



Combat Studies Institute

Staff Ride Team

Virtual Staff Ride Overview



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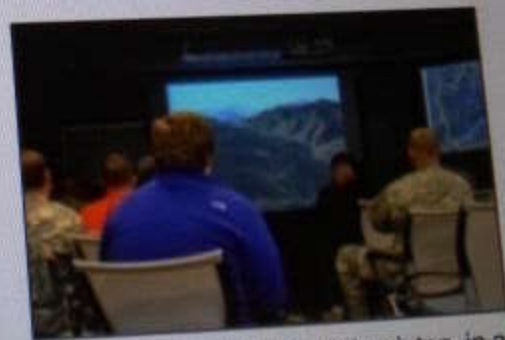
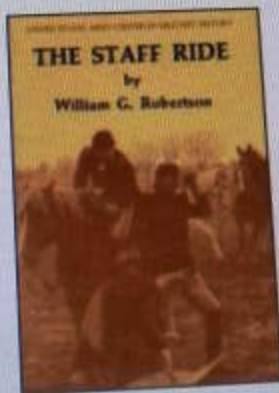
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Introduction

- A *staff ride* is a historical study of a campaign or battle that envisions a systematic **preliminary study phase**, an extensive **field study phase** on the actual historic site, and an **integration phase** to capture the lessons derived from each (for an overview of the staff ride concept, see the CSI Staff Ride Team web site at <http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/CSI/SRTeam.asp>).
- A *virtual staff ride* (VSR) **follows the same methodology as a field staff ride**, but because travel restrictions preclude a trip to battlefield sites, the terrain is **replicated in a virtual environment in the classroom**.



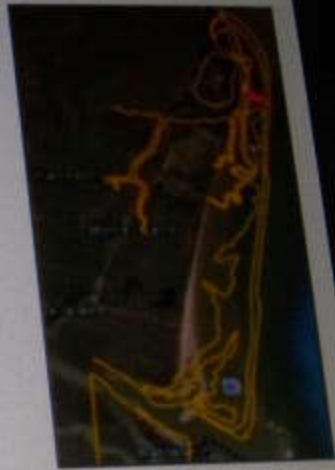
At the Bloody Angle at Gettysburg



In the Waygal Valley, Afghanistan, in a classroom

Why Conduct a VSR?

- Getting there is difficult
 - Funding
 - Distance
 - Time
- Inaccessibility to the actual ground (private property or foreign travel issues)
- Terrain overcome by modern urban sprawl
- The terrain simply no longer exists



Coastal erosion in South Carolina



Urban sprawl in Atlanta



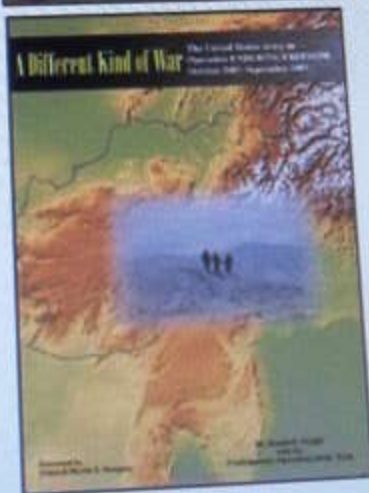
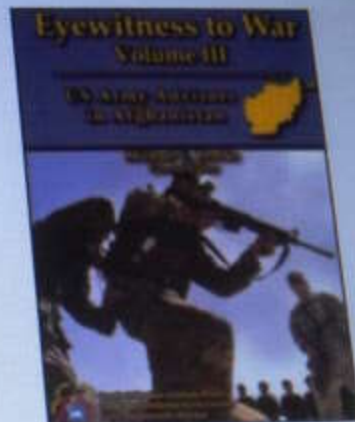
Observation post in Afghanistan

The Virtual Staff Ride

- Technology is leveraged to achieve the same degree of leader development and education as seen on a field staff ride.
- Produced since 2005, the CSI model of a VSR envisions a detailed replication of terrain based upon satellite imagery and the construction of three dimensional models to immerse the student in the virtual terrain, thus providing the most realistic vision of the battlefield possible.
- All current VSRs are set in the contemporary environments of Afghanistan and Iraq and based upon CSI-published Long War materials provided to the Force since 2001 that are available upon request and/or can be downloaded from the CSI website.
- CSI provides quality instruction and technical support (two personnel), funded by the unit.

Supporting VSR References

CSI Publishing



Available Virtual Staff Rides

- **Operation Iraqi Freedom Virtual Staff Ride (March 2003-March 05)**
 - This staff ride provides approximately 16 hours of material that examines the major facets of the planning and execution of Phase III combat operations from JAN-MAY 2003 and the transition to Phase IV operations, to including the Shia Uprising in Najaf, Operation Phantom Fury in Fallujah, and operations in Tal Afar through 2005. The length of the virtual staff ride can be tailored to run from one to three days, subject to the unit's schedule and training objectives.
- **Operation Anaconda (February – March 2002)**
 - A day long staff ride (or partial day staff ride) that examines the coalition attack into the Shahi Kowt Valley in 2002. The study encompasses conventional operations (3/101 ABN Div), coalition operations (Afghan Military Forces), joint operations (CFACC), and special operations.
- **Wanat (13 July 2008)**
 - A 4-hour staff ride that examines a coalition Task Force conducting COIN operations in the Waygal valley of Afghanistan, 2007-2008, focusing primarily on an insurgent attack on a small COP occupied by 2nd PLT, Chosen Co, 2nd/503rd Airborne Infantry, 173rd Airborne Brigade.

Operation Iraqi Freedom

Shorter Scenarios

- **The March to Baghdad:** An abbreviated version of the overall OIF VSR, this 6-hour staff ride focuses on Phase III Combat Operations during March-April 2003, culminating with the fall of Baghdad.
- **The Ambush of the 507th Maintenance Company:** This 2-hour staff ride looks at the ambush and destruction of the 507th Maintenance Company on 23 March 2003 during V Corps advance on Baghdad.
- **Check Point 541:** This 2-hour staff ride highlights an escalation of force incident at US blocking position in Baghdad on 4 March 2005, resulting in the accidental death of an Italian Major General.
- **The Palm Sunday Ambush:** This 2-hour staff ride focuses on the insurgent ambush of two supply convoys on ASR Detroit and US actions on contact on 20 March, 2005.

The March to Baghdad

- Leadership and Mission Command
- Combined Joint planning and execution
- Warfighting functions
- Influence of culture in warfare
- Employment of emerging technology
- Urban operations
- Transitions and sequels



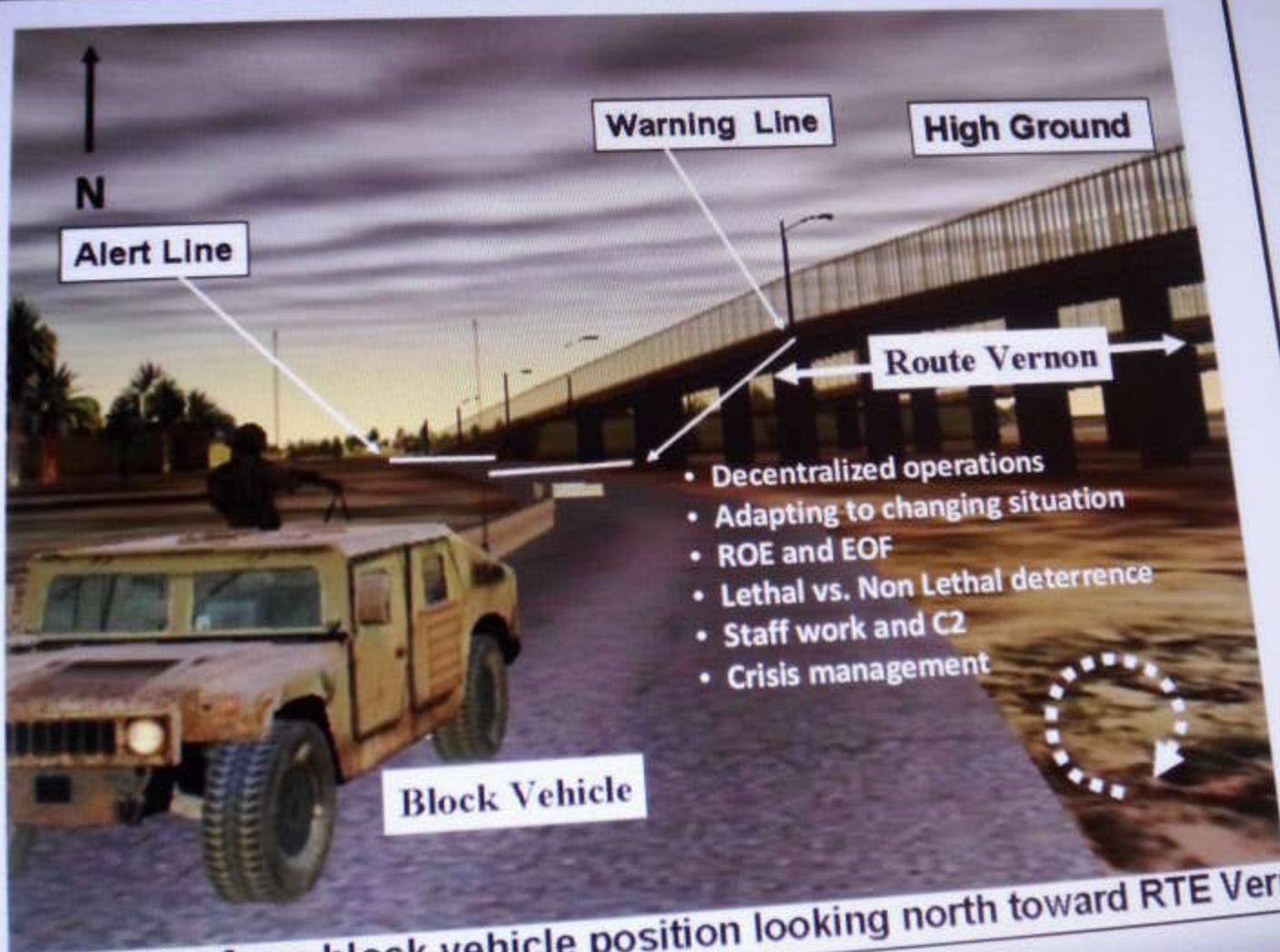
The Ambush of the 507th Maintenance Company

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- Importance of pre-combat inspections
- Knowledge of the enemy situation/intelligence
- Effective command, control, and communication
- Considerations of the non-linear battlefield
- "Cultural attitudes" on training for combat

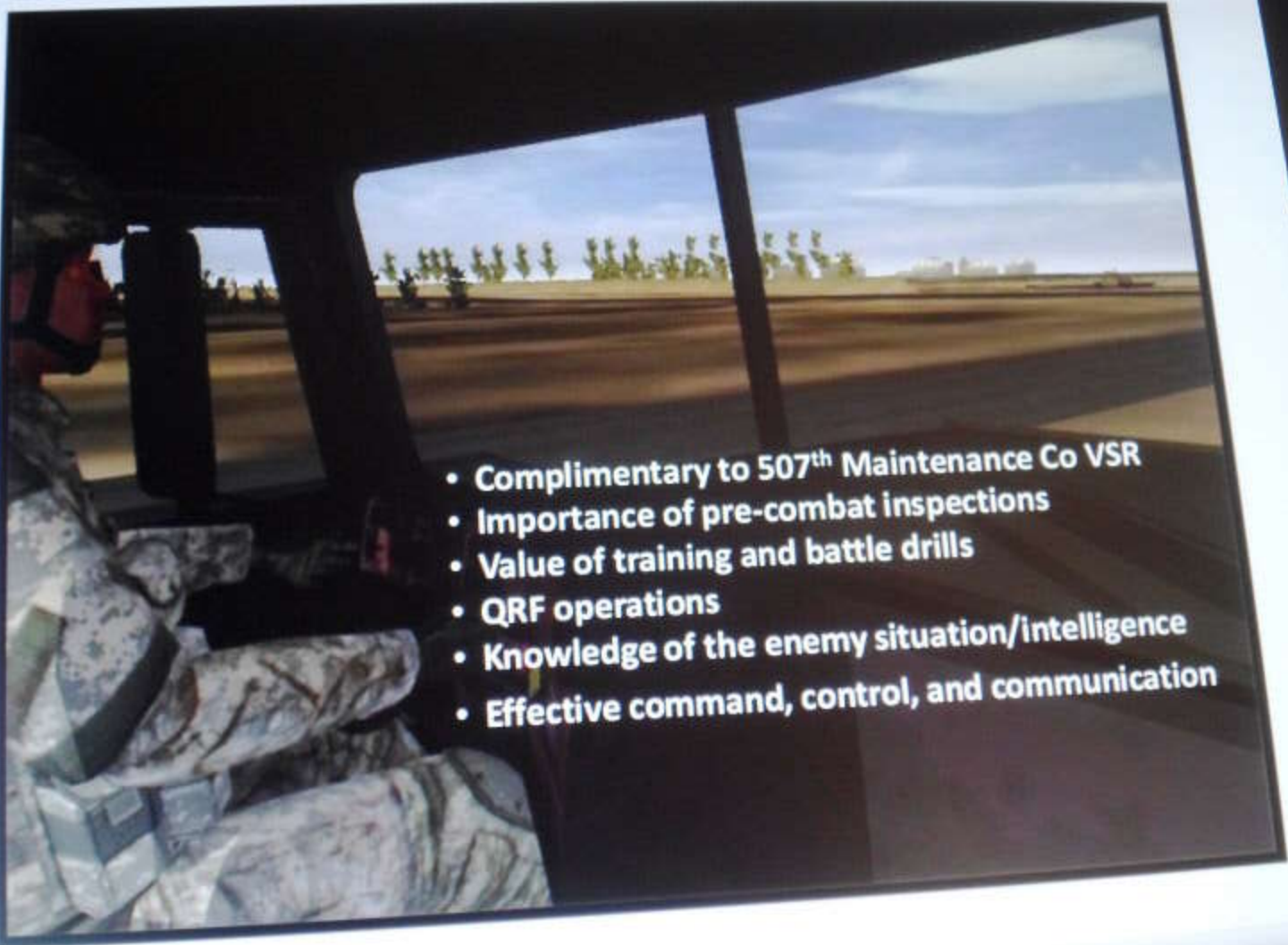


Check Point 541



Virtual view from block vehicle position looking north toward RTE Vernon

The Palm Sunday Ambush

- 
- Complimentary to 507th Maintenance Co VSR
 - Importance of pre-combat inspections
 - Value of training and battle drills
 - QRF operations
 - Knowledge of the enemy situation/intelligence
 - Effective command, control, and communication

Operation Anaconda

A one-day staff ride (or partial day staff ride) that examines the coalition attack into the Shahi Kowt Valley in 2002. The study encompasses conventional operations (3/101 ABN Div), multinational operations (Afghan Military Forces), joint operations (CFACC), and special operations.



Takur Ghar

- Leadership and Mission Command
- Mission Analysis
- Joint Operations
- Multinational Operations
- Warfighting functions
- Combat Power
- Terrain Analysis

The village of Babol Kheyi

Robert's Ridge at the top of Takur Ghar

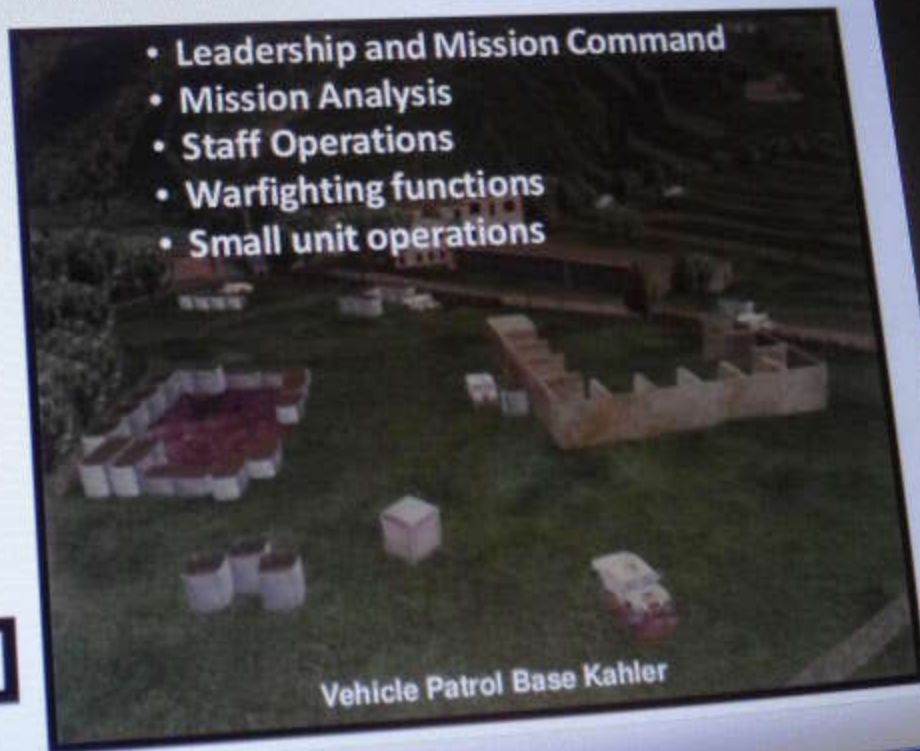
Wanat - 13 July 2008

Examines a coalition Task Force conducting COIN operations in the Waygal valley of Afghanistan, 2007-2008, focusing primarily on an insurgent attack on a small COP occupied by 2nd PLT, Chosen Co, 2nd/503rd Airborne Infantry, 173rd Airborne Brigade.

Primary focus is PLT and CO level, but can be tailored to concentrate on the BN level.



Executed in approximately 4 hours



OIF VSR "Exportable" Package

- "Staff ride in a box" concept in a R/CD format
- Includes all materials required to conduct a VSR without direct support from CSI
 - Virtual terrain (VBS2 required to run program)
 - Instructor support package
 - Student support package
- Provides three separate 2-hour OIF VSR scenarios
 - The Ambush of the 507th Maintenance Company
 - Check Point 541
 - The Palm Sunday Ambush
- Packages will be mailed directly to the organization via US mail
- Requests for the OIF exportable package can be submitted to the CSI Staff Ride Team at usarmy.leavenworth.tradoc.mbx.csi-srt@mail.mil.

Classroom Requirements



Typical classroom set up and orientation

Facility Types

- Organization classroom/conference rooms
- Education Center classrooms
- Simulation Center classrooms

Audience Size

- Standard audience cap is 35-40 personnel
- Quality of the facility allows for increases up to a maximum of 50-60 personnel

CSI Requirements

- Two laptops
 - VSR software
 - Power Point visuals

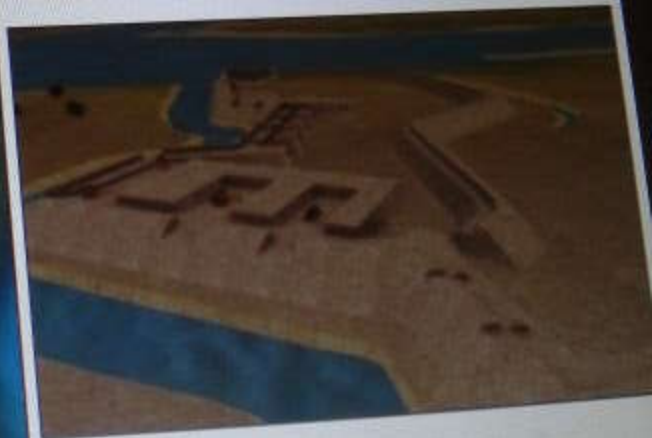
Unit/Organization Requirements

- Adequate classroom facility with adjustable lighting
- Two projectors w/ UGA cables
- Two projection screens
- Podium
- 1-set of speakers

Rebuilding History

Battery Wagner, South Carolina

In 2013 CSI began a transition to balance its contemporary VSRs with historic examples. An initial requirement in this process was to rebuild lost sites and terrain from historical events and bring them back to life in the classroom. The pilot VSR for this initiative is the recreation of Battery Wagner, a key position in the defense of Civil War Charleston, SC, made famous in the 1989 film, *Glory*. In the 150 years that passed since the Union assaults, Battery Wagner and its adjacent terrain were lost to Atlantic Ocean erosion. Now, resurrected, it will be integrated into an existing CSI field staff ride for the Charleston Campaign, 1861-1865. Future VSRs currently in development include the Battle of Fallujah and Pancho Villa's Raid and the Punitive Expedition, 1916-17.



Conclusion

The Benefits of a VSR

- Ability to transition from the 2D to the 3D in 360'
- Flexibility to move sequentially over terrain
- Illustrates the difficulty of mission command and leadership challenges relative to terrain
 - Terrain and weather analysis
 - Analysis of mobility corridors and avenues of approach
 - Advantages & disadvantages of available cover
 - Line of sight & fields of fire
 - Movement and maneuver
 - Fires coordination and integration
 - Air ground integration

The past is prologue!

