

## THE EDUCATION OF “A MODERN MAJOR GENERAL”

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*Major General William F. Burns, U.S. Army, Retired*

*For my military knowledge, though I'm plucky and adventury,  
Has only been brought down to the beginning of this century;  
But still in matters vegetable, animal, and mineral,  
I am the model of a modern Major-General.*

THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE

Over a century ago, Gilbert and Sullivan developed a caricature of a contemporary general officer of the British service in their operetta *Pirates of Penzance*. Almost three decades ago, Colonel Donald F. Bletz of the U.S. Army War College faculty published an article using this caricature, Major General Stanley, as a model of what should *not* be the typical general officer of the future.<sup>1</sup> Since that future is

now, it is useful to examine the factors that contribute to and influence the development of a professional military officer, particularly an officer who has achieved general or flag rank and so can be considered a strategic leader.

Of course, a number of factors enter into the selection and development of such officers. This article will consider only one—the education of potential strategic leaders. I will discuss a bit about its antecedents and speculate about its future. In doing this, I will restrict myself essentially to the U.S. Army. I do this for two reasons: first, the Army is the case with which I am most familiar; second, the recent evolution of “jointness” in the U.S. armed forces has made career patterns and educational requirements converge more and more. Thus, an examination of the Army model should provide insights into problems and possibilities in the other services as well.

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*General Burns entered the Army in 1954, commissioned from the Reserve Officer Training Corps program at La Salle University. He served as a field artillery officer, including brigade and battalion command, taught in the ROTC program, and was a faculty member at the U.S. Army War College, where he served later as deputy commandant. He also was assigned as deputy assistant commandant of the Field Artillery School. After his retirement from government service he continued to teach at the college level and is currently a Distinguished Fellow at the Army War College. He serves on a number of boards and committees, several involved in professional education.*

Words are important both for what they mean objectively and for how we employ them in common and specialized usage. Some terms relating to the development of military leaders are used at times rather loosely, and it seems important to establish their meaning for our purposes here. First, a *profession* is defined (by *Webster's Third International*) as “a calling requiring specialized knowledge and often long and intensive preparation including instruction in skills and methods as well as the scholarly principles underlying such skills and methods, maintaining by force of organization or concerted opinion high standards of achievement and conduct, and committing its members to continued study and to a kind of work which has for its prime purpose the rendering of public service.” *Education* means “to develop (as a person) by fostering to varying degrees the growth and expansion of knowledge, wisdom, desirable qualities of mind or character, physical health or general competence especially by a course of formal study or instruction.” *Training*, in contrast, means “the teaching, drill, or exercise by which the powers of mind and body are developed[;] . . . the development of a skill or a particular group of skills; instruction in an art, profession, or occupation.”

“Professional” and “professionalism,” then, describe a rather narrow class of educated people who have embraced particular ways of life, mastered specific bodies of knowledge, and embarked upon careers—lifelong, in most cases—that make significant and lasting contributions to the common good. Medical doctors, lawyers, and “professed” religious immediately come to mind. However, professionalism has become more loosely construed in the past decades by commentators and observers who mean (aside from the obvious sense of “paid”) simply “highly skilled” or “dedicated.” In this way we refer to professional athletes, professional actors, and professional construction workers.

A true professional of whatever vocation must master the body of knowledge that provides intellectual and philosophical substance to the profession, as well as the requisite training for action. According to Webster's definition, this education and training is a lifelong endeavor, constantly honing the ability of the professional to perform at ever-higher levels. These characteristics accurately describe a military officer today. The system of military education and training of officers is designed to foster such ability and performance. At the senior service colleges—which constitute the culmination of the educational rather than the training aspects of professional development—officers can find professional fulfillment and satisfaction to the highest degree their profession offers, short of command in combat. It is up to the senior military leadership to ensure that this is so.

The interplay of education and training takes place throughout a professional career, with varying relative emphasis. Both are essential, but one often

dominates, depending upon the individual's evolution and progress in the particular profession.

Success in training is amenable to rote memorization and practice, and knowledge and abilities thus gained are essential to the prosecution of war. Close-order drill, disassembly of a weapon, operation of complex electronic equipment, or the writing of a five-paragraph field order can be learned, practiced, and tested to an established standard. Curricula supporting such training can be outlined clearly in terms of tasks, conditions, and standards. Objective testing, using either a pass-fail or percentage grading system, can at the least establish whether the student can or cannot accomplish the task. Tactical operations at lower levels can be studied and categorized in the same way. The Army's National Training Center at Fort Irwin, California, has developed for this kind of training an evaluation system that is second to none. The efficiency of companies and battalions can be assessed and compared, and lessons can be derived.

Educational attainments cannot be so easily assessed. Papers can be graded and examinations given, but no one can truly determine the future performance of a senior leader in a classroom. Looking back on four years of experience as a faculty instructor at the Army War College, I recall a number of officers who later succeeded to senior posts, including major unified commands. Not many of these successful strategic leaders had been "honor students." Certainly, they were thoughtful, knowledgeable, and active participants in seminar rooms, but few had made major academic contributions or advanced the profession through learned articles or books. Those who had were not always selected for rapid advancement to senior rank.

#### SENIOR OFFICER EDUCATION BEFORE THE MODERN ERA

Military officers of the past were often amateurs at heart, brought up in an area of *noblesse oblige*, dedicated to military service because in their social class it was the thing to do. Wars were fought with, by modern standards, primitive weapons. Personal courage, stamina, and a bit of luck were part of the mix that resulted in victory on the battlefield, and personal skill and success in arms were essential prerequisites of a strategic leader. Classic works recounting successes and failures in past battles were the essential textbooks.

Gilbert and Sullivan's Major General Stanley of the nineteenth-century British army would have had little or no opportunity for formal professional military development. Military schools and colleges existed but provided primarily precommissioning education. Stanley's knowledge would have come from assimilation and practical application, allegedly made easier by his aristocratic heritage and association with officers of similar upbringing and outlook.

In the American military too, professional military education in the nineteenth century depended very much on individual motivation and study. Given geographic isolation and, as the century progressed, stability on its land borders, the growing republic could make do with a small army and limited naval forces. Most of the U.S. Army was scattered in western outposts. When troubled times arrived, it expanded by calling upon the states for militia, officered by men chosen and characterized by bonds of friendship, popularity, and politics rather than professional interests or abilities.

President Abraham Lincoln's difficulties with senior commanders in the Civil War were legendary. After the reductions following that war, the Army returned to its frontier outposts. Officers isolated in small units at widely dispersed locations in the West had little time for formal professional education. None at all was provided for senior officers aspiring to high command or staff positions.

The Navy was the first to establish a senior service college, the Naval War College at Newport, Rhode Island; education at the senior level for Army officers did not begin until 1903, with the founding of the Army War College. That college, however, was an extension of an Army educational system that had developed, sometimes haphazardly, over the previous hundred years, beginning with the Military Academy at West Point, New York. Training institutions ("schools of practice") for the infantry, cavalry, and artillery were established to meet the technical needs of the principal branches of the Army during the nineteenth century; a smattering of professional education through reading and lectures was provided at these institutions. The advent of advanced military schooling at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, in 1881 established a sound basis for instruction in command and staff procedures for midlevel career officers.

It seems to have been assumed that professional soldiers would continue their military educations privately, through reading and observation. The foundation laid at West Point was only that—a foundation. It was common for officers in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to attend maneuvers of other nations' armies in peacetime and to participate as observers in wartime, learning about tactics, strategy, and strategic leadership at first hand. For example, First Lieutenant Douglas MacArthur accompanied his father, General Arthur MacArthur, to Japan in October 1904 to observe the strategy, tactics, and political underpinnings of the Russo-Japanese War. Young MacArthur later asserted that the visit to East Asia was "to color and influence all the days of my life."<sup>2</sup>

Even then, however, it was becoming clear that unorganized learning and self-education were not enough to develop a professional officer corps.

### THE ROOT REFORMS AND THE PROFESSIONAL OFFICER

Major changes in the Army came about after weaknesses in planning, operations, logistics, and leadership became evident during the war with Spain in 1898. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Secretary of War Elihu Root spearheaded reforms that included the establishment of a war college (at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, in 1903) to educate officers for senior command and staff positions. The idea was derived in part from the German *kriegsakademie* and the Prussian general staff concept. However, Root's dictum that the Army War College was founded "not to promote war but to preserve peace" is often quoted to this day and was a particularly American adaptation. Of the officers qualified by education and past assignments for the general staff on the U.S. model, a number were selected to serve for relatively short periods and then revert to their regiments. This approach required a greater pool of educated candidates than a system that assigned an officer once and for all to the general staff, with periodic experience in command, as was the Prussian practice. The American model established senior officer education on a broad basis and created a class of senior officers, identified at least in part by their formal military education credentials, from which strategic leaders and senior staff officers could be drawn.

A formal education and training system, culminating in the senior service colleges, was a necessary precursor to the professionalization of the officer corps in the twentieth century. Through the Root reforms, particularly as they pertained to education, officers became professionals, earning that title through education and practical application, and their calling embodied the same defining characteristics as the classic professions.

The changing nature of war and the rapid technological advances of the next century radically affected the way that military officers were required to perform. This change, in turn, affected the educational basis of the profession of arms. Ground commanders evolved from the traditional "man on horseback," leading their troops from the front, to leaders who appeared before their troops from time to time but more than likely spent most of their waking hours in command posts, in front at first of maps, eventually display screens or computer monitors. Today, a crucial task for an officer education system is to keep abreast of changing leadership styles. Napoleon literally sat his horse on a hill overlooking the battlefield while aides-de-camp galloped to and fro delivering messages and orders. Bands played, and banners waved in the distance. What must we do today, in the educational system and beyond, to compensate for the gloom of a van, the flicker of a cathode-ray tube, the hum of an electrical generator? With what do we replace the bands and the banners?

The wars of the twentieth century created large army, naval, and air forces involving tens of millions of American citizens. The association of so many Americans with the armed forces eliminated much of the mystique that had surrounded the military in the past and, to a degree, became an engine of reassessment and further democratization of the military. This was institutionalized in the late 1940s by law and regulation, resulting in removal of many of the remaining distinctions between officers and enlisted personnel. However, the realization that there were good reasons for preserving a difference between the leaders and the led, particularly on the battlefield, caused a renewed interest in what makes this difference.

The rapid development of the officer corps into a professional institution caught the attention of eminent political and social scientists, who provided useful analyses of the educational needs of the profession. Morris Janowitz and Samuel Huntington were in the forefront of such work in the 1950s. Other authors both in and out of uniform have continued to examine military professionalism since that time.

One of the positive outcomes of the post–World War II reassessment of military professionalism was the creation of the National War College, the reconstitution of the Army Industrial College as the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, and the reestablishment of the Army War College after a ten-year (originally wartime) hiatus. Today’s structure of five senior service colleges, with the amalgamation of the National War College and the Industrial College to constitute the National Defense University, provides a remarkable and diverse academic base for continuing professional development at the highest levels. Each service places a different emphasis on senior service college attendance. However, the importance of joint operations makes such attendance essential for any aspiring officer. Arguments among officers are still heard over the status of the National Defense University as the premier institution, but all recognize that it is at least *primus inter pares*. Recent requirements for joint service education as a prerequisite for assignment and senior promotion have placed greater emphasis on this aspect of professional education even at senior service colleges not part of the National Defense University.

#### EDUCATIONAL EVOLUTION AT THE ARMY WAR COLLEGE

The development of the system of senior officer education at the U.S. Army War College has been cataloged in detail by Colonel Harry P. Ball in two editions of his definitive history of that institution. The college originally vacillated between serving as a planning adjunct to the War Department General Staff and as a purely educational institution. In its planning role, officers learned

professional skills by actually accomplishing them, through on-the-job training. Less time was devoted to personal study or professional lectures. In later years, the development of war plans ceased to be a major focus, and students followed primarily academic pursuits.

### *The “Four Army War Colleges”*

Ball identifies four distinct phases in the growth and development of the Army War College.<sup>3</sup> The “First War College” began with the Root reforms and lasted until the college suspended operations for World War I. This phase was dominated by the concept of a senior service college as a planning resource. The “Second War College” describes the period during the interwar years (when the Army War College was known for a short while as the “General Staff College”). Planning for future conflicts remained important, but the academic and educational goals began to dominate the curriculum. The college closed again in 1941 for World War II.

The Army did not reestablish a senior service college until 1951. During this hiatus, the National War College was founded as the primary joint institution of higher learning. The Cold War dominated the curriculum of this “Third War College” for the next forty years. Earlier curricular trends continued, however, especially that of educating generalists on a broad basis rather than narrow military specialists. Senior reserve officers were brought in for short courses, and for a time senior Department of the Army civilians were provided initial orientations at the Army War College. A nonresident program was established by which students not selected for the regular resident course could pursue a war college diploma by correspondence over two years, in addition to two summer sessions of two weeks each. The resident course and what became to be known as “distance learning” operated at the same education level. This early experimentation with nonresident instruction provided valuable insights into its utility and practicability on a wider scale.

The “Fourth War College,” the present institution, developed quickly in the aftermath of the Cold War. The curriculum has been sharpened to educate strategic military leaders, new technologies have been employed, exercises and war games complement seminars, and lectures have been reduced in number. The proportion of civilian faculty has increased, and the capabilities of the faculty to teach, guide, and evaluate have improved. In these years the faculty developed from a group that facilitated and advised to a truly teaching faculty. This shift was driven in part by the educational reforms required by the Goldwater-Nichols Act in the mid-1980s as well as by congressional concern about the education of senior officers. The student body now includes a higher percentage of non-Army students and a larger number of civilian U.S. government officials, and therefore represents a more cosmopolitan and diverse assemblage of talent.

A major innovation in the late 1970s was the enrollment of International Fellows—officers from the armed forces of other nations—in the annual course. These changes broadened the educational experiences and associations of the Army students as well as contributed to knowledge about the U.S. Army and land warfare for people who were not of the Army themselves.

### *The Army War College Today*

The modern Army War College curriculum is the product of thirty years of development, the impact of withdrawal from Vietnam, the reconstruction of the ground forces that followed, and the success achieved by this “new model army” in the first Gulf War. The revolution in military technology that accompanied these changes, or is at least partially responsible for them, has been paralleled by changes in senior officer education. The Army War College mission states this succinctly:

To prepare selected military, civilian, and international leaders to assume strategic responsibilities in military and national security organizations; to educate students about the employment of land power as part of a unified, joint, or multinational force in support of the national military strategy pursuant to a Masters Degree in Strategic Studies; to research operational and strategic issues; and to conduct outreach programs that benefit the USAWC, the US Army, and the Nation.<sup>4</sup>

The operative words are “prepare,” “educate,” and “research.” The preparation is academic, social, and psychological. The education at the Army War College is comparable to a graduate school, and research by both faculty and students is encouraged. Emphasis is no more on purely Army matters but on the employment of the Army “as part of a unified, joint, or multinational force.”<sup>5</sup> For the student, completion of the program results in a diploma, a Military Education Level 1 certification, and since recently an advanced academic degree.<sup>6</sup>

The current curriculum supports the mission statement with a multiphased program. A general overview phase considers the elements of power, national strategy, national military strategy, force structure and deployments, leadership and command, and the world environment in which these elements exist. During this phase, students are grouped in seminars, where social bonding takes place as well as learning. Students prepare regional appraisals, in which the International Fellows make a vital contribution.

Two terms of elective subjects follow in which students may select from a wide variety of courses. These selections are made based on interest, possible future assignment, or current military specialty. Electives are at a graduate level and are of proportionate rigor. Each is designed to advance the professional education of the student. A student research program is conducted concurrently with the elective courses—students with something to say are encouraged to say

it. Papers are examined carefully by the faculty and are forwarded to applicable Army and Defense staff agencies as appropriate.

Two programwide events take place during the ten-month course. First, students, faculty, and visitors take part in a Strategic Crisis Exercise (SCE) for two weeks in March each year. The purpose of the SCE is to develop strategic leaders in two ways: by integrating and applying knowledge acquired during the academic year, using exercises, automation, and simulations to enhance the experiential learning process; and by pursuing mastery of the strategic and operational art within the framework of crisis-action planning and execution.

The second event, the Annual National Security Seminar, provides a forum in which distinguished speakers discuss their views on issues of importance to the nation's security and welfare with the students, International Fellows, and faculty of the Army War College and with invited guests from across the country. It provides an extended opportunity for a free and candid dialogue between the college community and a widely representative group of American citizens, drawn from varied sectors of American life and endeavor. Finally, the Annual National Security Seminar enables, on one hand, representative citizens to get to know some of the prospective leaders of their armed forces and government and, on the other, permits officer students to understand better the society they serve.

Both of these programwide events integrate learning and reinforce educational objectives. They are complemented by student travel opportunities, principally a visit to New York City during which the class is familiarized with the United Nations. Small groups visit state and local governmental organs as well as business enterprises to become acquainted with the operations, needs, and relationships of these elements to national security policy. A "staff ride" over the Gettysburg battlefield (about thirty miles from the college) is a traditional exercise that relates historical examples to modern strategic leadership concepts. International Fellows are offered additional opportunities for travel in order to become informed about the United States and its military and naval capabilities.

The presence at Carlisle Barracks of the Military History Institute's vast collection of documents as well as objects of historical interest is an added bonus for professional research. Together with the Army War College Library, it provides fertile resources for reflection and professional development.

The Army War College curriculum has developed in an evolutionary rather than a revolutionary manner. It has taken thirty years to move from a course of lectures and discussion to a varied approach to learning that includes guided seminar discussion, electives, lectures, and major exercises. A century has elapsed since the Root reforms began that evolution. Concurrently, a teaching faculty has been developed to match the curriculum. Today, a Major General Stanley would probably find no place at the U.S. Army War College.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR . . .

The changes in the world since the collapse of the Soviet Union have been dramatic, among them international terrorism and unrest. We can expect these challenges to affect the education of strategic leaders. The future will call for continuing development of the senior officer education system. The evolutionary change described above seems likely to be accelerated. Two “players” must be particularly involved in this evolution if it is to be effective: the Army Chief of Staff and the Commandant of the Army War College.

We all woolgather from time to time concerning “what might have been” or “what we would do in the same circumstances.” We can never place ourselves in the actual position of another, experiencing all the pressures and insights that go with it, but we can still examine a problem from a leader’s viewpoint. I offer the following suggestions in that vein.

### . . . *The Army Chief of Staff*

A periodic review of the Army War College curriculum is now in progress. Permit this review to advance unhindered. It is a great temptation for senior military officers to offer advice in informal conversation, but it can be considered directive in nature. I remember once as a battalion commander mentioning casually to a first sergeant that I liked the color of blue in which his battery had just painted a dayroom. Within two weeks, all the dayrooms in the battalion were the same shade of blue.

Ensure that the location of the Army War College and its educational independence are preserved. Over the course of years, the college has been subordinated to various headquarters and staff agencies. A decision was made recently to remove it from the responsibility of the Army Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans (G-3) and place it under the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC); that change becomes effective 1 October 2003. The TRADOC staff must adjust to the difference between the concept of training and the educational experience at the Army War College, which will be unique among the institutions under its command. Senior commanders must ensure that this change is not permitted to affect the education of senior officers negatively. The college’s location is important, since it is close enough to the nation’s capital for easy access but far enough away not to be a mere adjunct of the Army Staff. These factors should weigh heavily in any future base-closing scheme.

From time to time, commandants, higher commanders, and the Congress have raised questions of cost, productivity, and utility concerning senior service colleges in general and the Army War College in particular. The Army War College is situated alone at Carlisle Barracks, whereas the other senior service institutions are collocated with at least one other educational or training facility. On

paper at least, this increases the per capita costs for the Army. Further, it would seem that it would be economical to provide most or all such education as distance learning, which has been successfully used at the Army War College; smaller class sizes through more careful selection and evaluation of student potential might also save money. Amalgamation of all senior service education into one facility—or subordinating all other senior institutions to the National Defense University—could be another apparent cost saver. However, cost should not be the critical factor in the future of senior officer education.

Continue to fund the International Fellows Program at current levels. It is important that each seminar group have at least two International Fellows from different regions of the world. It is equally important that International Fellows be able to make direct contributions to the curriculum and have a reasonable facility with the English language. We need to invite not only our friends and allies to send fellows but also nations with which we have or might have differences in the future.

Ensure that civilian government employees who are enrolled as students are selected not only for their own career development but also for the contribution their expertise and backgrounds can make.

Ensure that assignment of students to the various senior service colleges is balanced with regard to the relative standing of individual officers as assigned by the selection board. From time to time in the past, at least the perception has been that the officers on the fastest career tracks attend the National War College.

Assign commandants with great care. The proper combination of acknowledged leader, accomplished educator, and humane, ethically sound soldier is difficult to find given the limited number of general officers—but not impossible. The Army War College has been fortunate to have had several commandants in recent years who possess these qualities to a marked degree. The post of commandant should never go to an individual as a reward for service in another assignment or as a holding assignment while he or she waits for better things. Commandants' tenure should be a minimum of three years to provide continuity and to allow them to manage change effectively.

The system of academic reports used by the Army is antiquated and of little use. It often is reduced to a trite, repetitious recitation of basic facts on the curriculum, information found in greater detail in the course curriculum pamphlet. In my experience, little is ever said in war college academic reports that reflects positively or adversely on the specific student; they simply record attendance, in stock phrases drawn from other places. Instead, a knowledgeable member of the faculty should prepare the academic report for each officer graduate. The officer's strengths and weaknesses in terms of aptitude for senior assignments should be cataloged; specific, positive accomplishments should be

included.<sup>7</sup> The commandant should be required to endorse the report and make specific comments, positive or negative, concerning aptitude for promotion. This requires the commandant to be actively involved with students during the academic year. It will not permit him to spend much time on administrative matters—but that is why he has a deputy. If the academic report is too burdensome, it should be abolished, at least at the senior service college level.

... *the Commandant of the Army War College*

The commandant must be a leader, a tutor, and a mentor. This is a tall order when the student body, from all sources and in several modes of learning, approaches one thousand each year. Thus, the commandant must be innovative, accessible, and genuinely interested when engaged with students. He or she must also understand the distinction between education and training, as well as the long-term professional impact that senior service college education can have. The commandant must be dedicated to delivering that education.

For the resident class, an approach found quite useful in the past should be revived. Over a number of years, a program called under several names but most recently “discussions with the commandant” enabled him to meet during the academic year for perhaps two hours with small groups of students at his quarters. The commandant provided refreshments, and the agenda was completely open. As a student, I found this event to be one of the most stimulating of the year-long course. As a member of the faculty, I recall that this program was among the most popular for each class. It requires a good deal of the commandant’s time, but it gives him or her a special opportunity to serve as a role model, contribute to the education of each student, and become aware of what each student is thinking. Given the size of the present resident class, this could be a tall, even unmanageable order. However, it might be possible to share the burden with senior officers from Washington who are amenable, or with retired general and flag officers in the area.

Encourage student research. Facilitate the work of officers who have always wanted to write on a professional topic, no matter how esoteric, but have never had the time. A listing of topics on which research would be immediately helpful to Army planners encourages students who are not already attached to a particular subject. Such a list has existed, but it should be screened and pruned to ensure that the topics are suitable for student research. At the same time, resist attempts to employ students during their academic year to work on “real world” issues—even important studies, critical exercises, or crucial missions—that require answers and decisions *now*. Short-term utility can have long-term cost.

The Army War College is fortunate to have both a civilian professor of ethics and an Army chaplain on the faculty. For a number of years there has been an

ethical component in the curriculum. On concerns ranging from just war theory to right personal conduct and proper understanding of the ethical dimensions of strategic leadership, future senior leaders need the opportunity to learn, study, and reflect. The commandant must not only ensure that the curriculum is properly developed in this regard but provide an institutional atmosphere that supports high ethical standards. Ethical and moral considerations must permeate studies.

The utility of distance learning has already been raised, but there is an aspect that requires special attention. There are five senior service colleges; it should be possible to develop horizontal distance-learning applications—that is, in common among the colleges—as well as vertical ones (within each college). Attempts have already been made to link activities, particularly exercises, of two or more war colleges. This seems a fertile area for immediate development: lectures could be shared, seminar groups could interact, and joint student research projects could be developed. As the senior service colleges explore and evaluate new technologies that enable them to export their curricula in new ways to students not in residence, they should also accelerate exploration of how this technology will enable them to work more closely together.

#### MAJOR GENERAL STANLEY WOULD NOT RECOGNIZE US

When this article was in its first drafts, American forces were at the gates of Baghdad; the international airport at its outskirts had just been seized by elements of the 3rd Infantry Division. The tasks assigned to ground forces in the subsequent pacification of the country and its rehabilitation have been controversial if not unique in our military history. Again, strategic military leaders have been called upon to adapt as they lead hundreds of thousands of soldiers, marines, sailors, and airmen in harm's way at the call of our elected officials. Again, the officer corps is meeting that test masterfully.

How much the military senior education system contributes to the effectiveness of the officer corps is extremely hard to measure in concrete ways. But if analytical methods are inadequate, common sense suggests that we would be hard pressed to overestimate the importance of the senior service colleges. The costs involved are minute compared to most other aspects of U.S. defense expenditures. Nonetheless, the future shape of senior officer education is unclear at this point. A cost-saving formula—one that necessarily limits the great advantages of the present system in terms of development of the professional officer—could be adopted. It is more likely that the present system, in some modified form, will prevail. In either event, there are certain fundamental requirements that should be met if a professional officer corps out of which senior strategic leaders can

arise is to be maintained. This article has offered some ways to address these requirements.

The education of future senior officers will remain essential for the formulation and execution of national security policy. Senior leaders must keep in mind and understand the differences between the long-term impact of professional education and the often short-term, if equally important, purpose of military training. Attendance at the Army War College (as well as the other senior service colleges) should remain the lodestone of the profession of arms. Membership in its faculty should be considered an accolade by the entire military profession. Both a new Army Chief of Staff and an Army War College commandant have recently assumed their duties. They now jointly bear the prime responsibility and enjoy the opportunity to preserve and improve the already excellent senior officer education system for the benefit of the nation and future members of the armed forces.

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#### NOTES

1. Donald F. Bletz, "The 'Modern Major General' (Vintage 1980)," *Parameters* 4, no. 3 (1974).
2. Douglas MacArthur, *Reminiscences* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), p. 30.
3. Harry P. Ball, *Of Responsible Command: A History of the U.S. Army War College*, rev. ed. (Carlisle Barracks, Penna.: Alumni Association of the U.S. Army War College, 1994), pp. 501ff.
4. U.S. Army War College curriculum pamphlet, 2003.
5. The development of the Army War College curriculum over the past century is beyond the scope of this article, but it has not been without difficulties. Focus is always a problem as Army Chiefs of Staff and Commandants come and go, sometimes in rapid succession and with quite different ideas. For a summary of this process, see Ball, pp. 491–99.
6. A master of strategic studies degree has been conferred on graduating students since the class of 2000. Full accreditation is expected in 2003. The Army War College emphasizes that this is a professional degree, not a degree in either the arts or sciences. This is philosophically consistent with the nature of the college as a professional institution.
7. The directive that prescribes the academic report, AR 623-1, "Academic Evaluation Reporting System," describes (chap. 4) senior service college evaluations only in broad outline. The regulation perpetuates a system of doubtful value. As president of a senior service college selection board in the late 1980s, I found these reports, as prepared, the least useful of all tools available for evaluation. I doubt that assignment officers seriously consult them today.