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Preface

Over the past ten years of my military career, I have engaged my peers, subordinates, and superiors on the training and education of officers during the first years of an officer's career. Officer professional development sessions were common, but rarely provided enough time to develop a deep understanding of the issues or to cultivate the necessary attributes of a successful officer. I often felt ROTC should have endeavored to develop greater breadth and depth to enhance officer performance. When it came time actually to develop an idea for this paper, I knew my efforts should focus on cadet education and curriculum in order to provide a stronger foundation for issues most officers face during their career.

I would like to thank to my wife, family, colleagues, and instructors for the support and wisdom in the completion of this paper. Their influence will have a lasting effect on my thinking and career.

Executive Summary

Title: U.S. Army ROTC – Implementing a Strategically Relevant Core Curriculum to Maximize Officer Capability

Author: Major Matthew Booth, United States Army

Thesis: The current Army ROTC academic curriculum needs to be modified in order to provide a strategically relevant education to future Army officers. To educate future Army officers, the US Army should align academic curriculum and graduation requirements with the strategic environment in order to provide an essential foundation of history, politics, culture, and foreign languages for ROTC cadets.

Discussion: The Army ROTC curriculum has largely remained the same over the past several decades. However, the Army continues to assess education and competency requirements for officers. The Army acknowledges officers must have a greater depth of knowledge and wisdom to fight in tomorrow's strategic environment, but fails to build an appropriate foundation while officers are studying as cadets. Army ROTC should align core curriculum with the strategic environment in order to provide an educational foundation relevant to strategic requirements and issues.

Conclusion: There are significant advantages to updating ROTC curriculum. The Army should move quickly to adjust these policies, or risk not preparing or providing competent officers for tomorrow's conflict.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past several decades, the United States Army Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) academic curriculum and graduation requirements have remained relatively unchanged. However, General Mark Milley, the current Chief of Staff of the Army, recognized officer education and development must change in a 2016 speech in reference to the conduct and character of future conflicts. He said, "Our leader development programs, officer and NCO schooling and training, and individual soldier training is going to have to amp-up in order to leverage the already present inherent qualities in all of our Soldiers from private to general."¹ GEN Milley's statement suggests officer education must improve in order to provide greater wisdom and capacity within the officer corps. Current Army ROTC academic curriculum does not adequately provide a strategically relevant education to future Army officers. For this paper, a strategically relevant education is defined as an education that enhances decision-making within the strategic environment. To educate future Army officers, the US Army should refine academic curriculum and graduation requirements for all ROTC cadets in order to provide an essential foundation of history, politics, culture, and foreign language.

In today's complex strategic environment, leaders and Soldiers must be constantly educated and trained in order to maintain the highest advantage possible over an enemy force and to effectively operate in this uncertain world. The Army must invest more time. place higher expectations on the education provided to junior officers, and align undergraduate disciplines with the operational needs of the Army.

ROTC is the largest commissioning source for the Army. For most officers, one's training and education begins as a cadet. However, cadets focus on their academic program in order to graduate with a bachelor's degree, and typically spend minimal time within the ROTC

classroom. Cadets only spend one to three hours weekly with a ROTC instructor, and this focus is typically on general military information such as drill and ceremony, land navigation, physical training, and basic small-unit tactics.² In regards to academic curriculum, cadets are required to complete the academic requirements for a four-year undergraduate degree established by their college or university. Additionally, cadets are required to enroll in a military science course each semester and take only one semester of a foreign language of their choice. Army ROTC does not require cadets to take strategically relevant classes on subjects such as history, geopolitics, philosophy, religious studies, anthropology, or international politics. Cadets are allowed to pursue their own interests. However, the study of such subjects as agronomy, paleobiology, music, and meteorology arguably does not provide cadets with relevant information for the modern battlefield. ROTC's military science courses only provides a minimum foundation for young cadets to quickly build off of once they enter the operational force upon graduation. Specifying and requiring curriculum relevant to the operational needs of the Army provides long-term tactical and strategic benefits to the Army.

In order to justify changes to academic requirements, one must understand the operating environment, policy, and literature on the development and education of junior officers. First, this paper will describe the current and future operating environment junior officers must lead in, and what education would provide benefit to them during their career. Second, an analysis of current ROTC academic policy will be detailed in order to highlight current shortfalls in Army ROTC academic curriculum. Third, this paper will discuss past relevant studies of ROTC curriculum in order to highlight trends that promote officer capability. Finally, recommendations to ROTC academic policy will be made in order to provide the Army with a better prepared officer upon graduation.

SECTION ONE: CURRENT AND FUTURE OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

Today, Army officers face an uncertain future on the battlefield. Today's enemies come in many different forms, and military actions have potential to create new enemies unknowingly. The 2015 Army Vision states, "it is likely the United States will face an unstable, unpredictable, increasingly complex global security environment that will be shaped by several key emergent trends: the rise of non-state actors; an increase in 'hybrid threats'; state challenges to the international order; and expanding urbanization."³ Non-state actors utilize religious, ethnic, and familial identities in order to motivate others in conflict. ROTC academic requirements must reflect this strategic environment in order to provide a better officer to the Army. In other words, ROTC curriculum must be relevant to the issues found in the strategic environment.

Due to globalization, potential threats will utilize diplomatic, informational, military, and economic elements of power in order to attack our policies and interests. The US will engage in conflict with partners in the international community in order to maintain international legitimacy, reduce costs, and increase international pressure against potential aggressors.⁴ Political, social, economic, cultural, historic, ethnic and religious elements intertwine in tomorrow's conflicts.

History and economics give a reason for state and non-state actors to pursue policies of hybrid warfare where combining conventional warfare, irregular warfare, terrorism, criminal activities, and cyber activities can defeat or deter a stronger adversary. Insurgents with low tech weaponry can wage long-term conflicts against technologically-advanced militaries. Only superpowers such as Russia and China can maintain a military force equal to or exceeding our military capability. However, the costs of high-intensity conflict involving large scale maneuver warfare remains an unlikely possibility. If the Army's reliance on technology can be reduced by

an opposing enemy, then the Army must develop the intangible characteristics of its Soldiers and officers.

In order to effectively operate in this environment, the Army argues for their forces to be organized around eight key characteristics: agility, expertise, innovative, interoperability, scalable, versatile, and balanced.⁵ Agility requires leaders and Soldiers to respond to unforeseen events and to transition easily across the range of military operations. Leaders must have a wide array of knowledge that will affect their abilities to execute different missions. In order to maintain agility across the force, leaders must be educated, trained, and trusted to perform a variety of tasks. Junior officers are still learning their profession upon commission, but the learning curve becomes steeper as time passes. Expertise requires leaders that are knowledgeable on military, regional, and civil issues in order to make decisions that affect both tactical and strategic outcomes. Tactical and technical expertise remains a priority for the Army, but the Army has recognized one must understand a region's language, culture, and history in order to effectively implement strategy. Leaders can interpret or foresee an adversary's action by studying an adversary's history and behavior over time.⁶

Innovation to counter irregular threats, development of new ideas, and implementation of new technology is necessary in order to maintain an advantage over the enemy. In conjunction with civilian enterprises, leaders must develop and adapt to new technology. Interoperability is not just the technological means to communicate with different services and agencies, but requires a force capable of integrating and leveraging other services, agencies, and strategic partners. A knowledge of international, domestic, and geo-politics may be necessary in order to leverage these assets. Scalability refers to the necessity for units to task-organize elements to fit certain situations and missions. This requires junior leaders to be capable of leading their

organization in an expeditionary environment as a small unit without the higher headquarters there to help with decision-making in complex situations. Small-units will dominate the battlefield. Therefore, small-unit leaders must be prepared and ready to make both tactical and strategic decisions.

Versatility requires units to maintain a variety of capabilities to be able to successfully operate across the range of military operations. Major General Robert Scales, USA (ret.) bluntly states Soldiers “must be able to adapt on the fly to react to unexpected circumstances. They must be able to employ some of the most sophisticated precision weapons, while at the same demonstrating patrolling, tracking, and tactical fire and maneuver skills that have not changed in millennia. Then, on a moment’s notice, once the shooting stops, these men must change their entire skill set from warrior to humanitarian.”⁷ Soldiers and Leaders cannot be solely focused on the kinetic aspect of war, but must be prepared to serve in ways not seen before in previous conflicts. One military leader can cause strategic implications in a region if they can never transition from a traditional military role to a diplomatic or humanitarian assistance role. Lastly, balanced requires units, Soldiers, and leaders to balance the other six characteristics as they are all inter-related.⁸

When combining the environment and characteristics the Army wishes to develop, it becomes clear that a leader must understand and operate within the human, political, cultural, and religious realms. Leaders can no longer be successful by increasing their physical fitness test score or demonstrating their ability to establish a support by fire position during a combined arms live fire. Imagine a military force that fully understood the political, historical, cultural, and religious aspects of Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan. Our military remains tactically and technically proficient. However, in order to maintain or increase our advantages on the

battlefield, our leaders must arm themselves with knowledge and wisdom found outside of the tactical and technical fields. Technology may be enough to win a battle, but is surely not enough to win a war. Victory may be defined in capturing the socio-cultural, rather than the geographical high ground. Understanding, empathy, and cultural awareness must be in place to build defensive ties with local populaces.⁹

Army leaders must look to strengthen the profession of arms if they are to succeed in future conflicts. Education and indoctrination at the beginning of an officer's career, while a cadet, is an easy way to develop strong foundations for future success in the military. ROTC provides only a minor foundation. The Army relies upon on-the-job training and officer self-development to develop leaders instead of fully taking advantage of a cadet's undergraduate time to educate themselves on topics with potential to assist a leader on the battlefield. Failure to educate our future leaders leads to potential amateurism on the battlefield, where leaders learn lessons in loss of blood and treasure.

The Profession of Arms White Paper discusses four levels of expertise inherent to the profession of arms: 1) military technical expertise 2) human development expertise 3) moral-ethical expertise 4) political-culture expertise. These levels of expertise focus on tactical and technical proficiency, education, training, ethical practice of war, and proficiency with both foreign and domestic civil-military relationships.¹⁰ Once again, the Army recognizes land warfare is largely based on the human dimension. As Clausewitz said, conflict is a clash of wills. Victory in conflict is not purely based on superior technology or scientific reasoning, but more in line with understanding a wide array of variables that can influence the outcome of a conflict. The Profession of Arms White Paper further adds, "it is the development of human knowledge, skills, abilities, and attributes associated with each field of expertise that are of most importance

to the profession. Stability and support operations, for example, have shifted the need for political and cultural expertise to earlier in the career of many Army leaders.”¹¹ If we fail to provide a sufficient working foundation for cadets, our future leaders will not be fully prepared.

General Charles Krulak described a “three block war”, where one block is a high intensity battle, the second a counter insurgency block, and a third block of humanitarian aid.¹² General Petraus called for officers to evolve into “pentathlete officers”, warriors, innovators, diplomats, and cultural experts.¹³ Conflict today is not for the faint of heart or uneducated. Technology and science cannot win these conflicts on their own. Soldiers on the ground, interacting with the populace, ultimately will win or lose the “three block war”. Additionally, investing in educating leaders is cheap compared to designing new weapon systems. Requiring officers to be well versed in history, politics, culture, and foreign language ensures leaders are prepared to operate in the strategic environment.

SECTION TWO: REVIEW OF ROTC ACADEMIC POLICY

Review of current national and Army policy is key to understanding where the Army currently stands on educating cadets. First, this paper will review current ROTC organization and professional military education timelines. Second, this paper will review policy associated with ROTC curriculum and academic requirements.

The Army describes officer development as “a continuous process that begins with pre-commissioning training and education.”¹⁴ ROTC is classified as Basic Officer Leadership Course (BOLC) A, as the pre-commissioning training course for officers. Unfortunately, the Army differentiates in preparing future leaders at ROTC and the United States Military Academy (USMA). ROTC’s mission is to “commission the future officer leadership of the US Army and

motive young people to be better citizens. USMA's mission is to educate, train, and inspire the Corps of Cadets so that each graduate is a commissioned leader of character committed to the values of Duty, Honor, Country, and prepared for a career of professional excellence and service to the Nation as an officer in the US Army."¹⁵ The Army has more influence over cadets at USMA, and is able to directly control university curriculum, thus placing more emphasis on indoctrinating cadets to the Army. Specifically, USMA's core curriculum requires cadets to complete a minimum of two semesters of economics, foreign language, history, international relations, military history, and political science. Additionally, USMA cadets complete classes on law, leadership, geography, and philosophy.¹⁶ USMA aligned their core curriculum with subjects relevant to military officers. Additionally, this applies to all USMA cadets, so even those enrolled in STEM programs gain a foundation in these subjects. Unlike USMA, there is no established core curriculum for ROTC cadets.

Once commissioned, officers attend BOLC B, which is a branch specific technical school where officers prepare to serve as a lieutenant within their assigned branch. Training and education is completely focused on the tactical and technical proficiencies required within each specific branch. This ensures all officers are on the same playing field prior to arriving to their first operational unit. Both BOLC A & B provide small unit leader training, common attributes necessary for all officers. However, the minimal time in military science classes and the short length of BOLC B does not provide a significant amount of time to develop a strong foundation within history, politics, culture, and foreign languages.¹⁷

DA PAM 600-3 describes professional military education, officer development timelines, assignments, and officer characteristics desired for each branch. The majority of branches require an officer that is agile, adaptive, flexible, critically reflective, tactically and technically

proficient, comfortable with ambiguity and uncertainty, and innovative. Officers must perform well in a joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational environment. They must be proficient in combined arms and joint warfare. Army officers must possess expeditionary competencies such as regional knowledge, cultural awareness, foreign language, diplomacy, and statesmanship.¹⁸ None of the branches require a degree within a specific academic discipline, but all require a wide array of necessary characteristics. Only aviation, engineers, and signal branches require officers to possess certain technical knowledge relative to their fields. Engineer branch goes as far to instruct their officers to continuously update their education and professional certifications within engineering. Only Special Forces requires officers to display an aptitude to learn a foreign language. Not one single academic discipline provides a strong enough foundation for officers to completely fulfill the characteristics requirements by their branches. Therefore, the Army must update their policies and require cadets to focus their academic curriculum, within reason, to specific classes relevant to the strategic environment.

ROTC detachments at certain universities possess the ability to adapt academic requirements to the strategic environment. A large portion of ROTC cadets commission from senior military colleges. The senior military colleges are the following: (1) Texas A&M University. (2) Norwich University. (3) The Virginia Military Institute. (4) The Citadel. (5) Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. (6) The University of North Georgia." Title X states, "The senior military colleges consistently have provided substantial numbers of highly qualified, long-serving leaders to the Armed Forces." Additionally, Title X says, "the senior military colleges can and will continue to accommodate to changing military requirements to ensure that future graduates entering military service continue to be officers of superb quality who are quickly assimilated by the Armed Forces and fully prepared to make significant

contributions to the Armed Forces through extended military careers.” This is significant, as senior military colleges are encouraged to adapt curriculum to changing strategic environments in order to provide a higher quality officer to the Army.

In reference to practical military training, Title X states, “For the further practical instruction of members of, and designated applicants for membership in, the program, the Secretary of the military department concerned may prescribe and conduct practical military training, in addition to field training.”¹⁹ Instruction of cultures, language, politics, history, and psychology, in today’s environment, is arguably practical. However, ROTC does not place significant importance on educating cadets on these subjects. Most ROTC training and education focuses on basic tactical and technical skills such as land navigation, radio operation, physical training, and maneuvers.

However, Army ROTC does make an attempt to provide cultural experiences to at least a small number of cadets. The Army typically educates Soldiers on culture based on future deployments to a specific country or region. In regards to culture training, AR 350-1 states, “TRADOC is responsible for a program to incentivize cultural studies. This program, pursuant to approval, may include monetary and non-monetary incentives as well as the opportunity for overseas language and cultural immersions. All units must receive culture and language training that specifically orients them to the area to which they will deploy. Leaders must receive additional training on the military, political, cultural, economic, and religious environments of the area to which they will deploy.”²⁰ However, there are several issues with this policy. First, this training may be overlooked in the training plan or given less priority by commanders. Second, this training may be a brief power-point or online training. Soldiers and leaders may not spend enough quality time absorbing the information and applying what they have learned prior

to deployment. Third, this training is typically very short, meeting only minimum requirements. One cannot fully understand another's culture through a one hour block of instruction. Sufficient education and instruction must be provided to Soldiers and Leaders in order to maximize their cultural awareness and ability to interact with different peoples. ROTC has made some headway in this regard by executing the Cultural Language and Language Proficiency Program. This is a competitive three week program between a cadet's sophomore and junior year. Cadets, supervised by military cadre, travel to foreign countries where the US has strategic interests in order to broaden themselves culturally. However, not all cadets are able to participate in this program. Encouraging or requiring cadets to take specific classes associated with potential strategic regions or adversaries could prove very valuable to the Army in both the short and long term.

Army ROTC needs to emphasize cadet acquisition of a strategic foreign language. Title X encourages the acquisition of foreign language for cadets. Title X states, "The Secretary of Defense shall support the acquisition of foreign language skills among cadets and midshipmen in the Reserve Officers' Training Corps, including through the development and implementation of— "(1) incentives for cadets and midshipmen to participate in study of a foreign language, including special emphasis for Arabic, Chinese, and other 'strategic languages', as defined by the Secretary of Defense in consultation with other relevant agencies; and "(2) a recruiting strategy to target foreign language speakers, including members of heritage communities, to participate in the Reserve Officers' Training Corps." It is unknown exactly what incentives for studying foreign languages are provided under Title X. However, the military benefits are wide-ranging.

The acquisition of foreign languages provides leaders potential to easily convey ideas, messages, or narratives to foreign persons within an operating area. Being able to effectively

communicate with a local populace, without an interpreter, can build rapport and trust. Additionally, being able to communicate with coalition partners leads to increased interaction and efficiency between coalition partners on the battlefield. It also reduces the perception of American arrogance, diminishing the perception that the US interests are the only interests considered. AR 350-1 further adds, “TRADOC is responsible for the administration of the OSD Cadet Language Incentive Program to incentivize foreign language studies for ROTC cadets including monetary incentives. The program develops and implements on-campus cultural studies and foreign language incentive programs at ROTC colleges and universities, pre-commissioning study abroad, and summer Cadet Language and Cultural Immersion training deployments in support of Army Security Cooperation objectives and the Language Regional Expertise and Culture Strategy.”²¹

However, ROTC does not fully incentivize foreign language studies in their accession or scholarship process. Additionally, AR 145-1 only requires scholarship cadets to successfully complete one semester of college instruction in a major Indo-European or Asian language.²² However, upon review of Cadet Command Regulation, 145-1 under mandatory requirements for scholarship cadets, taking a foreign language class is not listed. Taking one semester of foreign language will not make an individual proficient or possibly even able to carry on a simple conversation with a native speaker. Two or more semester would most likely be adequate, but ROTC should ensure cadets take appropriate languages in key strategic areas such as the Middle East, Asia, or eastern Europe.

Army ROTC lacks an effective history curriculum unlike USMA’s core curriculum. The study of history, specifically military history, is clearly linked to learning and implementing strategy while reducing the possibility of repeating past mistakes. The Army acknowledges this

by requiring cadets to enroll in one semester of a military history course, if offered, or by requiring ROTC cadre to instruct at least 40 hours of military history prior to commissioning.

The objectives of these requirements are to 1) develop the students' awareness of the relationship of the military establishment to society, particularly in the United States 2) develop the interest in the evolution of war and the progression of military professionalism 3) provide awareness of the history and purpose of joint operations 4) discuss the role of history in understanding the profession of arms and encourage the viewing of American military history from a joint perspective.²³ In other words, this regulation is “intended to foster a sense of historical mindedness in the Army community, resulting in sensitivity to the intellectual and functional values of military history as a necessary component of professional education and development.”²⁴ Unfortunately, courses differentiate from school to school, and instructors may place importance on topics not relevant to these objectives. However, providing a military history foundation is still beneficial to junior officers.

The overall mission of the Army ROTC Program is to produce commissioned officers in the quality, quantity, and academic disciplines necessary to meet active Army and reserve component requirements. The objective is to produce officers in academic disciplines that correlate with the specialty needs of the Army.²⁵ However, officers are not solely placed in specific branches that relate to their academic discipline. AR 145-1 states, “Branch assignments must be made according to the needs of the Army. Consideration will be given to the cadet’s area of academic specialty. Army policy is to assign graduating cadets to a branch and specialty code based on the following: a. Army branch/specialty strength requirements. b. Academic disciplines. c. Personal preference. d. Recommendation of PMS. e. Demonstrated performance

and potential. f. Prior military experience. g. Other.”²⁶ Further analysis of OML accession criteria and relation to officer success is shown in section three.

SECTION THREE: LIBERAL STUDIES VS STEM

In order to propose changes to Army ROTC academic curriculum, two different academic fields, liberal studies and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM), must be discussed. Liberal studies encompass a wide array of academic disciplines. Generally, liberal studies contain the study of history, politics, culture, and foreign languages. USMA and other military academies historically aligned their academic programs with STEM education. Liberal studies is obviously related to specific characteristics the Army is looking to cultivate. However, STEM is still high in demand and highly recruited by Army ROTC.

There is an enduring conviction that a STEM background works best to prepare officers for a multitude of reasons. An officer may be able to improvise when the unexpected happens and a vital system fails.²⁷ This is especially true when working with machinery such as naval vessels, aircraft, tracked vehicles, and other military machinery. Officers with STEM backgrounds may be able to solve complex, technical issues due to their ability to analyze a system. Masland and Radway affirmed, “The world of combat is peculiarly a world of physical means. The younger officer has always to deal with highly complicated apparatus. The senior officer must be competent to direct and evaluate the technical work of his subordinates. Increasingly, he is also called on to administer research and development programs or to accept or reject the far reaching proposals that flow therefrom.”²⁸ Edward Palm argues the services encourage STEM as an analytical mind can treat war as a calculus problem, and solve the problem with the correct application of doctrine.²⁹ This love of STEM possibly came about as the result of the high degree

of mechanization, and reliance on technology to win large wars which came with World War II and the Cold War. Without a regard to or desire to increase knowledge of technical fields during this time, the Army may have fallen into a period of traditionalism as seen after World War I during the Interwar Period.³⁰

However, STEM education doesn't provide an educational background relevant to the strategic environment. Admiral Stansfield Turner, in reform of the Naval War College in 1972, moved military education from technical specialties by expanding scope of military education beyond its natural inclination toward technical skill sets.³¹ Technical skills are normally defined as having a practical knowledge and proficiency with equipment, machinery, and systems. Education should focus on larger strategic and operational issues, where officers will quickly find themselves during their career.³² Most officers will never be involved in research and development, and non-commissioned officers and warrant officers are highly trained in the technical aspects of assigned equipment.

If it is correct to say that, to make people more imaginative, flexible, resourceful, and responsible, education must be more liberal than technical. Liberal education provides cadets ability to draw parallels and make connections between disciplines.³³ Humanities and liberal studies provide prominent gray areas, where a technological focus and military training typically assumes only a right and wrong answer.³⁴

While the Army still attempts to maintain a technological advantage, it has already been stated that war is a conflict of human wills, and victory is no longer guaranteed to the one with the best weapons and machines. In 2010, the House Armed Service Committee issued a report saying officer education must remain dynamic and evolve in order to "imbue service members with the intellectual agility to assume expanded roles and perform new missions in an ever

dynamic and increasingly complicated security environment.³⁵ ROTC cadets searching a degree in STEM are at a disadvantage without a working knowledge of issues related to the strategic environment.

MacCloskey argued there are three types of officers: those with a STEM background, those capable of working within the political and organizational arenas, and pure combat leaders.³⁶ Ideally, an Army officer can develop proficiency in each of MacCloskey's categories. The study of history, politics, culture, and foreign languages benefits each category.

MG Robert Scales established four different categories of officer genius. Political genius is studying political arts and serving within civilian institutions that work with the military. Institutional genius is immersion and understanding of internal staff mechanisms. Anticipatory genius shapes the Army institution and challenge doctrines. Combat genius is immersion in the art of war, both in practice and through study of military history.³⁷ STEM students may be able to understand complex, mechanical systems but those with a background in specific liberal studies will arguably have a stronger educational foundation of issues related to the strategic environment.

The Army already utilizes curriculum focused on critical thinking, military history, leadership, national security affairs, and joint military affairs while officers are attending Intermediate Level Education (ILE) at US Army Command and General Staff College or other service schools. However, they attend once they have approximately 10 years of service, and their time with tactical units or conducting tactical tasks is over. Additionally, there is no guarantee that officers, at this point in their career, have the necessary education to discuss the curriculum at a high academic standard. Teaching economic, historical, political, and

geopolitical concepts to students largely associated with technical and engineering backgrounds is difficult, and there is insufficient time at ILE to provide a quality education on these subjects.³⁸

Liberal studies shouldn't wait until one is halfway through a military career. For instance, the study of history, specifically military history, can provide fundamental tactical, operational, and strategic instruction to cadets while providing a chance to test their own theories on tactics and strategy. Cadets develop or apply military theories, and then analyze their decisions through the lense of historical examples.³⁹

Military history is the foundation of our art, the basis of our profession.⁴⁰ Reardon gives three reasons to study military history: 1. Promote intellectual component of officer corps, provide a foundation for theories and maxims of modern war 2. Practical tool to introduce command problems and problem solving 3. Provide need for theory and fulfil practical needs as well. The study of military history leads to the study of safe leadership.⁴¹ Students with strong background in military history learn from their predecessors mistakes and successes. All too often we hear of general and admirals basing their decisions on what studies of past wars, successes and failures. While these senior leaders most likely partake in a lifelong study of war, it would only behoove our cadets, even if only in the military for a short period of time, to gain a decent foundation of military history. The enemy and our national security do not simply care that a cadet enrolls in ROTC and gains a commission just to pay for college.

Even Napoleon's army realized the study of military history was vital to success on the battlefield. Napoleon's dictum was to study attentively the campaigns of the great masters. One could learn the art of maneuver, operational planning, logistics, and even counterinsurgency tactics through rigorous study of past leaders and campaigns.⁴² Additionally, peacetime training with maps develops sound judgement and prompt decision making.⁴³ Study of military history

shows students that even the best laid plan can go awry, and those that are able to adapt typically prevail.⁴⁴ Officers who have been thoroughly versed in historical methodology and source evaluation will surely develop skills that improve one's ability to analyze complicated military questions, even in the heat of battle.⁴⁵

In addition to military history, the study of domestic and international government, law, and political science provide great potential to future officers and the nation's military. Reardon posited there are two paths to developing a more professional officer corps. First, officers must understand their role as a soldier, the principles of war, and the application of deadly force. Here, the officer studies military history in order to learn from past experiences. Second, an officer must understand the relation between the military and the government in order to accurately and effectively implement the proper conduct of war.⁴⁶ Understanding our nation's policies, history, law, and international political dynamics serves to benefit young leaders when they face a potential strategic decision on the battlefield. With today's environment becoming much more complex, leaders must be cognizant of a much wider array of factors, including how the nation's public could perceive an operation, or even how our allies may react. Global politics and grand strategy are areas which even Army War College students are largely unfamiliar.⁴⁷ Army ROTC should provide leaders a a strategically relevant foundation for when they become staff officers so that they may have the ability to read through a relevant problem, think through it, and develop a solution.

Edward Palm, while instructing military science at the University of California, Berkley, covered such topics as history and organization of our military establishment, the concept and character of the military profession, the nature of the civil-military relation in America, causes of war, just-war theory, law of land warfare, and issues of personal responsibility versus military

discipline. He argued when a cadet puts the uniform on as an officer, they become a military role model. They must be well-versed in military affairs, military history, and possess the academic credentials to teach these disciplines on the college level.⁴⁸ Suggesting a cadet must possess the knowledge to teach military affairs or history immediately upon graduation seems extreme, but his argument has merit. Providing a strong foundation to cadets in military and political affairs, science, foreign language, and culture provides our current leaders with a strong foundation to conduct operations within the strategic environment.

SECTION FOUR: RELEVANT STUDIES

The pursuit of officer development is a continuous battle for the Army. Human Resource Command (HRC) serves as the primary analyst in determining officer promotion trends and variables leading to a successful career in the Army. Unfortunately, HRC does not release significant amounts of information to the force. Even major research organizations, such as RAND Corporation, are not given full access to HRC data. HRC should evaluate personnel data highlighting specific education backgrounds for officers promoted to field grade ranks and selection for battalion and brigade command in order to determine if specific educational backgrounds benefit officers during their career. Focus should be placed on whether or not certain academic backgrounds and foreign language experience or additional factors that lead to this level of success in the Army.

However, studies related to ROTC academic curriculum have been conducted. In 2012, RAND conducted a study for the US Air Force, focused on whether or not language proficiency benefits Air Force officers. The study discovered language proficiency benefits mission success, but not necessarily officer career success. The study recommended the Air Force develop and

maintain language professionals for specific career fields.⁴⁹ Air Force officers work in inherently more technical fields, and the vast majority do operate with civilian and enemy combatants in a more intimate setting as do Soldiers and Marines. If the Air Force maintains language professionals in intelligence or special operations, it makes sense. For pilots, it does not. However, the Army, across all branches, directly interacts with civilians and enemy combatants on a much more common basis. Being able to communicate with foreigners provides multiple advantages to the officer and unit. However, the study also recognized the language proficiency must be relative to strategic locations.⁵⁰ Focusing language training and education on Russian, Mandarin, Korean, Persian, or Arabic is in line with national policy and strategic guidance. Allowing cadets to take classes in non-strategically important languages may benefit the cadet when he vacations to Europe, but does not provide much capability to the Army. RAND also discovered developing and maintaining language proficiency is different from officer to officer. Some officers had an aptitude for learning and speaking a second language.⁵¹ This will always be the case. Implementing a policy requiring Army to obtain a certain proficiency could lead to the loss of quality officers. Promotions must not be related to language proficiency, but policies enforcing regular study and testing of language proficiency should be implemented in order to encourage career development and maintenance for that officer's particular second language.

United States Army Cadet Command (USACC) and United States Human Resource Command (HRC) conduct frequent studies to improve officer success. Due to privacy and information sharing issues, these studies, methodologies, and supporting data are rarely released to the public. However, USACC released a study of the Year Group (YG) 2006 OML in order to determine what OML factors were most relevant to promotion to major. The top five reasons relate to leadership ability. Officers who demonstrated exceptional leadership ability while being

assessed by cadre at the Leadership Development & Assessment Course were more likely to be promoted to major than their peers. Academics and physical ability were least correlated to promotion to major.⁵² Specific academic disciplines did not correlate with officer success. Further study into LDAC scores and PMS comments related to specific academic disciplines should be conducted. However, leadership ability is still the primary characteristic associated with the OML factors most correlated with selection to major. LDAC trains cadets to Army standards, develops leadership skills, and evaluates officer potential. Cadets that are tactically and technically proficient will most likely succeed, but this course does not fully train a cadet to serve as a junior officer. However, LDAC focuses on leadership ability. Cadets must engage and motivate their peers to accomplish missions, and be decisive in their planning and execution of tasks. During this exercise, academic disciplines or backgrounds are on a level playing field. However, any training or course curriculum that focuses on leading, motivating, and decision-making surely benefits cadets during their evaluation. Perhaps a cadet with a strong foundation in military history or cultural knowledge will have an advantage during scenario based training events that are modeled off real world combat situations.

SECTION FIVE: RECOMMENDATIONS

The Army, in an effort to improve officer education and development, should update ROTC curriculum, academic requirements, and accession policy. The reform proposed would supplement current curriculum at the Army Command & General Staff College, Army War College, School of Advanced Military Studies, or other professional military education institutions. Creating a strategically relevant core curriculum for Army ROTC cadets provides a foundation for junior officers to build on and use during their first fragile years of service where

they may have to make a decision with strategic implications. Additionally, placing leaders strong in certain academic disciplines in specific Army branches provides the force officers with a greater aperture within their respective field.

First, cadets must take a foreign language in specific strategic languages such as Russian, Chinese, Korean, Persian, and Arabic. Two semesters should be required in place of the current single semester. The Army should assign officers, when possible, to regionally aligned forces where that language ability will have the greatest impact.

Second, cadets, when the academic institution allows, should take ample courses on history. Specifically, history courses focused on traditional military history and regions with a strategic focus. USACC should work with universities to develop historical curriculum that develops cadets best, as military cadre may not possess the required background to instruct students.

Third, classes on domestic politics, international relations, diplomacy, and geopolitics should be considered by all cadets. As discussed previously, junior officers may potentially find themselves as the lone decision-maker with a foreign entity. We must ensure they are prepared to handle such a situation.

These are simple measures that can be easily monitored and enforced by ROTC military cadre and academic institutions. This paper does not suggest requiring cadets to focus on one academic discipline over the other, as a varied background within the officer corps provides different opinions and ways of accomplishing tasks. However, officers are disadvantaged if they do not build a sufficient foundation within strategically relevant courses which will improve an officer's ability to operate within the strategic environment. The Army is superb at developing

tactical and technical ability, but there is not enough time or academic capability within the officer corps to develop a political, historical, and cultural competency.

However, the Army should analyze promotion results to determine what academic disciplines contribute to officer success and whether an officer's education or academic institution, operational experience, personality, or other factor contributes most to success. At that point, the Army should refine officer development policies to focus on those key factors, and continue to do so in an effort to continue to improve the officer corps.

CONCLUSION

In order to maintain a superior and professional officer corps, Army ROTC must align academic curriculum with the strategic environment. Cadets are our future leaders in the Army. In the strategic environment, junior leaders face complex decisions and situations. Their education and academic discipline surely affects their decision-making ability. The Army must look past the tradition of focusing on education in STEM backgrounds. The human dimension, where history, culture, and politics come together, is where we should prepare our junior leaders to operate.

Furthermore, aligning officer branches with specific academic disciplines will serve the Army and the officer best. STEM majors can surely help the Army in technical fields, acquisition, or research and development. They may perform just as well in other branches, but should be required to take more strategically relevant classes that will prepare them for the conflicts fought today and tomorrow.

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- ² US Army Center for Initial Military Training. "FY15 Approved BOLC Common Core Task List." 2015.
- ³ Department of the Army Headquarters. *The Army Vision*, (Washington, DC, Department of the Army Headquarters, 2015), 4.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.
- ⁶ Robert H. Scales, *Scales on War: The Future of America's Military* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2016), 44.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, 68
- ⁸ Department of the Army Headquarters. *The Army Vision*, (Washington, DC, Department of the Army Headquarters, 2015), 9-11.
- ⁹ Robert H. Scales, *Scales on War: The Future of America's Military* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2016), 100.
- ¹⁰ Center for the Army Profession and Ethic. *The Profession of Arms*, (US Army Training and Doctrine Command, Fort Eustis, VA, 2010), 7.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*
- ¹² Robert H. Scales, *Scales on War: The Future of America's Military* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2016), 202.
- ¹³ Carol Burke, "Combat Ethnography," in *Military Culture and Education*, ed. Douglas Higbee (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2010), 36.
- ¹⁴ Department of the Army Headquarters. *AR 350-1: Army Training and Leader Development*, (Washington, DC: Department of the Army Headquarters, 2014), 66.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁶ USMA Office of the Dean, *United States Military Academy Academic Program*, (West Point: USMA, 2017), 17.
- ¹⁷ Benjamin King, *Victory Starts Here: A Short 40-Year History of the US Army Training and Doctrine Command*, (Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2013), 51.
- ¹⁸ Department of the Army Headquarters. *AR 350-1: Army Training and Leader Development*, (Washington, DC: Department of the Army Headquarters, 2014), 340.
- ¹⁹ Government, US. n.d. *Title X Code*.
- ²⁰ Department of the Army Headquarters. *AR 350-1: Army Training and Leader Development*, (Washington, DC: Department of the Army Headquarters, 2014), 141.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, 142.
- ²² Department of the Army Headquarters. *AR 145-1: Senior Reserve Officers' Training Corps*, (Washington, DC: Department of the Army Headquarters, 2011), 23.
- ²³ US Army Cadet Command, *Cadet Command Regulation 145-3*, (Fort Knox: US Army Cadet Command, 2011), 63.
- ²⁴ Benjamin King, *Victory Starts Here: A Short 40-Year History of the US Army Training and Doctrine Command*, (Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2013), 41.
- ²⁵ Department of the Army Headquarters. *AR 145-1: Senior Reserve Officers' Training Corps*, (Washington, DC: Department of the Army Headquarters, 2011), 2.

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- ²⁷ Edward E. Palm, "Real Officers Don't Teach Keats: The Naval Academy, ROTC, and Military Spiritualism," in *Military Culture and Education*, ed. Douglas Higbee (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2010), 17.
- ²⁸ John W. Masland and Laurence I. Radway, *Soldiers and Scholars: Military Education and National Policy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), 212.
- ²⁹ Edward E. Palm, "Real Officers Don't Teach Keats: The Naval Academy, ROTC, and Military Spiritualism," in *Military Culture and Education*, ed. Douglas Higbee (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2010), 15.
- ³⁰ Monro MacCloskey, *Reserve Officers Training Corps: Campus Pathways to Service Commissions* (New York: Richards Rosen Press, Inc., 1965), 28.
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- ³² Ibid., 6.
- ³³ Edward E. Palm, "Real Officers Don't Teach Keats: The Naval Academy, ROTC, and Military Spiritualism," in *Military Culture and Education*, ed. Douglas Higbee (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2010), 15.
- ³⁴ Andrea Trocha-Van Nort, "Literature, Identity, and Officership," in *Military Culture and Education*, by Douglas Higbee, (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2010), 94.
- ³⁵ Joan Johnson-Freese, *Educating America's Military*, (New York, Routledge, 2013), 8.
- ³⁶ Monro MacCloskey, *Reserve Officers Training Corps: Campus Pathways to Service Commissions* (New York: Richards Rosen Press, Inc., 1965), 32.
- ³⁷ Robert H. Scales, *Scales on War: The Future of America's Military* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2016), 189-191.
- ³⁸ Joan Johnson-Freese, *Educating America's Military*, (New York, Routledge, 2013), 90.
- ³⁹ Carol Reardon, *Soldiers and Scholars* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1990), 3.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid., 12.
- ⁴¹ Ibid., 17-22.
- ⁴² Ibid., 49.
- ⁴³ Ibid., 39.
- ⁴⁴ Edward E. Palm, "Real Officers Don't Teach Keats: The Naval Academy, ROTC, and Military Spiritualism," in *Military Culture and Education*, ed. Douglas Higbee (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2010), 15.
- ⁴⁵ Carol Reardon, *Soldiers and Scholars* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1990), 69.
- ⁴⁶ Ibid., 93.
- ⁴⁷ Joan Johnson-Freese, *Educating America's Military*, (New York, Routledge, 2013), 3.
- ⁴⁸ Edward E. Palm, "Real Officers Don't Teach Keats: The Naval Academy, ROTC, and Military Spiritualism," in *Military Culture and Education*, ed. Douglas Higbee (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2010), 25.
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- ⁵¹ Ibid., 87.
- ⁵² US Army Cadet Command, *YG06 OML Study Findings* (FT Knox: US Army Cadet Command, 2016).

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