Charles A. Krohn. *Lost Battalion of Tet: The Breakout of 2/12th Cavalry at Hue.* Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2008. 210 pp. $23.95 (paper), ISBN 978-1-59114-434-2.

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The Lessons Never Grow Old

Readers will enjoy this book by Charles Krohn, whose experiences as the intelligence officer for the 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment (2/12th) during the Tet Offensive of 1968 provides the foundation for the work. *Lost Battalion of Tet* reveals an army unitâs struggles preparing for an impending battle. The author's first-hand account provides a tale of bravery that captures the readerâs imagination. Additionally, Krohn does a good job of identifying lessons learned that are based on his observations–lessons on the value of training, intelligence preparation of the battlefield, and planning. Each has solidified and improved our current doctrine. Charles Krohn is now on the staff of the American Battle Monuments Commission in Arlington, Virginia.

First published by Praeger Publishers in 1993, the original included statistics that many readers questioned. This revised version corrects the first edition with two new appendices containing the names of the men killed in action, and those receiving the Distinguished Service Cross. Of special note, Lieutenant Colonel Bob Leroy Gregory, the replacement commander for Lieutenant Colonel M. Collier Ross, is listed in both appendices.

The 2/12th Cavalry, typical of most cavalry units, was a hard-training organization that demonstrated discipline under extreme conditions. Motivating men to maintain a vigil for an event that might or might not occur is one of the military's great leadership challenges.

The troops of the 2/12th were constantly improving their positions on the ground, and rehearsing procedures to ensure the highest standards when it came time for action. Gregory instilled this type of discipline into the men of the 2/12th Cavalry, enabling a strong and effective defense against the Tet Offensive. In addition to defensive operations, U.S. forces learned that when conducting search-and-destroy missions, it was critical to have artillery support because they could be ambushed at any time. Training with, and using artillery properly, can balance a fight. Krohn supports this point through his recollection of a platoon from C Company that used artillery to keep a numerically superior force from overrunning their positions until they could disengage.

Intelligence gathering was Krohnâs business. As the intelligence officer for the 2/12th, he had the task of getting inside the enemyâs decision cycle. Intelligence is a combat multiplier, and intelligence preparation of the battlefield is a critical part of the commanderâs ability to visualize an impending combat action. Krohn illuminates this with information obtained from senior North Vietnamese army officers killed just prior to the beginning of Tet. This information allowed the battalion commander better to prepare his defenses for the impending attack, thus saving the lives of many of the soldiers involved in the operation.

Krohn points out a serious miscalculation by the United States concerning the enemy's tenacity. In many

cases, U.S. forces did not view the North Vietnamese army as formidable. Therefore, commanders made mistakes in employing forces against an enemy who was extremely patient and dedicated. It is critical for planners to remember that war against an experienced enemy who is fighting on their own ground, without in-depth study of their culture as part of the planning process, can end badly. Reflecting on the past, Krohn concludes that arrogance and lack of respect for one's enemy is a shortcoming that can lead to protracted war.

From the early days of warfare, armies realized that they must sustain operations, whether while training, deploying, or in combat. Early in the book, Krohn discusses the abundance of equipment available to combat forces in Vietnam, and how quickly replacement equipment was provided. None of that, however, mattered if the plan for sustainment was not nested with the combat operation. One such concern developed as the 2/12th was preparing to move from Landing Zone Ross to Camp Evans. The unit lacked confidence that ammunition, along with other supplies, would be on the ground at the battalionâs new destination. Upon arrival, the 2/12th found

that there was, in fact, no ammunition. Moreover, an overall poor movement plan for the entire division from Camp Evans to the north proved very dangerous. The lesson that Krohn illustrates is the importance of planning all aspects of an operation, and the role the commander must play to ensure trust between units in contact, and units sustaining the operation. The best way for this to occur is through planning, coordination, and proper execution.

In summary, Charles Krohn provides an accounting of the actions of the 2/12thCavalry during the Tet Offensive of 1968. Krohn reinforces the lessons provided by the 2/12th's experience during Tet. First, train the force. There is no substitute for disciplined training focusing on the fundamentals that aid in survival. Second, the ability to take information from the battlefield and interpret it in a manner that allows the commander the ability to make decisions through visualization is a true combat multiplier. Finally, planning all aspects of an operation is vital for success, whether at the tactical or strategic level. Any young officer can learn valuable lessons from the 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry's experience.

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