U.S. ARMY

Facilitated After Action Review (FAAR)

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What makes an AAR effective?

FM 7-0, Appendix K (June 2021)

Facilitated After Action Review (FAAR)

An After Action Review (AAR) is…

What → a guided analysis of an organization's performance,

When → conducted at appropriate times during and at the conclusion of a training event or operation

Why → with the objective of improving future performance.

Who → It includes a facilitator, event participants, and other observers.

AARs enable and encourage participants to self-discover what happened and then develop a plan for improving task performance.

FM 7-0, Appendix K

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Formal AAR

- Have external Observers/Controllers, and supporting personnel
- Requires more preparation time and resource-intensive
- Normally incorporates complex training aids
- Deliberately scheduled – time and date
- Conducted where best supported

vs.

Informal AAR

- Conducted by internal chain of command
- Requires less preparation time
- Incorporates simple training aids (things available to you at the time)
- Conducted when the unit needs it
- Held on-site

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The AAR process consists of four steps…

- Which events must be discussed in AAR
- AAR location
- Gather/Collect Observations
- How will it be organized? Chronological, key events, themes, or issues?

Plan

Execute

- Provide / establish rules
- State agenda
- Summarize what happened and why it happened that way
- What needs improvement or sustainment
- Determine how the task should be done differently
- Close out with takeaways

Evaluate

- Compare the learned performance against standards
- Identify specific ways to improve proficiency

Integrate

- Identify findings that can be applied to the next mission
- Share lessons learned through after action reports

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Best Practices

- Identify strengths to sustain and weaknesses to improve
- ***Everyone participates*** if they have insight, observation, or a question that will help the unit identify and correct deficiencies or sustain strengths
- Participants must ***avoid using the AAR as a critique***. No one – regardless of rank, position, or strength of personality – has all the information or answers
- The facilitator can / should:
  - Reinforce the fact that ***it is permissible to disagree respectfully***
  - Focus on learning and encourage people to give ***honest opinions***
  - Draw in personnel who are reluctant to offer input
  - Use ***open-ended and leading questions*** to guide the discussion
  - ***Enter the discussion only when necessary***



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Balancing the Art & Science of the CST AAR

- Platoon AARs should not last longer than 30 – 45 minutes.
  - *Establish what was supposed to occur*
  - *Establish what actually occurred*
  - *Determine what went right or wrong –* ***doctrine is the blueprint***
  - *Determine why something was right or wrong*
  - *Close out by emphasizing key takeaways for* ***implementation*** *in next mission*

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Prescriptive Methods

- Leader prescribes problem and solutions to subordinate
- No significant self-reflection – limits thinking and learning



Guided Discovery Learning

- More effective than prescriptive methods
- Maximize the potential for discovery – with facilitator guidance
- Assumes cadets have sufficient task knowledge and training

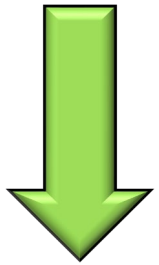


FM 6-22, Chapter 2

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Experience is a powerful learning tool;

however, learning from experience is not guaranteed.



Learning requires commitment and purpose… and

occurs after reflecting on experiences.

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Let's talk about you…

- How do you learn best?
- What makes this learning method best for you? Why?
- Do you learn more effectively when the information can be internalized… rather than just "being told what to do"?

Why do so many AARs involve leaders DIRECTING training audiences on what and how to do?

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A cadre observation…

The cadet Platoon Leader has finished the order brief and is preparing to depart the patrol base. The platoon's patrol base exit and movement towards the Objective Rally Point (ORP) was relatively smooth until 300 meters into their movement. The Platoon Leader used the radio to order the squads to halt. However, the lead Squad Leader does not hear the radio transmission and continues to move forward. The Platoon Leader furiously arm signals the lead squad without success. The lead squad eventually disappears into the brush without the rest of the platoon. The Platoon Leader spends the next 20 minutes trying to reestablish contact with the squad leader.



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LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE

Cadet Mission Execution

Experience

Cadet Observation

FAAR Incorporating the Experiential Learning Cycle

Problem Solving

Publish	***Process***	**Developmental Need**	***Generalize & Apply***
What was supposed to happen?	What went right?		How will we sustain the good?
Mission Brief	*Perspective*		How will we improve the bad?
Recall	***Reflect***		***Learn***
What actually happened?	What went wrong?		***How can we include this in the next training event?***
Mission Execution	*Perspective*		

Repeat as necessary for each phase or critical event, etc.

End-state

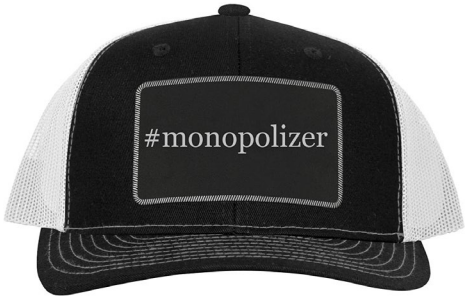
Ready for Future Application

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Challengers to the Group Dynamic

Individual Challengers

- The Monopolizer
- The Pollyanna
- The Apologizer
- The Withdrawer
- The Complainer











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Conducting Your FAAR…

- Identify one or two key observations (sustain / improve) prior to the FAAR.
- Select a site that will support facilitation.
- Have Salmon Card available for use during FAAR.
- Establish FAAR ground rules.
- Promote discussion among the group and enter the conversation when required.
- Publish what was supposed to happen.
- Publish what actually happened.
- Process what went right (strength) and/or what went wrong (improve).
- Identify how the task could be completed next time to improve/enhance performance.
- Provide closing comments and link findings into next training iteration.

