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STUDENT REPORT

IDENTITY AND THE MILITARY PROFESSION
AN ERIKSONIAN PERSPECTIVE

MAJOR RICHARD H. ST. DENIS 86-2380

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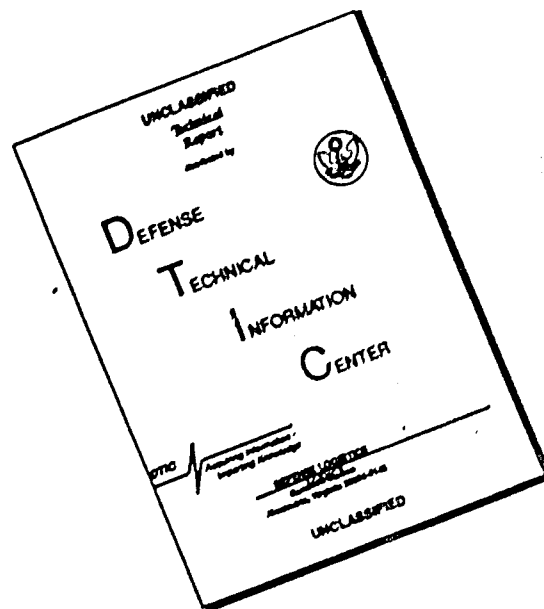
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REPORT NUMBER 86-2380

TITLE IDENTITY AND THE MILITARY PROFESSION:
AN ERIKSONIAN PERSPECTIVE

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Submitted to the faculty in partial fulfillment of
requirements for graduation.

AIR COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE
AIR UNIVERSITY
MAXWELL AFB, AL 36112

UNCLASSIFIED

ADA 166 734

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

1a. REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION UNCLASSIFIED			1b. RESTRICTIVE MARKINGS	
2a. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION AUTHORITY			3. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY OF REPORT STATEMENT "A" Approved for public release; Distribution is unlimited.	
2b. DECLASSIFICATION/DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE				
4. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S) 86-2380			5. MONITORING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)	
6a. NAME OF PERFORMING ORGANIZATION ACSC/EDCC		6b. OFFICE SYMBOL (If applicable)		7a. NAME OF MONITORING ORGANIZATION
6c. ADDRESS (City, State and ZIP Code) Maxwell AFB, AL 36112-5542			7b. ADDRESS (City, State and ZIP Code)	
8a. NAME OF FUNDING/SPONSORING ORGANIZATION		8b. OFFICE SYMBOL (If applicable)		9. PROCUREMENT INSTRUMENT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER
8c. ADDRESS (City, State and ZIP Code)			10. SOURCE OF FUNDING NOS.	
11. TITLE (Include Security Classification) IDENTITY AND THE MILITARY PROFESSION:			PROGRAM ELEMENT NO.	PROJECT NO.
			TASK NO.	WORK UNIT NO.
12. PERSONAL AUTHOR(S) St. Denis, Richard H., Major, USA				
13a. TYPE OF REPORT	13b. TIME COVERED FROM _____ TO _____		14. DATE OF REPORT (Yr., Mo., Day) 1986 April	15. PAGE COUNT 45
16. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTATION ITEM 11: AN ERIKSONIAN PERSPECTIVE (U)				
17. COSATI CODES			18. SUBJECT TERMS (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)	
FIELD	GROUP	SUB. GR.		
19. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number) The theories of professor/psychoanalyst Erik Erikson provide an ideal conceptual framework for studying the dimensions and dynamics of identity formation. Using Eriksonian concepts, this study analyzes the impact of military service on the shaping of the individual identity and occupational identity of Army officers. The study demonstrates that several institutional policies and practices, as well as the actions of other officers, have the potential for disrupting an officer's identity development. It shows that the development of a coherent and positive sense of identity is essential to effective leadership and inextricably tied to the enduring values of the Army Ethic. This study recommends various changes in Army policy and practice to promote the formation of individual and occupational identity from pre-commissioning through the latter stages of an officer's career.				
20. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY OF ABSTRACT UNCLASSIFIED/UNLIMITED ☐ SAME AS RPT ☒ DTIC USERS ☐			21. ABSTRACT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION UNCLASSIFIED	
22a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUAL ACSC/EDCC Maxwell AFB, AL 36112-5542			22b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (Include Area Code) (205) 293-2483	22c. OFFICE SYMBOL

PREFACE

The famed military historian S.L.A. Marshall once wrote that the starting point for the understanding of war is the understanding of human nature. This study looks at a particular aspect of the human nature of the professional soldier: the formation of his personal and professional identity.

In specific, this study employs the theories of a prominent psychoanalyst, Erik Erikson, as a conceptual framework for analyzing how an Army officer's individual and professional identity develops. It shows how some of the Army's institutional policies and practices, as well as the actions of other military personnel, can hinder the development of an officer's identity from pre-commissioning through the point where his career is fully established. It also shows the importance of identity to successful military leadership and to the ethics that are at the core of military service.

This study does not intend to suggest that there are serious psychological problems affecting the officer corps today. Rather, it shows how aspects of military service can adversely affect one's sense of identity. It also makes recommendations on how the institution could better promote a sense of individual and professional identity among its officers.

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DTIC TAB	☐
Unannounced	☐
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By _____	
Distribution/ _____	
Availability Codes	
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Major Richard H. St.Denis was commissioned in the Field Artillery in 1970 upon his graduation from the United States Military Academy at West Point. He has served in various command and staff positions in three 155mm self-propelled artillery battalions in armored divisions in the United States and in the Federal Republic of Germany. He has also served as the Public Affairs Officer for the 3d Armored Division in Frankfurt, West Germany. His current assignment is as a student at the Air Command and Staff College. His next assignment will be as the Chief of the Army Writing Program at the United States Army Field Artillery School.

Major St.Denis holds a Master's Degree in English from Duke University and has taught composition and literature at West Point. He has also developed and taught an interdisciplinary course entitled "Identity Crises in Modern American Literature," from which he derived the topic for this study.



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REPORT NUMBER

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AUTHOR(S)

MAJOR RICHARD H. ST.DENIS, USA

TITLE

IDENTITY AND THE MILITARY PROFESSION:
AN ERIKSONIAN PERSPECTIVE

I. PURPOSE: To analyze how aspects of military service, especially various Army policies and practices, as well as the actions of superior officers, can hinder an officer from developing his personal and professional identity. Based on that analysis, to recommend ways to reduce the obstacles to identity and promote the growth of identity.

II. BACKGROUND: The theories of noted psychoanalyst Erik Erikson provide an ideal framework for studying the growth of identity and the problems in developing a coherent sense of self. They show that a well-formed identity is the key to a healthy personality, a productive adulthood, and the virtues of loyalty and selflessness.

III. ANALYSIS: When applied to the various stages of an Army officer's career, Erikson's concepts show that certain actions of senior officers and various institutional policies and practices can jeopardize one's sense of personal and professional identity. These hindrances can work against certain components of an integrated sense of identity: stability, self-knowledge, self-esteem, and identification with one's unit, one's fellow officers, and the institution at large. These problems should be minimized or resolved since a sense of identity is essential for effective leadership and since it fosters ethical conduct.

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IV. FINDINGS:

a. Career Choice. If pressured to become an officer, the young adult may prematurely foreclose his adult identity development. By committing early in life to lengthy training and military service, one may also curtail the growth of an individual identity. Because American society offers youths many different opportunities and requires they choose and form their own identities, young people may suffer identity diffusion and enter the Army as a way to discover themselves. This is not a desirable situation for future officers.

b. Pre-commissioning. When training for officership, the young adult may lose his sense of self because of the stresses of the officer training program. He may react against the authority and the pressure to conform and thus develop a negative identity. If motivated to fit in but lacking a sense of self, he may overidentify with role models or give up his individuality and thus develop an inauthentic identity. If the program is lax and doesn't socialize him adequately to military life, he may develop a deficient career identity.

c. Newly Commissioned Officers. The new lieutenant must adjust to the realities of adulthood and his new career. He may have to resort to role-playing when facing the demands of officership. If he cannot integrate his roles into his identity, he may experience an identity conflict. If he can't identify with officers, he may fraternize and develop a misplaced identity. His sense of identity will probably affect his decision whether or not to make the military his lifelong career.

d. The Established Officer. The turbulence of Army life with its frequent moves and changes of jobs can disrupt one's sense of identity. A dual-tracked career can cause identity diffusion. Promotion and command selection systems may weaken one's self-esteem and career identity. Inflated evaluation reports may prevent self-knowledge. Attendance at military and civilian schools may distract an officer from his career focus and occupational identity.

CONTINUED

e. Leadership. An officer needs to have an honest self-awareness, a high degree of individuality, a positive self-image, and a clear sense of identification with the values, beliefs, and attitudes of the officer corps. These qualities--all aspects of a strong personal and professional identity--contribute to being an effective leader. They allow an officer to devote himself selflessly to his duties, the accomplishment of the mission, and the welfare of his men.

f. Conclusion. The attainment of a sense of identity is essential if an officer is to exhibit the qualities of maturity, loyalty, and selflessness--some of the enduring values that comprise the Army Ethic. While officers have an obligation to espouse the Army Ethic, the Army itself has an obligation to help them develop their identities.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS:

a. The Army must carefully select and develop potential officers for military service. To ensure applicants make mature career choices, it should raise the age for entrance to pre-commissioning programs and should make them complete basic training before they enter. To promote their identity growth, the Army should thoroughly orient and socialize officer candidates to the military while giving them the latitude to plan and control their daily lives.

c. The Army must undertake a number of policy changes to enhance the growth of identity among officers. To create greater stability in their lives, the Army must lengthen their assignments and their time in grade between promotions. To improve their career focus, it must eliminate dual specialties and distracting schools. To promote a sense of corporate identity, it needs to reinvigorate the customs of the service. To help officers become more self-aware, it must initiate self-assessment programs, institutionalize mentoring, and foster more realistic officer evaluation reports. Overall, Army officials must promote initiative, self-reliance, and individuality among all officers by giving them the latitude to do their jobs and to learn from their honest mistakes. By so doing, they will foster a greater sense of personal identity, which will contribute to their effectiveness as leaders. This will also build their professional identity, which will promote their adherence to the Army Ethic.

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

In the past century, there have been significant advances in the study of human nature. Many notable psychoanalysts and psychologists, beginning with Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, have developed new theories useful for understanding human behavior and psychology. In the past thirty years, Erik Erikson, an influential psychoanalyst and former Harvard professor, has illuminated one important aspect of this increasingly complex subject: how man develops psychosocially through the life cycle. In a number of classic works on the subject, Erikson has set forth a comprehensive theory explaining how individuals grow psychologically and socially from infancy through old age.

Central to Erikson's work, and possibly his most significant contribution, has been his theory about identity, that is, a person's sense of self. He has written extensively about the importance of achieving a sense of identity, and he has discussed in detail how one's identity is formed and how it is threatened. His ideas about identity have generated considerable public and professional interest. They have spawned an ever-widening body of literature on the subject, the most notable of which have been Daniel Levinson's The Seasons of a Man's Life and Gail Sheehy's best-seller, Passages.

IDENTITY

For Erikson, a person's identity has two dimensions: his group identity and his ego identity. A person's group identity is the sum of his affiliations with various groups, organizations, and institutions; it is his recognition of being a member of a family, a set of friends, a particular nationality, race, religion, occupation, and various other social groupings. By contrast, ego identity is a person's sense of his unique roles and his perception of being a variant of the group per se (3:Ch 1; 4:Ch 4). In both cases, identity is largely dependent upon the individuals, groups, organizations, and institutions that have a significant impact

on one's life. But identity is also a function of how the individual perceives himself as being different from others. Ultimately, one's personal identity "includes all significant identifications, but it also alters them in order to make a unique and reasonably coherent whole of them" (4: 161).

Another way of looking at identity is to say that one's personal identity is the sum of all the answers to the question "Who am I?" It is the combination of everything that defines a person--his familial, racial, ethnic, sexual, religious, social, political, vocational, economic, emotional, and intellectual being, to name some of the more significant components of identity. For example, the identity of a certain person might be described as follows: Max Jones, a 36-year-old American male caucasian, son of Joe and Martha Jones, husband of Grace Anderson, father of Margaret and Robert Jones, a graduate of North Carolina State University with a bachelor's degree in aeronautical engineering, commissioned in the United States Army through the Reserve Officer Training Corps, a major in the Field Artillery, a member of the National Rifle Association, a Democrat, a tennis enthusiast, an avid reader, and so on. But besides these categorizations, Max's sense of identity would include his personal value judgments about these various aspects of his "self" and his perceptions of what sets him apart from others.

IDENTITY FORMATION

Erikson says that the formation of a personal identity is a complex and sometimes stressful process that begins in childhood and accelerates rapidly during adolescence. It reaches its most crucial developmental stage at some point during later adolescence and early adulthood, in what Erikson calls the identity crisis (4:Ch 3). During this difficult turning point in life, the individual feels uncertain, awkward or uncomfortable about who he is and where he is going in life. His self-assuredness and the assumptions upon which he has based his life are shaken (5:12). For his personality to develop further, he must resolve the crisis of identity and attain a clear sense of self or face continuing confusion, uncertainty, or dissatisfaction about himself and his place in society (3:94-100).

Erikson believes that the successful resolution of an identity crisis is marked by a strong, authentic, and mature self-awareness, as well as self-esteem and "a conviction that one is learning effective steps toward a tangible future, that one is developing a defined personality within a social reality which one understands" (3:95). It occurs when a person discovers the way that his personality operates, the way that he accumulates new components to his identity, and the way

that he responds to what others see in him. This self-awareness becomes the foundation for self-acceptance, a healthy personality, and a productive adult life. It is a virtual prerequisite for coming to meaningful adult decisions about such vital issues as occupation, family, and lifestyle. The ultimate social value of a sense of identity is fidelity to people and institutions. When a person achieves an inner sense of identity, he can then turn outward from himself and become genuinely caring of others and loyal to the people, groups and organizations with which he identifies (2:Ch 7; 3:Ch 3; 4:Ch 4).

IDENTITY PROBLEMS

The formation of identity, however, does not stop after one resolves an identity crisis. Building one's identity is a lifelong process, never free from changes, new dimensions and new definitions. Moreover, one's sense of identity can be jeopardized by a variety of external factors: the behavior of others, the practices of the groups and organizations to which one belongs, and the stresses of rapid change, be it social, biological, marital, vocational, intellectual, political, economic, cultural, historical, or technological. Identity can also be threatened by the traumas and stresses encountered during the many transitions and key events of life (2:277-284; 3:Ch 3; 4:Ch 3).

In the face of these obstacles to identity, one may fail to attain or maintain a coherent sense of self. This can result in identity problems such as identity foreclosure, identity diffusion, identity conflict, negative identity, and imposed identity (2:Ch 3; 4:Ch 4). These problems may be manifested in a feeling that there is something wrong with oneself, in over-sensitivity, in excessive self-concern, in a feeling of alienation, in a feeling of unrealized potential, or in excessive consciousness of role playing (5:11). Moreover, they may not easily be resolved and may preclude one's further psychosocial development.

IDENTITY AND THE MILITARY

Erikson's concepts about the dimensions and dynamics of identity are usually applied to the adolescent or the adult within society at large. But they are relevant to people in the military, as well, and are useful to a study of the psychology of military life. Much of what Erikson says about the formation of identity can help us better understand various aspects of military service such as recruitment, education and training, socialization into the military way of life, adjustment to duty in one's first unit, new duties and

subsequent assignments, selection for command and promotion, and military leadership. Moreover, Erikson's ideas are particularly instructive for those military leaders who serve as teachers, counselors, and mentors to younger soldiers who are at important stages in their identity formation. In short, the issue of identity is very relevant to the armed forces today.

In a careful analysis of the military experience, one can also see that military personnel encounter a variety of difficulties in attaining or maintaining their personal identities as individuals, as well as their group identities as military professionals. In the military, there can be many obstacles to identity, particularly in the actions of one's superior officers and in the peculiarities of military life itself. The theories of Erik Erikson provides a useful tool for understanding the problems of identity facing people within the ranks of our military today.

OBJECTIVES

This study, therefore, discusses the subject of identity as it pertains to people in the military. While applicable to the armed forces at large, it focuses on the United States Army in general and its officer corps in specific. It first discusses how an identity forms and how one's sense of self is a significant factor when choosing a career in the military (Chapter Two). It then describes the problems of identity as an officer candidate is educated, trained, and socialized to military service (Chapter Three). It also analyzes those problems facing the newly commissioned officer (Chapter Four) and those who are well-established in their military careers (Chapter Five). Throughout, this study addresses the various obstacles posed by one's senior officers, as well as the Army itself as an institution, to the attainment or maintenance of a sense of self. It shows that some of these obstacles occur in various organizational policies, practices, and procedures, and it offers a number of recommendations for preventing these identity problems and enhancing one's personal and career identity. Finally, it comments on how a fully-achieved sense of identity contributes to an officer's effectiveness as a leader (Chapter Six) and how it enhances his values and ethical conduct (Chapter Seven). Throughout this study, Eriksonian concepts serve as the backdrop for a discussion of the importance of identity and the impact of military service on the individual and career identities of officers.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this analysis is to offer an Eriksonian perspective on aspects of officer professional development,

to include selected practices and policies affecting officers. It seeks to educate the military reader about the matter of identity, which is an important factor in the professional and personal lives of officers. In doing so, it hopes to promote a greater self-understanding, a clearer sense of identity and, subsequently, increased military professionalism and career motivation among all those who serve in the profession of arms.

Chapter Two

IDENTITY AND CAREER CHOICE

CHILDHOOD, ADOLESCENCE AND IDENTITY

Throughout childhood and adolescence, one begins to develop social skills and to form attitudes that gradually evolve into adult capabilities and values. Moreover, one starts to form a variety of interests, expectations, and hopes that will be more actively pursued in the future. During these early years, one previews some of the roles to be played out in full as an adult. As such, the experiences of youth serve as the foundations for adulthood (3:Ch 2).

According to Erikson, probably the single most important psychosocial development during youth is the formation of an identity. As a child, the individual begins to discover the initial components of his identity as a member of a family. During early adolescence, he widens the horizons of his identity to include friends, school classes, athletic teams, and other such social groupings. Then, in later adolescence, after gaining security in his group identifications, he looks to find himself and express his individuality and uniqueness. Usually by early adulthood, he sees himself as a unique person, differentiated from his group associations. In middle adulthood, he finally comes to see himself as his own person, distinct from others (2:Ch 7; 3:Ch 1; 4:Ch 3).

But the path to this sense of an achieved adult identity is not a simple one, and at some point along the way, the individual inevitably experiences an identity crisis. Usually during later adolescence, he grapples with questions about himself, his past, and his future. He wrestles with his image of himself but, in so doing, he gains a clearer sense of where fits in, how he fits in, and why he fits it. He gradually attains an understanding of who he has been in the past, who he is now, and who he can become in the future. With this clarified image of himself, he can start to make mature decisions about his adult life, one of the biggest of which involves a choice of careers (3:Ch 1; 4:Ch 3).

CAREER CHOICE

One's choice of a career is inextricably tied to one's sense of identity. A young adult's choice of occupations is, first and foremost, a statement of what he wants to become; it is a preliminary definition of an ideal future self. At the same time, however, it is a reflection of his current self; it is a means to pursue his current interests and to express his basic values in a socially productive context (6:Ch 5).

For the typical middle-to-upper class American youth today, the choice of a college and a field of study is the first step toward a career. His collegiate studies and experiences will allow him to explore various possibilities for an occupation, and he will gradually begin to clarify his intentions about the shape of his adult life. More often not, he will change his mind along the way, and like many college students today, he may pursue a course of study that leaves room for a variety of occupational directions. Even after starting out in one career field, he may change his mind and find something else to do. Indeed, he may change careers a number of times before settling into his life-long occupation (6:Ch 5 & Ch 6).

Since this process of forming a career can be a complex and drawn-out proposition, it is not uncommon for young adults, including those ending up with a career in the military, to experience psychological difficulties. As Erikson has observed, "it is primarily the inability to settle on an occupational identity which disturbs young people" (3:97). This disturbance, which is not necessarily abnormal, can take the form of temporary periods of confusion, bewilderment, depression, self-preoccupation, isolation, and discouragement. The individual may experience such identity problems as identity foreclosure or identity diffusion.

IDENTITY FORECLOSURE

For adolescents with a strong sense of identity and exceptional strength of character, the decision to pursue a particular career such as the military may be the fortuitous result of a lifelong dream, a mature self-awareness, and a realistic assessment of the career field. This is most likely to happen among individuals who follow in the footsteps of a parent, relative, or close friend. In this case, their quickly-achieved occupational identity is the natural extension of their adolescent identifications.

For many youths, however, such a quick and straight-line route to a career is neither possible nor desirable. Indeed, for many, such an experience could constitute identity fore-

closure, a premature shutting out of an authentic, self-realized identity (4:Ch 4). This problem of identity foreclosure is most likely to occur in someone who has been coerced or unduly influenced by a parent or friend into deciding on a specific career. It is also possible among those who feel economic or social pressure to make a quick choice of careers. Whatever the cause of the identity foreclosure, the individual pre-empts or has been pre-empted from a deliberate and mature career choice (4:Ch 4).

Such a foreclosure of identity, which is often an indicator of a weak sense of identity, is not uncommon among youths choosing to become an officer in the Army. There are countless officers who were raised in military families, then strongly encouraged or pressured into a military career. Others undoubtedly choose the Army because of vague aspirations or private fantasies. The problem is that the individual makes a strong commitment to a career without sufficiently considering his own developing personality and identity.

More to the point of this study, however, the problem of identity foreclosure can be prompted by the military institution itself, for example, in the requirement that future officers begin an officer preparatory program at a relatively young age. To begin studies at West Point, one must be between the ages of 17 and 22. To receive a Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) scholarship, one must be between 17 and 25. Once in the program, the officer candidates can come under considerable pressure from families, friends, and the institution to see the training through to completion.

The length of the service commitment after the training can become yet another obstacle to identity. Attending West Point results in five years of obligated service; an ROTC scholarship may do the same. As such, entrance into a pre-commissioning program can result in a rather significant investment of time for those in their late teens or early twenties. For all intents and purposes, then, the decision to become an officer effectively forecloses other career possibilities and a wider-ranging exploration of the self.

Regardless of the positive aspects of military service (and, of course, there are many), such an important and binding decision should not be made at such an early age. Most young people are not psychologically prepared to make a firm commitment to a career when they are still in their late teens or early twenties. The nature of youth at this point is to avoid firm commitments, even to the detriment of building a good career. Oftentimes, according to psychologist Daniel Levinson, a person's commitment to a specific vocation is not really solidified until middle adulthood--the mid-thirties (6:102-106).

Such an early and binding selection of a career may have unfortunate consequences: frustration, delayed identity crises, and a lack of career motivation. As Levinson notes,

Young men who make a strong occupational commitment in the early twenties, without sufficient exploration of external options and inner preferences, often come to regret it later. . . . One of the great paradoxes of human development is that we are required to make crucial choices before we have the knowledge, judgment, and self-understanding to choose wisely (6:102).

Unfortunately, applicants for pre-commissioning training are required to commit to the profession long before they may be ready to do so and certainly well in advance of their civilian counterparts pursuing other professions. It is significant that the military may be the only occupation to require an oath of service and a binding commitment from youths so early and at such a fragile point in their psychosocial development.

IDENTITY DIFFUSION

There is yet another potential identity problem facing youths opting for careers in the military: the problem of identity diffusion, which stems primarily from the very nature of today's open and plural society. In America today, there are many opportunities for most young people, such as a wide range of schools, career field, and lifestyles. In essence, there is considerable personal freedom for the individual to shape his own destiny and his own identity.

Such freedom of choice brings with it, however, a peculiar set of responsibilities and problems. As Erikson observes, "Democracy in a country like America poses special problems in that it insists on self-made identities ready to grasp many chances and ready to adjust to changing necessities" (3:98-99). For those lacking a strong sense of identity, this wide range of opportunities and the responsibility that comes with choosing can result in a person's confusion and bewilderment. Indeed, the individual may experience what Erikson refers to as identity diffusion, an inability to choose a particular role or occupation. The individual may drift from one interest to the next, from one pursuit to another, trying out a number of different roles and jobs but making only superficial commitments that are later abandoned (3:94-100).

PSYCHOSOCIAL MORATORIUM

This problem is widespread in America and evident in the number of students who enter college without a clear direc-

tion, who change their majors, and who have only a vague idea of what they actually want to do after graduation. But in that the college experience is meant for growth, experimentation and exploration of different possibilities, these years can accommodate a lack of commitment. This period of sanctioned non-commitment, which Erikson calls a psychosocial moratorium, is, therefore, a time when one can try to find himself and define his interests. The pressure to have a well-focused identity is thereby suspended for a while (3:118-120).

In certain respects, service in the military can constitute a psychosocial moratorium for a young adult who isn't ready to settle on a particular career. While military service can thus be a self-serving escape from responsibility, it can also be a way to engage in something productive until one discovers himself and focuses his interests.

The Army, however, contributes somewhat to this matter of identity diffusion and psychosocial moratorium through its recruiting practices. The ubiquitous pitch to youth to join the Army and "Be All You Can Be" sells the idea that in the Army there are diverse opportunities and the latitude for growth. The implicit message is that in the Army you can choose what you want to do and be what you want to be. Moreover, the slogan that the armed forces is "A Great Place to Start" implies that you can use your time in the Army to discover yourself and develop your capabilities.

The idea of military service as a psychosocial moratorium is acceptable for enlisted soldiers but is neither desirable nor appropriate for young officers. Their years in the service are not the time for them to find themselves. The responsibilities of officership demand people with well-established identities who are already psychologically mature and self-aware.

RECOMMENDATIONS

When assessing an individual's suitability for military service and officership, Army recruiting and admissions officials must consider not only the person's achievements to date, namely, his scholastic and extracurricular record, but also his character and personality. Admissions officials need also to gauge applicant's sense of identity, as well as his self-image and self-esteem. A person's level of identity development can be an indicator of his potential for military service as an officer.

A useful tool to accomplish this is the use of personality profile inventories to supplement the usual personal interviews and letters of recommendation. Any number of psycholog-

ical tests such as the Myer-Briggs Type Indicator could help the individual understand himself and help the selection officials determine the applicant's level of development and potential for leadership. Although there is no particular type of personality best suited for military service, personality inventories can still assist young people in understanding their strengths, weaknesses, and aptitudes, and they can aid selection officers in passing judgment on the maturity and psychosocial development of the applicants (9:5).

Another recommendation is to raise the age bracket for entrance into an officer-producing program such as West Point or ROTC. Raising the minimum age of admission to West Point to twenty would foster a more mature career choice and thus help prevent the problem of identity foreclosure of young people who make hasty or ill-considered choices. To that same end, the Army should award ROTC scholarships only for the last two years of college and no earlier than the age of twenty. While certainly radical and difficult to implement at first, this policy would generally produce older, more mature officers.

To measure career motivation among applicants and also to preclude identity foreclosure, the Army should require that all young men and women accepted for West Point or an ROTC scholarship must complete basic training before they are allowed to enter the program. Such training would certainly familiarize them with some important aspects of military life and test the degree of their interest in a military career prior to starting their pre-commissioning training. This type of practical orientation to the rigors of military life could make for more judicious career decisions.

To the greatest extent possible, the military should give prospective officers a good indication of what they are getting into. Many applicants for West Point only really consider the free education or the prestige of the Academy. Many ROTC scholars are interested, first and foremost, in the educational benefits, as well. As such, Army officials should give applicants a clear picture of what their military duties would entail upon commissioning. Moreover, the advertisements for the military should be focused more clearly on the specifics of military life and less on the Academy and ROTC or the adventure and elitism of service in such units as the Rangers, Airborne, and Special Forces.

Finally, since the application process itself may have an effect on the individual's concept of the military, it is imperative that recruiting and admissions officials represent the highest standards of the Army. The process whereby an

applicant is selected to the academy or awarded an ROTC scholarship may be his first real exposure to the military. His initial impressions may be formative ones with respect to his future identity as an officer.

Chapter Three

IDENTITY AND PRE-COMMISSIONING TRAINING

EARLY ADULT TRANSITION

The time for choosing and preparing for a career comes at a very turbulent point in a person's psychosocial development, namely, the late teens and early twenties, or what Daniel Levinson calls the Early Adult Transition. For most young adults, this is a period of termination and initiation, a time of leaving the pre-adult world and of taking the first preliminary steps into the adult world. During these transitional years, the young adult must not only undertake his most serious explorations of himself and the world, but he must also begin to build his life structures for the future (6:21-22 & 72-78).

This is also a significant time with respect to one's identity, particularly one's group identity. To begin with, the young adult usually leaves his family of origin and meets new groups of people who will become important to him. As he modifies his relations with family and high-school friends, he initiates new and potentially long-lasting relationships with college classmates and love interests. His parents give way to college authorities and teachers who become surrogates for them. With the change in the people, groups and institutions that he encounters on a daily basis, the emerging young adult builds new components to his identity. His future occupation will undoubtedly constitute a prominent part of his adult identity.

SOCIALIZATION TO THE MILITARY

For those looking to enter a profession, their specialized education and training will include a process of socialization to the occupational identity. That is to say, a part of their preparation will be "the acquisition of the habits, beliefs, attitudes, and motives which enable a person to perform satisfactorily the roles expected of him" (8:227). For those seeking to become officers, their pre-commissioning training will not only give them the specific knowledge and skills associated with officership. It will also provide an intense process of socialization to the unique culture of the profession of arms.

Be it at West Point, in ROTC, or in Officer Candidate School (OCS), the pre-commissioning experience will have a significant impact not only on one's professional qualifications, but also on one's sense of self and one's identity as a soldier. It will absorb and integrate the future officer to the military way of life. It will transmit to him the ethos of military service, that is, the values, beliefs, and lifestyle of being a soldier.

There are, nevertheless, some obstacles to identity development to be encountered during pre-commissioning. They include the expected psychological difficulties of this stage of life: the uncertainties of the future, the stresses of making important life decisions, and the strain of adjusting to new surroundings, new people and new institutions. But there are also hindrances to identity to be found in the regimen, requirements and practices of the officer training programs themselves.

NEGATIVE IDENTITY

To begin with, the life of a cadet or officer candidate at West Point, ROTC, or OCS is usually quite different from that at home. To be specific, it may represent a whole new world of values, habits, and attitudes. As such, the strict regulation, time pressure, and authority may generate levels of stress that the candidate may never have experienced. As it tries to inculcate the values and norms of the military, the training may also threaten the individual's sense of identity.

In the case of a strong-willed person or someone with a strong self-image, the individual may rebel against what he perceives as a threat to his individuality, basic beliefs, or deep-rooted values. Moreover, in the face of regulation, pressure, and authority, he may react in a negative or contrary fashion so as to preserve his sense of control over his life. This contrariness may result in what Erikson calls a negative identity, whereby the individual dissociates himself from the expected standards and then demonstrates behavior at odds with the norms (4:172-174). The young person may become bitter about his experiences and reject out of hand the ideal attitudes, values, and beliefs of the service.

There are other stresses on the individual that may lead to identity problems. First, there is the isolation of being separated from family and friends when one goes to West Point or OCS. Then there are many competing demands on one's time and attention, particularly so during the Academy's plebe year, the ROTC summer camps, and virtually the entire OCS training experience. For those unable to adjust quickly,

their experiences may lead to identity diffusion (3:94-98). The training may be so taxing psychologically as to diminish their self-confidence, self-image, and individual identity.

IMPOSED IDENTITY

But the typical officer candidate is an outstanding young person with an extraordinary capacity and motivation to meet the demands placed upon him. As such, however, he is particularly susceptible to institutional influence. If the individual has an underdeveloped identity or hasn't experienced an identity crisis, he is liable to be molded rather than developed by the institution. Eager to fit in and adopt the group identity, he may yield himself unquestioningly to the socialization and indoctrination processes. This may result in an imposed identity, whereby he loses his own sense of identity to the one prescribed by the institution.

Thus, the pre-commissioning program can prevent the healthy development of personal identity by being too demanding and by defining too carefully what is expected of its young charges. Additionally, by emphasizing authority, teamwork, and conformity, the institution may communicate the idea that the candidates need not establish their own goals and find their own way in life. As such, it may prevent or discourage some of the necessary developmental experiences of young adulthood, namely, exploring the possibilities of the adult world, creating one's own goals and life structures for living within the adult world, and undertaking a serious examination of one's deepest values and beliefs.

Another problem stemming from the individual's susceptibility to influence and willingness to conform is that he may overidentify with his superior officers or other role models within the institution. He may seek to emulate one of the successful or heroic figures of the military past. Such overidentification may lead to inauthentic behavior, attitudes, or beliefs, which are detrimental to the integrity of the self.

In summary, the institution can be at fault for doing too much for the individual. By satisfying too many of his personal needs, by providing a ready-made identity, by presenting unrealistic role models, and by not requiring the exploration of the self and the external world, the training program may develop officers with strong personalities but plastic individual identities. This is especially possible at the military academy, where there is a great deal of nurturing and protection of cadets and too little leeway for realistic self-exploration. The result may be an identity crisis at a later point in the officer's career when he is least able to resolve it.

IDENTITY DEFICIT

At the other end of the spectrum, the officer preparatory program may not be intense enough, or the individual may not receive a suitable orientation to nature of military life. For example, a lax ROTC program in a predominantly collegiate setting may not adequately communicate to its cadets the unique values, beliefs, and responsibilities associated with officer-ship. Such undernourishment of the individual may lead to what is called an identity deficit. In this situation, the individual develops "an inadequately defined self" that is "characterized by a lack of commitment to goals and values; the person lacks the basis for making consistent choices and decisions" (7:408).

A form of identity deficit may also occur as a result of the culture shock in going from the civilian community into the military service. In this day and age of "mobile pluralism" as Orrin Klapp calls it, American society promotes "a great movement of persons from one status, subculture, class, community, job, church, school, family, or association to another in a milieu with great variations. This means pressure to adjust's one's identity rather than holding fast to one image" (5:17). As such, when encountering the military's more rigid class distinctions and conservative values, the officer candidate may feel stifled by the hierarchical structures and traditional manners and mores of the military culture. He may also not be able to conform to the more conservative behavior and attitudes expected of him.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The first duty of the various pre-commissioning programs is certainly to develop within the candidates the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes associated with the military. Their primary objective is to produce capable, self-reliant young officers dedicated to service to the military and the nation. To accomplish that, the training must build a sense of identity with the military, while at the same time fostering individual self-development.

To promote a suitable degree of identification with the military, the military academy, ROTC and OCS must thoroughly orient their young men and women to the Army. Secondly, they must provide the candidate a sense of the history, traditions and customs of the service. Moreover, all three officer-producing programs should send their candidates on extended internships with troop units to give them practical experience and a wider career orientation before they are commissioned. These are all important means of developing a sense of group

identity, continuity and community with those in the service now and those who have gone before.

The pre-commissioning programs must promote the candidate's individual identity, as well. To do so, they should provide extensive instruction on developmental psychology to give students a theoretical framework for assessing their own identity status and self-development. They should also provide for frequent self-assessment programs and for counseling the candidates on their psychosocial development, besides their progress in academics and military training. In short, the training program should extend beyond the cadet's intellectual, moral, and physical development. It should focus on their psychosocial development as well.

Finally, the officer-producing institutions and programs should give their young men and women the widest latitude possible for self-exploration and identity-seeking activities. Specifically, the officer candidates should assume a greater responsibility for their daily lives, schedules, and training activities. The military academy needs to reduce the supervision of cadets by the tactical officer corps and move further away from the "Blue-Book Regulations" mentality of years past. In ROTC, the cadets need to assume a greater responsibility for planning, developing and conducting their military training and education.

Chapter Four

IDENTITY AND THE NEWLY COMMISSIONED OFFICER

APPRENTICESHIP AND GROUP IDENTITY

When leaving college and launching a first career, the young adult faces a new set of challenges. To begin with, he must enter the occupational world and establish himself within it. He must begin to form lasting relationships, social obligations, a sense of ethics, and a more differentiated adult identity. He must also make and test any number of decisions about a home, a family, a lifestyle, and friends (6:101-102).

Although faced with these demands of adulthood, the young adult's tendency is to remain uncommitted, and his early adult years continue to be largely a time of experimentation and of exploration of the self. Psychologically, it is a period of tension between the desire for flexibility and the need for stability. This dichotomy can lead to considerable indecisiveness and uncertainty about a personal identity.

For the newly commissioned officer, the first few years of his career are a period of apprenticeship, indoctrination, and acculturation to the military way of life. Ideally, the young officer has assimilated the broader, ideological dimensions of his new profession through his pre-commissioning training. But now he must adjust to the norms and realities of his unit of assignment and the institution at large.

One of the young officer's most important tasks is to develop a deeper sense of identity as a member of the officer corps. The young officer must be integrated not only into his unit but also into the corps of officers and leaders within the organization. Until his individual identity is strengthened, his group identity as a member of the officer corps can serve as "a superidentity or an alter ego" (5:xii). But he must not rely exclusively on his group identity. He must assert his individuality if he is to mature further and become a leader.

For a variety of reasons, the new lieutenant may experience problems in developing his group and individual identity. Some of the difficulty may be attributable to the changes and developments within his personal life, such as starting a

family, creating a home, and adjusting to new surroundings. Other problems may stem, however, from the demands of officership, the actions of his superiors, and practices within his new unit.

ROLE-PLAYING

One of the greatest challenges to the new officer is to adapt to the considerable demands of the profession. Indeed, there may be no other profession that requires such a diversity of roles, such a high level of responsibility, and such a degree of versatility and adaptability of its newest members. To begin with, the lieutenant must assume a variety of different roles associated with being an officer: warrior, leader, manager, trainer, counselor, and technical expert. On top of that, he must cope with a host of additional duties for which he may be unprepared. Moreover, he must undertake significant responsibilities within his first few years of service, such as the leadership of a platoon or the command of a company, battery, or troop. He will have to be flexible, versatile, and adaptable in coming to grips with his new profession.

Accordingly, it is not uncommon for new officers to experience something of a reality shock when joining their first unit. The perplexing array of duties, responsibilities, and requirements can easily lead to uncertainty, anxiety, and problems of identity. The newly commissioned officer may feel inadequate to cope with his many new roles. He may also feel frustration in not being able to handle the wide range of duties. Furthermore, he may lack confidence in his ability to accomplish all the tasks that confront him.

To cope with this, the young officer may resort to role-playing. He may find himself performing his duties without feeling a sense of authenticity about what he is doing. Although he may be uncomfortable about it at the time, the role-playing can be a healthy form of experimentation and identity-seeking if the young officer is conscious of what he is doing. Ultimately, if he is to maintain a sense of integrity and personal identity, he must somehow reconcile his various roles as an officer into his concept of himself.

IDENTITY CONFLICT

The young officer who cannot harmonize the multiple demands, contradictory roles, and diverse commitments may experience an identity conflict in which "the situation makes it impossible to choose and act consistently with all the person's values and goals" (7:408). If he feels a strong

personal and emotional commitment to two or more distinct identity components that are incompatible, he may feel obligated to drop or betray certain loyalties and identifications. As an example, the newly married officer may feel pulled in different directions by his responsibilities to his family and to his unit. Similarly, the young platoon leader may feel the conflicting loyalties to his men and his superiors. Such circumstances can generate considerable pressure on the stability of the lieutenant's sense of personal or professional identity.

FRATERNIZATION

A different form of identity problem arises when an officer fails to develop a sufficiently strong group identity as a member of the officer corps. If he is not integrated into the leadership structure of his unit or if he doesn't develop a sense of kinship with his fellow officers, he may resort to identifying with others in the unit of similar age, background, or interests, namely, enlisted men or young non-commissioned officers. He may seek a more comfortable, less threatening relationship with them than he could otherwise achieve with his peers and more senior officers. In this form, fraternization is as much a problem of misplaced identification and an underdeveloped group identity as it is a case of inappropriate professional behavior.

CONTINUING THE CAREER

Normally, within his first few years of service, the typical young officer will adapt to the military and adopt his diverse roles as an officer into his concept of himself. But early on, he must decide whether or not to continue his career after the term of his obligated service. In deciding, he will affirm earlier choices, make new choices, or possibly choose not to choose and just wait to see what happens.

This is an important and difficult life decision obviously, and the young officer may experience psychological difficulties in figuring out what he wants to do. He may experience a serious identity crisis, and if his dilemma is not resolved quickly, he may experience identity diffusion, an extended period of personal confusion and indecision. Some of the important factors in his decision whether to stay in or get out will be his satisfaction with the service, his expectations for the future, and his sense of occupational identity, motivation, and commitment as an officer.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is particularly important to build the young officer's sense of group identity and his sense of personal identity. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways. To begin with, the leadership must provide the new officer with an extensive reception and orientation into his new unit. He should be briefed in detail on the policies and procedures of the organization. He should be widely introduced to the people within his unit, and in particular, he should meet all of his fellow officers as soon as possible and be quickly brought into the leadership structure of the unit. This orientation period should last at least a full month and should be under the sponsorship of a peer who has been in the unit at least a year.

To ensure their continued orientation to the unit and the profession, all of the lieutenants in a unit should be provided a Junior Officer Professional Development Program that frequently conducts classes, seminars and activities relevant to their needs. The more senior officers should be actively involved in passing along their knowledge, skills, experiences, perceptions and attitudes to their proteges within the structure of such a program.

Most importantly, lieutenants should be placed in appropriate leadership positions whenever possible and should be given meaningful duties and responsibilities commensurate with their skills and abilities. Insofar as possible, they should be assigned to troop assignments where they have sufficient opportunity to associate with fellow officers and to lead troops rather than be isolated on a staff.

A useful way to build group identity among new lieutenants is to assign them special projects that contribute tangible benefits to the unit. In these activities, they should have to work extensively with their peers. Yet another way to develop their cohesiveness and esprit de corps is through constructive competition for all lieutenants. Finally, they should be encouraged to form junior officer councils for wider interaction their peers and superiors on matters of importance.

Besides helping to build group identity, supervisors and leaders should assist lieutenants in developing their individual identities. To that end, senior officers must provide useful feedback on all aspects of their performance through helpful mentoring and counseling sessions. But the lieutenants should also be afforded opportunities for formal self-assessment to complement the feedback they get through officer evaluation reports, counseling, and mentoring. The self-assessment can take the form of personality inventories and tests, as well as seminars conducted by trained counselors.

To build their self-image and identity, the new lieutenants should be told frequently of their importance to the unit, the officer corps, and the Army. Since lieutenants comprise nearly 35% of the officer corps overall and nearly 40% in line units, they should know their relative value to the operation of the unit. They should receive special consideration as a group, rather than be relegated to secondary status. They should receive recognition and awards for their meaningful accomplishments and contributions.

Chapter Five

IDENTITY AND THE ESTABLISHED OFFICER

BUILDING THE CAREER

For the average adult, the years between thirty and forty are a time of settling down. One usually commits to a few key choices about how he will live his life, and he settles comfortably into his career. The productive adult invests himself as fully as possible in his work, his family, and his community, and he energetically pursues his long-range goals and plans (6:111).

According to Erikson, the primary developmental task during these adult years is to become "generative," that is, to turn one's concerns outward and to devote his efforts for the good of others (3:103). While one certainly looks for advancement in his career, he also seeks deeper fulfillment by making significant contributions to his profession, community, and the succeeding generations. For those who fail to become generative, these years can be given over to self-indulgence and self-absorption, which can be the result of "excessive self-love based on a too strenuously self-made personality" (3:103).

For an officer at this stage of his life and career, there are aspects of military service that can hinder his efforts for a fully realized occupational identity, self-actualization and generativity. A variety of bureaucratic practices and policies within Army life make it difficult to attain the goals and maintain whatever personal and career identity that one has fashioned for himself. The result of this difficulty can be to diminish one's sense of career motivation and commitment.

DUAL SPECIALTIES

A key hindrance to maintaining a stable sense of identity during the middle years of one's Army service is the requirement for most officers to have two specialties and a dual-tracked career. An officer begins his military service with a functional specialty within his basic branch, but around the seven-year point, he must select a second functional area of

specialization. Moreover, a number of officers in the combat branches are strongly encouraged to transfer to a support branch between their third and eighth year of service. For many officers, their secondary specialties or new branches of service bear little direct relation to their original specialties. Unfortunately, some of these assignments are made arbitrarily, based on the needs of the Army.

Although the Army must have a diversified officer corps that can handle the increasingly sophisticated needs of the service, this system of dual specialties and dual-tracked careers poses an identity problem to officers, nonetheless. A mid-term officer who has settled into and started to become expert in one field must select a second subprofession, train for it and then gain some experience in it, which amounts to starting a second career. First of all, an officer must decide which specialty to choose; secondly, he must become trained and qualified in this subprofession; then, he must serve in his new field, ideally alternating assignments between his primary and secondary specialties. Later in his career, he may have to work in his alternate specialty exclusively.

This policy of alternate specialties, therefore, constitutes a diffusion of one's occupational identity. An officer must split and expand his professional roles rather than sharpen and build on those already established. This tends further to dilute what the Army considers the primary identity of an officer: a warrior/leader.

ASSIGNMENT POLICIES

The current assignment policies within the Army also make for identity problems by creating anxiety and turbulence. It is not uncommon for officers to change jobs every one to two years, and most have to make a major move to a new locale at least every three years. To unsettle their lives even further, they must attend any number of professional military education schools and courses of varying length throughout their career. One barely has time to establish oneself in a unit or job when it is time to move.

Although the assignment policies and practices are purportedly for the good of the service and to give officers a wide variety of experiences, they are not particularly beneficial for the individual's sense of identity per se. This forced transience, a career-long pattern of turbulence and readjustment, disrupts the stability of one's personal life structures. It requires a frequent readjustment of one's associations and identifications with associates, units,

communities, and locales. This constant change, often rapid and sometimes unexpected, also places great stress on the individual and his family. It diffuses an officer's sense of identity because it upsets the continuity and sameness that is vital to sustaining a coherent sense of self.

EVALUATION REPORTS

Another key ingredient of identity is an honest self-awareness, and one of the most important ways to attain this self-knowledge is through honest and balanced feedback from the significant persons in one's life. Within the military, the official system of feedback is found predominantly in officer evaluation reports (OERs) and periodic informal counseling sessions. But for a variety of reasons, the tendency in the Army is not to provide one's subordinates with straightforward assessments of their performance and potential. In particular, overinflated OERs, long a problem in the Army, do not provide the individual a suitable basis for realistically assessing his strengths, weaknesses, progress and performance in relation to his peers, his personal expectations, or his goals. A string of imprecise evaluation reports can only lead to uncertainty, faulty self-perceptions, and a flawed sense of identity. This, in turn, can lead to unrealistic expectations about promotions, selections for command, and assignments.

PROMOTION

The military's promotion system also contributes somewhat to identity problems. A centralized board of disinterested officers quickly reviews personnel records and, on the basis of those files, selects officers for promotion. By necessity, the selection board must sometimes differentiate and choose on the basis of negative discriminators. Moreover, they must fill quotas for certain functional areas. This system implicitly places an unhealthy emphasis on a spotless record of evaluation reports. The underlying message to the officer corps is that in order to advance in the Army, one must avoid making mistakes. This breeds an attitude of conservatism and caution among the officer corps and discourages initiative, individuality, and other outward manifestations of a unique self.

As is to be expected, promotions become more competitive as one progresses in his career, and because of the promotion system and the diminishing number of billets for the senior ranks, there are many outstanding officers with excellent records who are not selected for advancement. But in establishing quotas for officers to be selected within certain

specialties, the impersonal promotion system passes over many officers with outstanding careers and records. For those not selected for promotion, the stigma of being passed over dissipates their self-esteem, career motivation, and career identity.

COMMAND SELECTION

The Army's current system for selecting lieutenant colonels and colonels for command positions is a similar institutional practice that threatens the identity and self-esteem of many officers. Only about one-fourth of the eligible officers can be selected for the Army's battalion and brigade command positions, and since these positions represent the ideal goal of the professional Army officer, the failure to be selected can be a demoralizing blow to one's self-esteem and self-image.

EDUCATION

The military's strong emphasis on continuing military education and civilian graduate schooling is, in certain respects, counterproductive to an officer's identity, as well. While attendance at a professional military school such as the Command and General Staff College or the War College can be useful sabbaticals to strengthen one's professionalism and military identity, the months spent at schools can also be distractors from an officer's primary roles of warfighting and leadership. All too often, these schools delve into subjects that are only peripherally related to the profession. They serve to expand one's horizons, but they also tend to diffuse one's identity as a military professional first and foremost. Many officers come to see these schools as unnecessary interruptions in their careers.

In a similar vein, the emphasis on graduate-level education and advanced degrees also detracts from an individual's concentration on his primary duties. Mid-term officers feel considerable pressure to gain a graduate degree for their record. The degree may be patently unrelated to their professional needs or may be more suitable for a second career outside of the service. Moreover, the Army's emphasis on education is particularly troublesome for officers who are not academically oriented and who feel they must go to school to remain competitive for promotion.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure that officers achieve an increasing clear sense of identity as military professionals, the Army should change

a number of its policies. To begin with, the Army must promote stability in its officer corps and within its units to allow for continuity and cohesion. To accomplish this, assignments should be made for longer periods, and the length of a tour at a specific locale should be extended by at least one year.

The Army's dual-tracked system for officer professional development should be drastically modified or discontinued. Officers should stick with one specialty through the course of their careers. There should be more accession specialties and less pressure for officers to have a wide variety of so called "career-broadening" assignments. Such a system would make for more fully achieved professional identities, which would contribute to greater career satisfaction, motivation, and commitment.

To allow for a more measured and deliberate development of military careers, the Army should slow down its rate of promotions. Specifically, the time-in-grade requirements for promotion should be extended by one year for each grade to allow more time for the development of professional skills and to accommodate more stabilized assignments. Moreover, the Army should extend the minimum time-in-service criteria for retirement to twenty-five years.

The Army should also decentralize its systems for promotion and for command positions to the maximum extent possible. General officers and commanders in the field should have a direct say in the both the promotion and command selection of officers within their commands or functional areas. This would create a more personalized decision-making process in which officers would be judged more on their merits than on their shortcomings.

Professional military schools for officers should be consolidated, modified, or offered by correspondence only. They should focus more clearly on the military arts and sciences. They should be voluntary and have less an impact on one's chances for promotion. These changes would keep the focus of education on the development of an officer's professional identity.

All of these measures would serve to reduce some of the excessive dislocations and rapid changes that characterize the careers of most officers in the Army today. The turbulence and impersonality that are so much a part of Army life have a detrimental effect on the sense of continuity, stability, and community that are so important to identity formation.

Overall, the focus of officer personnel policies in the Army should center on the principle of individual self-development as the basis for professional growth. There should

be greater responsibility placed on the individual to shape his life and his career according to long-range plans and goals that he establishes in consultation with a mentor and a career manager. In doing so, the Army would build a corps of officers with a strong sense of professional and individual identity.

Chapter Six

IDENTITY AND MILITARY LEADERSHIP

As has been shown, identity is an important factor in the personal lives and the professional development of officers. It is crucial to one's psychological well-being, and it is the foundation for one's continued psychosocial growth.

But the matter of identity holds yet another importance for all officers at all stages of their careers. A highly developed sense of identity is a key contributing factor to effective leadership. Indeed, it is a virtual prerequisite for successfully leading people in the military.

SELF-KNOWLEDGE

The first component of a genuine sense of identity is an honest self-awareness, and a leader must certainly know himself. He must have a realistic sense of who he is, what he knows, what he believes, and what he represents to other people. This self-knowledge is important so that he can better control himself and improve himself. Self-knowledge is critical so that he can play to his strengths and minimize his weaknesses (13:46).

SELF-ESTEEM

Another important element of leadership is self-esteem. A positive self-image gives a person confidence, and it inspires confidence in one's followers. A recent West Point historical study on military leadership shows that a positive self-image is one of the most prominent and recurring traits among successful combat leaders (12:8). Moreover, management experts Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus contend that effective leaders actually build their self-esteem which contributes to their emotional maturity which, in turn, fosters success (1:188-190).

CORPORATE IDENTITY

A military officer must also have a strong corporate identity to be an effective leader. He needs to identify strongly with and adopt the values, beliefs, and attitudes of the profession of arms. In doing so, he gains legitimacy for his

commission, and he gains an element of credibility for the authority vested in him. Without this legitimacy and credibility, his impact as a leader would be greatly diminished. This sense of a shared professional identity--what military sociologist Samuel Huntington terms "corporateness"--is fundamental for genuine officership and good leadership (10:14-17).

UNIT IDENTITY

But if an officer must have a strong corporate identity to be a legitimate and credible military leader, he must also have a sense of identity with the members of his unit. He must feel that he is a part of them and they are a part of him. This will inspire their confidence and trust in him as a leader.

But beyond identifying with his men, a leader should know their individual identities and the unit's identity, as well. He should know who his followers are, what they know, and what they can do. He must know their individual and collective frames of mind, knowledge, abilities, and needs. An understanding of the people in his unit will help him predict how they will react to him, to one another, and to specific situations. As such, he can take the appropriate leadership actions at the right time to influence and motivate them as individuals and as a unit so as to accomplish the desired task (13:45). It will be invaluable to him in determining how best to increase unit cohesion and effectiveness. It will help him in training, teaching, evaluating, counseling, disciplining, and developing his subordinates.

PERSONAL IDENTITY

But self-knowledge, self-esteem, a corporate identity, and a unit identity are not enough to be a fully successful leader. Effective leadership is ultimately a function of one's personality, and a leader should have a mature, healthy personality that stems from a well-developed sense of personal identity. This is important because, as the Army's manual on military leadership puts it, "What you are (your beliefs, values, ethics, and character) is the essence of your ability to lead. Your ability to inspire soldiers to do the right thing, the brave thing, the things they think they cannot do, flows from what you are" (13:106).

Finally, according to Erik Erikson, a clear and balanced sense of individual identity is one of the keys to a selfless and productive adulthood (4:Ch 3), and therein lies the ultimate value of identity for the leader. By being secure in who he is, the leader can turn outward and concern himself

with the accomplishment of his mission and the welfare of his followers. He can demonstrate the selfless devotion to duty and concern for others that is not possible when one is self-absorbed and trying to find himself (3:103).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the importance of self-knowledge, a positive self-image, and a sense of individual, unit, and corporate identity, the Army's leadership at all levels should ensure that officer professional development programs and policies focus on these keys to effective leadership. They should undertake a variety of actions to enhance these aspects of identity among all officers.

To begin with, the Army should improve the ways and means to attain greater self-knowledge throughout the corps of officers. Specifically, the Army's leaders should initiate a program of personality inventories, psychological testing, and self-assessment seminars with trained counselors. It should be focused on officer candidates and junior officers first, but should also extend to mid-term and senior officers, as well. The leaders of the Army should also work hard to create the environment and attitudes that encourage all officers to provide realistic feedback to their subordinates, be it in counseling sessions or through realistic officer evaluation reports. Lastly, the Army should formally institute a service-wide program of mentoring for all officers. At a minimum, each officer candidate, lieutenant and captain should have a mentor, a senior officer who is not in his chain of command but assigned to a similar type of unit. Moreover, all majors and above should be encouraged strongly to assume duties as a mentor to a junior officer.

The Army should also work on developing a positive self-image among its officers. Senior officers should emphasize the positive accomplishments of their subordinate officers. They should initiate formal programs to recognize outstanding lieutenants and captains through junior officer competitions and officer-of-the-quarter and officer-of-the-year programs. This will help build self-esteem and pride among individuals and units.

The Army's leaders at all levels should work to reinvigorate the sense of corporateness throughout the officer corps by increasing the number of activities which bond the officers together. They should strongly promote such traditions and customs of the service as dinings-in, officers calls, parades, retreats, reviews, ceremonies, and competitions. These events would help to build the esprit de corps and comraderie that is so vital to a cohesive officer corps.

Last of all and most importantly, to build initiative, individuality, self-reliance, and a strong sense of personal identity among officers, the Army's leadership at all levels should give their subordinates the latitude to do their jobs, make honest mistakes, and learn from their mistakes without fear for their careers. They should give their juniors the minimum guidance, counseling and instruction necessary to accomplish their tasks. They should continue to work hard to provide officers the widest opportunities for challenging assignments, meaningful duties, and significant responsibilities within their units. But they should also show them trust and confidence in their judgment, maturity and ability to make the right decisions and to succeed. There is no better way than that for an officer to grow professionally and develop a sense of individuality and a sense of identity as a military professional.

Chapter Seven

CONCLUSION

THE IMPORTANCE OF IDENTITY

In his theory on human psychosocial development, Erik Erikson ascribes great importance to achieving a sense of identity. First, he believes that "a firm sense of inner identity marks the end of the adolescent process and is a condition for further and truly individual maturation" (4:88-89). Moreover, he argues that when a person identifies strongly with someone or something, he develops fidelity, that is, loyalty and a sense of commitment that is freely pledged to those people, institutions, or ideologies (2:261-274). Finally, he states that when a man feels secure about who he is and where he is going in life, he can then become truly generative or caring; he can selflessly devote himself to the service of others (2:261-274; 3:100-105). In brief, Erikson sees a fully-achieved sense of identity as a key that unlocks the door to maturity, loyalty, and selflessness.

IDENTITY AND THE ARMY ETHIC

Of course, maturity, loyalty, and selflessness are indispensable qualities for a commissioned officer in the service of his nation and responsible for the well-being of the soldiers entrusted to his care. As such, it is not surprising that the Secretary of the Army and the Chief of Staff emphasized these qualities as part of fundamental ethic of the military profession when they recently announced the 1986 Army theme of "Values:"

The Army Ethic comprises four enduring values: loyalty to country and the Army, loyalty to the unit, personal responsibility, and selfless service. It is beneath these overarching values that our soldierly and ethical standards and qualities--commitment, competence, candor, courage, and integrity--are nurtured and given opportunity for growth. . . . We ask each of you, as members of the Total Army, to embrace these values and make them a part of your personal and professional lives. We urge you to find ways to temper them like steel (11:2).

As Secretary Marsh and General Wickham indicate, the first responsibility lies with the individual to espouse and exhibit these values. It is vital, nevertheless, that the Army as an institution do its part to foster these attributes in its officer corps. To that end, it should recruit future officers who are well on their way to a fully achieved sense of identity and the maturity, loyalty and selflessness that follows. Moreover, Army leaders at all levels should do everything possible to help their junior officers achieve and sustain an honest, coherent and positive sense of their personal and professional identities throughout their careers. In doing so, the entire Army will benefit, and the institution will have taken an important step in fulfilling its responsibility to the people who make up the Army.

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