

**STRATEGY
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**OFFICER CANDIDATE SCHOOL (OCS):
RELEVANCE INTO THE 21ST CENTURY**

BY

**LIEUTENANT COLONEL SCOTT L. ARMBRISTER
United States Army**

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**Officer Candidate School (OCS):
Relevance Into the 21st Century**

by

LTC Scott L. Armbrister
US Army

Prof. Leonard Fullenkamp
Project Advisor

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U.S. Army War College
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

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ABSTRACT

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This paper will explore the relevance and continued usefulness of the Army's Officer Candidate training and commissioning program as we move into the next century. I will take a critical look at the demographics of the OCS graduate, and how they "stack up" against officers from other pre-commissioning sources. Are these officers (OCS Grads) needed in the world of Army After Next (AAN), and can they compete on the same playing field with officers from USMA and ROTC? I will look at the US Army's commissioning sources, and compare and contrast the different commissioning programs...USMA, ROTC, and OCS (both AC and National Guard). I will look at promotion trends (thru General Officer) and command opportunities with respect to each commissioning source. The project will outline what a 21st century leader looks like, and the qualities he or she must possess. Bottom line: are young men and women, with some prior experience in the enlisted ranks, needed in our Army as we change and evolve over the next 20 years? I think so...OCS, and the officers it produces, are relevant in our Army's future! What kind of officer do we need in the next 20 years? Does OCS produce that officer? Can OCS adjust its course to ensure relevance of its product? These are the key questions I will attempt to answer.

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INTRODUCTION/THESIS

The United States Army is about winning. The mere thought of anything less is repugnant, because when the Army loses, America loses. These are the words of the current Chief of Staff of the Army, Gen Dennis Reimer.¹ Winning starts with leadership, and leaders, specifically officer leaders, come from several different sources. Will all these sources produce the "winning" Gen Reimer mentions? That issue gets at the very heart of my thesis.

The Twenty-first century is upon us. In less than a year we will stop talking about the year 2000, and all that it brings, and we will begin actually *living it*. We will have to live with the Y2K(year 2000) problems that have worried us over the last few years, and look at the wondrous challenges that lie ahead. We will surly be living with a more world-based economy and much more open markets worldwide. Unfortunately, we will also be living with increased threats to our national interests and our basic way of life, threats such as, international organized crime, the continued invasion of killer drugs into our society, regional instability, increased terrorism, and unfortunately the continued proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). The United States, as it has been for many years, will be a key player in a new world strategic and defense environment consisting of unstable regions and numerous new and challenging

MOOTW, Military Operations Other Than War, operations. We will be the leader, others will follow. We will be living in a world where terrorism is the primary threat to our nation and its allies. No longer will symmetrical large-scale military operations over vast landscapes be the focus of our military training and overall reason to maintain our strength. We will be living with rapid change and within an information "supercharged" world, where things measured in days in the late 1990's will be measured, and must be reacted to, in hours and even minutes. We will be living in the future, because the future will be now. The question raised here is whether we, in the United States Army, are adjusting to and can adapt and prepare for these new challenges and threats. More precisely, are the officers, men and women we send out to lead our Army into the next century, the right "breed" of officer, and do they possess the required skills, mentally and physically, to successfully conquer the challenges ahead. In other words, do they have the "right stuff"? Gen Reimer further notes, "perhaps the greatest change we face today is becoming comfortable with using the technologies of an information force to enhance the execution of leadership. Leading in the information age requires new trust and confidence—trust in technology and the confidence to share information and decision making."²

The Army will publish its new FM 100-5, Army Operations, our capstone doctrine document, before the beginning of the new

century. This important document links Army roles and missions to the National Military Strategy. It states that Army doctrine lies at the heart of its professional competence. Professional competence is critical to our success in any endeavor. Leadership is another absolute when considering the success of our Army in the next century.³ Clearly what is needed are folks who are dedicated, disciplined, smart, and morally sound. In addition to the important foundations contained in FM 100-5, the Army is currently developing programs to "build" our future leaders under an umbrella concept called "Character Development XXI." Revision of US Army Field Manual (FM) 22-100, Army Leadership, is the centerpiece effort. The FM is supposed to put the "mystery" of leadership into clear, plain language, reaffirming the Army's tested and proven approach to leading. The manual will reinforce the time-tested belief that there are no easy answers to leadership's toughest questions and, no substitutions for competent, caring and courageous leaders.⁴

Leaders may be made, or they may be born that way--this is for others to argue. The focus for this study will be the Army's Officer Candidate School and its ability to produce leaders with the required competencies for success in the next century. Will Officer Candidate School (and specifically the officers it produces) be a relevant, viable, and key source of commissioned officers in the 21st century? I believe the answer is a resounding yes! Let me explain.

A COMMISSION IN THE ARMY

First, let me briefly address a commission in our Army and the various commissioning programs we have today. More specifically, the methods we have for commissioning officers and current expectations we have of our officer corps.

The United States Army has four basic commissioning sources. They are:

- United States Army Military Academy at West Point, (USMA)
- Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC),
- Officer Candidate School (Federal and State), and
- Direct Commissions.

Note: The direct commissioning path to officership is not pertinent to this study and thus will not be considered further. The numbers of officers commissioned each year from each commissioning source has fluctuated over the years, but an average over the last ten years would look like this: West Point, 950; ROTC, 3700; and Federal OCS, 500.⁵ These figures have remained relatively constant over the last few years, and are projected to be similar through 2005 with USMA production gradually going down to 860, while ROTC and OCS will increase modestly to 4,000 and 550 respectively.⁶ These figures suggest several questions. Has this been a good mix? Is it the right mix for the future? Are we getting our "bang for the buck" for each person commissioned? Finally, are the officers from each source

contributing to the overall good of the service? These are key questions to my thesis, and will be addressed as I make my arguments.

According to "The Armed Forces Officer," a commission in the United States Army is an absolute commitment, which permits no mental or moral reservation.⁷ Upon being sworn in, the new officer is given a paper stating that the President has vested him or her with authority, a "special trust and confidence" in the "patriotism, valor, fidelity and abilities" of that individual. This special trust makes the commission a sort of "pact" with the country. Serving honorably, the officer will be sustained by the Nation, cared for through illness, and shielded through life if disabled in service. This "contract" goes both ways and is the reason such extreme emphasis is placed on the imperative of personal honor. The general public must have faith in the virtue and trustworthiness of the officer corps. New officers who are truly worthy of their commissions will look beyond the letter of their obligations and will accept in their heart the total implications of their responsibility to serve as an exemplars of dutifulness—loyal leaders and faithful followers.⁸ There is a one-word key to the answer among the four lofty qualities cited on every military officer's commission. That word is **fidelity**. Patriotism, valor and abilities have their place and are critical, but fidelity, because it comes of personal decision, is the jewel within reach of every officer who

has the will to possess it. It is the epitome of character and defines an officer.⁹ A commission in the Army is a special bond, and those who enter into those bindings must be aware of the expectations and responsibilities associated.

There have been many attempts at comparisons of the three primary commissioning sources the Army utilizes. These comparisons have focused on amount of training, length of instruction, the overall cost estimate to "produce" a lieutenant and so forth. Let me talk briefly on the subject of "paying for a 2Lt" or what I call "bang for the buck." When I first assumed command of Officer Candidate School, the "Command Briefing" contained a slide titled "Bang for the Buck". The cadre and leadership at OCS were fairly proud of the slide in that it vividly showed a comparison of the estimated cost each primary commissioning source paid from entry to commissioning per officer. The chart numbers were similar to the following:

- USMA \$250,000
- ROTC \$75,000
- OCS \$15,000¹⁰

The above figures are not the actual figures used, but clearly illustrate the point the OCS Battalion was trying to make. There were several things about this portrayal that disturbed me. First, comparison of the Army's commissioning sources in any way gives one the thought that there is some difference in the product, that more money produces a better,

more qualified, officer, and this should not be the case. Second, each commissioning source is so distinctly different from the next that comparison is not valid in the majority of areas that one may attempt to do so, especially cost per individual commissioned. Finally, when you "peel the onion back" you ask questions such as, "The average enlisted experience of an OCS graduate is six years. Why, therefore, doesn't the cost of all the training and years of service these prior enlisted soldiers had count in the equation?" Another question might be, West Point awards a full degree upon graduation and commissioning, does OCS do the same? Should it? These points are valid, and bring me to my point. Comparisons should not be the point here. Commissioning the best officers possible is the point. Let us not get caught up in "one-up-man's-ship" and forget why we are in this business.

HISTORY OF OFFICER CANDIDATE SCHOOL (OCS)

By way of background, and to show that OCS also has a great heritage and lineage, a little history of OCS is appropriate at this point. The idea for the modern OCS for Infantry was conceived in June, 1938, when a plan for an officer training program was submitted to the Chief of Infantry by BG Asa L. Singleton, Commandant of the Infantry School, Fort Benning, Georgia. However, the man given credit for the final plans for OCS and establishing the format, discipline and honor code, was

General Omar Bradley. For reasons beyond the scope of this paper the program was initially delayed, but it finally went into effect in July 1941, as the Infantry, Field Artillery, and Coast Artillery Officer Candidate School. Other branches followed later with their own OCS. On 27 September 1941, the first OCS class graduated 171 second lieutenants out of 204 that started the 17-week course. Between 1941 and 1947, over 100,000 candidates were enrolled with over 70,000 receiving commissions. The vast majority of these young officers went on to serve their country magnificently in war and peace.¹¹ Men like Presidential candidate, Senator Bob Dole and former Defense Secretary, Casper Weinberger, are just two examples of these talented men. Moreover, sixteen OCS graduates received the nation's highest award for valor, the Congressional Medal of Honor (CMOH), for action in World War II. Among these heroes were men like Col(Ret) Bob Nett, a platoon leader and company commander in the Pacific, and 2nd Lt Thomas Wigle, a platoon leader in Italy who gave his life for his country, and in whose honored memory the OCS Hall of Fame is proudly named today. These were men who had "the right stuff" and knew how to lead and motivate other men in the toughest of situations. A total of thirty-two OCS graduates have received the CMOH since that time.

On 1 November 1947, OCS was discontinued, but a shortage of officers during the Korean conflict caused OCS to reopen at Ft. Benning on 18 February 1951. During the Korean War, approximately

7,000 officers graduated from OCS. On 4 August 1953, OCS was once again reduced to three programs: Infantry, Artillery, and Engineer. Later, during the height of the Vietnam conflict, Infantry OCS produced an average of 7,000 officers annually. After Vietnam, the program was drawn down from a peak of five battalions to the one training battalion, which now exists at Ft Benning, Georgia. In 1973, a branch immaterial OCS was created to replace the branch specific OCS courses. OCS for female candidates remained at Ft McClellan, Alabama until 1976 when it was merged with the branch immaterial program. Today, officer candidates enter OCS from the active, National Guard, and Army Reserve.¹² Others enter under the "College Option" program, which allows fifty college graduates per year with no military experience at all to apply for and attend OCS. These candidates go straight to basic training for eight weeks after enlisting in the Army and then directly on to the OCS at Ft Benning.

OCS is a demanding and rigorous course of instruction. Every graduate **earns** a commission. The course is currently fourteen weeks in length, and covers all the pre-commissioning common core tasks required for a commission in the Army. ROTC and the USMA have the same pre-commissioning requirements, although all three commissioning sources augment these requirements based on the time and priorities within the schools themselves. Important here though is the fact that all have the same entry level tasks to accomplish before attaining the rank of 2nd lieutenant. OCS must

meet the same requirements as the other two commissioning sources and must stand as an equal partner in the areas of training, evaluation and assessment. Thus, the Army can benefit from the synergy among all three institutions and their officers once in the force. Moreover, these requirements must provide standards applicable to all OCS programs, not simply the federal one at Ft. Benning. Army National Guard, state-run officer candidate schools must be required to stay on the same level with the exact same commissioning standards.

Officer Candidate School has a proud history and has produced some of the greatest leaders of our time. Over 1,000 general officers have been commissioned through OCS over the years. OCS graduates are still filling the general officer ranks at high rate. According to the latest General Officer roster from the General Officer Management Office at DA, there are over seventy active duty general officers that have graduated from OCS. This number, out of a total of just over 300, is quite substantial considering the low number of graduates per year as compared to the USMA and ROTC during the late 60's and early 70's. Years from which most generals today were commissioned. OCS, as does USMA and ROTC, has a proud and distinct history. Its contributions to our Nation's defense are beyond question. The leadership OCS has provided our Army is significant, but can it contribute and provide leadership in the next century?

TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY CHALLENGES AND OCS

In the Army of the future, leaders will be required to understand human dynamics within an environment of information bombardment, increasing complexity and frequent unit metamorphosis in order to train and lead a cohesive, fighting force which will operate faster, and with more lethality, than any adversary. Studies have listed the essential competencies for the 21st-century leaders in different societal sectors.¹³ They typically included an ability to deal with cognitive complexity, tolerance of ambiguity, intellectual flexibility, a meaningful level of self-awareness, and an enhanced understanding of the relationships among organizational sub-systems that collectively construct the prevailing "climate." These additional competencies would supplement timeless leader qualities such as: integrity, high energy, courage, and commitment to institutional values.¹⁴ The basic cognitive and emotional demands of the future battlefield as we now describe it in Army After Next (AAN) documents have been recognized for decades. However, strong conclusions about required competencies and behaviors have rarely produced powerful and integrated new policies designed to support the development of the heralded attributes.¹⁵ The new Officer Efficiency Report (OER) reflects the Army's latest attempt at capturing the values and attributes necessary for successful leadership. The OER, which will ultimately determine the

commanders of the next century, has embedded values like loyalty, respect and selfless-service. It has leader attributes, skills and actions such as influencing others, developing subordinates, tactical proficiency, emotional stability and self control, and inspirational qualities.¹⁶ These are admirable and tough attributes for any one good person to have, but we expect them of **all** officers.

During the last five years, the Army has reviewed and refined its warfighting doctrine, *FM 100-5, Operations*, and the training doctrine that supports its successful implementation. One of the key elements in the development of combat power is leadership. Emphasized in one of the six imperatives of maintaining a trained and ready Army is leader development. General (Retired) John Galvin stated the following:

"Principles don't change—but battlefield execution in accordance with these principles has changed drastically. Soldiers don't change—but the tools of their trade, the modern weapons systems that are flooding into the inventory, are changing in a revolutionary way...As we look at the mistakes over the past 100 years, the common theme is that the leader did not understand the technology of his time or, as they say, he elected to fight the last war rather than the one he happened to be in. An officer must be versatile enough to take into battle the existing technology of whatever moment in time he is called upon to fight. The job of an officer is to be a battlefield leader, a tactician, a logistician, a commander who readies his force for battle with enlightened training and leads it into the fight with inspirational tactical judgement and a deep understanding of soldiers."¹⁷

OCS produces officers that have in the past, and will in the future, answer Gen Galvin's challenge.

For years, the U.S. Army officer Candidate School (OCS) has been a source of leadership training and a manifestation of the American dream -- that citizens of this nation can, by their own

talents, skills and hard work may aspire to be anything they dare to dream. For enlisted soldiers, it represents the possibility for upward mobility and an opportunity to lead soldiers as commissioned officers. This is truly the value of a program such as OCS. Once again though, are these great young folks capable of handling the complexities of the 21st Century?

The 21st century will be different. It will be a challenge, and Army leaders must be ready for it. The leader in an information age digitized force must know how to effectively use computers. They must become systems thinkers. Preparation for meeting the challenges of the next century begins with understanding the process. Digitized leaders must develop greater mental agility. As always, future leaders must thoroughly understand mission-type orders and the negative effects of micromanaging their subordinates. Finally, the digitized leader of the 21st century must have realistic but varied training experiences.¹⁸ This last point drives home my stated conviction that OCS must remain a significant contributor to our officer corps. Nothing, and I must emphasize nothing, replaces or substitutes for experience. Yes, the 21st century will surely challenge the best of us, but OCS can and will continue to produce officers that can not only be successful, but also excel and thrive in such an environment.

OCS PROFILE & TRAINING

Officer candidate training clearly bridges basic training, the noncommissioned officer education system (NCOES) and the officer education systems (OES). Noncommissioned officers (NCO's) are trained in skills and individual and collective tasks, and they are also taught ethics, conduct and leadership. OCS capitalizes on the refinements of NCOES and produces quality commissioned officers who are well grounded in basic individual and collective skills, understanding of the human dimension of soldiering, team building and leader experience. OCS graduates are generally a little older and usually more mature than 2nd Lieutenants commissioned from ROTC and USMA. This is not an earth shattering point, but does indicate the variety of person coming into the officer corps at the entry level. This, I believe, is inherently good. The average age of an OCS graduate is 27.5 years, with an average of 6 years of service. Over 60% have bachelors degree or higher, and the rest are required to have a minimum of three years (90 credit hours) towards a degree.¹⁹ Nearly 75% of OCS candidates have been Non-Commissioned Officers (NCO's). This fact alone indicates the wealth of knowledge, experience, and, importantly, leadership, these fine young soldiers bring to the officer corps.

The OCS officer's value to the Army is professional maturity. As stated, OCS officers are generally older, more

proficient in individual and collective skills, and possess more life experience, having had the opportunities to follow and lead as soldiers and team-build at the grassroots level. The importance of these traits cannot be overstated as we meet and conquer the challenges of the next century.

Officers whose source of commission is OCS can be, and are, mentors as well. They can be catalysts in accelerating the professional maturation of USMA and ROTC officers who are generally much younger and less experienced in life and military training. This is not a "slap" at the other commissioning sources, but simply an assertion derived from years of observation. Before the drawdown at the beginning of this decade, the ratio of OCS officers to USMA or ROTC officers was one to six. Since the drawdown, the ratio is one OCS officer per two USMA officers and one to seven for ROTC officers. This changing dynamic limits the opportunity for interaction among young officers, neutralizes the real benefit of the OCS officer, and ultimately affects the training and readiness of the Army. Whatever the ratio, every company-sized unit in the Army should ideally be cross-fertilized with as a minimum at least one OCS officer. This leads me to a key issue in my overall thesis.

OCS can not simply remain stagnant and resist change. For OCS to remain relevant, there must be a comprehensive and multi-phased strategy to bring OCS into the 21st century, much like its counterparts. This strategy must begin with a review of the OCS

mission, its role as a commissioning source, the functional proponency of all OCS training, its interface with the reserve components, and mobilization and technology.

The selection of the right kind of individuals to attend OCS is the most critical aspect of this new strategy. Selection must be based on the whole person -- on an assessment of written and oral communication skills, a high state of health and physical fitness, demonstrated leadership skills, commitment to excellence and moral fiber. Generally, candidates should have a college degree. If not, they should be in a degree program with a minimum of three years college credit, easily allowing them to get a college degree after commissioning. How well a soldier does in promotion, military and civilian school achievements, awards, the advanced physical fitness test, and personal military and civilian conduct are indicators of commitment, duty and excellence. Assessment of moral fiber is by far the most difficult, but the structured interview conducted at installations, the personal essay -- "Why I want to be an Officer?" -- and the soldier's past disciplinary record assist in that assessment. This process must be continually reviewed to ensure we are screening properly before choosing candidates for the program.

The mission of the U.S. Army Officer Candidate School is to train soldiers in basic military skills and leadership; to instill in them the professional Army ethic through reinforcement

of the values of candor, courage, commitment and competency; to develop and evaluate their leadership potential; and to commission quality second lieutenants in the U.S. Army, the Army National Guard and the Army Reserve. This mission requires the highest quality in leader training, education and assessment conducted by role models of good leadership. And importantly, leader feedback to students in order to correct weaknesses and highlight strengths that will result in future success and excellence through company grade.

The Total Army school system (TASS) established formal relationships between the state-run officer candidate programs and the proponent of officer candidate training, the U.S. Army Infantry School. TASS established accreditation guidelines on the resourcing and conduct of training and leader assessment, which provided the Infantry School the opportunity to place all officer candidate training and leader assessment under one standard.

OCS, the subject matter expert and functional proponent that can provide oversight of requirements to the Army National Guard and state military academies, establishes standards in conduct of training, student assessment and evaluation that can result in a high-quality officer for the Total Army of the 21st century.

Federal OCS provides functional proponentcy that establishes the standard that accredits all Army National Guard state-run OCS programs. This is done with a cadre and staff integrated with

officers and NCOs from active and reserve components. Cadres learn the OCS standard by doing their job every day. This sets one standard that reserve component cadre can apply when they are reassigned to their home station. Active and reserve component soldiers participate in all initiatives that may affect any future OCS programs and training. OCS is an important tie to the "civilian" soldier, and the importance of that tie should never be underestimated.

Historically, OCS has served magnificently as the expansion base for mobilization*, from its beginnings during World War II through the Vietnam War. Just as it served for rapid expansion, OCS has tempered the impact on USMA and ROTC during the recent drawdown. This ability to expand or shrink, the cornerstone to responsiveness in mobilization makes OCS a critical arm in our Nation's ability to respond to worldwide threats. *Note: Whether or not mobilization will continue to be a feature of the future force is beyond the scope of this paper. Some would argue that the future force would be so small, highly trained, and employed in conflict of short duration thereby doing away with the need for a mobilization capability. For the present, mobilization remains a required capability and thus OCS will continue to be a much-needed source of commissioning. To that end, a rejuvenated strategy for OCS is called for.

Mobilization planning requires the expansion of the force to be incremental and span a continuum from peacetime to full

mobilization. Mobilization planning should address the training of reserve component officers before active duty call-up for each level of mobilization. OCS can assist in developing this mission for TASS, particularly the use of the regional OCS battalions during reserve component officer mobilization. Additionally, mobilization planning should address the mission of the U.S. Army Recruiting Command in the enlistment of quality people for officer candidate training. It should be based on desired quantities that support contingency planning and our warfighting doctrine and a comprehensive process of acquisition, enlistment and training.

The need and mission of OCS becomes increasingly important as we restructure the Army with an increased reliance on reserve component assets and as we refine our warfighting doctrine. Therefore, OCS continues as a mainstay in the commissioning process. Deliberate qualitative and quantitative refinements to OCS with a well defined, executable and fully resourced strategy remain the bedrock of continued success and high-quality officers for our soldiers and units of the future Army. OCS should be programmed, resourced, and manned as a primary source of commissioning. All efforts should be focused to keep OCS as an equal partner in precommissioning, and on the forward edge of officer training, education and assessment in order to produce the warfighting leaders of the 21st century.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As stated earlier in this paper the 21st century will be quite different from the one just ending. No one can doubt the challenges will be tremendous. The sheer amount of information available to leaders will stress processing systems to the breaking point. The speed of decision making will be greatly accelerated. All battlefield operating systems (BOS) will be applied and integrated in a much more fluid and transitional environment. Warfare will be asymmetrical and symmetrical, at the same time. Probably the most distinct change for our leaders of the next 30 years will be the speed at which operations will take place, and their requirement to "stay ahead" of the action. Critical decisions and combat operations will not wait on the deliberate planning process in the years ahead. Leaders will have access to so much information in the coming years that it will require a singular talent to sift through it all and determine the essential elements of information, and then make sound, immediate, and correct decisions. Future deployments will require officers, regardless of component, to be problem-solvers and risk-takers, solidly grounded on the professional Army ethic with the right moral and ethical compass.

Standard officer training and leader development ensures that officers possess the physical, moral and mental aptitude that supports our warfighting doctrine. Commissioning programs

enhance this basic package and add important ingredients to it. Each program has its own history and greatness. Each program has contributed significantly to our force over the years. OCS is truly providing the diversity and experience we need today, and will certainly provide it for the next century.

One need not worry that the wonderful young men and women from OCS will be ready for the challenges of the next century, they are already far ahead of many of us. Can OCS graduates be effective leaders in the 21st century environment? This paper has argued that they most certainly can be effective. Should we continue to train and commission young men and women from the ranks of the Army through OCS? Without qualification, the answer is a resounding yes.

What I have described above will take men and women who are dedicated, courageous, selfless, intelligent, physically fit, and mentally alert. Does any of this sound any different than today? No, it does not. The leader of the 21st century will face different challenges, circumstances, and environments. He or she will be required to make decisions based on a whole new set of critical factors and at a much faster pace. But, when you get right down to the essentials of military leadership, and specifically "officership," the mental and physical attributes are the same as they are today. These young men and women, our battalion and brigade commanders of the year 2020, will need to adapt just as the soldiers of 1991 had to adapt, just as the

soldiers of 1965, and just as the ones of 1950 had to adapt, and they will.

Officer Candidate School provides our Army with a superb source of leaders. Leaders with real experience and real talent. OCS is an important spoke in the wheel of officer production in our Army today, and will remain so well into the next century. Diversity in the workplace has been a big topic ever since the Kennedy administration, and the beginnings of the Civil Rights movements in the early 1960s. With true initiation of "affirmative action," diversity and minority representation has been the norm in our country, and importantly, it has been good. Our nation is not only more fair and diverse, it is more productive. We are better today for the decisions of that time. Although it is not exactly analogous, I believe OCS, and its role with respect to commissioning officers into our Army, is of similar importance. We must never allow an elite or select few people the opportunity to rise through our ranks. Opportunity and the "American Dream" are important, even in the Army. The bottom line is that OCS provides capable, fully qualified officers for our Army, and will do so in a tremendous manner into the next century. We have it about right today. Let us not change what is not broken. General Dwight Eisenhower once said:

"I would say that most leaders are made. A fellow that comes from a long line of ancestors with determination and courage has no doubt inherited some leadership qualities. I have seen many times in combat where somebody who is small and meek was given the opportunity and had leadership you never before realized he had, and he becomes a Medal of Honor winner. These are some qualities you inherit that make you a good leader; but many who have not these qualities develop them, or just seem to come up with them when opportunity knocks"²⁰

If we do not allow "opportunity to knock," that is to say, retain OCS, the loss tangible and intangible to the country will be significant. OCS, as an institution, is the Army's "opportunity" to cultivate the right leaders for the 21st century and ensure we have the right blend of people in the officer ranks. In combination with the magnificent commissioning programs at the USMA and ROTC, with OCS we will ensure our Army remains strong, relevant and well led into the next century. On a final note, remember, commissions will not, and never have, made leaders, they will merely make you officers.

WORD COUNT = 5,402

ENDNOTES

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¹³ Walter F. Ulmer Jr., "Military Leadership into the 21st Century: Another Bridge Too Far?", Parameters, Spring 1998: p. 7.

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¹⁸ Major Jack Gumbert, "Leadership in the Digitized Force", Military Review, January-February 1998, p. 13-25.

¹⁹ Officer Candidate School, Command Briefing, OCS Ft Benning, Georgia, 1996. Note: this requirement changed in 1997 from 60 credit hours.

²⁰ Department of the Army, Leadership, Statements and Quotes, DA Pamphlet 600-65, 1 November 1985. p. 11.

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