

*CHDS Occasional Paper*

*December 2012*

# **Strategy and Why It's So Hard to Get Right A View of U.S. Senior Service Education**

*Cynthia Watson*



**Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies**  
*National Defense University*



On the cover: August 16, 2012, the National Defense University Class of 2013 began the school year with a morning convocation ceremony on the front steps of the National War College on the Fort McNair campus in Washington, DC. MG Gregg F. Martin, 14th President of the National Defense University, gave the address.

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Layout Design: Vitmary "Vivian" Rodriguez

The opinions, conclusions, and recommendations expressed or implied in this book do not necessarily reflect those of the Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies, the National Defense University, or the US Department of Defense.

## Foreword

Professional Military Education (PME), which seems always to be controversial, is currently going through another period when its performance, its accomplishments, and all its assumptions are again being questioned. Professor Joan Johnson-Freese of the Naval War College has written a new and carefully stated book on the subject; journalist Thomas Ricks blogs frequently and critically about the topic; Congress has recently held a new set of hearings on PME; and the Joint Chiefs are in the process, once again, of reorganizing the National Defense University.

Now into this thicket comes Dr. Cynthia Watson with a well-crafted, balanced, and judicious examination of U. S. senior service education. Dr. Watson, a former university-based academic, is a 20-year, Title X, Professor of National Security Policy at the National War College.

Professor Watson begins her analysis with a useful statement of the history and present organization of PME education. But then, warming to her subject, she delves into the hot issues: how good is the quality of the education provided by the PME institutions; should they offer advanced degrees or not; what about the quality of the faculty; should the faculty be military, civilian, or a mix of both; is the curriculum adequate for today's needs; what kind of institutions should these be, teaching academies or centers of research, too; do we even need these institutions or should we send our future flag officers off to foreign and security policy programs at civilian universities?

Professor Watson gives us a well thought-out, stimulating, and provocative analysis of these and other issues. Whatever our positions on the topics listed above, her monograph serves as a superb starting point for the discussion.

Dr. Howard J. Wiarda  
Associate Director, Research and Publications



# **Strategy and Why It's So Hard to Get Right**

## **A View of U.S. Senior Service Education**

**Cynthia Watson<sup>1</sup>**

The U.S. military provides many opportunities for professional development education, which is encouraged at both the enlisted and the officer corps levels.<sup>2</sup> This education not only supports the needs of a twenty-first century officer corps that confronts both highly-sophisticated weaponry and a complex, interconnected strategic context, but also puts these officers into competitive position with civilians when they take off their uniforms to serve elsewhere during the later portions of their working lives. Additionally, military education is part of the national development of an educated work force, helping the nation compete in an increasingly globalized economy. It also reflects the current military need for officers who can think beyond the levels at which they were commissioned. This piece will address the various opportunities for military personnel to pursue educations.

### **Governing Authorities**

Defense and security education in the twenty-first century United States falls under multiple authorities, illustrating the unique and complex structure of the nation with its continuing checks and balances as a society and pointing to the dual nature of this type of education. The Department of Defense, as part of the Executive Branch, holds much of the responsibility for security and defense topics, yet the civilian accrediting agencies play an increasing role in the assessment and oversight of the education as desired by the Legislative Branch. The civilian accrediting bodies exist around the nation and seek to hold the U.S. professional military education institutions to relevant educational standards that make them into competent foci for security and defense officers and civilians and allowing them to think rigorously and appropriately for the challenges facing the United States in today's world.

Additionally, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, through the sub component known as J-7, the Joint Force Development Directorate, under a three-star officer, has oversight in military education. The J-7 periodically issues an Officer Professional Military Education Policy (OPMEP) document, which instructs military education institutions in the joint arena on what they are required

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<sup>1</sup> Views expressed here are purely personal and should not be interpreted as policy of the National War College, National Defense University, or any U.S. Government agency. The author thanks COL Greg Schultz, USA, Col Pat Pihana, USAF, and LTC Kathleen Taylor, USA, for comments on various drafts.

<sup>2</sup> This discussion will concentrate on the latter, as the array of short courses for enlisted and non-commissioned personnel is too varied to offer a good comparison with education in other countries.

to demonstrate their graduates can accomplish in preparation for future assignments. Similarly, each of the services has a policy responsibility over the education needs of officers and enlisted personnel.

### **Historic Approaches**

For roughly half of the nation's history, the primary focus of military education was at the most basic level: the service academies. Beginning with Thomas Jefferson's U.S. Military Academy at West Point, overlooking the Hudson River 50 miles north of New York City, these institutions provided initial educational opportunities within the system. President Jefferson created the Academy, frequently termed just "West Point," to produce officers, particularly engineers, who would go further west as the nation expanded its hold on the continent. These are undergraduate institutions specifically charged with educating the officer corps of each of the services.<sup>3</sup> The parallel path of civilian institutions providing a preparation similar to the academies illustrated the U.S. civil-military balance that has characterized the nation's approach to military service.



Photo 1. West Point, Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, left, talks to members of the women's volleyball team at the United States Military Academy during a visit to West Point, N.Y., Oct. 13, 2011. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Teddy Wade/Released)

The creation of national service academies was not a foregone conclusion, however. The United States has historically debated the nature of its military with regard to whether it should be a standing professional force or a "citizen-soldier" model, where the military would return to their nor

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<sup>3</sup> The U.S. Coast Guard Academy, located at New London, Connecticut, is also a service school that requires payback for a commission earned; students must serve as Coast Guard officers after four years at the Academy. The Coast Guard falls under the Department of Homeland Security rather than the Department of Defense, but its education system parallels that of Defense.

mal lives (most often farming, at that point) unless there was a national crisis. This ongoing tension has permeated the U.S. national security vision over the past 235 years and was one of the reasons why the establishment of a service academy, with the implied long-term commitment to the officers educated there, was such a pivotal decision.

Jefferson understood that the nation needed an officer corps that could go out and confront the dramatically changing society evolving in the first years of the new republic. While the United States had aspirations to move much further west, particularly as it eyed what became the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, the need for professionals who could facilitate the expansion of governmental presence was obvious. Many prominent people feared these professionals would become too likely to enforce the will of the majority over the minority through strong government, but Jefferson thought the need to expand the presence outweighed these concerns. By establishing a national academy to educate its officers in the basics of leadership, officership, and engineering, Jefferson's vision was to provide fundamental needs that the nation could not satisfy easily in any other way. During this period, when communication and transportation were so much less developed in the rugged west, the engineering corps of the Academy would prove essential to normalizing those processes. The U.S. Military Academy opened in March 1802.

The officer corps graduated from the Military Academy proved resilient and served as nation-builders and also as agents of national security, particularly during the Mexican American War of the 1840s. The camaraderie, an essential component of military life, did not, however, supersede the loyalty to their home states; hundreds of classmates at West Point faced each other on the battlefields of the Civil War between 1861 and 1865. Indeed, the generals of both sides were most often graduates who had taken their commissions after their education together at the Academy.

In the nineteenth century, two private schools also began to educate men who would enter the military, and still do so today. The Norwich Military Institute (now University) began in 1819 as an institution that would provide structure, discipline, and the military lifestyle in which to breed officers. Norwich's program provided a basis to the programs outside the academies that led to the creation of the Reserve Officer Training Program (ROTC) that is today so common as an entry portal for officers. Similarly, the Citadel in Charlestown, South Carolina, offered the same type of coursework, development of military outlook and discipline, and general support for the officers who graduated from the institution. Known alternatively as the Military College of South Carolina, it opened to students in 1842 and provided a strong corps of officers, who became pivotal to the efforts of Confederate States of America to win the Civil War two decades later.

Both of these schools, with their traditions, emphasis on military discipline, and academic support for officers, became sources of military commissions for hundreds of thousands of officers, many still serving today. Their model of a civilian establishment outside of the federal army system illustrated an alternative to bringing in the small number of officers that the Service academies—especially West Point—could provide, and the nation needed more officers. A similar third institution was the Virginia Military Institution.



Photo 2. U.S. Naval Academy., Annapolis, MD. A midshipman walks toward Bancroft Hall between class periods, March 1, 2012. The building is named after George Bancroft, the 17th secretary of the Navy who established the Naval Academy in 1845. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Chad Runge)

The U.S. Naval School, situated at historic Annapolis, Maryland, opened in October 1845. Ironically, President Jefferson’s great rival and predecessor, John Adams, had a hand in creating the Navy and had long argued for an institution to support the Navy. The delay in creating the Academy reflects a strong bias within the U.S. Navy to practical, “sea based” education, rather than classroom time divorced from the true challenges of Navy leadership. Through the first decades of the nineteenth century, the U.S. Navy was often abroad fighting challengers like the Barbary Pirates, so the need for an institution such as the Academy was not obvious. Located roughly forty miles east of the nation’s capital near the Maryland state capitol, the U.S.N.A. has been crucial in providing the officer corps of the Navy and the Marine Corps, since both are part of the Department of the Navy and are often referred to as the “Sea Services.” The institution changed its name from the “School” to the “Academy” in 1850. As true with all of the Services, leadership, ethics, and substantive fields of navigation, steam, and mathematics provided the bases to the curriculum. Students at the Naval Academy form the Brigade of Midshipmen rather than the Corps of Cadets as do the students in Colorado Springs or West Point. “Annapolis,” as its graduates ruefully hear it labeled, began offering Bachelor of Science degrees in 1933.

The U.S. Air Force Academy, located in the foothills of the Colorado Rockies outside of Colo-

rado Springs, did not begin until the late 1950s, but the Air Force itself dates only back to the 1947 National Security Act. The Air Force's initial cadre of officers received their education through the U.S. Military Academy, reflecting the Service's roots as a branch of the Army. The basic approach at the Air Force Academy mirrors that of the other services: commissions come from Congressional nominations for students to apply and coursework concentrated on developing ethical leadership and aerospace specialization while also cultivating discipline and camaraderie. All three of the academies have worked to raise the understanding of the cadets regarding the specific field of the institution while trying to provide a common understanding of the history, traditions, and heritage of the Service.

### **The Contemporary Service Academies**

The Academies are public institutions, today accredited by the appropriate regional bodies, offering rigorous undergraduate curricula with the intention of producing officers to serve at least a minimum term of service for the nation. Women were first allowed to participate with the class of 1980 and constitute just under fifteen percent of the student bodies today. African Americans and other ethnic minorities have been sending students to the Academies since the nineteenth century. No longer do commissioned officers have to be graduates of the hallowed halls of the Academies,<sup>4</sup> but the prestige of receiving a Congressional appointment to one of the three Academies make the nomination and selection processes as competitive as those of the most prestigious private schools in the nation.

While tradition is important to the military at all levels, it is incorrect to assume that tradition trumps the need to change as the needs of the nation have changed, academically and culturally. The U.S. Military Academy offers admission each summer to roughly twelve hundred new students, or "plebes." By the end of their four-year educational experience, the retention rate remains high, with a thousand graduating each year out of the original class and receiving commissions as Second Lieutenants. The academic program requires students to study military affairs, history, mathematics, the hard sciences, and a foreign language. Historically, the graduates went into engineering as a major field but history and the social sciences of political science and sociology became available as majors by the mid-twentieth century. Today languages are a more desirable portion of the curriculum, particularly with the directive in the 2008 Quadrennial Defense Review and Department of Defense Directive 3000.05 in 2009 to prepare the future force with language and cultural understanding.<sup>5</sup>

One of the most sought-after officer characteristics is the ability to think critically, so the coursework relies on developing strong intellectuals who are interested in a range of topics, not merely the role of war. Students at the Academies also engage regularly in mandatory sports events with

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<sup>4</sup> One of the primary goals of the Morrill Act of 1862, which established land-grant universities, was to provide a place where officers could earn undergraduate degrees that would later lead to military commissions. The ROTC programs of the twentieth century, along with the Officer Candidate Schools for the Services, now produce more than half of the officers in the U.S. armed forces.

<sup>5</sup> 3000.05 was a Department of Defense directive that elevates security, stability, reconstruction and transition operations to the same level of emphasis within the defense community to the same importance as traditional combat operations. See <http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/300005p.pdf> for the full text.

the understanding that today's force requires an officer who is physically as well as mentally able to compete with adversaries. This blend of academic rigor, physical prowess, and discipline explains why graduates of all three of the Academies, such as General Wesley K. Clark (USMA Class of 1966), Admiral Dennis C. Blair (USNA Class of 1968), and Brigadier General Michelle D. Johnson (USAFA Class of 1981), regularly earn the prestigious Rhodes Scholarships.

The majority of the students at each Academy earn commissions in the associated Service, but a small number of students from the other Academies and foreign countries enroll as "exchange" students for an academic year. This allows a better understanding across the services. More importantly, allowing the basic education of officers from abroad leaves a deep impression of the ethics, values, and Service education of the United States that these students are able to take home to promulgate a much more fundamental understanding of the United States and its armed forces.

The change in society's concerns has also brought about a change in the role of "hazing" of the plebe students. Historically, the upperclassmen would use severe discipline to prove to the cadet or midshipman that he or she was part of a team that could be trusted through any set of circumstances, rather than an individual who could follow his or her own path. However, the hazing led to dangerous situations and appeared to humiliate many students, rather than accomplishing the bonding desired. While the Academies' mission still requires building the Service ethic, the decision to abandon the harsh tradition illustrated the willingness to change when demanded by society.

The undergraduate curriculum at any of the Academies is a four-year commitment of funding from the U.S. taxpayer to the prospective officer. In return, the newly-minted second lieutenants must spend a considerable portion of their summers between academic years with their classmates, taking the opportunity to learn about the military in the field. The summer involvement provides a more "hands on" experience for each of the Service's students, allowing them to familiarize themselves with nuances and day-to-day activities before making a long-term commitment to the field. Navy students leave Annapolis to engage in summer "cruises" as midshipmen to familiarize themselves with the responsibilities of an officer.

Each Academy prepares the students for the specific challenges and options of the service through courses aimed at enhancing understanding of the traditions, history, and capabilities of the Service. While this appears similar across the organizations, the Academies reinforces the specific traditions of the Services, while also providing the basis for understanding the U.S. military system. As the armed forces have become more complex over the decades, these dual functions are equally important at the undergraduate level.

Upon graduation, officers "owe" the nation a payback of five years' service, known as the Active Duty Service Obligation (ADSO). Following that period, the graduates commissioned out of the Academies have a three-year Individual Ready Reserve (IRR)<sup>6</sup> commitment to stay in the reserve force.

As true with follow on education, the quid pro quo sets up a relationship between receiving

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<sup>6</sup> This shifts to a requirement in the Reserves by 2015.

additional education and having to remain in uniform for a fixed period of time as a tradeoff for that education.

## **ROTC**

A substantial portion of the U.S. officer corps earn their commissions after participating in the ROTC education offered at many universities around the country. In these programs, the University hosts a ROTC unit where students are on scholarship in exchange for paying back the Service-sponsored loans through a commission for an eight-year period.<sup>7</sup> Students who earn a military commission through ROTC without a loan have a slightly shorter period of military obligation. In many cases, the ROTC graduate does four years in the AMSO and a further four in the reserve component.<sup>8</sup> In some cases, however, the full ROTC obligation is eight years in the IRR. Staying beyond that point is desirable if the officer is performing to the standards of the Service.

ROTC programs tend to be at land-grant institutions, those schools where engineering and science-intensive curricula developed in the nineteenth century. ROTC programs can be at private universities as well, but those are not required to have the public service component that the Morrill Act established in the mid-nineteenth century for public schools established as land-grant.

## **The GI Bill**

The GI Bill passed in the last months of the George W. Bush administration increased the categories of persons who can use the educational benefits. Traditionally, as in the aftermath of World War II, the benefits for schooling extended to the service man or woman who had worn the uniform of the nation, in accordance to the understanding by the public that education enhanced the quality of the service member who stayed in uniform after doing service, as well as those who chose to leave after a fixed initial period of service. The GI Bill signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1944 benefitted those who had already served as well as those who would put on the uniform in the years ahead.

The GI Bill is often used by enlisted personnel who then earn their college degrees along with commissions as officers in the armed services. The benefits are not restricted only to undergraduate level but let service members to use the GI Bill for graduate or professional schools, allowing student creativity and interest to guide the educational choices the student takes.

Educational benefits covered by the 2008 bill can go not only to the service member but also can be transferred to the member's sons or daughters, if she or he does not need them, This allows the children of service members to study at various institutions, regardless of the cost, without incurring requirements to then serve in uniform.

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<sup>7</sup> The length of payback depends on the specific career trajectory. Pilots, which are a financial-intensive portion of the armed forces along with a lucrative job for post-uniform employment, require a slightly longer commitment to serve in uniform in exchange for the educational benefits. The majority of people who go through the ROTC programs at universities across the country face a four-year requirement as officers after they graduate.

<sup>8</sup> The term "Reserves" is often interchanged with "Reserve Component" (RC) to denote the Reserve portion of the overall Force.



Photo 3. Secretary of the Air Force Michael Donley and Yale University President Richard Levin shake hands at Yale in New Haven, Conn., Sept. 12, 2011, after signing an agreement to establish an Air Force ROTC detachment on the campus, marking a renewed Air Force presence at Yale. (U.S. Air Force photo by Scott M. Ash/Released)

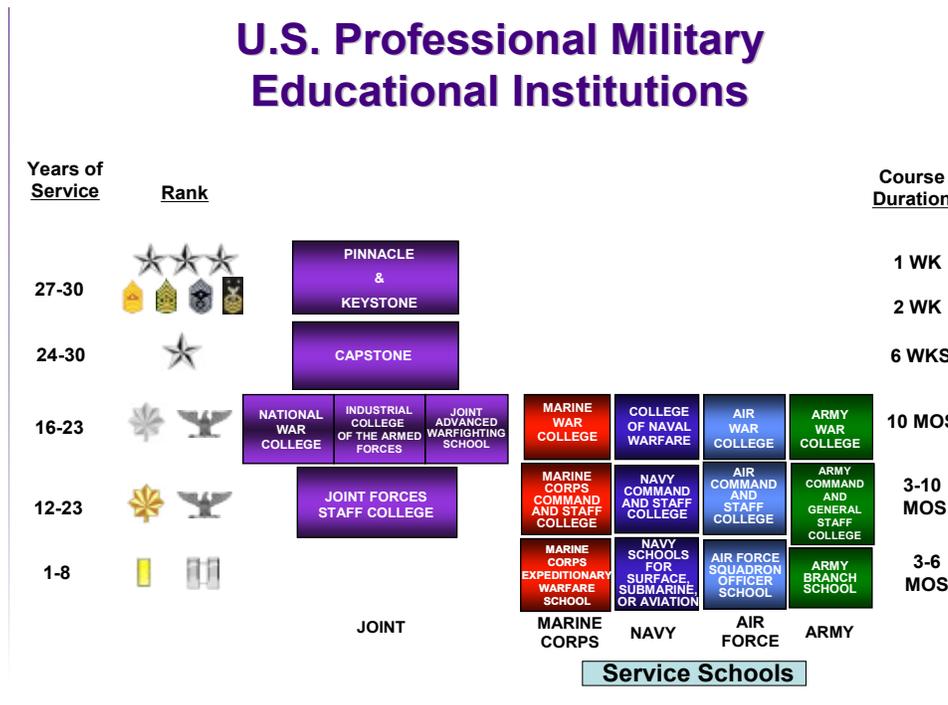
## **Beyond the Academy**

When officers receive their commissions in any of the four services, they enroll in a series of mandatory schools to provide the basic schooling in their chosen fields. These schools can be between the first and eighth years of service. The Marine Corps, for example, actually terms its program “the basic school” to indicate this important step in the career path.

The basic-level education lasts for roughly twelve to twenty-six weeks, depending on the particular career path. (This level appears in Figure 1.) This education is at the lowest level of organization and is extremely targeted to provide competency for the officer in managing his or her initial tour within the service. The education may be as a weapons officer, a cavalry officer, or a pilot.

The new officer likely serves two tours, each with an increasing set of responsibilities, to test his or her ability to serve as an officer in an increasingly skill-oriented organization. The basic course for any officer leads to the advanced course, where a more technical sophistication accompanies greater responsibility within the unit in which the individual is working. These schools are through the

Service, although individual officers might be pursuing an outside master's or doctoral (in rare cases) degree at the same time they are mastering the basics of their craft.



**Figure 1. The Command and Staff Colleges**

Source: NDU Command Briefing, July 2011

Roughly one three-year assignment later, if successful, he or she will take an intermediate-level course. These are the Staff and Command courses, closely associated in many people's minds with Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, the home of the Army Command and General Staff College. Similarly, the Navy has what is known as the "junior" course at the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island. The Air Command and Staff College is at Maxwell Air Force Base in Montgomery, Alabama. The Marine Corps locates its Command and General Staff College at Quantico Marine Base in northern Virginia.

Each of these schools has an emphasis on preparing for the initial command opportunity that any officer will have, while also giving her or him an understanding of how to work on a joint staff, thus de-emphasizing the service-specific issues he or she has just learned over the prior half dozen years. The courses are roughly of ten months' duration and provide a strong classroom basis to the challenges any officer will confront when put into command out in the field. It is virtually impossible to meet an officer above the rank of major who has not attended a staff college.

With the emphasis on interservice education known as "jointness," the Armed Forces Staff College, created in the late 1940s in Norfolk, Virginia, became the Joint Forces Staff College. This institution had been built to provide better staff officers as the military leadership evaluated lessons

learned after World War II. With the enhanced concerns that the Goldwater-Nichols law raised in the 1980s, the increased role for jointness, or cross-service approaches and analyses, led to renaming—and thus broadening its spread of ideas and approaches to solving problems—the AFSC to the Joint Force Staff College. This put the College, in the early years of the twenty-first century, in line with the Joint Staff perspective of a staff that is “purple” instead of solely green (Army), blue (Navy), red (Marine Corps), or sky blue (Air Force). The purpose of this level of education is to prepare officers for more cooperative activities within a staff, whether solely the Marine Corps or a staff at a combatant command if one has been to the Joint Forces Staff College. In general, people attend the command and staff level course between the tenth and thirteenth years of service.

### **Advanced Schools**

The Army, Marine Corps, and the Air Force each have an advanced school, which educates an exceptionally small, select student body to pursue research beyond their classroom work in an area of work of use to the Service. For the Army, the SAMS (School for Advanced Military Studies) is located at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, where the student already has studied at the Army Command and General Staff College. At SAMS, two different academic courses of study allow the student to think critically about the nature of warfare confronting the army. Students will be in a Master’s program in military studies. The students at this school often have served an instrumental role in the most challenging policy reconsiderations in the Army, thus are known as the “Jedi knights”.

Within the Marine Corps, a similar program exists under the title of School of Advanced Warfighting (SAW). It prepares Marines to think in a more challenging manner about the threats, the environment, the options, and the lessons learned.

In the Air Force, the School of Advanced Airpower and Space Studies (SAASS) continues challenging students at Maxwell Air Base beyond their education at the Air Command and Staff College. With the advent of unmanned flight becoming so important to the future of the U.S. Air Force, this school has been particularly important in providing the Air Force with new ideas. Students earn a Master’s degree as they do at SAW and SAMS.

The lack of a similar program at the Naval War College reflects the Navy’s traditional emphasis on learning at sea. A good naval officer is one most competent in the maritime environment rather than merely in the classroom.

### **Senior Service Schools**

Those officers who stay in the service roughly through the end of the second decade after receiving their commissions may be selected to attend the Senior Service Schools (SSS), or what are known as the war colleges. Each of the war colleges has a specific emphasis and tends to attract a selected range of students, but rather than being able to make their own choice, students are selected by the individual Services.

The War College curricula are independent but based on the OPMEP requirements assigned by the J-7 and then coordinated through the Military Education Coordinating Committee (MECC), where



Photo 4. National War College, Fort Leslie J. McNair, Washington, DC.

each SSS has a representative to periodic meetings. Each of the six schools has a considerably different view of its responsibilities. The Industrial College of the Armed Forces (ICAF), retitled the Dwight Eisenhower School of National Security and Resourcing Strategy, has been located since its inception in 1924 at Fort Lesley J. McNair in Southwest Washington, D.C. Founded as the Army Industrial College after the Army began to examine the problems of providing resources to an army thousands of miles away on the western front in World War I, it took on a more service wide view of the same resourcing questions after World War II when it changed its title to the Industrial College of the Armed Forces. This was done to capture its link, which some such as industrialist Bernard Baruch sought to enhance, with industry in the United States. Students at ICAF have the task, under the OPMEP, to study how to go about providing materiel for the United States in case of a conflict, while also looking at the increasingly intricate process of defense acquisition. Its charge is to “prepare selected military and civilians for strategic leadership and success in developing our national security strategy.” The Industrial College considers national security in evaluating the best approach to providing the resources, transportation, and support needed during conflict, while not ignoring that conflict should not be interminable. ICAF awards its graduates a Master’s Degree in National Resource Strategy.

Along with the Eisenhower School, the National War College (NWC) is the only other school

that has the responsibility to look exclusively at the national level of analysis. Begun in September 1946 to look across the services as well as across the government of the nation, NWC's core mission has changed little over its 65 years. This means that both schools have to keep their students from drifting into discussions of tactics or operations unless they are germane to achieving national objectives. The War College curriculum builds on the charge to "focus[es] on national security strategy—the art and science of developing, applying and coordinating the instruments of national power (diplomatic, informational, military and economic) to achieve objectives contributing to national security." Students look exclusively at the strategic level of analysis but also must consider the views of at least one foreign country in their work. The National War College is also located at historic Fort Lesley J. McNair, and it and the Industrial College have long granted Level II of the Joint Program for Military Education as established by the J-7 of the Joint Staff.

Both NWC and ICAF also are part of the National Defense University (NDU), an umbrella organization created in 1976 by the Ford Administration to lighten the administrative burdens on the two Senior Service Schools. Today, NDU has grown to include the Information Resource Management College, the College of International Security Affairs, the Institute for National Strategic Studies, the Center for Advanced Strategic Learning, the Center for Technology and National Security Policy, and a host of other institutions. The two Senior Service Schools remain the portions of the University with links and assigned tasks that fit the direct bill of the J-7 within the Joint Staff, partially because, by law, 50.1 percent of the graduates from these institutions in each of year's class must fill Joint Staff Officer billets, which have certain requirements to make the officers joint in character.

The four other Senior Service Schools date to various significant changes within their services. The Naval War College, located since the 1880s in Newport, Rhode Island, was known especially for its use of war gaming early in its history, having provided the groundbreaking "War Plan Orange" analysis of the Pacific theater in the early twentieth century. The Naval War College, which grants a master's degree to its graduates along with Level II JPME credit, focuses on the maritime instrument of statecraft and its application within national security strategy. The College educates commanders and captains, along with a small portion of civilians and officers from other services and many foreign countries. Students attend the ten-month program roughly 18–25 years into their careers, as is true of all SSS education in the United States. Also in Newport are a sophisticated gaming facility and a research enterprise that focus on future concerns for the Navy as it ponders the post-9/11 international environment.

The Army War College began in the first decade of the twentieth century in accordance with Secretary of War Elihu Root's goals of shaking up the Army after the Spanish-American War of 1898. Based in Roosevelt Hall at the southern end of the army facility in southwest Washington at the confluence of the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers, it was moved to Carlisle Barracks in southern central Pennsylvania during World War II. After that point, during which the National War College occupied Roosevelt Hall, the Army War College expanded into a sophisticated complex of teaching, research,

outreach, and “lessons learned” activities. As true of other Senior Service Schools, Army offers a ten-month program, here emphasizing the ground aspects to national security strategy. The education allows students to evaluate the threats from various changes in the international environment and from technology as the world becomes a more globalized place. Many of the most prominent Army generals, such as Barry McCaffrey or Norman Schwartzkopf, attended the Army War College.

The Air War College, co-located with the Air Command and Staff College, has its location at Maxwell Air Base in Montgomery, Alabama, where the Air University complex includes research, other air schools, a war gaming facility. The ten-month master’s degree considers the use of air—whether it is manned or unmanned, aerospace or outer space—at it affects national security strategy.

The Marine Corps War College, often colloquially called “MacWar,” is part of the vast Marine Corps educational facility at the Marine Corps Base in Quantico, Virginia. The Marine War College is easily the smallest of the SSS, with fewer than two dozen students. Their emphasis is on the unique challenges and qualities of the Corps as it evaluates its role in future national security strategy requirements.

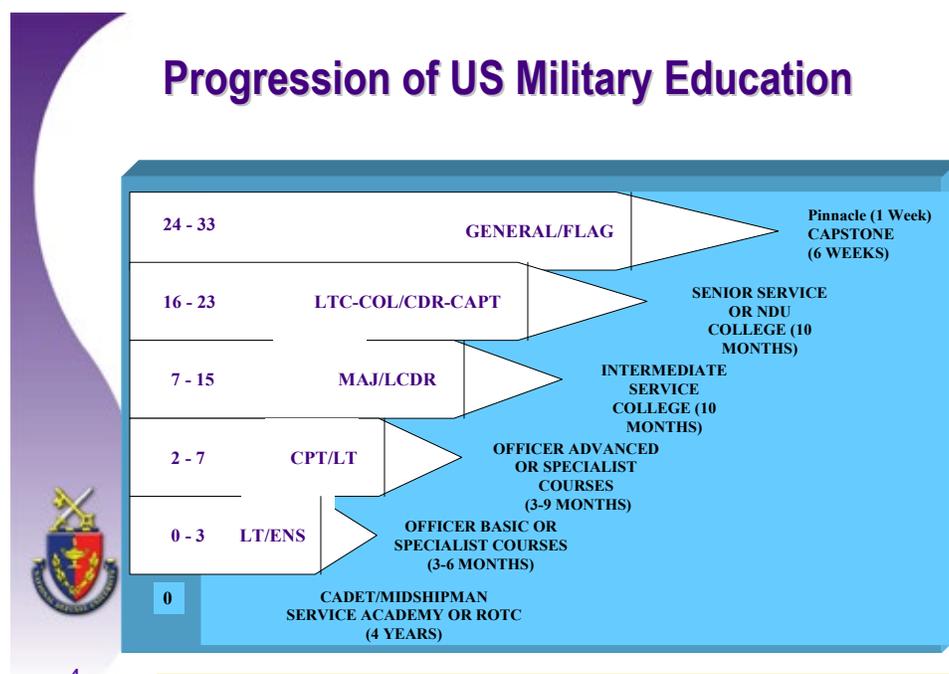


Figure 2. Progression of U.S. Military Education

### Reasons for Education

Military education opportunities are given not simply for learning’s sake but for a number of other reasons as well, such as retaining personnel in the fleet or force, giving them a better basis for analysis in a more complex command environment or simply at a higher level of command, or providing a more skilled, appropriate officer and enlisted corps.

The education opportunities within the U.S. military also come from the changes to the officer selection process and requirement for joint qualified officers. The 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Mili-

tary Reform law changed views on military education to ensure that all services offered opportunities while not penalizing their personnel for spending time in the classroom. In particular, the Navy, with its long, proud tradition of autonomy at sea, had put a greater premium on time at sea rather than “inside the classroom.”

Twenty-five years after the passage of Goldwater-Nichols, the idea that classroom education is part of the progress for any professional officer is the norm. The difference in emphases between the various services does still exist, but the overall curriculum objectives fall under the power of the J-7 branch of the Joint Staff, the Operational Plans and Joint Force Development Directorate. The J-7 sets these learning objectives, specific for each institution, through the Officer Professional Military Education Policy (OPMEP), which is promulgated, in conjunction with the schools’ leadership, on a regular basis after the individual institutions have gone through a Program for Assessment of Joint Education (PAJE) review. The OPMEP is a public document from the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Services, but is highly focused on the needs of the individual student body because of the tasks those students will require for their billets, or positions. An example of the OPMEP appears at [http://www.dtic.mil/cjcs\\_directives-cdata-nlimit-1800\\_01.pdf](http://www.dtic.mil/cjcs_directives-cdata-nlimit-1800_01.pdf). The result is that the OPMEP gives the fullest guidance of any document regarding PME at all levels.

### **Beyond the OPMEP**

The U.S. military values professional education for its officer corps up to a senior level in order to keep those officers aware of changing technology, threats, and opportunities. The last level of education specifically targeted by the OPMEP is the senior service level colleges, which teach strategy. There are two further courses, however, which offer general officers the opportunity to engage with their peers from the other services as well as with senior civilian, the Capstone program and the Pinnacle program, instituted in the initial months after the 9/11 attacks and focusing on the requirements and options for the combined task force leaders of the various services.

The Joint Forces Staff College campus in Norfolk, Virginia, also has schools that are important at the Senior Service Schools level. According to their website, the Joint Advanced Warfighting School (JAWS) was “envisioned to populate the Joint Staff and combatant commands with officers expert in the joint planning processes and capable of critical analysis in the application of all aspects of national power across the full range of military operations. Students must be capable of synergistically combining existing and emerging capabilities in time, space and purpose to accomplish operational or strategic objectives.”<sup>9</sup>

This course has a higher emphasis on military operations than do many, but it is actually made up of a number of smaller courses concerned with warfighting. Students pursue their studies for ten months at the same period in their careers as in the other Senior Service Schools. There are a number of other joint academic programs at the Norfolk campus.

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<sup>9</sup> JAWS website at [http://www.jfsc.ndu.edu/schools\\_programs/jaws](http://www.jfsc.ndu.edu/schools_programs/jaws).

## **CAPSTONE**

This six-week course allows newly minted flag and general officers, along with senior civilians (especially ambassadors), to expose themselves to the national security issues confronting the nation at the most broad level. While the bulk of the time is spent in listening to lectures on specific regions and targeted threats, Capstone also allows the general officers to become fully aware of the specific concerns of various combatant commanders in their areas of responsibility, as well as the forces available to them for operating there. After preparatory briefings and discussions, fully a third of the time for the course is an on-the-ground evaluation of one of the regions.

Held at the National Defense University for much of its briefing time, Capstone also allows spouses to accompany their officials to briefings by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and discussions with senior level national security officials in the nation's capital. The program has been part of the reforms mandated by the Goldwater-Nichols Act to ensure that all new officers have an adequate understanding of the nation's security posture. Ambassadors and civilians from other parts of the national security field have long been part of the program. Many flag officers do not attend immediately, but rather when their schedule allows.

## **Pinnacle**

The highest-level course for military officers began in the early 2000s, to discuss combined and joint task force command. In this instance, the officer participates in Pinnacle with fellow senior officers who will be involved with international coalitions and other top-level officials executing combined and joint operations. This is a single-week course, held under the auspices of the National Defense University.

## **Civilian Options for Military Education**

Students from the officer corps may also apply for civilian academic programs. General David Petraeus, as is often noted, graduated from Princeton with a doctorate in political science. Students can apply to civilian institutions presumed to provide better, more critical academic rigor than the SSS or other PME institutions. These students may or may not agree with that assessment but are generally able to apply to some of the more competitive academic programs in the nation. Because they are more mature than many of the existing graduate students, officers often find their programs an excellent time to learn outside of the field of battle; they also see this as an opportunity to recharge their curricula and careers as a whole. The bottom line, however, is that the U.S. military greatly values education and encourages its officers (and enlisted personnel) to pursue that education to the fullest of their abilities.

A small proportion of the U.S. population serves in the military over the course of their lives; even a smaller proportion has any recognition that the U.S. armed forces value exceptionally highly educated personnel to conceptualize, execute, and evaluate the nation's national security strategy and various operations. The education that officers receive is multi-leveled, cumulative, and specialized to

promote deeper thinking and a more fundamental grasp of the threats and opportunities confronting the nation. Some of these chances to learn are in federally sponsored educational institutions, while others are through the traditional, civilian academic sector.

These academic opportunities allow the military personnel to study specific fields that interest them or may be mandated under the auspices of the OPMEP or to satisfy the intent of the Goldwater Nichols Military Reform Act. This means that the officers are not only learning about specifics for their career fields but also preparing for various positions and opportunities for the remainder of their careers. This reflects the deep-seated understanding and national ethic that an educated workforce, regardless of the source of the financing for that education, is crucial to the development and sustainment of economic promise within the country.

### **Other Opportunities for Education**

Other opportunities for related PME within the National Defense University include the Information Resource Management College, which is also known as the ICollege. Its focus, for a range of courses that have many different durations, is understanding information. It offers in-residence and distance-learning courses. The College for International Security Affairs concentrates on counterterrorism and is located at Ft. McNair as well. Finally, the “regional centers,” the George Marshall Center for European Affairs, the Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies, the Africa Center for Strategic Studies, the Near East and South Asia Center, and the Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies offer courses of interest to officers in uniform, although they are not strictly PME institutions. The first and fifth are not in Washington but in Garmisch, Germany, and Honolulu, respectively.

U.S. military officers may also take courses for credit through foreign institutions, such as the Inter-American Defense College or a war college in another country. These are longstanding arrangements and give students a far more basic grasp of the host nation. Their students matriculate in U.S. PME institutions, as well.

### **Current State of PME**

How to best accomplish senior professional military education remains a subject of hot debate. A series of articles challenging the education by Senior Service Schools have appeared, asking whether there is sufficient rigor or whether the education offered in these institutions is keeping officers within their “comfort zones.”

The prominence of General David H. Petraeus’s doctoral degree from Princeton, rather than a Master’s degree from a War College, has been one of the reasons the question has arisen. Generally, officers would pursue their ten-month education at one of the War Colleges as a fulfillment of the Goldwater-Nichols Act push to provide better joint officers. Petraeus, instead, spent time in Princeton working on a dissertation that concentrated on lessons from counterinsurgency, a topic now gone from the War College curricula (in general) since the 1970s. Considering the importance it played in his subsequent command in Iraq, many critics have asked whether all officers would not be better off at-

tending an outside institution in order to broaden their thinking. Petraeus's staff over the Iraq period was also populated by officers who had studied at civilian institutions, such as Brigadier General H.R. McMaster who studied under Dr. Richard Kohn in the highly regarded history department at the University of North Carolina. McMaster's dissertation, later published to wide acclaim, considered the civil-military errors that led to a deepening of U.S. involvement in Vietnam and the unwillingness of senior officers in uniform and civilian service to give President Lyndon Johnson their honest professional assessments of conflict ahead. Several of the officers who made their names during the Iraq and Afghanistan campaigns also held doctoral degrees from traditional, rather than PME, institutions.

PME institutions have discussed offering a doctoral degree for many years.<sup>10</sup> The main reason given is that doctoral degrees will develop strong thinkers and will provide a road to retention of the "best and the brightest" who might leave the service if not given the opportunity to pursue further education.

In fact, none of the PME schools have opted for offering doctoral degrees for a variety of reasons. The requirement for Level II Joint Professional Military Education of ten months, often in residence at one of the schools, is a significant portion of time for an aspiring officer to be out of his service. As noted earlier, within the Navy, virtually any time served on shore can be a detrimental move in an officer's career.<sup>11</sup> But, even within the other services, the "ops tempo," or the time that the officers are moving between assignments in various deployments, preparing for deployments, or doing "after action" reports after deployments, remains a major driver in the Services' staffing needs. It is not enough to say that a doctorate is good; the service's needs for an officer with a particular specialty may simply make it impossible for someone to take more than ten months to study, much less perhaps three years in coursework and research.

The bigger question is what is the purpose of sending officers to traditional civilian universities to study for doctorates does for the military. No one disputes that having a doctorate is an exceptional move for anyone with an intellect seeking to explore the world more fully than someone stopping earlier at the master's degree level. But, raising the number of officers attending these programs is not easily evident as a benefit for the various services.

Additionally, there are a number of difficulties, some associated with "ops tempo," others not, in administering this type of education for a three-year period. A substantial number of officers studied for their undergraduate degrees in hard sciences and engineering but "discovered" social sciences and history in their graduate work. These students do not have the requisite background to do the

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<sup>10</sup> In nineteen years at the National Defense University, I have heard this option discussed seriously probably half a dozen times.

<sup>11</sup> In August 2011, I heard a Navy colleague opine that his service still does not care to have its officers go to PME institutions because it's not educationally relevant to most officers' careers, reflecting the long-held belief that the real work for anyone is with the fleet at sea, not in studying ashore. The other services appear to encourage education more readily.



Photo 5. General Martin E. Dempsey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, addresses the combined colleges in Fort McNair's Lincoln Hall as part of the National Defense University's Distinguished Leader Program Series, October 19, 2012.

absolute minimal amount of time in residence that would allow them to get their coursework finished while putting them back into the regular rotation of the force. If students need additional time to complete coursework, will they be allowed to stay to complete the degree requirements or will they have to go back into the service? Would officers find that faculty at a particular PME institution rotate so that desired faculty are not available to work with them throughout their degrees? Will students be taken out of competition for other jobs within the career trajectory because they have gotten off the traditional career path? This is a problem for many officers who chose a regional specialization, known in general as “Foreign Area Officers” (FAOs), reflecting the Army designation for officers in that specialty.

Traditionally, FAOs have had little chance of progressing beyond the Lieutenant Colonel rank since they have chosen to diverge from the normal career path, or the Colonel rank if they become military attachés to represent the United States in a foreign land. While Lieutenant General (and subsequently Ambassador) Karl Eikenberry and Major General Charles Hooper<sup>12</sup> are two notable exceptions to this generalization, few other FAOs make flag (in the Navy) or general rank; even fewer flag officers were in the area officer corps. Both were Army officers who rose above the Lieutenant Colo-

<sup>12</sup> It is also worth noting that Eikenberry and Hooper were China FAOs. While there is no question of their competency to become general officers, probably the high visibility of China within the military spotlighted their exceptional skills in a way that might not have been true in a much smaller post.

nel rank into the general officer corps, but these are fairly exceptional.

The same problem would likely occur for a military officer pursuing a doctorate. Taking the three years to be out of the infantry or the aviation community would put the officer at a distinct disadvantage for promotion and/or for command selection. This assumption is based on a student's ability to do her/his work in the minimal amount of time: three years. Anything further would be highly problematic.

A more-subtle problem is the credibility of the degrees if they are rushed. While no one disputes that the average seven-year duration of traditional civilian students to pursue a doctorate would not work for the military (seven years would be roughly one quarter of the time anyone at the O-6 or lower rank can spend as a commissioned officer), some might also question whether three years, start to finish, is an adequate time frame for anything other than an exceptionally mechanical degree. The purpose of a doctorate is to give a student time to understand the philosophy of the field and to explore a particular problem in that field. That process includes absorbing the depth and breadth of the academic literature in preparing to and actually producing a dissertation. The likelihood that a student could do the coursework, then have sufficient time to absorb the material from these theoretical works, is not entirely apparent.

The term "professional military education" obviously focuses on the uniformed students, but the civilian students in the PME neighborhood continue to grow as the Pentagon and other agencies of the national security field seek to provide similar educational tools to their professionals. A debate about the relative size of all institutions exists, but the particular configuration of all student bodies reflects the need to educate officers while also providing the civilian counterparts with sufficient knowledge, enabling them also to deal with security and defense challenges. While some traditionalists believe that PME should only be aimed at military personnel, since the governmental institutions receive their funding primarily from the uniformed services, the agencies across the U.S. government who can get their personnel into PME slots at the various institutions will do so to take in as much understanding of the field as possible. The shift from a heavily officer-based student body at the various federal institutions to one with a higher civilian component<sup>13</sup> affects teaching as well as the overall educational goals because the civilians, *even within the national security community*, often know little about the details of the various services, and thus require basic remediation on this score before any other learning can be accomplished.

## **Faculty**

One of the greatest controversies about professional military education relates to the quality of the faculty. Historically, the faculty at the SSS has consisted of senior officers (Captain in the Navy or Colonel in the other services) who rotated into the role as educators toward the final point in their

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<sup>13</sup> Since 1992, the National War College has gone from 75 percent military officers (roughly 89 percent of whom were U.S. officers versus 11 percent foreign officers)/25 percent civilians to 60 percent officers (about 95 of whom are from the United States and 36 from foreign countries)/40 percent from various civilian agencies.

careers and are active duty personnel. A normal tour might be two or three years, shorter for someone pulled out from an assignment for the needs of his/her service, but anything more than four years is a real exception. The reason for the fixed assignment for military officers was that these individuals taught the most current issues relevant to the mission of the school. Allowing someone to stay for longer might undermine the currency of the teacher in terms of “hot” issues to teach, and could also seriously diminish their effectiveness with young men and women, particularly those coming directly from the fields of battle, who would see the faculty as out of touch.

Each PME school is unique, but 20 years-plus at the National War College gives this author some experience in looking at questions in the area. The configuration of faculty today is different from what it was in 1992 when I arrived, and certainly much earlier in the College’s experience, but it is one that will be fairly similar to other schools around the PME system.

The faculty of the PME schools all have a civilian direct-hire component, most often labeled Title X faculty, the hiring authority under which members received their hiring contracts; agency personnel on loan for a fixed period; and the military officers who have been part of the schools since the nineteenth century. Each of these portions of the faculty has its own character and staffing process, theoretically under control of the leadership of the PME institution.

This rotation of the *military* staffing system had serious difficulties for in the achieving of educational goals, however. The entire question of whether military faculty are at a similar level to offer rigorous education has arisen recently in several PME criticisms.<sup>14</sup> The military faculty are not generally engaged in academic research and are considered too soft in the classroom to promote the critical thinking that PME was established to promote. The reality is probably somewhere in between.

First, those officers with exceptional careers are likely to resist going into PME because it will adversely affect their career enhancement. In the middle of the Afghanistan conflict, at least one senior officer did not want to take a senior position at NDU because he did not think it would get him another star. Yet PME wants successful officers as an example in professional leadership, so there is a distinct tension between the people the field wants and those who want to attend. Second, the constant flux of faculty, particularly during periods of “high ops tempo,” would likely lead to officers’ leaving before their assignments were complete. This meant that someone who came to the PME classroom with no prior teaching experience might have time to prepare for his/her new teaching assignment but never get to teach before being pulled out of the school. The bottom line of any PME institution will always be the needs of the Service or the country, not the concerns of any individual or any educational institution. Third, the ops tempo would, in fact, make the Services feel they could not sacrifice their best personnel for teaching, since the need for constant restaffing in a war zone, such as in Iraq,

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<sup>14</sup> Two of several critics have vocally questioned military faculty’s qualifications. Joan Johnson-Freese of the Naval War College has written several pieces on her blog that attracted much attention for her strong doubts about the quality of military peers at both the Newport and the Air War College in Montgomery. See <http://defense/aol.com/bloggers/joan-johnson-freese> on this question. Similarly, Dr. Howard Wiarda wrote a scathing critique of the disjunctures he saw between traditional academics and military faculty at the National War College in the 1990s. See Howard Wiarda, *Military Brass versus Civilian Academics at the National War College* (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington, 2011).

for example, would trump the goal of staffing an educational institution. The possible result would be that lesser-quality officers might stay longer than the “high flyers,” affecting the quality of the educational experience. Fourth, an officer needing a “rest” from a particularly stressful job might receive a PME assignment, but where a classroom is a different environment, it may not have a less stressful operational tempo. Fifth, an officer might receive an extended assignment to the War College after having less than optimal success in a prior job, but not to the point that the Service seeks to force that individual to retire, since someone has to staff the PME needs. Any of these might adversely affect the quality of the PME available to any and all students attending that institution. Finally, an officer hoping to hold on until mandatory retirement (30 years at the rank of O-6, or Captain/Colonel) might not be at all effective in the class or seminar room, but the Service might see the billet as one to fill, even if not with the most qualified or effective candidate. In each of these cases, the needs of the Service will inevitably trump those of the educational process.

Similarly, the civilians on loan from agencies come for a projected, fixed period of time, but the needs of the agency may lead to a time extension or, more likely, a reduction to get people back to their home agencies much earlier than projected. The Department of State commonly has this difficulty with assignments, particularly for its senior most Foreign Service Officers (FSOs). The FSOs, particularly those who have served as ambassadors, offer absolutely vital understanding of material needed for any military officer as she or he rises through the ranks. But, the State Department, as the smallest of the cabinet agencies with a relatively miniscule corps of diplomats, cannot afford to leave someone in place when the “perfect fit” for that individual argues for deploying him or her to the Department’s benefit. Again, leaving a State person at a PME institution for an extended period raises questions about the individual’s success and credibility in the classroom.

The same problem exists for any of the other agencies in the national security community that participate in PME. These agencies include various portions of the intelligence community, Department of Justice, Office of Secretary of Defense, the Joint Staff, Department of Homeland Security, Library of Congress, or Government Accountability Office. The faculty who come from these offices bring a completely different view of the national security community, often having served even longer than the military officers around any room, and speak with much authority on some issues and far less on others. Agency personnel rarely stay for more than three years, most often two and occasionally a single year. As is true with the uniformed personnel, it is not unknown for an agency person to train for teaching, only to be pulled on the shortest of notice back to the home agency, leaving a disruption in the classroom and in the staffing rotation.

Title X of the U.S. Code allows civilians to be hired to work in the Department of Defense. Bowing to national civil-military realities and the partnership between civilian agencies and the armed services in conducting national security, civilian faculty have been part of the PME system for decades. Civilians hired back in the immediate post–World War II period brought an understanding of the challenges facing the nation along with a cache of prominent academic and policy credentials:

Ambassador George F. Kennan was the first international affairs advisor at the National War College in 1946–1947 and wrote the “Mr. X” article in *Foreign Affairs* while serving there.<sup>15</sup> At the same time, Dr. Sherman Kent of Yale brought a distinct intelligence perspective to the curriculum and discussions. The prominent nuclear weapons theorist, Dr. Bernard Brodie, also served as a civilian faculty member during those early years. But these individuals came more as traditional agency personnel who knew their time in PME was circumscribed.

Beginning in the 1980s, largely as a result of pressures by Congress as it was evaluating the processes and related issues, Title X faculty became direct hire employees of the Department of Defense under which the PME system operates. Title X has a fairly wide leeway in hiring professionals, but the decision-making for each PME school diverges beyond the most basic fact that a Title X category exists for each.

Title X allows schools to hire senior people who have a vast array of publications, seniority, and recognition in their field, and an almost instant credibility with military and senior civilian students. Many Title X hires are senior retired colonels and captains. Herein lies an issue of great contention, however, as many captains and colonels have tremendous credibility in their Service by way of their professional accomplishments on the field of battle, but may not hold terminal degrees (usually a doctorate). In a number of cases in the 1990s, these individuals appeared to have been hired because, having been on the faculty before, they knew the hiring committee members rather than because a serious national search determined these were the best people for an open position. The effect of such hiring has been to call into question the hiring of *any retired 0-6*, regardless of the facts in the individual’s career.<sup>16</sup> The cascading effects for faculty morale can be damaging to the institution. Faculty begin to question whether military officers are up to snuff or, worse, make assumptions that military officers cannot possibly be as thoughtful or open-minded as civilians. These types of discussions rarely appropriately consider whether the individual brings great skill or an operational expertise that the civilians cannot replicate into the classroom.

On the other side, civilians may be young, eager, and energetic individuals seeking to make their professional marks. These individuals may have exceptional credentials in terms of where they did their doctorate work, but their inexperience or theoretical perspectives may render them far less effective in the classroom, depending on the level of officers they are addressing. If any seminar leader cannot differentiate between the common attributes of the Services or makes fundamental assertions about theoretical conditions that a PME student can speak to from personal experience as being

fundamentally different, problems will result, not only for the individual faculty member but within

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<sup>15</sup> Mr. X, “Sources of Soviet Conduct,” *Foreign Affairs*, July 1947.

<sup>16</sup> Early in my time at the National War College, a civilian agency official complained to me that a recently retired officer was being hired to fill a position, but that this person was no big deal. The retired officer had a doctorate from one of the top three schools in his field, had written an exceptionally well-cited and peer-reviewed book relevant to the College’s mission, and had been an honored officer during his career. It struck me as a strange criticism, but went to the assumption that the retired officer was hired only because he had served on the faculty when still on active duty.

the institution.

Civilians hired under Title X may stay at the institution for many years or they may stay for only a brief period. Many contracts are for three years, allowing a review at the end of the period and offering objectives—teaching, research, and outreach—for the faculty member to meet. They do not have tenure, as associated with civilian education institutions, but have signed a series of renewable contracts, up to ten years' in duration, which can be abrogated with thirty days' notice if either the professor or the PME institution chooses to do so. The vast majority of PME civilian educators, thus, are known as “excepted service” hires, instead of civil service employees. But, this means that any civilian faculty member could easily stay much longer than uniformed or agency members, thus promoting a feeling a greater investment in the institution and a greater ownership on issues of policy. Considering that academics tend to see themselves as the professional educators in the institution, some obvious problems may arise.

Title X faculty believe they have much greater understanding of educational goals and pedagogies, yet many uniformed personnel are as exceptionally gifted as teachers as are civilians. Title X faculty also generally have a desire to engage in research to keep themselves “current” in the literature and/or research in their field, and military have never done research. Civilians may prefer the gratification of research over the constant pace of teaching in the classroom, but military may have to work far harder to master the literature being used in any particular classroom, thus setting up the institution for tension. Most importantly in many cases, civilians believe that theoretical literature is much more important for students to learn than the anecdotal, personal “experiential learning” that uniformed officers bring to the table—and the reason they are at the institutions in the first place. This difference can appear in any individual class, a curriculum, or a departmental orientation. Civilians having been at an institution so much longer gives them a much stronger position in these arguments.

How to accomplish the PME mission is another part of this equation. The link between PME and assignment process—whether for military or agency personnel instructors or students—is not nearly as clear as one would think, considering the taxpayers' investment in the process. Many faculty are at the end of their careers when they enter the door, with PME jobs often called “sunset tours.” Yet the students are seeking faculty who will be engaged, challenging, and pushing ahead in ideas that will affect military education. The armed services and civilian agencies are reluctant, however, to give up their best active personnel for the classroom, undermining the argument that in the United States professional military education counts.

At the same time, there is a distinct danger for civilians staying at any PME institution, one that is readily acknowledged for the military but not for civilians. Because at PME institutions there is no tenure system with a fixed understanding of quantifiable standards for forming the long-term faculty, some may come to these institutions not to serve as researchers but to focus on teaching, which is a far more amorphous but no less challenging field. While preparing for each and every class requires time, effort, and concentrated professionalism, some Title X faculty appear by peers to be short-

changing the students and the institution by not offering cutting-edge research, the “coin of the realm” to most academics. This creates serious concerns that the non-publishing faculty “homestead,” instead of being full participants in the life of the institution. Ironically, the greatest tension on this is between civilian Title X faculty, but it does have effects on debates about the whole of the institution involved.

Academic rank is another topic that raises hackles within the PME community, for reasons linked to some of the points regarding time at the institution. Civilians proudly note that they are either Assistant Professors, Associate Professors, or Full Professors by want of their publication records and, in a lesser number of cases, their teaching skills. The overwhelming basis for awarding these titles is the skill that peers have placed on publications that the whole of the professional community have assessed as adding to the value of the intellectual enterprise.

Before the great expansion of Title X faculty around 1990, military faculty at any PME school were known as professors to avoid distinctions across the faculty and to award people for being consummate, senior professionals. As Title X faculty appeared and PME schools underwent more traditional processes, the various PME institutions moved toward giving individual faculty members academic ranks as they would have at any civilian institution. These ranks were given to promote an understanding of who had the most teaching and publications, almost inevitably putting the military officers at the lowest level as Assistant Professors or Lecturers. Military faculty were furious that their experience as officers, often nearly thirty years’ worth, counted for nothing in the academic world, yet they historically were the basic teaching group within PME schools. Civilians could not understand why military were upset, and military found their civilian peers unreasonable about these important titles, which conveyed the relationship for people above and below the various ranks.<sup>17</sup> This highlights the basic cultural differences that exist between the military and civilian professions but that can be overcome, if desired by both sides, across PME institutions.

Tension between the long-term Title Xs and the other groups exists in other ways important to the PME institutions. What they do is an example. Professors who come from traditional academic institutions believe they must publish or perish, as that is the standard for civilian academics. One’s coursework and dissertation prepare the scholar for interactions with students and colleagues for the remainder of her/his career. Engaging in research is a further extension of one’s professional behavior. If a decision has to be taken on using one’s time, research will outweigh teaching in all but a minuscule number of cases.

At PME institutions, however, where military and civilian agency personnel are working to perfect their teaching skills and, in many cases, grasp new material they have never had to consider in a theoretical sense, the idea of scholarship and publishing seems as a remote as possible. For these

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<sup>17</sup> A traditional academic once asked me if a senior Navy officer would be offended by a civilian PhD asking to have the “con” over a ship. I responded that the academic did not have the knowledge to have “con” over the ship, as its work is so intricate. He responded that no officer knew how to teach or do research in his field in a similar manner, implying that it was wrong to call military officers “professors” as PME institutions often do. The gulf in understanding professional standards as well as professional cultures can be vast within the United States.

members of PME faculties, the preparation for class each and every day is an ongoing task that precludes time for research, especially for someone who is coming out of a deployment and needs time with family. The result is that frequently the military ends up carrying the classroom responsibilities that are too often dismissed by others with different priorities as “no load jobs,” while Title X faculty get resources to do their research, such as time resulting from reduced teaching loads, travel funding, and a different sense of how they fit into the institution’s priorities. Bitterness creeps into both sides, as they do not see the perspective of the other side. Agency and military faculty see their predicament as being asked to do the “scut work” while academics bemoan how hard they work to publish. In fact, because publishing is assumed so crucial to professional competence, the question of how non-publishing faculty affect the reputation of the institution subtly comes into play, with the lack of understanding on either side that good teaching takes as much dedicated work as does solid scholarship.

The underlying issue that the U.S. PME system has never resolved is what type of institutions it seeks to create and sustain. Is the Naval War College junior course meant to educate individuals for staff jobs, or is it seeking to promote much broader educational issues for the student’s ultimate assignments down the line? Does the Industrial College of the Armed Forces seek to educate its students as national security professionals or potential scholars in the field? Is this the same thing, or does a field of national security scholarship even exist? The goals of the institution, broadly understood, begin to drive who is hired and for how long. In truth, many people within the PME establishment believe that everyone sees the world as each of them does, when nothing could be further from the truth. Thus, it is not surprising that there is no hard and firm guidance that *states* these guidelines, but instead there are somewhat more vague mission statements crafted to facilitate other goals. In short, what is the purpose of the institution: academic or professional? Medical, education, and law schools each produce a different education than do traditional graduate schools. These professional schools aim for a specific professional competency, rather than broadly asking questions about the philosophical basis of a field of inquiry.

A range of non-PME institutions allows students to study for professional development. As noted, Generals David Petraeus and H.R. McMaster both received doctorates at prominent civilian universities. Other programs exist that are tailored to military officers’ needs. The Fletcher School of Diplomacy has been a favorite destination for military officers taking civilian degrees for decades. A somewhat blended school with practitioners and more traditional theoretical scholars, Fletcher is the professional school associated with Tufts University in Medford, Massachusetts. It allows promising officers from all the services to attend classes, then earn advanced degrees in a wide range of fields relating to diplomacy, broadly defined.

Similarly, the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) at the Johns Hopkins University in Washington, D.C., offers a well-known option for military officers who want to study in the nation’s capital with highly reputable scholars. One distinct advantage of SAIS is that



Photo 6. Georgetown University, Washington, DC.

its location offers many current practitioners the chance to teach part time while retaining their normal positions. SAIS also boasts the leadership of Dr. Eliot Cohen, one of the most highly-cited scholars in national security issues.

Georgetown University, also in the capital, has long had a national security option for students seeking to pursue degrees with an emphasis in national security strategy. Its energetic, broad-ranging faculty, responsible for much new research, is complemented with a plethora of adjunct faculty who teach part time while conducting the nation's business. This practical and theoretical opportunity makes Georgetown highly desirable for many who want to go outside of the strictly PME experience.

The George Washington University offers a program targeted specifically at military serving in the national capital area. A discrete program, it brings officers from all the services together with seasoned practitioners to discuss the current array of problems and options to resolve them without requiring the student to engage in a doctoral degree.

The Institute for World Politics offers a program on national security strategy, with subfields in intelligence, decision-making, and strategy. Located in Washington, D.C., this program is unique in that it does not require students to do other work in associated fields. It allows those interested to pursue work in the field they want to perfect: national security.

Several other programs around the country take advantage of their proximity to military facilities to offer coursework on national security. The Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kansas, near Fort Riley, offers an interdisciplinary program that relies heavily on its superb military history and political science staff. K State, as it is often known, requires students to enroll in a full master's or doctoral program, but opens the door to interdisciplinary work that suits most students' interests. Within the California system, California State University San Bernadino offers a national security concentration at the master's degree level.

The former Southwest Missouri State University, now known as Missouri State University, operates a national security program far from the resident campus in Springfield. This master's program, under the leadership of a prominent Reagan-era national security scholar, Keith Payne, allows students who are in the Washington metro area to travel to Fairfax, Virginia, to learn about strategic thought, nuclear questions, decision-making, and intelligence. As with a number of other programs, this allows students to study not only with published researchers, but with people who deal with strategy and national security concerns on a daily basis.

## **Conclusions**

Security and defense education has evolved a great deal in the United States, even in the past twenty-five years that the Goldwater-Nichols Act has been in place. While each of the services maintains its own culture, the emphasis on education has grown across the board as the national security community faces an infinitely more complex environment and must make choices that require understanding not only their direct, intended consequences but the indirect and unintended ones. While defense and security education aims predominantly at uniformed officers, the increasing presence of civilians who heretofore would never have had exposure to these questions indicates the changing environment that others face. The dynamic nature of the environment, the challenges, and the need for intellectual and operational nimbleness will, for the foreseeable future, be juxtaposed against the fiscal relationships of a U.S. security budget likely to fall dramatically so that the United States can get its budgetary house in order. Clear, useful, challenging, but productive education will be an important component of this environment, while also posing significant challenge as demands on curricula increase and resources decrease.

Additionally, the U.S. political system does not require elected officials or staff to study at these institutions, nor would that ever be acceptable. Civilians may or may not think through the same defense and security implications as those asked to carry out the decisions. But, this lack of a common language adds one further challenge in an increasingly demanding world of national security strategy and practice. ■

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