "make or break" philosophy has enormous advantages and merits, there is no doubt about that. I believe that the parachute regiment, to a certain extent, adopts this philosophy, and there are other organizations in this country who do it as well.

I think what I am saying is that a balance between these two philosophies is what will produce a man who is strong physically and mentally. And of course mental endurance is at least as important as physical endurance, probably more so. And who is, in addition, resourceful, self-reliant, and confident, both in himself and the strength of his team, confident that his buddies are not going to let him down. Clearly, if you are going to produce a very special organization, a very high quality organization that will function well in the most difficult situations, as COL Pughe said, it is an essential ingredient in their training, that they be subjected to severe and demanding conditions. That really means, since you aren't allowed to shoot at them in peacetime, subjecting them to difficult terrain and difficult weather.

MAJ McMichael: And I can see that the philosophy, "You can do more than you think you can," can be translated into an attitude of adaptability. Is that fair to say sir?

COL Pughe: Yes, I think that is the aim. And this whole question of how you develop self-reliance and initiative is all part of the same problem. I must say, looking back on my times in the parachute brigades in the UK, I think that particular attitude of mind by the soldiers is the most impressive of all the aspects that I saw in the brigades. It's not macho, it's a quiet, steely-eyed determination--pride if you like--to keep yourself fit, to not rely on other people unnecessarily. For example, I'll explain to you how, if I were taking the brigade headquarters to the firing ranges, one would announce, "The range firing starts at ten, I expect you all to be there." No transport is provided, they just get there with whatever loads they think appropriate. And its all part of the philosophy: day-to-day living in these formations that must be got right, and that is the key.

COL Whitehead: We had exactly the same philosophy in the commando course. I'll remember to my dying day the officer that took me through my commando training. I was so impressed with him that I used similar techniques when I was an instructor at the commando school. Transport wasn't provided. We were told that on 8:00 Monday morning you were required to be at such an such a place, and how you got there was your business.

MAJ McMichael: When you use this technique, are you calling on the individual soldier or are you calling on the low-level NCO to solve these problems?

COL Whitehead: You get a bit of both. The reaction you will produce in some people by that kind of attitude is to be totally self-reliant and make their own way. It will also bring out the leaders, who will say, "Right chaps, here's how we are going to hack this problem," and it will be a team effort. You will see both kinds of attitude.

MAJ McMichael: When you talk about doing it with a brigade headquarters--and of course I've worked on a staff before, and I know how difficult it is to get everybody to the range to fire and how there are so many problems--when you just throw it open like that, is it the mess steward's problem or the communications sergeant's problem just to solve any other previous commitments he has and to reach a solution and get his people to the range?

COL Pughe: You are absolutely right. There is always a number of people in these certain instances who will find a very good reason for not being able to do what you want them to do, because they've got some other pressing engagement. Fortunately, if one warns the officers concerned in advance and the soldiers are given reasons for doing these things, then these problems have a habit of going away very rapidly. And I think that's just a normal process, normal administrative planning. But there was never any doubt that every man in the brigade headquarters, including stewards, clerks, and cooks went. And indeed the attitude was so good that most of these people, generally, would feel very hurt if they were left out or forgotten. People used to say in the brigade headquarters, among the clerks and quartermasters particularly, "Oh, my God, what's going to happen if someone rings up at 1000 and we are actually out marching and we should be manning the telephone?" I used to say, "Well let them ring." More people ought to know that we are out preparing ourselves for war.

MAJ McMichael: Now, does this mean that you are operating on a day-to-day basis or are you still able to plan long-range and to have an integrated training plan?

COL Whitehead: I think we've got off the point. What we were actually talking about was what makes the individual light infantry soldier, and we've gone into one particular example, and I think we have probably kicked that one as far as it can go. It is an attitude of mind to produce individuality, self-reliance, resourcefulness, and adaptablity. I don't think you should construe from that that you operate on a hand-to-mouth basis, because certainly the parachute regiment would never have survived had it operated on a hand-to-mouth basis anymore than 3 Commando Brigade would or any other specialist formation.

COL Pughe: No, there is a very good balance to all this to be maintained in these formations on doing things at no notice, which occasionally is a good thing, and giving people sufficient notice to be able to conduct their own administrative affairs in an orderly and well-planned manner. It is, in fact, in the striking of that balance where good leadership appears. It is terribly important to get that right.

MAJ McMichael: COL Whitehead, you mentioned earlier a tactical attitude that the light infantry unit needs to have and that is to be terrain-oriented as opposed to being exclusively enemy-oriented. Would you develop that idea a little further?

COL Whitehead: I can develop it by examining some of the tasks that we might find ourselves engaged in. Starting at the bottom of the scale, or near to the bottom of the scale, one can dream up a scenario in which a small country somewhere around the world, which has a defense agreement with either your country or mine, finds itself in an internal situation that demands external support and assistance and calls for that support and assistance. One can imagine a scenario (which has happened hundreds of times) in which lightly equipped light infantry troops have been dispatched at short notice and have dealt effectively with a relatively unsophisticated enemy, possibly facing adversity of terrain and climate, and have done their job and come back home again. Moving up the scale, one can construct a scenario in Europe that applies to my own corps. As you probably know about three-fifths of 3 Commando Brigade are trained and equipped for mounted Arctic warfare and in pursuit of that aim we spend three months of every year in Norway doing exclusively mounted Arctic warfare operations. We are all ski-borne, ski-trained. Over-snow vehicles replace our wheeled vehicles to move radio sets and ammunition and supplies around, and everyone from helicopter pilot to a cook becomes snow oriented.

Now, when one considers the sort of opposition that one might be called upon to fight and remembering that NATO is essentially a defensive organization, it is clear that initially we are not going to have the initiative, because NATO is unlikely ever to attack preemptively the Warsaw Pact. Therefore, to start with at least, we will always be in a defensive situation. If you then put all those hats together and add to them the terrain of north Norway and the climate of north Norway, you've got a peculiar problem, which on the face of it, light infantry soldiers, such as 3 Commando Brigade, are not particularly well equipped to deal with. We have no armor. We have only light field artillery; i.e. 105mm artillery, albeit a particularly good weapon. We are fairly light on air defense, and we rely on our skis and on a small number of helicopters and landing craft to give us tactical mobility.

That train of thought leads me, at least, to the conclusion that there are only two ways in which one can defeat the sort of enemy that is likely to be coming against us, which will be heavy in armor, heavy in artillery, and heavy, heavy in firepower. And there are only two attitudes of mind which will lead one to success. One is to exploit every advantage of the terrain that will cause the enemy firepower and his weight to be an incumbrance rather than an advantage. That means fighting him where he least wants to be fought; that means reading the terrain in such a way you force him to canalize his attack, you force him to come down vulnerable and difficult routes from which you can destroy him piecemeal. It means causing him not to be able to deploy on a very broad front to take advantage of his superior firepower. It means forcing him to attack you on a very narrow front. This approach depends on reading the terrain. The other philosophy is an offensive one, an offensive form of defense, a form a defense that will inflict casualties on an enemy

before he has the opportunity to deploy and overrun you. Then you fade away in order to attack him somewhere else, at a time when he is hoping that you won't.

MAJ McMichael: Are those two philosophies complementary in your opinion or do they require a significant change in attitude?

COL Whitehead: They are complementary. I think they can be taken together. They are heavily dependent on the first of the three major factors that I discussed--terrain. They are also heavily dependent upon tactical mobility, on the ability to move around the battlefield, particularly on one's ability to move in and around areas where the enemy doesn't expect you to be able to move; i.e., over the most difficult route.

COL Pughe: In relation to the armored battle, it has been a source of much argument since World War II, whether light infantry forces are relatively immobile. I think everytime I hear someone say that, the small hairs on the back of my neck stand up, because mobility is related to terrain in the way that COL Whitehead has been describing. There's nothing more mobile than dismounted infantry in wooded areas, in jungle, in urban areas (which are on the increase all the time) and in some mountain areas. There are occasions, of course, in the example just stated, of an armored force coming down through Norway, when foot mobility in certain circumstances seems to be a relative advantage to the enemy. In certain circumstances, therefore, the mobility of the light infantry depends to quite some extent on a characteristic I call elusiveness. He's got to be able to fade away, melt away in the darkness. He's got to be familiar with operating at night. He fades away, he reforms and appears somewhere else. It's the darkness and the terrain together that give him his elusiveness. And I think that is probably covered in the mobility and terrain aspects.

COL Whitehead: I think we are agreeing with each other. I've heard the argument many, many times about the relative immobility of light infantry forces, and it is normally advanced by people who see the opposition in terms of broad fronted, high-speed blitzkreig type attacks over terrain that is most suited for armored assault. Well, there the infantryman is going to get left behind, no doubt about that at all. What I'm talking about is the ability to read the terrain in such a way that you can hold him, damage him, fade away, and do it again. He never gets the opportunity to take advantage of his superior firepower and his superior weight.

COL Pughe: Yes, history is rich in examples of light forces that have done exactly that, from the Boers mentioned earlier, to the Russian forces and so on.

COL Whitehead: And the Finns.

COL Pughe: I think we ought to cover the point of flexibility, which we haven't discussed very much.

MAJ McMichael: Please do, sir.

COL Pughe: Flexibility comes from the training of soldiers in many different roles and tasks. We mentioned the example of engineers who are both combat engineers and construction engineers. In nearly all of seventy-four British deployments since World War II, we have found the need for engineers to be proficient in both fields. In the Falklands, as you know, they were clearing mines from the battlefields one day and restoring power to Port Stanley the next. This sort of flexibility only comes with having long-term regulars who can be thoroughly trained in various skills, trades, and roles. It also comes from having first-rate officers and intelligent NCOs. But there is more to flexibility than just that. There is the flexibility of employment of the force, not just the individual members of the force. And the flexibility comes from having a balanced force available to you from which weapons, equipment, and resources generally can be selected in a way appropriate to the deployment or the conditions prevailing on the mission for which they were dispatched. I can't emphasize too much the fact that over these past forty years we have been able to do that most effectively and have a balanced force on which to draw.

Moreover, there are some pieces of equipment that provide you with that flexibility, such as a medium mortar of the 81mm size, light artillery of good range and mobility, and light armor. It is significant I think that seventy-three of the seventy-four deployments have involved light armor at some stage in the campaign. Initially, light armor is used in the reconnaissance role for the protection and development of the lodgement area, beach head or air head, and also in subsequent operations, of course, not forgetting the pacification phase of an operation or stabilization or whatever you like to call it, when, again, (particularly) wheeled or light tracked armored vehicles have been extremely useful. So there's flexibility derived from both these characteristics of light forces, without which you know one could be really pushed about.

COL Whitehead: I quite agree, and it is significant that the two most important areas of concern of the several areas that have been singled out for more work in terms of the characteristics of 3 Commando Brigade, as a result of our experiences in the Falklands (and we had the whole brigade down there) were the absence of any light armor in the 3 Commando Brigade and also the absence of air defense. There was light armor down there as you know, but it didn't belong to us. We are now looking for both of those things to enhance the capabilities of 3 Commando Brigade, without making us into a heavy brigade which loses all of its light infantry advantages.

MAJ McMichael: Sir, is this a good time to talk about the organizational changes that you made in your commando battalion as a result of the Falklands operation?

COL Whitehead: Yes, I'm happy to tell you about them but I don't think you should draw too many weighty conclusions from them, because at best they are an example of necessity becoming the mother of invention, and at worst they are making the best of a bad job. I'll tell you what happened.

There were two factors that caused me to reorganize my commando, and that reorganization turned out to be a success. Number one was the experience of the parachute battalion that attacked through the screen, which amongst other things revealed the immense value of short-range direct fire infantry weapons, specifically the light machine gun and the 66mm LAW. As for the other factor, during the time my commando was moving on foot, from one end of the island to the other, my logistic area, which was colocated with the brigade logistic area known as the brigade maintenance area on the beach at Ajax Bay, was bombed. It became a very attractive target, and I won't bore you with why it became an attractive target and how we might have avoided that. Amongst other things, I lost all my MILAN antitank guided missiles and all the aiming posts. I had left them there because at that stage of the operation there was no tank threat, and I saw no need for them and I was using my antitank troop, which is part of support company, in a different role. They were all commando soldiers, and they were being used in a reconnaissance role to boost up my reconnaissance capabilities, and they left their antitank weapons behind.

Putting those two events together I reconfigured my antitank troop before the first of our commando night attacks on one of the features dominating Stanley, and I called them a weapons troop. I equipped them with extra machine guns, extra 84mm CARL GUSTAV, and extra 66mm LAWs. And then, because they had a very neat and well-understood command structure, which is designed around the three-man detachment required for them to operate the MILAN guided missile, having a high proportion of leaders and a high proportion of radios, they were a very good organization to farm out in small weapons teams to my rifle companies. So what I did was put detachments, one or more detachments, with each of my forward rifle companies during the assault. The effect this had on their firepower was dramatic. Now, that isn't a particularly clever idea, it certainly isn't original, but it did work.

The fallout from that, which became interesting when we got back from the Falklands and began to sort ourselves out prior to going to Norway for normal winter training in January of 83, was that I decided to leave my antitank troop configured as a weapons troop. Support company, I should tell you consists of a reconnaissance troop, a surveillance troop, an assault engineer troop, a mortar troop, and an antitank troop. The antitank troop is normally equipped with MILAN wired guided missiles. I told support company commander to produce me an organization from what was now called weapons troop, an organization which could operate two or more of the following weapons: a general purpose machine gun in the sustained fire role, the 84mm CARL GUSTAV in the tank hunting role, and the MILAN in the static antitank defense, ambush-type role. Now he didn't have enough men to operate all three at maximum capacity, but he could do two out of three.

It seemed to me that it had advantages from the training point of view in that all training on all three of those weapons, instead of being spread among the rifle companies of the commando was concentrated, thus producing a common standard within support company. It also had an advantage from an organizational and flexibility point of view in that I could say this operation has the following characteristics and the following threat. We will therefore configure the weapons troop thus, i.e., with a proponderance of machine guns or a proponderance of antitank weapons or a balance of the two. That's what it was about.

MAJ McMichael: Did you pull your machine guns out of your rifle companies?

COL Whitehead: A rifle company has ten general purpose machine guns, three per troop (platoon) and one in company headquarters. It has three kits, what we call SF kits, which consist of a dial sight, a tripod, and an aiming post, which convert any GPMG in the light role into a sustained firepower role. I took all the GPMG SF kits out of the rifle companies and put them into weapons troop. The advantage that weapons troop had, as I said, is that they had an organization of small detachments, eighteen three-man detachments--each commanded by a corporal, with sergeants in charge of pairs of detachments and an officer in command over all. It was a very good little outfit with a high percentage of leaders, ideally suited to be farmed out in packets to the rifle companies. But it was an informal reorganization. I wrote a piece of paper on the subject but I don't know whether it has been adopted formally. I rather suspect that a residue of it will remain. Someone will re-invent it in years to come.

COL Pughe: I would like to add something about your current American ideas that I have studied in considerable detail on light infantry, not only the 10,000-man light infantry division but the motorized division, 9th ID. I recently read the draft concept operations of the 9th ID and I must say, in light of all the experience that we have had, some of the statements in that concept fill me with alarm. I think probably the idea in the concept of operations that is most alarming is the idea that a light division of that nature, or motorized division of that nature, can grapple with the enemy, particularly in an offensive role, without necessarily taking ground. This seems to me incongruous and possibly it doesn't look at some of the lessons of history.

Quite clearly, the organization of 9th Infantry Division and the ones proposed for the 7th ID and other light divisions will not enable one to close with and attack the enemy effectively if the enemy is in a well-entrenched position. I would suggest that those divisions as presently constituted perhaps haven't sufficient armor or engineers to deal with entrenched enemy positions. The concept, as I see it, is that they are making maximum use of the fast attack vehicle, which I believe is the most exciting development we've seen in tactical concepts for a very long time, making maximum use of them as reconnaissance vehicles and to some degree with the 40mm gun giving

quite a good account of itself. One can see these divisions being used in a role that neither their lack of wheeled mobility nor their equipment will enable them to carry out the missions given to them.

Furthermore, if you look at the scenarios in which they are likely to be used, they seem to ignore the fact that inevitably warfare, to some degree, particularly in the early stages of an intervention operation, revolves around the occupation of ground. He who has the high ground overlooking the lodgement area is in a remarkably good position. And look at history. How many times have lodgements come unstuck because the enemy holds the high ground overlooking the beach head or the air head? Therefore, how can you envisage these light divisions being employed in an offensive role purely to engage the enemy, but not to take ground. It may be that the concept is not fully developed yet and obviously requires a lot more thought, but as presently constituted I cannot see those light divisions being effective in an offensive role particularly in open ground of the sort experienced in southwest Asia, Falklands, and many other areas. So I have misgivings about that.

MAJ McMichael: What would you add? How would you change the organization?

COL Pughe: The first thing I would do is add light armor, without any doubt.

MAJ McMichael: And that primarily to be used against an enemy entrenched force?

COL Pughe: Yes, light armor of the sort of our Scorpions, Scimitars, etc., have many different roles. They have an antiarmor capability, they perform armored reconnaissance of course as their primary role, but they are used in many other roles. They also have the advantage of being easily transported strategically, parachute dropped, and that sort of thing. I would say that is a major requirement.

MAJ McMichael: In the amount of study that I've done on light infantry, I think, because light infantry has to be terrain oriented, it is useful also to think of light infantry operations in terms of the three engineer missions: mobility, countermobility, and survivability. I find myself using those engineer concepts to think about light infantry. We've talked about mobility. Do you have any thoughts about the light infantry force and the capabilities that it needs to survive? You've talked about elusiveness. That's one way. And, elusiveness is avoiding enemy fire, as opposed to being protected by armor, or bunkers, or whatever, from enemy fire. But, I invite you to give me your thoughts on countermobility and survivability in a light infantry force.

COL Whitehead: I think I can talk a little bit about survivability. Clearly, if as a light infantry force, you set yourself up to take on a numerically

superior and firepower-superior force on its terms, you will not survive. Therefore, you have a number of characteristics, some of which we've addressed, which you must turn to your advantage. One is terrain, another is mobility, the third is concealment. I believe the ability of a light infantry force to conceal itself--and that means not just from visual reconnaissance, it means from electronic reconnaissance as well--is paramount. With the increasing sophistication of detection devices, it is becoming more and more difficult.

The Norwegians have an interesting philosophy here. They go in for deception in a big way, particularly in a snow-covered environment in the winter. They recognize that it is virtually impossible to conceal tracks in the snow. The track of one man on skis, stands out like an arrow from the air, because of the very sharp shadows it casts. It points like a direction marker. Their answer to that solution is to cover the area with tracks. They actually divert quite a lot of time and trouble to confusing the enemy as to where they are. You know they're there somewhere, but they could be within four grid squares. That's one idea. Another is to move and operate as light as you can, and place a considerable amount of attention and care on concealing yourself. It's a very, very hard lesson to learn. It requires a very high level of soldiering, and a high level of leadership to ensure that one stupid man doesn't do something that will give away the position of the whole fort.

MAJ McMichael: Sir, does a light infantry force digging in--it seems without doubt that soldiers need to be able to do that, need to be able to do it rapidly, under many conditions--is there a danger with light infantry digging in, an attitudinal danger?

COL Whitehead: Well, of course, there is a danger that if you swing too violently in the direction of digging in, then you will become static in your thinking. But, the other side of that coin is the philosophy that is even more dangerous, which says, "We're light infantry, we're on the move all the time, we don't bother to dig."

MAJ McMichael: And, you see that as a danger too?

COL Whitehead: That would be a danger too. You've got to get people into the philosophy that every time you stop, you dig yourself a little scrape, because it is going to save your life.

MAJ McMichael: Yes, sir.

COL Whitehead: Would you agree to that?

COL Pughe: Yes, again, one points to a number of occasions when well-dug in troops have survived the most colossal bombardments. Just look back to Korea, when the weight of artillery brought down on defensive positions by the

Chinese was absolutely colossal, of World War I dimensions. Yet, our troops survived, somewhat dazed, to fight another day. On many occasions they survived because they were able to dig, and dig jolly well. There's no substitute.

MAJ McMichael: So, if we can turn to the concept of countermobility, do you see that as a major mission for the light infantry engineers? How would you rank that, among the three?

COL Pughe: Well, I see two main problems in using light infantry formations in the countermobility role. One is the lack of stores to actually do it--the lack of mines, the lack of obstructions, the lack of engineer stores to enable them to construct obstacles. And, secondly an obstacle is only an obstacle if it is covered by plenty of fire, and they're not very strong in fire support, although they have a reasonable amount of artillery. So, I don't think they're ideally suited for that sort of role. Of course, much can be done in favorable terrain, such as urban environment, if they're equipped with demolition charges to a certain scaling, to make use of buildings, and rubble, and all that sort of thing in the countermobility role. That's more a function of the terrain and the environment, rather than the capability of the light force itself, which I would say is very slim in this field.

MAJ McMichael: All right, sir. I would like, before we close, to invite both of you to comment on what our new light commanders ought to know--some advice for them. Obviously, in everything we've said today, we're providing some advice for them, but is there anything else that you'd like to focus on?

COL Pughe: I dare say two perfectly obvious and traditional things. One is that the most important thing in the light force is the man. Two, the most important factor in war is his morale. If you can get those things right, then equipping the man of high morale is something which we can do, I hope, in a flexible way, and not be too rigidly confined within a preconceived number and preconceived organization.

COL Whitehead: Yes, I agree. I think the success or failure of the light infantry soldier is more a factor of the way he thinks than of the way he's organized or equipped. The way he is organized and equipped follows from the way he thinks. If the resources available to him are such that he can pluck what he wants for a given mission, so much the better, because that will not only give him flexibility, it will complement his flexible attitude. But, it's the way he thinks, I'm sure. You know he thinks through his feet.

MAJ McMichael: Sir, you mentioned earlier, too, a personnel assignment policy. Do you think it is important that light infantry soldiers be returned, as they rotate among tours, to the light infantry?

Col Whitehead: Yes, I do. The regimental system, as practiced in the British Army and the Royal Marines, has an advantage in that we seldom stray very far outside it. Even when you're employed outside your regiment, as COL Pughe and I both are at the moment, we very soon return to the bosom of our family. We're not subjected to the same violent role changes as your organizations might be. So, I think if you're going to extract all the advantages of the light infantry soldier, you have got to create a light infantry soldier who joins as a light infantry soldier and stays that way for the rest of his career. During that career, he might be employed in a staff appointment or a training appointment, but he always comes back to being a light infantry soldier, so that's what he is. It's part of the elitism bit.

COL Pughe: Yes, I think I, as a gunner, having had airborne background, find it of immense value in ordinary regiments, and units, and the mechanized field, because the more one can bring the light ethic to heavy units, the better.

MAJ McMichael: Sir, I'd like to take these last ten minutes or so to focus on the Falkland Islands campaign and ask you to provide whatever comments you think are appropriate about that campaign, along the lines of what we've been talking about. Some of this may be repetitious, but I would still be interested in hearing it from you, as one of the commanders. For instance, the importance of physical fitness, and how, as you mentioned earlier, you had to think in terms of the foot. Was the Falkland Islands campaign a good example of what you mean by that?

COL Whitehead: A short answer to your last question is yes. I think it is probably worth prefacing anything I say by an admonition or a caution. The Falkland Islands operation was spectacularly successful in all sorts of ways. It was spectacularly successful in a strategic way, in that nobody really thought Britain would launch an amphibious operation 8,000 miles from home. It was spectacularly successful in terms of emotion. It had all the ingredients of an affair that could instantly appeal to very simple concepts of right and wrong. There was a country--whatever the arguments about sovereignty of the Falklands may or may not be--there was a country that was taking an island populated by people who are as British as I am.

It was successful from a tactical point of view, in that the aims were achieved, with relatively small loss of life, against numerically superior odds. Now, for all those reasons, it is quite possible to get swept up, as indeed a large number of people have, both professional military men and writers--nonmilitary writers who write about military subjects--swept up in an orgy of conclusion drawing, and lesson learning, and so on. Far be it from me to say that there were no lessons to be learned. There were. There were a hell of a lot. And, heaven knows, I learned enough of them. But, one should be careful not to ascribe to the Falklands operations characteristics which it doesn't deserve. Every operation has certain factors which make it different and unrepeatable, and I think there is a danger in all this great glut of "conclusion-drawing," one draws conclusions that shouldn't perhaps be drawn.

Having said that, as far as my own experiences were concerned, and I was only a commando battalion CO, and therefore I speak from a position as a unit leader and not as a brigade commander or a division commander, or commander of the infantry task force or a more grand position, but strictly muddy boots and rifles. I kept a diary, as did a lot of people down there, on the back of a fat packet. I wrote it all out laboriously when I got home or on the way home. It has proved to be useful to me, to remind me of things that one can all too easily forget. In the back of the diary I attempted to draw some conclusions about what we'd learned, and where we'd been successful and hadn't been successful. I concluded that we beat the Argentines as far as the land matter was concerned for the following reasons:

1. We could move and fight in difficult terrain and difficult weather, and they could not.
2. We could move and fight at night, and they could not.
3. We could patrol offensive and aggressively, and they could not.
4. We could read the ground, and they could not.
5. We cared for our men, and they did not.

Now, that sounds like a broad sweeping series of statements, but I believe them to be true. Let's take them one at a time, if I can remember the order in which I gave them to you. First, terrain, difficult terrain and difficult weather. My unit, and the majority of the units in 3 Commando Brigade are mountain and arctic warfare trained and equipped. There is no doubt that our equipment, clothing specifically, and our experience of operating in the mountains of Norway and Scotland stood us in very good stead. We had an understanding of the mountains, we understood mountain navigation, we understood the hazards and difficulties of bad weather in the mountains. Essentially, we could hack it. We were fit enough to keep up a sustained rate of movement forward across the island. It was my unit that walked from one side of the island to the other. Actually, a lot was made of that in the papers, but it was not a particularly phenomenal feat. It was simply the ability to sustain a continued rate of advance and not have people falling out from minor disabilities and complaints. One of the most difficult obstacles to that kind of fitness was the seven weeks that we spent on the way to the Falklands--seven weeks necessitated by (a) the distance, and (b) the amount of shuttle diplomacy that was going on. It was a "shall we, shan't we" type situation. There is absolutely no substitute in developing that kind of physical fitness for endurance training. And, I don't mean the kind of physical fitness that can do a hundred meters in 9.4 or can lift heavy weights off the ground a thousand times. It's the kind of dogged, wiry endurance that will bash on regardless. Doggedness and quiet endurance are the characteristics that we're talking about. Not some macho, superhuman superman type force, which <u>we</u> quite certainly are not, anymore than the paras are.

Operating at night. There was absolutely no way that we could have used the advantages that we derived from being able to move and operate in the terrain and the weather, unless we had been able to operate at night as well.

Why? Because, the enemy had the advantage that all defenders have--he was static and we were moving. He was dug in, and we were not. He had his fixed lines of fire, and we did not. We had all the disadvantages that an attacker has in those respects, plus we didn't have a three-to-one advantage. The conventional wisdom is that a three-to-one advantage is what you want. The only answer was to operate at night, because it was only at night that many of the enemy's defensive advantages were nullified. If he had used his weapons and read the terrain in the way that, right up until the last minute, we fully expected him to do, then we would have had a much more difficult job than we actually did.

The third point was reading the terrain. It astounded me, and continued to astound me and most of my marines, that the enemy did not occupy certain features that we regarded as tactically vital. For example, he allowed us to get on Mt. Kent, which was the largest mountain for miles around. It dominated all the other features and was the jumping off point from which the entire attack on Stanley was launched. They allowed us to get on that feature with nothing more than a skirmish. If he had dug himself in up there in a determined way, the course of the war would have been dramatically altered.

MAJ McMichael: You couldn't have bypassed it?

COL Whitehead: We might have bypassed it, but it would have been extremely difficult. And, of course, the arguments of bypass versus confrontation are the ones that you know as much about as I do. They're very vexed arguments. And, indeed I now know, I didn't know at the time, that there was considerable discussion in brigade as to whether it was more important to bypass the enemy positions and go for Stanley, than it was to take them out and then go for Stanley. The second solution was favored because the brigade commander was trying to minimize our own casualties and to minimize the risk of engaging in street fighting in the town of Stanley, which would have flattened Stanley with its small wooden construction, houses, and so on.

I've mentioned weather, mentioned the mountains; I've mentioned operating at night; I've mentioned reading the terrain. I'm sorry, the fourth one was offensive patrolling.

The other aspect of the enemy's performance that continued to surprise me--because I could do nothing else, I had to continually assume that he would do what I expected him to do, though he never did, not to any great extent--was his inability to patrol offensively against us. As a result, my patrols were free to do murder, effectively that. For four days, during which the 3 Commando Brigade with two parachute battalions under command, five units altogether, was preparing itself for the final assult on Stanley (artillery ammunition was being brought up and so on)--during that period, my unit, and all the other units were sending out fighting patrols against the enemy. The effect of this was, of course, to produce a lot of information about him. But, it also did terrific damage to his morale. I'm absolutely convinced that

his defense of the feature that we attacked was much less spirited because he'd come up against us every night for the previous five nights. He never did that to us, though I took the precautions that went with my assumption that he would, every single day, in the way of observation posts, defensive patrols, listening posts, clearing one's front door step, at dawn and dusk, etc. He never really patrolled aggressively against us.

The final point was the question of caring for one's men. It amazed some of my marines when, after the surrender, they were handling the very large numbers of prisoners down in the town of Stanley and discovered the attitude that existed between officers, NCOs and enlisted, in the Argentine forces. On the Argentines' part, they could not understand how it was possible for marines and officers to carry on perfectly reasonable conversations with one another without one treating the other like scum, and the men treating the officers like pigs, which was the situation that existed in their forces. A feudal system, it was part of their downfall. It surprised us, and it brought home to me and to my people that the sense of belonging that goes with being a member of a very tightly knit and very special organization, like a commando, or indeed the wider organization of the Royal Marines, is a very, very powerful magnet, when it comes to cohesion. When the chips are down, you know that your superiors care, and as a leader, you know that your subordinates trust you to do the right thing.

MAJ McMichael: Sir, did your men understand and accept the logistical problems--the fact that they had to walk across the island, owing to the shortage of helicopters, and that sort of thing? Did they ascribe that in any way as a failure of their officer leadership?

COL Whitehead: No, I don't think so. They accepted it, because it was very carefully explained to them, by me, and the company commanders, and the other leaders in the commando. It became something of a sick joke, which was probably the only way to treat it at the time, to avoid totally losing sight of one's sense of humor. Remarks like, "Well, we've walked this far, we might as well walk to Stanley," were made frequently. It was never really the Brigade Commander's intention that we would march all the way. He sent me out to break out of the beachhead. We were the first unit to break out of the beachhead. My objective was about 25 kilometers northwest of the beachhead, a little place called Douglas Settlement, where the enemy were reported to be. It was one of these little townships of a couple of dozen wooden houses occupied by sheep farmers. We went for that; that was our objective. Future intentions, such as they were--I had only the vaguest idea of what the Brigade Commander's detailed future intentions were--but, as I understood them, future intentions were to move forward by bounds, using helicopters. I did not expect to be out on a limb, on my own. I didn't expect to yomp all away, but circumstances required it to be so, and it certainly didn't result in any lack of trust, or lack of understanding from the marines.

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MAJ McMichael: Let me ask you something else, too, Sir. Occasionally, in the US Army you hear even high ranking officers and NCOs say, "You don't have to train to be miserable." Do you think, and maybe that's a bad way to put this question, but does it help sometimes to train to be miserable, in order to accept miserable conditions? I mean do you seek miserable training conditions?

COL Whitehead: Well, if I understand you correctly, the answer to your question is probably yes. Certainly, in initial training, in recruit training, and the formative period of producing commandos from recruits or young officers, there is absolutely no doubt that a deliberate injection of unpleasant conditions is an essential ingredient, if for no other reason than never again will life be so bad. You can always say, "Well, I've been here before, and I hacked it last time. So, I can probably hack it this time." There is a very fine balance when one is commanding an organization that is trained, and one is commanding an organization that is an elite and specalist outfit of very high quality people. When one is doing continuation training, there is a balance to be struck between the moral value of subjecting oneself to unpleasant conditions--the moral advantage that one gets from the self-dicipline, self-denial, and endurance that comes from stretching oneself in adverse conditions--and the training value in other lessons that one might wish to learn. A classic example of this is Norway, where we train for three months of every year. It happens once or twice every winter; the conditions become so bloody with heavy driving snow and very low temperatures that exercise value is being lost in the pursuit of survival. And, that's probably the time to call a halt, and say, "Well, we're not actually learning anything. All we're doing is surviving, punishing ourselves." Well, not even just punishing oneself, one is just simply surviving--staying alive. And, that's probably the time to say, "Okay, stop, we'll do it again tomorrow." But, it's a very nice judgment, and I would err on the side of "He who trains hard, fights easy." Actually, from a sort of adverse conditions point of view, my personal view is that the worst conditions are cold and wet, when it's actually a good deal warmer than minus 40. When it's minus 40, and you're coping with very severe cold, you can at least take violent exercise to keep yourself warm. That was the problem in the Falklands; it was cold and wet.