

*“A leader’s character will develop in proportion to the responsibility with which he has been entrusted. ... The two vital attributes of a leader are: (a) decision in action, and (b) calmness in crisis. Given these two attributes he will succeed; without them he will fail.”*

*— British Field Marshal Bernard L. Montgomery*

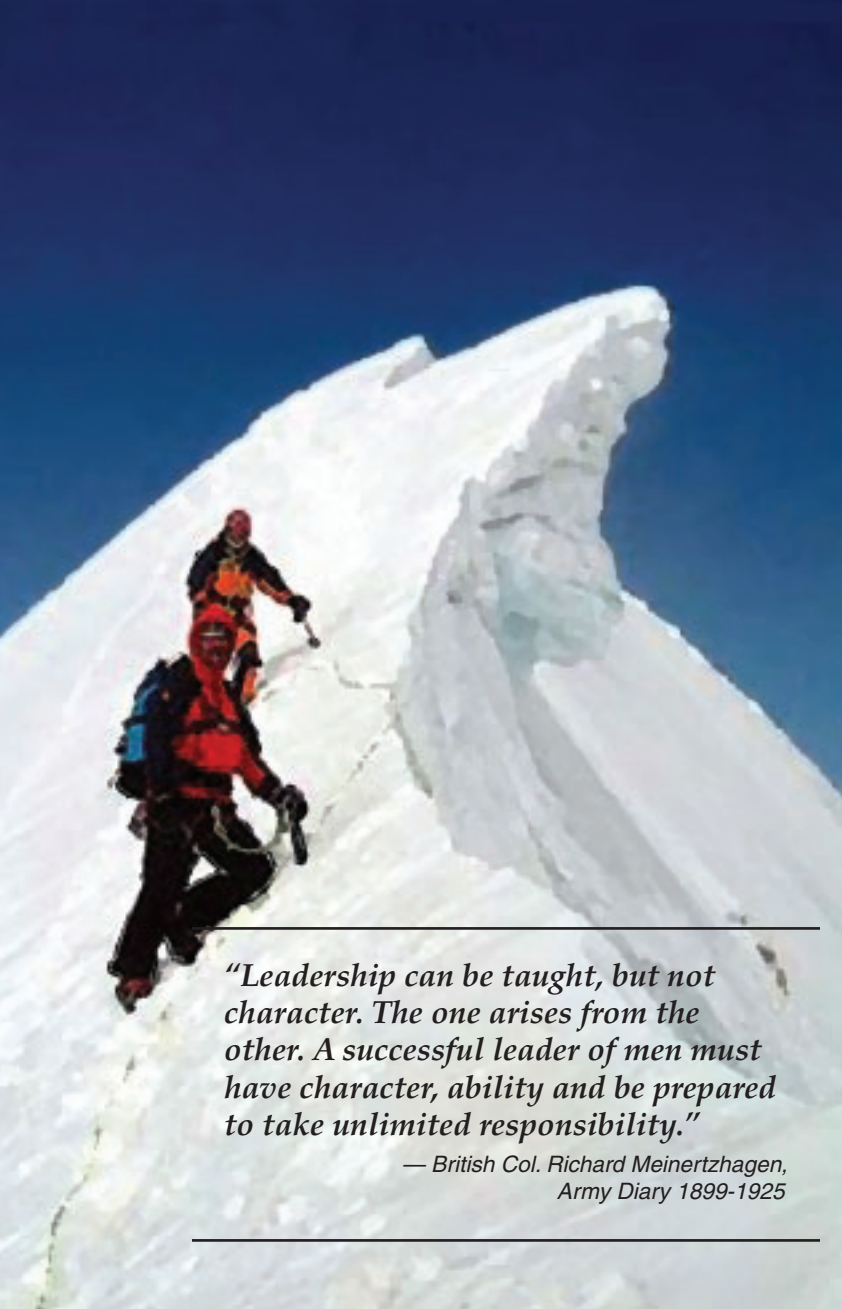
# Developing Pentathletes— Another Tool for the Box

By Col. Andrew C. Cuthbert

*The British liaison officer to Headquarters U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) describes how adventurous training can be a key factor in developing adaptable, agile and decisive young leaders.*

**I**n terms of developing leaders, the U.S., British, Canadian and Australian Armies (the ABCA Armies) are, in essence, after the same goal: they want adaptable, quick thinking, confident and decisive leaders, who are able to operate successfully across the spectrum of conflict. These leaders must not feel hindered by the unfamiliar or by the situation for which they were not specifically trained;





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*“Leadership can be taught, but not character. The one arises from the other. A successful leader of men must have character, ability and be prepared to take unlimited responsibility.”*

— British Col. Richard Meinertzhagen,  
Army Diary 1899-1925

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scale, organization and tradition between the U.S. Army and the armies of the United Kingdom, Australia and Canada dictate that the U.S. Army must use a variety of methods to select, train and educate its young officers—the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, Officer Candidate School and the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC). The Basic Officer Leadership Course (BOLC) II has been a beneficial addition to young officer training to ensure that all officers are equipped to lead a platoon in combat operations, while standardizing and validating BOLC I training.

**I**n the British army all young officers are commissioned after a year’s training and education at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. After graduation young officers attend their special-to-arm training (that is, infantry, armor, artillery, logistics or other). Before starting their training at Sandhurst, all potential officers must pass the selection board, called the Army Officer Selection Board, a three-day residential board

aimed at assessing a candidate’s leadership potential. Approximately half of the candidates are rejected or told to try again when they have matured and developed as individuals. Nearly half of the officer cadets beginning the year’s training will also have spent two or three years in one of the University Officer Training Corps (UOTC), which is broadly similar to the U.S. ROTC program. In Australia young officers spend 18 months training at the Royal Military College Duntroon and are also required to pass a one-day selection board. In Canada, potential officers either spend five years studying at the Royal Military College of Canada in Kingston, or, if they are already university graduates, they will attend the Recruit and Leadership School at St. Jean for approximately four months. Many of the subjects taught in these differing training environments are similar, but there are some training methods that are very different and are worth exploring.

### **Leadership and Initiative Adventurous Training**

Central to the concept of leadership and initiative training is the idea that an individual’s character and personality can be developed through exposure to a wide range of challenging and unfamiliar experiences. The British, Australians and Canadians address this aspect by what is broadly termed adventurous training (AT). In the Canadian and Australian armies AT is conducted as part of leadership development, although not quite to the same degree as in the British army. The British army’s approach to AT has also been influenced by war; the leadership development benefits of hard training in rugged terrain were recognized by those charged by Winston Churchill with setting up British commando training during World War II. The craggy mountains of west Scotland, around Spean Bridge, became the Scottish

commando training center. These men were elite infantry, trained and optimized for raiding enemy coastlines and operating behind enemy lines. Some of the skills required in commando training—mountaineering, rappelling, canoeing, night navigation, advanced first aid, understanding and avoiding hypothermia—are skills taught in many current AT pursuits. Properly constituted, AT can be an important factor in developing the character and personality that is so important in building agile and adaptive young leaders.

Today, AT in the British forces is organized and managed on a Joint Services basis. AT must be physically, mentally and environmentally challenging and must have a direct link to operational preparedness. The British also find that it is a positive factor in recruitment and retention of servicemembers and is extremely cost-effective. AT is open to all servicemembers, and army policy is that all soldiers should conduct a minimum of five days AT each year. The tempo of operations can make this difficult to achieve.

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*“Leadership is that mixture of example, persuasion and compulsion which makes men do what you want them to do. If I were asked to define leadership, I would say that it is the Projection of Personality. It is the most personal thing in the world, because it is plain you.”*

— British Field Marshal Viscount Slim

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Adventurous training pursuits include: scuba (sub aqua) diving, offshore sailing, rock climbing, mountaineering, caving/spelunking, skiing, canoeing/kayaking, free-fall parachuting, glider gliding, and hang- and para-gliding.

An indicator of how important the British army considers AT is the fact that all army officers are trained, while at Sandhurst, how to plan, finance, secure authority for and mount overseas AT expeditions. During their year at Sandhurst all cadets participate in two AT expeditions. In 2005 the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst mounted 64 expeditions, the majority of which were conducted abroad. In this way, all young officers are equipped with the knowledge required to initiate AT for their own soldiers, whom they are encouraged to lead on AT pursuits. Many young officers and NCOs attend courses to become qualified leaders or instructors in particular AT pursuits; this provides them with much more flexibility in being able to plan and execute challenging AT expeditions without having to bring in a qualified kayak instructor, mountain leader or other trainer from outside the unit.

### Levels of Adventurous Training

**Level 1.** This compulsory AT is undertaken by officer cadets and soldiers during initial training, before graduating from the training establishment. An example would be a company under training that would spend four or five days at a Joint Services AT center. Some participants are trained in survival techniques and use of specialist equipment before embarking on a mountain trekking expedition under the control of qualified mountain leaders. Others spend the time learning ropes, knots and safety harnesses before rappelling off cliffs or bridges. Others learn kayaking, water safety and capsizing drill before conducting a kayaking expedition. The range of activities depends on which AT center is hosting the training unit or subunit. Alternatively, officer cadets often plan and initiate ambitious expeditions, which are led by officer cadets

and are not accompanied by Sandhurst staff or instructors. In August 2006, for instance, officer cadets at Sandhurst mounted 23 expeditions to the United States, Romania, France, Crete, Germany, Chile, Croatia, Spain, Oman, Turkey, Malta and Jordan.

**Level 2.** This is compulsory AT when a battalion or company commander directs a subunit, platoon or squad to participate in AT. This could include sending soldiers to an AT center, such as the Alpine Training Centre in Sonthofen, Germany, to learn cross-country or downhill skiing, or to the Kiel Training Centre to conduct off-shore sailing. Alternatively, and depending on the number of qualified AT leaders the unit holds, soldiers might be sent on AT without relying on the resources of an AT center. This demands more planning as well as drawing relevant equipment from centrally controlled AT stores. Decisions on the type of AT undertaken will be driven by numbers involved, time, qualified AT leaders held, availability of AT centers, and the imagination and determination of the officers involved in planning the training.

**Level 3 (Expedition Training).** This is voluntary AT and normally requires some financial contribution by participants. Level 3 AT is generally more demanding than Levels 1 or 2. Often, but not always, participating officers and soldiers have some previous experience in the AT pursuit undertaken. Some of these expeditions are categorized as “high risk and remote,” because they carry more risk than would generally be the case in Levels 1 or 2 training. Many of these expeditions are carried out abroad and may demand a year or more in planning. Level 3 expeditions range from climbing Mount Everest, to searching for a lost tribe in the Indonesian jungle, to walking to the South Pole.

**Level 4 (Leader/Instructor Training).** Level 4 AT is undertaken by an individual attending a course of instruction in any discipline of AT at a Joint Services adventure training center (JSATC). In 2004 and 2005 more than 10,500 servicemembers attended JSATC courses, approximately 8,000 of whom were British soldiers.

## British Army Adventure Training Centers

The heart of AT expertise is contained in the Joint Services adventure training centers in the UK, Germany and Norway. In the UK the army has an AT headquarters and five AT centers; in Germany there is a small headquarters and three AT centers; and there is a Joint Services mountain training wing in Norway. There is also a British AT center in the Canadian Rocky Mountains, which is used by battlegroups that have completed their major combat operations (MCO) maneuver training at the British Army Training Unit Suffield (BATUS) in Alberta, which is broadly equivalent to the U.S. Army's National Training Center (NTC) at Fort Irwin, Calif.

The army also can take advantage of the facilities run by the other services, such as the Joint Services Adventure Sailing Training Centre (JSASTC) at Gosport on the south coast of England. The facility is run by the Royal Navy and has more than 40 yachts, many of which are capable of sailing around the world. Under the guidance of an experienced skipper, soldiers may sail across the Atlantic after two or three days of training. Many will overcome fear, seasickness, cold and fatigue in order to succeed. Teamwork is critical to success, and at the end of one of these voyages the sense of achievement is tremendous.

The Level 4 AT centers cost less than \$18 million (2005) per annum. The cost of Level 1 AT is carried by the train-

Expedition 2001/2002, which ran from August 2001 to May 2002, 100 regular and reserve soldiers participated along with civilian scientists and explorers. The British Army Forbidden Plateau Expedition in 2004 was also conducted in Antarctica. Other recent high-profile purely military expeditions include:

■ Army—*Everest West Ridge 2006*: Put the first Briton on Everest via the West Ridge. [www.armyoneverest.com](http://www.armyoneverest.com).

■ Army—*Northern Volta Serpent*: First recorded descent of the White Volta River in Ghana using five open canoes plus bank support in Land Rover.

■ Army—*Andesmountain Diamond*: Climbing Aconcagua. At 22,841 feet, it is the highest mountain in South America.

## The Real Value of Adventurous Training

Officers and soldiers participating in AT learn a great deal about themselves and about each other in a nonmilitary environment. Young leaders can ascertain which of their soldiers are bold or timid; who are the best team players; who display leadership skills; who are impetuous or reckless; who are risk averse; who are excitable under pressure; who are calm and collected under pressure; who are more determined than most. Many positive and negative characteristics are exposed during challenging AT, which is also an effective vehicle for team building.

In some respects, the U.S. Army teaches the same things through Airborne and Ranger training. When considering personal commitment, determination, fitness, resilience, fear of jumping and teamwork, there are great similarities between this U.S. training and some of the aims of British AT. There are also significant differences. U.S. Airborne and Ranger training is mostly undertaken by the infantry and other combat arms personnel, whereas AT is undertaken by all personnel, regardless of military specialty. The most significant difference concerns the individual responsibility of the leader. When participat-

ing in either U.S. or British army military training, the young leader is part of a recognized military hierarchy—there are instructors, an in-place chain of command with sergeants major and company commanders. In short, there is someone else to sort out the serious drama or difficulty. When a young officer or senior NCO is leading a group of soldiers on a mountain trekking expedition in the Himalayan Mountains, however, the buck stops with him or her—there is no one else there. Whatever the difficulty is—an expedition member injured, expedition cash lost, a cultural error causing offense to local people, a serious disciplinary problem—the leader must resolve it. Quite a number of British officers will admit that some of their greatest leadership challenges occurred during AT expedi-

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*“Leadership is a psychological force that has nothing to do with morals or good character or even intelligence; nothing to do with ideals of idealism. It is a matter of relative will-powers, a basic connection between one animal and the rest of the herd. ... Leadership is not imposed as authority. It is actually welcomed and wanted by the led.”*

— Correlli Barnett, *British Army Staff College papers*

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ing organization. The cost of Level 2 training is carried by the unit, whose soldiers are undergoing training. The cost of Level 3 AT is provided by a mix of service funds, unit funds, sponsorship and participants. If the U.S. Army puts approximately 17,000 soldiers through Airborne School each year, but only needs to fill about 6,000 Airborne billets annually, it may be interesting to analyze the per capita training cost of the 11,000 that do not fill an Airborne billet. Future research may indicate that challenging AT achieves similar or enhanced results in the development of agile leaders for less per capita cost.

For some of the larger expeditions the army will team up with other organizations that share an interest in the same area or activity. For example, in the British Army Antarctic

tions rather than in Iraq, Afghanistan or on the streets of Northern Ireland. It is the necessity of having to make decisions in an unfamiliar environment that is so crucial to developing young leaders to be comfortable with chaos or to be unfazed by the unknown. In developing leaders this decision-making quality is a fundamentally important factor.

### Controlled Risk

In order for AT to be challenging there must be some risk or danger associated with the training. The key is to ensure that the risk is a controlled risk in order to maximize the training challenge and minimize injuries and fatalities. Consequently, it is important to ensure that AT pursuits or expeditions are controlled by, or led by, properly qualified individuals. Each AT pursuit has graduated levels of proficiency, allowing individuals to develop from novice, through intermediate, up to highly experienced and then instructor. The element of risk in the AT pursuit or expedition will dictate what level of experience must be held by the expedition leader or by the technical adviser to the expedition leader. In addition, each AT expedition is scrutinized to ensure that the correct procedures are in place and that the proposed level of risk is acceptable. Only when this has been achieved is authority given for funds to be allocated and for the expedition to proceed. Inevitably, in any challenging pursuit that involves risk there will be accidents. The number of serious accidents is very small, however, when compared with the number of soldiers/servicemembers taking part.

From 2000 to 2005, approximately 250,000 servicemembers would have been involved in some AT activity. During the same period 103 died in operations in Iraq and Afghanistan and 297 were killed in road traffic accidents. Although highly regrettable, the 13 fatalities resulting from AT reflects a very small percentage of those taking part.

The fact that the British armed forces are prepared to accept a small number of personnel killed or injured during AT is an indicator of the importance that is attached to AT in the development of agile and adaptable officers and soldiers.

### Cultural Awareness

A useful spin-off from overseas AT expeditions is developing cultural awareness. During most overseas expedi-

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*“An individual in today’s technological society needs the opportunity to test and challenge his basic human potential in order for the individual to realize and discover [himself]. It is necessary to introduce youth to danger and adventure to provide a learning environment that would provide the moral equivalent of war.”*

— Kurt Hahn, founder of the Scottish Outward Bound school, Gordonstoun

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tions, soldiers will interact with the local population and may well be required to study the region and its people as part of expedition preparation. This interaction enables soldiers to gain a greater understanding of how others live and



how the norms and values governing the lives of these various peoples differ from their own. This tends to broaden the experience and horizons of young servicemembers and may well enable them to understand and communicate effectively with local people when deployed on counterinsurgency and stability operations. For instance, in the Expedition Mercury Challenge, an around-the-world sailing expedition which ran from June 2006 to May 2007, 140 soldiers participated, sharing the 10 legs, each of which lasted between two and six weeks. Different soldiers landed in many parts of the world, including South America, the West Indies, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand.

With the current tempo of operations, an observer might wonder how time can be found to conduct AT. The reality is that a number of AT events or expeditions are cancelled because of operational commitments; however, the num-

ber that is retained is still substantial. This reflects both how important British commanders consider AT and the degree to which the British army is imbued with the spirit of AT. Units make time to send soldiers on AT.

### Potential for AT in the United States

The United States is blessed with wonderful AT opportunities: long ocean coastlines for sailing, numerous mountain ranges for climbing, trekking and cross-country skiing, together with the huge wilderness of Alaska. Countless rivers offer great white-water rafting and kayaking opportunities; the differentials in climate, from the icy wastes of northern Alaska to the arid deserts of states in



the Southwest, also offer a great variety of challenges. Beyond the continental United States, the U.S. armed forces' footprint across the world provides an enviable variety of base locations for mounting overseas AT expeditions.

AT could play a positive role in leadership and initiative training within the Army force generation (ARFORGEN) process, especially when units are in the reset pool. It seems likely that many units that have recovered from operational deployment may not have a complete set of operational equipment. This, together with the large turnover of personnel, may limit the opportunity for standard military training in the unit's primary role. During this period, AT could provide excellent opportunities for soldiers to develop teamwork, fitness and resilience, while the young officers leading them develop as leaders in unfamiliar environments. It would also provide opportunities for young officers and NCOs to get to know their soldiers in challenging conditions.

AT might also provide TRADOC with another tool for managing the influx of young officers into the operating force. Discussions with various officers in Headquarters TRADOC have indicated that the ARFORGEN model demands a steady stream of officers throughout the year; however, the current officer accessions process provides a

great bulk of young officers in the summer, which puts considerable pressure on educational resources. Officers' entry into the educational system could be staggered by sending some on AT courses in order to secure an AT qualification before attending their respective formal courses. Others might attend an AT course between leaving a school and arriving at a unit. The planning, financing and resourcing of AT expeditions could be taught as part of the basic officer leader course process; cadets could attend AT courses during their time at college in order to become qualified AT leaders.

Any initiative that takes officers and NCOs out of the operating force and into the institutional Army to man

AT centers is unlikely to succeed—considering today's tight manpower constraints. AT centers, however, can be staffed primarily by civilians or retired military personnel, as it is their technical AT expertise that is most in demand at the centers. Probably the most cost-effective AT instructor is someone who has retired from the military but also holds (or gains) the relevant AT instructor's qualification; these instructors will understand the military and be in a better position to shape the training in order to maximize the leadership and initiative aspects of the AT.

Armies have always needed to develop good leaders to be successful. The challenges of today may not be fundamentally different from challenges faced by previous generations

of military leaders. What may have changed most is the speed at which we expect young leaders to change their focus across the spectrum of conflict. Gen. Charles Krulak's 3 Block War is faced by U.S. and British officers and soldiers every day in Iraq and Afghanistan. They broker a cease-fire between warring tribes in the morning, deal with contractors and NGOs on reconstruction projects over the lunch period, train indigenous security forces in the afternoon, and fight through an ambush on the way back to base location before executing a deliberate night cordon-and-search operation. This is no longer considered a particularly unusual day. For our young officers and NCOs to be adaptable enough to succeed in the face of such varied challenges, we must ensure that their character and personalities have been developed to the point where they are comfortable with the unexpected and the unfamiliar and can plan from first principles. They must have the confidence for the "decision" and the personality from "which a single aim can be imparted to the herd." Alongside more traditional tough military training, adventurous training, involving controlled exposure to risk, can play a significant role in developing leadership, teamwork, physical fitness and moral and physical courage, among other personal attributes and skills vital to operational capability. ★