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Leadership Self-Development and Military Education

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27 Nov 07

Introduction

The U.S Army utilizes numerous types of military education programs to develop their Soldiers into better leaders to accomplish any mission that they will face, both present and in future wars to come. The purpose of this paper is to give a better understanding of the U.S Army military education systems benefits and drawbacks of training.

Military Education in Self-development

The U.S Army realized it needed to advance our military education to Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs) Corp drastically after the Vietnam War to improve our armed forces. The U.S Army realized the need to improve our junior enlisted members before they reach higher ranks, since younger leaders will make command decisions in modern wars to come. The length and time schools take Soldiers away from family and their units, Non-Commissioned Officer Education System (NCOES) and other military schools as well as civilian schools, such as college, develop our Soldiers, because improving training for our Soldiers will make a stronger Army and better educated Soldiers make better leaders.

Benefits of NCOES Courses and Other Military Training

NCOES

The Army started to improve all the NCOES Course starting after the Vietnam War. Today we have the following courses in our army. The Warrior Leaders Course (WLC) which

is designed to enhance our young Soldiers ability to lead from the front and fight like a team; Basic Non-Commissioned Officer Course for sergeants in the grade of E-5/ E-6 and Advanced Non-Commission officer Course for the pay grades of E-6/E-7. The Army also has the First Sergeant Course and the Sergeants Major Academy for senior leaders. The United States Army's purpose for the non-commission officer's education system is to produce the most proficient leader. The leader must be tactically and technically competent and be confident in the decisions they will make on the battle field and in peace time to execute any mission that comes their way. It is important to continue their education to enhance their ability to perform their duties and to complete any mission that comes their way. Our young and old leaders most know how to give the proper purpose, direction, motivation and guidance to their subordinates while executing the mission at hand. Our leaders most know how to support the higher commands desire or intent to complete the mission and instil it in the lower ranks to motivate them to complete the mission at hand. The non-commission officer education system will also enhance their knowledge to work in a joint or multinational operational environment with our allies to complete the mission at hand. NCOES schools provide the training needed to perform as leaders on today's battle field.

“The American Soldier... demands professional competence in their leaders. In battle, they want to know that the job is going to be done right, with no unnecessary casualties. The non-commissioned officer wearing the chevron is supposed to be the best Soldier in the platoon and he or she is supposed to know how to perform all the duties expected of them. The American Soldier expects their sergeant to be able to teach them hoe to do their job. And they expect even more from their officers” (“Field Manual” 6-22, 2006).

SQT Training and Testing

The Army used the Skill Qualification Test (SQT) up to the mid-nineties to evaluate our Soldiers and Noncommissioned Officers alike in their proficiency and knowledge in specific military occupation. The test was a multiple question test on the Soldiers primary Military Occupation Specialty (MOS) to evaluate his or her knowledge of his or her job and grade level task. The SQT allowed Soldiers to better understand their job better and gave them an opportunity to increase their knowledge for higher skill levels. The SQT also offered the Soldier to stand out ahead of his or her peers, which gave the Soldiers leader and evaluation of their unit and who to promote ahead of the rest. The test was beneficial in my opinion. It allowed Soldiers to study at work with their peers and at home with their family. This increased cohesion with the unit and also with family. It also gave the family a better understanding of the army and what their spouse was doing for a living. If the unit needed to deploy, the Soldier could take the SQT, while deployed.

Military and Civilian Schools

The U.S Army has other military schools for Soldiers to enhance their leadership skills. The U.S Army Ranger school is a prime example of an excellent school that is a combat focused, physical and leadership demanding course for our young Soldiers and officers to attend. The school produces great young leaders. The army has numerous different types of schools that help our Soldiers develop into outstanding leaders and to develop their competence and to overcome any fears; Airborne school; Air Assault school; Combat Lifesaver course to name just a few of them. The Army also sends our Soldiers to physical fitness training schools both military and civilian alike. The Army is also to sending our Soldiers to self-defence or hand to hand fighting courses to learn and to teach their Soldiers alike. All these courses, to include drivers training,

will only make our Soldiers better leaders. The benefits of additional training give our Army a better chance on the battlefield and to reduce the casualty rate for future wars or battles to come. There is nothing in this world that can replace experience. A leader is only as good as his or her experience and knowledge of all aspects of war fighting.

Drawbacks of NCOES Course and Other Military Training

Operation Needs of Units for Deployments

With the numerous deployment requirements of our Combatant Commanders to fight the war on terrorism there is a strain on the forces and availability of senior and junior leadership on the ground. The problem lies with being forced to send our leaders back for training from theatre to attend their NCOES schools to meet the prerequisite for their next promotion. The Army is forced to short fill NCOES courses to keep the leaders in the fight. The problem lies with what to take out from the schools and what to keep. The Army is dedicated in re-constructing all schools to help meet the requirement of the force and to make sure our Soldiers receive the training they deserve, the best leadership the Army can produce. The requirement to fight the global war on terrorism will not end soon. The military is forced to develop different rotation plans and the task to shorting or take the NCOES schools to the fighting theatre to continue the education process.

Time Away From Families

As the U.S Army goes into its seventh year of fighting the global war on terrorism, the strain is taking a toll on our Soldiers Families. When Soldiers return from combat, the last thing on their mind is to attend an NCOES school, especially if they have to leave their families to go

to another state or post to attend their NCOES school for their MOS. The divorce rate is growing within our military. The Army realizes this and is trying everything possible to re-vamp NCOES schools to have them located on the Soldiers post or in theatre. Most NCOES schools are not that long and a lot of the instruction can be taught on-line to reduce time away from family. This will continue to be an issue, until the Army changes the NCOES course, which the Army is currently doing and should be completed by the year 2010.

Conclusion

The importance of military schools to produce and enhance our young and senior Soldiers is vital to overall military success, both present and in future wars. The benefits of NCOES course outweigh the drawbacks, though hard on the Family and Soldiers, it is a must to continue education of our Soldiers. The Army needs to look at the minimum time needed to train our Soldiers, so they will have time with their Family and be more willing to continue their education to become better leaders.

References

Field Manual 6-22 (2006) *ARMY LEADERSHIP*, section II, page 2-24 Competence: What A Leader Must Know “A quote from General of the Army Omar N. Bradley”.

Field Manual 7-22.7 and TC 22-6, (2002), *The Noncommissioned Officer Guide*, NCO Section I, page 1-14, NCO Section II, page 1-16.

Army Regulation 350-1, Army Training and Leader Development (2006), chapter 1, page 7, para 1-14b,c (Introduction) on Leadership Development