

82nd Airborne and Pottenger's Cats: They Don't Make Germans Like They Used To

By Simon Yu, MD

August 1999. In the middle of a hot muggy summer at Fort Polk, Louisiana, I was doing my US Army Reserve annual training. My home station is the 21st General Hospital in St. Louis. I was assigned to the 325th Field Hospital in Kansas City. My mission was to support the 82nd Airborne Division for JRTC (Joint Readiness Training Center) for a joint training exercise with German Paratroopers doing night jumps into the swampland at Fort Polk, Louisiana.

Jumping from an airplane with full military gear has a certain rate of injury. Night jump exercises cause dramatic increases in the injury rate. Our assignment for the 325th Field Hospital was to take care of injured soldiers for the 82nd Airborne Division and the German Paratroopers.

We were told to expect greater than a 30 percent injury rate for the paratroopers. We were to be prepared for common injuries from ankle sprains, knee and back injuries, and occasional dislocations of shoulders and lower extremities. The US Army Reserve medical doctors, nurses and all the support groups were coming from all over the Midwest to support the 325th Field Hospital and 82nd Airborne Division for this Joint Training Exercise.

Every reservist was excited. This is a real field exercise for actual casualties and not our typical mock exercises. Some physicians brought their own medical supplies to treat soldiers. We were ready for the night.

Several hours after the Joint Exercise commenced, streams of soldiers started coming through the triage area. They were filling the emergency room tent and overflowing to all the medical tents.

I noticed that the wounded 82nd Airborne soldiers and the German paratroopers were separated between the two sides of the tent. They wear different uniforms so it was easy to recognize the German uniforms.

Colonel O., an old orthopedic surgeon with a distinct German name entered the emergency room. He started asking me why there were so many young German paratroopers lined up with injuries. He didn't seem too upset for the 82nd Airborne soldiers lined up with injuries but was visibly upset and fuming about seeing all those German paratroopers.

I will never forget what he said, "They don't make Germans like they used to!" Almost ten years later, after 25 years in the Army Reserve, I have retired as a Colonel. However, my memory of that night and his remark are as fresh today as at that time. What did he mean?

Without a national or ethnic bias, I think the old Colonel must have been trying to understand the new generation of soldiers. The old Colonel's attitude of "take the pain, don't complain, learn to live with it" wasn't on the same page with the new generation of young soldiers.

Attitude does make a difference how we cope with stress and pain. Since World War II, there's been a gradual change in our attitude for coping with stress and pain. There have also been dramatic changes in our diet and nutrition. There have been several generations of people who grew up with chemically based, industrially farmed food. They've been eating highly processed, junk foods laced with chemical additives for the last several generations.

After all, we are what we eat and assimilate. Those modern processed foods often provide maximum calories and minimum required nutrients. They don't provide optimal nutritional support for the body to heal and repair.

In all military branches, Army, Navy and Air Force, soldiers are struggling with weight problems very much like most Americans. The basic training for US Army recruits had to be modified because so many young, Americans are over weight, out of shape and incur high injury rates.

For those of you interested in nutrition and its effects on human health, look into the Price-Pottenger Nutrition Foundation at www.ppnf.org. Specifically, refer to "Pottenger's Cats." This was a study in nutrition by Francis Pottenger, Jr. MD. Dr. Pottenger compared cats raised on cooked foods versus raw food. He found that the cats on a cooked food diet had an acceleration of physical degeneration, arthritis, sterility, allergies, and skeletal deformities. These cats also passed the deficiencies on to succeeding generations. Also, read my short article, "Raw Food – More Powerful than Most Medicines" from the Articles page on my web site.

The 82nd Airborne soldiers, German paratroopers, and Pottenger's cats are not much different in regard to the physically degenerative effects of poor nutrition. Generations of changes in eating habits do carry their consequences. Rather than saying, "They don't make Germans like they used to" I may add, "They don't make people like they used to, whether Germans or Americans." I'm sure the "old Colonel" would agree with the "newly retired Colonel."

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