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**LEADERSHIP IN THE ARMY AND LEADERSHIP
SURVEYS OVER THE LAST TWENTY-FIVE YEARS:
WHAT HAVE WE FOUND?**

BY

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LEADERSHIP IN THE ARMY AND LEADERSHIP SURVEYS OVER THE LAST
TWENTY-FIVE YEARS: WHAT HAVE WE FOUND?

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ABSTRACT

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TITLE: Leadership in the Army and Leadership Surveys Over the Last Twenty-five Years: What have we found?

FORMAT: Strategy Research Project

DATE: 1 April 1996 PAGES: 22 CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

Over the last twenty-five years the Army has conducted many studies to analyze the feelings of the Army's leadership on key issues. This paper examines five such studies: three conducted by the Army, one by the author, and one by Volker C. Franke, a Doctoral Candidate at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University. The studies by the Army were conducted in the 1970s and 1980s on the Army as a whole. The author's study was based on a survey given to the 1996 U. S. Army War College class and Mr. Franke's study was based on a survey given to cadets at the United States Military Academy in 1996. This paper reviews the findings of each study and tries to answer the question, "What has the Army learned from these leadership surveys over the last twenty-five years?" In a changing global and military environment, leadership expectations, skills, and requirements have remained remarkably constant. Leaders continue to be value oriented and expect the military to provide them the place to live out these values.

Over the past 25 years the Army has undergone many changes. Three of these changes have been very dramatic and even altering the nature of the Army. These three changes occurred after the Vietnam War, during the Reagan military build-up of the 80's, followed by the post-cold war draw-down of the 90's. All three changes have resulted in the Army taking a close look at the nature, structure, and character of the Army to determine how to best meet the emerging responsibilities of the Army. The question is, did the Army learn anything new when it conducted these reviews or did it relearn the same lesson each time?

To assist in answering the question I will review and compare three leadership studies conducted by the Army, one conducted by the author, and one conducted by Volker C. Franke, a Doctoral Candidate at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University. One of the studies, the "Study on Military Professionalism", June 1970, was a US Army War College study directed by the Chief of Staff of the Army. The study deals with "the heart and soul of the Officer Corps" of the Army¹ during the Vietnam trauma. It looked strictly at the officer corps and the traditional standards of "duty-honor-country."

The second study, "Study on Leadership for the 1970's", was also conducted by the US Army War College at the direction of the Chief of Staff of the Army. The study undertook an analysis of leadership principles and techniques with a view to determining the type of leadership that would be most appropriate as the

Army's personnel sustainment procedures changed from reliance on conscription to volunteer accessions.² This study covered all ranks and examined how each rank viewed itself and the other ranks.

The third study conducted by the Army Science Board during the summer of 1984 is entitled, "Study of Leading and Manning Army 21". The study was a direct outgrowth of, and response to, the two personnel related goals of the then Army's seven goals - leadership and human - promulgated by General Meyer, Chief of Staff of the Army, and Secretary of the Army Marsh.³

The final two studies are current studies conducted at the US Army War College and the United States Military Academy (USMA). The USMA studies are based on surveys conducted by Volker C. Franke on the four classes at the USMA. The US Army War College study is based on the survey conducted on the Army War College class of 1996. The survey format is essentially the same at both the USMA and the Army War College with minor modification to tailor the survey to take into account the experience level of the cadets and career officers. The overriding theme of each study is, does, and will, the Army have the "right" leaders to meet the changing nature of its responsibilities and mission?

In the 1970s, the Army changed the primary responsibility of conscription replacements for the Vietnam War to an all volunteer force. The mission moved from containment of communism in Southeast Asia to containment in Europe. This had to be done

with a much smaller Army and in a very turbulent time in our nation.

During the 1980s, the Army restructured the force to meet the armor heavy forces of the Warsaw Pact. The Army needed to understand what type of leadership was needed on the fluid battlefield identified in the AirLand Battle doctrine. The weapons would have increased lethality but the main concern was can the Army fight outnumbered and win. Also, was the Army preparing its leadership to meet the increased challenge of an all out attack by the Warsaw Pact in Europe?

The current studies by the author and Mr. Franke seek to examine the attitudes of leaders and future leaders of the Army through the 1990s and into the next century. The main differences from the 1980s Army, is a drastically smaller Army, CONUS based with forward presence versus forward based units, increased deployments, and increased requirements for peace operations, constabulary, and humanitarian missions. Will the current leadership principles and training meet the needs of the Army in this new role? Does the Army need to refocus its leadership training and principles to ensure success in the new environment of peace operations?

STUDY ON MILITARY PROFESSIONALISM

The war in Vietnam had a devastating impact on the Army. Unit cohesion was non-existent because of the one year rotational

policy. Within this policy, officers rarely held command or leadership positions over 6 months because it was important for everyone to get his "ticket punched." The result was a breakdown in discipline and unit cohesion and the impact was a sad time in the Army's history.

The My Lai incident was the most notable, but indiscipline was becoming evident in many units in Vietnam in the latter stages of the war. Fraggings (the practice of soldiers attempting to kill their leaders) was appearing in units across Vietnam, as was a very high use of drugs among soldiers. Racial tension caused severe problems within units, and caused many soldier to lose faith in their leaders, especially officers. Because the need for replacements was so great, the emphasis on training was "get them through and get them to Vietnam." This did not allow officers to develop their warfighting skills prior to reporting to Vietnam.⁴

The amazing thing is that the officers that came out of this environment recognized the problem. Junior officers were deeply aware of professional standards, keenly interested about the subject, and intolerant of those--either peers or seniors--who they felt were substandard in ethical or moral behavior or in technical competence.⁵ The climate was characterized as one where officers perceived a significant difference between the ideal officer-leader values and the actual or operative values of the officer corps.⁶ The statistical results showed that this perception was both strong and felt by officers of all ranks.

Furthermore, there was concern among officers that the Army was not taking action to ensure that high ideals were practiced as well as preached.⁷

The study examined the causative factors and found them to be unclear. The belief that public reaction against the Vietnam War or a general anti-military syndrome caused the dissatisfaction was not found. Neither was there evidence that the climate was caused by external fiscal, political, sociological, or managerial influences.⁸ What was found was that most of the problems were internally generated by an environment that rewarded insignificant, short-term indicators of success, and disregarded or discouraged the growth of the long-term qualities of moral and ethical strength on which the Army depends.⁹

LEADERSHIP FOR THE 1970'S

In January 1971 The Chief of Staff of the Army, General Westmoreland, directed that a study be conducted to determine the type of leadership that would be appropriate as the Army switched to the Modern Volunteer Army.¹⁰ The survey population of this study varied from the 1970 study in that it included all ranks of non-commissioned officers as well as all ranks of officers. After years of a conscription Army, the all-volunteer force was to become a reality. It would be a smaller Army than the conscription Army and the Army leadership wanted to find out what

leadership challenges and changes faced the Modern Volunteer Army.

The findings showed dramatically that the Army's time-honored principles of leadership were still valid and were accepted overwhelming by leaders at all levels as appropriate for the coming decade. However, the study again found that serious deficiencies in the application of the principles by grade level, by perspective, and by specific kinds of leadership.¹¹ The study produced ten major findings. It is important to review three of them to lay the foundation for the deficiencies identified.

First, the degree of satisfaction with Army leadership varied significantly by grade level.¹² The lower the grade the lower the satisfaction with Army leadership. This could be a function of knowledge coming with experience because the higher an individual progressed, both for NCO's and officers, the more satisfied they were with the leadership. Since racial issues were a major factor in the early 1970's it was important to examine the satisfaction based on race. The study found that satisfaction did not vary because of race and the only variance was with rank.

The second finding was that the Army's expressed leadership principles (and the institutional concept they express) were valid and appropriate for the 1970's.¹³ The findings showed that the Army's leadership principles were understood and accepted. When asked for changes in these principles only 3 out of 1800 respondents gave any recommendation for changes. The vast

majority commented that the principles in their present form were sound and appropriate, and that leadership deficiencies derived not from the principles, but from the manner in which these principles were applied.¹⁴

The third important finding was that the perception of relative importance of leadership principles varies among grade levels.¹⁵ The study found that the higher the grade level the more important the principles of leadership became to the officer. This is probably a result of experience in the Army and seeing the results of these principles over time. It also may be a result of the different demands upon an officer as he moves from leadership to "commandership" to "generalship." The distinguishing factor is that the principles of leadership become more important as an officer progresses through the ranks and responsibilities continue to grow.

Leading and Manning Army 21

This study, conducted by the Army Science Board and released November 1984, was an extension of a series of studies from 1981 through 1983. The previous Army Science Board studies concentrated on issues such as equipping the Army, science and engineering, and development goals. The 1984 study evaluated "manning a ready force", "personnel factors in weapons system performance", and "leadership." The area of the study that is important to this paper is "leadership;" or, as the panel stated

it, "How can the Army most effectively develop leaders now and for Army-21?"¹⁶ The panel constructing the survey realized time did not permit them to evaluate leadership as a whole, so they concentrated their evaluation on the Officer Corps.

The study found that the then current Army informal leadership development system does not enhance the qualities necessary for leaders (on Army-21 battlefield and in peacetime) - independence, creativity, and flexibility in battlefield decision-making.¹⁷ The informal leadership development system was identified as the mentoring of subordinates by senior officers. Even though Army Regulation 350-1 gave guidance on what was to be accomplished in this system, the study found many offices failed to find time to mentor their subordinates. This in turn led many of the officers to view the Army as a "zero defects" Army which stymied initiative, creativity, and individual development.¹⁸

Pre-commissioning preparation in basic intellectual skills (mathematics, written and oral communications, and historical perspective) required of future officers was not standardized.¹⁹ While this may seem to be a simple fact of standardization, the problem identified was much greater. There were discrepancies between the United States Military Academy and ROTC schools and even among ROTC programs. As the study pointed out, this became a larger problem when you realize that we expected our officers to make decisions quickly on the battlefield while managing a wide range of variables. The issue became what starting point to

use to continue the development of young leaders and how does this translate to leadership requirements for the future battlefield. An even more basic question concerned who was to be responsible for ensuring the officer had the basic skills, Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) or the unit to which the officer is assigned.

If TRADOC was required to ensure officers have the basic skills to be leaders on the Army-21 battlefield, the issue became whether TRADOC schools were staffed to ensure the officers received the required instruction? The answer to this question was "No," and a plan needed to be developed to provide resources and responsibility to the TRADOC School System. One of the recommendations to correct this deficiencies was to establish permanent military faculty core to ensure the quality of instruction was consistent throughout the TRADOC School System. If established, this core faculty could be responsible for course development and standardization, mentoring of transient faculty members, and ensure the skills needed by a young officer were taught at the appropriate school.

U. S. ARMY WAR COLLEGE SURVEY CLASS OF 1996 AND UNITED STATES
MILITARY ACADEMY SURVEY OF 1996

The survey of the 1996 War College class was conducted in February 1996. Only U. S. students were given the opportunity to respond to the survey. The breakdown of respondents was 131 Army

officers, 3 Navy officers, 6 Air Force officers, 5 United States Marine Corps officers, and 9 U. S. Government civilian members of the class. The survey was not a pure leadership survey, but was designed to examine the ideas, beliefs, and attitudes of the respondents. Since the Army is not facing any major leadership problems currently, the focus was to survey a group of recognized successful officers and try to examine if the leadership surveys of the 1970s and 1980s, in which many of them participated, helped focus the Army in leadership development.

It will be beneficial to first review the demographic data collected on the respondents. The predominant sex in the class was male. Ninety-four percent of the respondents were male. When asked to classify their general social and political views the respondents classified themselves as seven percent liberal, eighteen percent middle of the road, and seventy-five percent conservative. Ethnic background breakout was eighty-three percent white and seventeen percent selected one of the non-white categories.

When asked, "what is your religious affiliation?," sixty-four percent responded as Protestants, thirty-one percent as Catholic, and three percent as a religion other than Protestant or Catholic. Only two percent responded with "none" or left the answer blank.

Demographic data was also gathered on experience in the military, specialty branch within the particular service, and officer training. The respondents indicated that twenty-three

percent had combat experience and seventeen percent served in operations that were classified as "operations other than war." Fourteen percent served in both combat and "operations other than war" while forty-six percent did not serve in either type of operation. Combat Arms officers made up fifty percent of the respondents, while twenty percent were combat support, twenty-seven percent were combat service support, and three percent were classified as not in one of the three above mentioned branches of service.

The final demographic data was source of commission. Twenty-five percent of the respondents were Military Academy graduates (Army, Navy, or Air Force). Sixty percent were commissioned from a Reserve Officer Training Corps program and ten percent received their commission from an Officer Candidate School. Five percent of the respondents received a direct appointment to a commissioned grade.

The survey was designed to examine three beliefs or opinion of the respondents: patriotism, globalism, and warriorism. Patriotism Was defined as a person who loves his country and defends and promotes its interest. The aim was to determine the devotion the respondents had to the United States after twenty years of service and if their beliefs varied greatly from the survey data of the United States Military Academy cadets. Globalism was defined as a policy or system of favoring or promoting globalization. This may seem contradictory to patriotism but it is actually viewed by many as a means of

safeguarding national security. Warriorism was defined as a person who believes in the application of warfare to achieve the goals and secure the interest of a nations. It usually includes the characteristics of courage and zeal and can include or not include actual combat.

Patriotism

Each respondent was asked, "I look upon the Army as a 'calling' where I can serve my country." Since most of the War College students entered the Army after the end of the draft, this question took on an interesting focus. Overwhelmingly, by a margin of ninety-three percent agree to two percent disagree, the respondents agreed with the statement. Five percent of the respondents were undecided. The West Point cadets responses were statistically similar, with the fourth classmen (freshmen/plebes) being closer to the War College responses than the other three classes. However, a significant increase in the "disagree" response was noted from the fourth classmen to the first classmen. This seems to indicate that three years of instructions and regimentation have a negative impact on the belief that service to the country is a "calling". However, since there is no way to determine whether the change constitutes a change in belief or just a change of attitude toward military service, we must assume that most officers enter their officer training with this as a core belief. The survey results seem to

indicate that this remains a core belief throughout an officer's career.

The question, "Although some people feel that they are citizens of the world, an American should always feel that his or her primary allegiance is to his or her country," found that most respondents in the War College and the Military Academy agreed with the statement. If the conventional wisdom that those who view themselves as liberal would not be as strong in this belief, the survey did not prove it out. There is no difference in this belief between the social and political views of the respondents, as half those who did not agree with the statement identified themselves as conservatives. However, the ones who did not agree with the statement were less than four percent. Therefore, overall the "disagree" response is insignificant.

Since most of the War College students and the Military Academy cadets view the Army as a "calling," they are not as strong in their belief that it is the only way to show patriotism. When asked, "The strongest indicator of good citizenship is performance of military service in defense of one's country," the majority did not agree with that statement. Only thirty-eight percent agreed with the statement, while forty-six percent disagreed with it. Even though sixteen percent were undecided, the indication is the majority of the respondents believe there are other means for good citizenship in the country. Again, the responses of the Military Academy cadets are in line with the War College students responses.

If good citizenship can be accomplished in many ways, and good citizenship seems to equal patriotism then what is the respondents belief of citizenship education? When asked, "The promotion of patriotism should be an important aim of citizenship education," ninety-two percent of the War College students agreed. Ninety percent of the Military Academy cadets agreed with the statement which seems to indicate the cadets come from a background where patriotism is important and taught.

If citizenship education is important, what should be the responsibility of a good citizen? Less than ten percent of the War College students disagreed with "All Americans should be willing to fight for their country." The Military Academy cadets were not as strong in their beliefs in this statement as twenty-five percent disagreed. While there is no data to indicate the reason for the fifteen percent difference, one reason could be the sacrifice over twenty years the War College students have made for their country. Since over fifty percent have been in imminent danger in either combat operations or "operations other than war," the difference could be a difference in experience.

Since patriotism is so important to both the War College students and the Military Academy cadets how should we view "world brotherhood?" When asked to respond to, "We should strive for loyalty to our country before we can afford to consider world brotherhood," the War College students had a broader world view than the Military Academy cadets. Only nineteen percent of the cadets disagreed with the statement while thirty percent of the

War College students disagreed. Again, this may be a result of the experience of the War College students and how this experience leads one to understand the importance of world order.

Globalism

If world order is important, how should the military support world brotherhood? The statement "the increasing multinational character of military missions since the end of the Cold War shows the need for a stronger United Nations," found both the War College students and cadets in general agreement. Only twenty-two percent of the War College students disagreed while seventeen percent of the cadets disagreed. However, there was a ten percent difference in the Military Academy's first classmen and fourth classmen, with the first classmen disagreeing the highest.

Since it is recognized by both the War College students and the cadets that the United Nations should be stronger how do they view world government? In response to the statement, "A world government is the best way to ensure peace," sixty-four percent of the cadets disagreed and seventy-seven percent of the War College students disagreed. Both groups want a stronger United Nations which can help promote peace, but do not want it at the cost of losing national sovereignty. Neither do they believe that giving the United Nations control over the armed forces is right.

When asked their belief on "the United Nations should be

strengthened by giving it more control of the armed forces of all the member nations," the War College student responded overwhelmingly against the idea, with ninety percent disagreeing. The cadets disagreed with the statement, but only fifty-seven percent disagreed, with another twenty percent being undecided. The difference is the cadets understand the need for an Army but the War College students know how the American Army fights. The American people will not allow their sons and daughters to risk their lives if they do not have a say in who leads them. As long as the President can be held accountable to the people, then the American people will let him make the decision to send their sons and daughters in "harm's" way. They do not believe they have that accountability if the armed forces are placed under the United Nations.

Warriorism

Based on the understanding of patriotism and globalism, how do the two groups view warriorism? Warriorism was defined as having the character of a warrior or one who is experienced in warfare. Since many of the respondents are not experienced in warfare then the responses are based on their beliefs of what it means to be a warrior. Also, in today's volatile world, warfare has taken on new faces and many of those new faces can be seen in "operations other than war" or peace operations.

If the predominant belief is that the world is more unstable

now than in the last fifty years what is the role of the military? When asked their opinion on "the most important role of the military is preparation for and conduct of war," ninety-five percent of the War College students agreed. Even though thirty percent of them had been involved in non-combat operations it did not have any affect on their belief that preparation for war was the most important role of the military. Eighty-two percent of the cadets also agreed with the statement.

The Army's slogan is "Be All You Can Be" and most of the respondents believe they will be warriors. The response to the statement, "when I decided to pursue a military career, I expected to fight a war," indicates that is the case for most of the War College students. Only eight percent of the War College students disagreed with the statement and it held true with the women who responded with only thirteen percent of them disagreeing. The cadets had a higher disagreement number with twenty-five percent of them disagreeing. However, both groups strongly indicated that they believe or believed their future held the possibility of them going into "harm's" way.

If they do believe this, why do they think this way? When asked their opinion on the statement "sometimes war is necessary to protect the national interest," ninety-eight percent of the War College students agreed and ninety-four percent of the cadets agreed with the statement. Both groups are of the belief that there are things worth going to war over and they expect to serve their country in war.

Recognizing that war is important and that they expect to fight in a war, there are also many other situations in which the military may find itself, that is not war. How should the military view these mission? In response to the statement, "in today's world, peacekeeping and other non-combat activities should be central to the military's function," only twenty-four percent of the War College students agreed with that statement. The agreement with the statement was significantly higher with the cadets as forty-six percent agreed. The difference can probably be traced to the inexperience of the cadets and them not understanding the nature of military training. The strong belief of the War College students is that if a soldier is trained to fight he or she will be able to function in any situation, combat or noncombat.

How do the respondents view non-combat operations? When asked their opinion on "I think I would find peacekeeping just as rewarding as war fighting," twenty-four percent of the war College students disagreed and seventeen percent were undecided. Since only thirty percent of them had served in a non-combat experience many do not have any personal knowledge whether the non-combat missions would be as rewarding as war fighting. The cadets viewed non-combat missions at about the same reward level as the War College students as twenty-one percent disagreed and seventeen percent were undecided. However, there is a significant difference in the female and male War College students as seventy-five percent of the female respondents agreed

and only fifty-eight percent of the males agreed.

The final thing the respondents were asked to give their opinion about was human nature. Nine percent of the War College students and twelve percent of the cadets disagreed with the statement, "human nature being what it is, there will always be war." So both groups believe they will fight in a war, they understood that when they began their military career, and they do not believe the world will ever get away from fighting wars.

Conclusion

What this study attempted is to review the results of leadership surveys conducted over twenty-five years by the Army. These surveys have focused on the attitudes and beliefs of the military officers and cadets. So what is the answer to the question "What have we learned?" from these surveys?

Without pursuing a lengthy discussion of the eleven principles of Army leadership, it can be safely said that these principles are based on the four elements of the professional Army ethic: loyalty, duty, selfless service, and integrity. Each survey confirmed this fact even though the situations influencing the Army changed drastically. What the Army must do is provide the opportunity and environment for these ethical standards to be built upon to enhance the principles of Army leadership.

Leaders need mentoring, nurturing, and an environment to develop their skills to be effective leaders. When the Army

alters the environment, such as moving toward a "zero defect" environment, then the development of leaders takes a less important role and the professional quality of the Army suffers. The Army needs to fight the influences of political and sociological forces which try to get the army to experiment with issues that alter the professional ethical standards. Instead the Army needs to focus on finding and enlisting the services of the individuals who have the values and beliefs that support its unique requirements.

The recruiting theme of the 1970s, "Today's Army wants to join you," was disastrous for the Army. It said in effect, "the Army has no professional ethics and the Army will adapt to your ethics." Even at the high point of the anti-military syndrome after the Vietnam War, the professional ethics of the Army were still found to be the foundations of the leaders, at all ranks, of the Army. The fact that these ethical standards weathered the turbulent times of the 1970s Army, and came out intact, speaks to their strength and firm hold on the Army.

So the answer to "what have we learned?," is we have learned that the nature of leaders of the Army has not changed over twenty-five years. The leaders are, and have been, value oriented and believe their chosen profession is a calling. As a result, they believe they will have to go in "harm's" way to fulfill their calling. Since the results of the survey given to the War College students and the cadets at the USMA are generally in line, the conclusion is the military does not create the

values, the leaders come to the military with them. Therefore, the home and community of the leaders of the military are where the values are taught and learned. The military only gives them a place to live out those values.

ENDNOTES

1. US Army War College, Study On Military Professionalism, (Carlisle, Pennsylvania: US Army War College, 1970), i
2. Ibid.
3. Defense Technical Information Center, Final Report of 1984 Summer Study Leading and Manning Army 21, (Alexandria, Virginia: Defense Technical Information Center, 1984), 3.
4. US Army War College, Study on Military Professionalism, Carlisle, Pennsylvania: US Army War College, 1970), iii.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid. V.
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10. US Army War College, Leadership For The 1970'S, (Carlisle, Pennsylvania: US Army War College, 1971), iii.
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12. Ibid. 11.
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