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program designed to evaluate aptitude for military service. The best qualified candidates would be offered financial assistance at a college or university specified by the Army. This alternative would allow the Army to select the best qualified students while maintaining academic and geographical diversity of colleges and universities. The third alternative proposes separating pre-commissioning programs from academic institutions by accomplishing the selection and training of commissioned officers during two summer training periods. The three alternatives could be implemented singly or in combination to meet changing officer requirements for the future.

USAWC MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM PAPER

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AN EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVES TO EXISTING  
U.S. ARMY COMMISSIONING PROGRAMS

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## ABSTRACT

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The United States Army is beginning the process of restructuring to accommodate the requirements of a post-Cold War force. One of the major issues confronting the institution will be the manner in which it selects and trains its commissioned officer force. This paper reviews the history of U.S. Army commissioning programs and proposes modifications and alternatives to existing programs for commissioning line officers. Since the early 1900s, the US Army has relied on three programs to produce commissioned officers: USMA, ROTC, and OCS. Although internal changes have been implemented to update the programs over time, there have been no significant changes in the sources of commissioned line officers since the beginning of the century. Based upon a review of the three sources and the needs of the US Army in the next century, three alternatives to existing programs are proposed. First, the Department of Defense should consider establishing a single Service Academy which supports all three military departments. The increased emphasis on jointness and resource constraints suggests a re-evaluation of this concept for the future. The second alternative addresses changes to current ROTC programs. Potential candidates would be selected through a competitive screening program designed to evaluate aptitude for military service. The best qualified candidates would be offered financial assistance at a college or university specified by the Army. This alternative would allow the Army to select the best qualified students while maintaining academic and geographical diversity of colleges and universities. The third alternative proposes separating pre-commissioning programs from academic institutions by accomplishing the selection and training of commissioned officers during two summer training periods. The three alternatives could be implemented singly or in combination to meet changing officer requirements for the future.

## INTRODUCTION

Every nation that maintains armed forces is confronted with the requirement to identify selected individuals to lead them. In the past this process may have been to identify the strongest individual, appoint the eldest son of the monarch, or follow a spiritual leader on a crusade. Today countries throughout the world have different political orientations, societal values, and professional criteria which affect the process for granting a commission to command and lead armed forces.

The purpose of this study project is to look at how the United States Army is addressing the issue of identifying, preparing, and commissioning men and women to be military leaders, with particular emphasis on examining possible alternatives to programs currently in place. For the foreseeable future the US Army will be confronted by significant pressures to evaluate nearly all existing programs, including the processes by which it obtains officers.

The commissioning programs employed by the Army have remained relatively constant for the latter half of this century. Although some of the institutions such as the United States Military Academy (USMA) clearly pre-date

this period, the US Army has relied on three primary sources of commissioned officers. In addition to USMA, officers receive commissions through the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC), and Officer Candidate School (OCS). These programs provide the basis for comparison of alternative sources throughout this study project.

General Gordon Sullivan, the US Army Chief of Staff, has identified leader development as one of the imperatives upon which the US Army will accommodate the changes in the United States national security strategy in the post Cold War Era.<sup>1</sup> Any decisions on the sources, selection and pre-commissioning training of officers must, by definition, be an integral part of any discussions of leader development. My intention in undertaking this study project is to provide additional input to these discussions.

As stated above, the focus of the study project is to look to the future. My intention is not to justify the existing programs through which the Army obtains its officer leadership. Rather, it is to examine alternatives which could be considered in the context of the overall evaluation of the officer portion of the leader development equation.

Just as important as identifying the focus of the study project, is clarifying what the project is not. First of all, this project is not a critique of existing efforts to down-size the Army's officer corps. The imminent

and pressing manpower and force structure reductions confronting the army are requiring day-by-day decisions which affect the accession of officers into the active and reserve components. These decisions are being made based on programs currently in being, and not alternative options.

Secondly, this study does not attempt to address the sociological basis or rationale of the US Army officer corps. There are a variety of opinions on the role of officers in a democratic society. Authors such as Janowitz, Moskos, Mill and Huntington have devoted careers to this subject. Although I have reviewed the work of these men, the study does not attempt to unify their theories as a basis for identifying alternative commissioning options.

Finally, the project focuses on sources of commissioning which generally lead to active service as line officers. There are other sources of commissions such as direct commissions for medical and legal professionals and National Guard State Officer Candidate Schools. This distinction is made to focus on those commissioning programs controlled by Department of the Army to provide line officers for active and reserve components.

The study project is divided into three sections. The first examines existing sources of commissioned officers for the US Army. This section is intended to provide background on how the Army arrived at its current programs. This discussion is followed by a description of the programs

for selecting and commissioning officers used by other branches of the United States armed forces and the armies of other nations. This information is included to identify how other branches and nations have addressed problems similar to those confronting the Army today. The third and final element contains conclusions and recommendations arrived at in the course of the study project.

## Historical Background of US Army Commissioning Programs

### General

The selection, training and commissioning of officers to lead the US Army have been, as with many other aspects of the founding of the United States, part of the great experiment of democracy. Prior to the American revolution, the eighteenth century European concept was that armies were a class apart, composed of soldiers who were theoretically volunteers, led by the younger sons of the feudal nobility. The colonel of a regiment was as much an entrepreneur as a military commander.<sup>2</sup> Although the colonial Army drew heavily on the experiences of the British and the other colonial powers in the structuring of its forces, the concept of the militia was strong and extended to the officer corps. The appointment of officers and the maintenance of a relatively egalitarian officer corps have also been strongly influenced by concepts of the citizen soldier.

This heritage of the apolitical officer, drawn from the general population, who rises to lead armies and defeat threats to the liberties and freedoms of the nation is a recurrent theme in the history of the US Army officer corps. Although this theme could be expected during the American Revolution where the colonies had no standing

army, the ideals continue to permeate the philosophy of commissioning programs to this day. Every commissioning program is based on the fundamental concept of the expansion of a relatively small standing Army to meet the needs of a nation threatened. This small standing Army would ensure that the great experiment of democracy would avoid the dangers noted in the large expeditionary armies of Europe.<sup>3</sup>

#### **United States Military Academy**

Initially, the officers of the small standing army were expected to be trained at West Point. Established by Congress in 1802, the United States Military Academy was seen as the primary source of professionally trained officers. As stated by President Jefferson:

As these youths grow up and take their stations in society, they will naturally become militia officers and in a few years, in the ordinary course of events we should see a uniformity in our militia, resulting from a spirit of emulation, which the reputation of having received a military education would naturally excite.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to this philosophical orientation providing the core leadership of a small standing army, West Point also focused on producing officers knowledgeable in military and civilian technical skills such as engineering. In fact, USMA was the first American institution of higher

education in engineering and about one of four early graduates followed a career in civil engineering.<sup>5</sup> It was not until 1933 that the USMA was accredited and authorized to grant a Bachelor of Science to its graduates.<sup>6</sup>

### **The Reserve Officers' Training Corps Program**

The sources of officers was expanded soon after the establishment of USMA when Captain Alden Partridge (USMA, 1806) founded Norwich University in 1819. Based on his experiences at West Point, CPT Partridge intended military training to augment a student's civilian education and to provide citizen-soldiers for the nation's militia.<sup>7</sup> The philosophy of Norwich was adopted over the next forty years by many other schools. Among these were the Virginia Military Institute (1839) and the South Carolina Military Academy (The Citadel, 1842). Although all three of these schools were organized as military colleges, they all focused on the integration of military skills and knowledges into a civilian education.<sup>8</sup>

The next significant evolution of the US Army's commissioning programs occurred during the Civil War. The United States entered the conflict with far too few leaders, and the majority of the federal officers during this conflict were in fact military amateurs who learned their trade on the job.<sup>9</sup> This fact was not lost on President Lincoln. In 1862 he signed the Land-Grant College Act which established programs for agricultural and industrial

colleges in each state. The legislation specified that military tactics were to be included in the curriculum of these schools.<sup>10</sup> This legislation was the genesis of the Reserve Officer Training program.

Over time, several problems in the initial legislation were noted and corrected. Problems such as the inability of the federal government to exercise control over the content and conduct of the military training conducted by the states, and the status of the commissions granted to graduates of the various state programs. In 1912 the Army Chief of Staff, General Leonard Wood, formulated what was called the "Plattsburg Idea".<sup>11</sup> This program built on the military instruction instituted by the Land-Grant College Act. General Wood's program provided for additional training for volunteer students at military summer camps. Successful completion of both portions of military training would qualify the student for a commission as a Reserve Officer. This idea was incorporated into the National Defense Act of 1916 which created the Officer Reserve Corps. This legislation provided for federal control of reserve officer training and for call up of these officers in the event of an emergency. Additionally, this law defined the structure of the Army of the United States into the Regular Army, the Volunteer Army, the Officer Reserve Corps, the Enlisted Reserve Corps, and the National Guard.<sup>12</sup> The distinctions established by

this law, with some changes in categories and specifics, still define the structure of today's Army.

### Officer Candidate School

The National Defense Act of 1916 also had another major provision. This law provided an entry for individuals desiring a commission from sources other than ROTC or West Point. These individuals would be required to complete a federal or state officer candidate school prior to commissioning.<sup>13</sup> As with the development of the other sources of commissioned officers, OCS has changed over the years. Since its creation OCS has provided the US Army with its only true rapid expansion capability. Officers commissioned through ROTC must complete what is normally a four year program. West Point is also a four year program, although from 1942 to 1945 a three year program was instituted to provide sufficient numbers of officers for the World War II army.<sup>14</sup> OCS remains the Army's only quick source of commissioned officers.

The first branch specific OCS program was implemented at the Infantry School in July 1941 and was followed shortly by Field Artillery and Coast Artillery. During World War II other branches conducted their own OCS programs. The expansion and contraction of OCS coincides with the US Army's participation in major conflicts. The program was discontinued in 1947, but restarted for both Korea

and Vietnam officer expansion. <sup>15</sup>

The OCS program is currently conducted as a fourteen week branch immaterial program at Fort Benning Georgia. All candidates in the program must have already completed the same Basic Combat Training as enlisted soldiers. Graduates of the program receive commissions and then attend a branch basic course with their ROTC and USMA counterparts. With the inclusion of the OCS program, identification of the principal sources of commissions for officers in the US Army, as we know them today are complete.

#### **Observations of US Army Commissioning Programs.**

The intervening years have seen significant changes in the content, procedures, and status of the three primary sources of commissioned officers for the US Army. Over the years each program has received significant scrutiny from within the Army and from external sources. My intent is not to minimize the magnitude or successes of these initiatives. Each source has had a significant impact on the status, capability, and quality of the officers commissioned in the US Army. The three primary commissioning programs described above provide the data upon which to base several observations which will provide a basis for comparison of alternative commissioning strategies.

The first observation is that all sources of commissions provide access to all levels of society. Not since the

earliest days of the republic has a person's social status been a criteria for entry to the officer corps. The establishment of a military elite has never been a goal of the officer leadership of the US Army. Additionally, women and minorities compete equally for commissions, although they were not able to as soon as some would have wanted. Any recommendation for changes to existing sources must address the egalitarian nature of the US Army Officer Corps.

The second observation is that obtaining a college education is integral to the commissioning process, and the officers of the US Army are nearly all college graduates. USMA is a degree granting institution. Commissioning of ROTC graduates is premised on the completion of the requirements for a baccalaureate degree,<sup>16</sup> and the OCS program requires a minimum of sixty credit hours for serving enlisted soldiers, and a college degree for non-prior service candidates.<sup>17</sup> The possession of a college degree is, essentially, a prerequisite for commissioning. As will be documented later, this is not the case in the commissioning programs of other nations. Any changes to US Army programs must include a discussion of this historical precedent.

The third and final observation is that, with the exception of some OCS candidates, US Army officers have not had any significant exposure to the military prior to the receipt of their commission. Students receive

only limited military training while in an academic environment. The amount of training varies based on the source of commission. USMA graduates, as expected, receive more than their ROTC counterparts, and ROTC cadets attending institutions with a strong military heritage such as VMI, The Citadel, and Norwich are more immersed in the military than their counterparts in purely civilian institutions. This factor is significant because it means that prior to commissioning, prospective officers are not evaluated within the environment in which they are expected to serve. Their expected performance as officers is projected rather than evaluated in the context of the military environment.

The three observations noted above provide the first element needed to recommend possible alternative commissioning programs for the US Army. The next section of the project examines the programs of the other US armed services and the commissioning strategies of other nations.

## COMPARATIVE COMMISSIONING STRATEGIES

### Other United States Armed Services

The first level of comparison is with the programs of the other branches of the United States armed forces. As expected in a centrally structured defense system, the United States Navy and the United States Air Force have very similar officer commissioning systems. The US Naval Academy founded in 1845, and the US Air Force Academy, which admitted its first class in 1956, were both initially structured on a model of West Point.<sup>18</sup> Over time each academy has established its own unique educational environment based on evaluation and perception of the needs of the service it supports. While there are differences between the service academies, there is a common purpose of providing college educated officers to their particular branch of service.

Similarly, both the Navy and the Air Force have ROTC programs at civilian universities and colleges, many at the same institutions as Army ROTC programs. Air Force programs began in 1920, first to support the Army Air Corps, and later as a separate service program.<sup>19</sup> Naval ROTC was started at six schools in 1926 and pursued a slightly different course. A program known as the Holloway Plan was instituted in 1947 by Rear Admiral James Holloway.

This program established the foundation for the ROTC scholarship program. The Holloway Plan was specifically focused on subsidizing NROTC students at civilian colleges and universities and upon graduation these officers were commissioned as "regular" Navy officers rather than reserve officers.<sup>20</sup>

Although the specific military portions of the curriculum vary to differentiate between the needs of the services, the ROTC programs of the services have a common orientation of integrating military training into the educational efforts of students attending college.

In addition to the common programs noted above, both the Air Force and Navy commission officers through Officer Training Schools (OTS). Significant differences exist between the Army's OCS program and the OTS programs of the Air Force and Navy. Although the programs of all three services are designed to provide rapid expansion of their officer corps, the Navy and Air Force have opted for programs designed primarily to provide commissioned officer pilots. This difference means that the Navy and Air Force programs are principally short duration screening programs conducted prior to basic flight school.

In contrast, the fourteen week Army OCS program follows a minimum of thirteen weeks of enlisted Basic Combat Training and Advanced Individual Training. Army OCS produces branch immaterial officers who, upon graduation and commissioning,

attend an additional three months of basic branch schooling to complete their training.<sup>21</sup>

One branch of service not yet mentioned is the US Marine Corps. While the Marines are considered a subordinate part of the Department of the Navy, their procedures for selecting and commissioning officers is significantly different from their parent department. Marines can, and do, receive commissions from the US Naval Academy; however, the number of officers is limited by law to one-sixth of the Annapolis graduating class each year. Naval ROTC students can also elect to pursue a commission in the Marine Corps by enrolling in a "Marine Corps Option" and taking different courses during their junior and senior years.<sup>22</sup> In addition to these options, the Marines also operate a totally separate screening and training option known as the Platoon Leaders Course (PLC).

The PLC program is different from the other services' commissioning programs. Essentially, the Marines recruit college students for a program which does not involve any military training while the student attends a civilian university. Instead, the military aspect of the training is limited to summers. Ideally, students enrolled in the program attend two six week training sessions, one between their sophomore and junior year and the second the following summer. The primary purpose of this program is to provide candidates with an opportunity to see what will be expected of them if they accept a commission.

Concurrently, the Marine Corps evaluates the candidate for potential to continue the program. If both sides agree to continue, the candidate attends the second summer camp following his or her junior year to complete the program.

For students who do not have the opportunity to enroll in the program as sophomores, there is a combined ten week program known as PLC Combined which is conducted between the junior and senior years. Enrollment in this variation is limited to students who missed the opportunity to attend regular PLC. As with the other services the Marine Corps does operate a program which provides access to the officer ranks for enlisted Marines and college graduates who do not elect to participate in the PLC program. This is the Officer Candidate Course (OCC) which is a ten week course.

There is one other aspect of the commissioning process that is unique to the Marine Corps. Every Marine Corps officer, regardless of source of commission, attends The Basic School (TBS). This is a twenty-five week program which is similar, but more comprehensive than the Army's Infantry Officer Basic Course. All Marine officers attend TBS regardless of their specialty.

The programs of the other armed services are essentially mirror images of the US Army commissioning programs, with the exception of the Marine Corps' PLC program. The similarity also applies to the three observations made

about the Army commissioning efforts in the previous chapter. All are college based, open to all qualified applicants, and with the exception of limited enrollment in officer candidate programs, none of the US programs provide any predictor of compatibility with the military service based on prior exposure. With the exception of the Marine PLC, all of the US programs are essentially identical in concept.

#### **Commissioning Programs of Selected Foreign Nations**

The next level of comparison of commissioning strategies is to examine the programs employed by other nations. This section of the study project will summarize the programs of the United Kingdom, Germany, Sweden, and Hungary. These countries have been selected because they provide a representative spectrum of countries with a reputation of having strong professional officer corps within different political frameworks, and because each nation employs concepts which vary from the programs in existence in the US Army.

Comparisons will be based on the same three observations concerning US Army programs cited in the previous chapter of the study. Restated these are: equal access of all levels of society; the requirement to possess a four-year undergraduate degree; and limited exposure to the military prior to commissioning.

With respect to the first comparative observation, today there is very little difference between the four

foreign armies for male applicants. An evaluation of female applicants varies significantly based on the individual country's approach to the integration of women into their armed forces. The openness of the armies to all elements of society is most probably a result of overall reductions in class distinctions throughout the world. This has not always been the case.

Throughout most of the last century, both the Prussian Military and the British academy at Woolwich gave strong consideration to the social standing of applicants. In the UK, a gentlemen's birth and bearing were the primary criteria (educational background was not even on the application form).<sup>23</sup> A limited exception to this open access occurs in Great Britain where admission to certain high status regiments is limited to students who attend certain prestigious preparatory schools.<sup>24</sup> The conclusion drawn for the review is that, at present, all four nations provide equal access to the ranks of commissioned officers.

The second observation to be compared is whether the armies of other nations place the same degree of emphasis on the possession of a baccalaureate degree prior to, or in conjunction with, obtaining a commission. There is significant variation in the approaches of the armies to this question. All officers in the Hungarian Army attend one of three military colleges which are somewhat similar to USMA. However, the requirements for admission to the military are considered almost ridiculously low.

A waiver can even be obtained for entry without a high school diploma. Additionally, the degree obtained from a Military College is not considered as prestigious as one from a civilian university.<sup>25</sup>

The armies of the other nations examined do not present such a clear picture. Nearly every nation recognizes the advantages of college educated officers, but the possession of a degree is not as clear a requirement as it is in the US Army. The Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst accepts candidates with and without a university degree. Sandhurst is not a degree granting institution. It focuses purely on branch immaterial officer training. Two separate courses are conducted. The Standard Military Course is a 42 week program for non-university graduates and a 28 week Standard Graduate Course for students who have attended civilian universities. The general military subjects of the curriculums are basically the same. The difference in course length is an emphasis on academic studies and leadership in the 42 week course.<sup>26</sup> Of particular note is the fact that subsequent to being commissioned, most officers without a degree are provided an opportunity to obtain one during their first few years of commissioned service.<sup>27</sup>

The German Army takes yet a different approach. Individuals commissioned in the German Army join the force with the equivalent of a Masters Degree. Applicants for commissions in the German Army must be graduates of a

"Gymnasium" which is comparable to receiving an Associate of Arts in the United States. Individuals selected for enrollment in pre-commissioning training must then complete basic training with other enlisted recruits in a particular branch of service, as well as a subsequent branch specific officer candidate course, and a period of unit training with a field unit of his branch. This training lasts one year. Next, potential officers are assigned to a basic training battalion where they perform as leaders of squad-sized units. There is continuous evaluation and attrition at each stage of this training process.

Potential officers who remain are then enrolled at one of two Armed Forces Universities for three years and three months. During this phase of training, the candidate is commissioned as a "Leutnant" on the third anniversary of his entry into the German Army. Not every one completes this portion of the program. In fact the average attrition is 30% with some technical disciplines experiencing attrition rates of 50%. Those students who do not complete the program complete their service obligation as non-commissioned officers.<sup>28</sup>

The last country to be examined is the Army of Sweden. This comparison is unique because Sweden does not have a standing Army in the same sense as the other nations examined. It is based solely on mobilizing forces as needed. This mobilization can be for an extended period such as a United Nations peacekeeping mission or a tour

with the Ministry of Defense, or a short period to organize  
and conduct basic combat or refresher training. <sup>29</sup>

An additional distinction concerning the Swedish Armed forces is that every soldier goes through the same ten to fifteen month basic training program. Potential officers are recruited from every basic training cycle. There is no requirement for a college degree, only the potential to complete the pre-commissioning training. Due to the size of the Swedish officer corps, and the fact that Sweden has a policy of universal conscription, it is reasonable to expect that many of the soldiers offered pre-commissioning training will have a degree, but it is not a requirement. If selected for pre-commissioning training, a potential officer can expect to undergo three years of preparatory and technical officer candidate training prior to receiving a commission, including a tour as a leader in the basic training structure as in the German Army. <sup>30</sup>

The final observation to be compared is the emphasis the foreign armies place on prior enlisted service. As discussed above, both the Swedish and German armies require potential officers to serve in troop units during their pre-commissioning period. This "troop time" is under structured conditions, and does not infer that the officer candidates must first prove themselves as soldiers prior to receiving an officer's commission. The armies of Great Britain and Hungary on the other hand approach the prior

military experience much like the US Army. That is: military skills, and the candidate's ability to perform adequately are evaluated only in conjunction with the academic programs and among their peers.

As each of the observations are compared between the armies above, it is clear that despite differences in the historical backgrounds of the nations, there is significant agreement in the current approaches taken toward selecting commissioned officers. During my research I noted numerous instances of service conducted internal revisions of the details of precommissioning training. These revisions frequently resulted in changes to course content and length, but as was noted in US Army revisions, there were no noteworthy changes to the overall prerequisites or intent of the programs of any of the nations studied.

In spite of the overall commonality of the programs of both other branches of the US armed forces and the other nations examined, there are a number of ideas which should be examined as possible alternatives to current US Army programs.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### General

The final objective of this study project is to present conclusions based on the research documented in the previous chapters. Then, using these conclusions, provide recommendations which could be implemented as alternatives to the commissioning programs currently in use in the US Army. Before presenting these conclusions and recommendations we need to consider the environment surrounding Army commissioning programs in the coming years.

In the near term, significant reductions in Army end strength will mean that comparatively fewer officers will be required. Additionally, force structure reductions will mean that existing commissioning programs will be looked at for possible reduction or elimination. Alternatives to existing commissioning programs need to balance the immediate issues of reduced force structure with a longer term goal of ensuring that regardless of size, the Army can continue to pursue options to improve the training of its officer corps. Not all of the recommendations contained in this chapter may be affordable right now. In the same vein, some of the study

recommendations may provide options which could result in significant cost savings.

### Study Project Conclusion

The first conclusion drawn from this project is that there is a solid, justifiable basis for associating pre-commissioning training with quality, accredited college and university educational programs. This association has been a tenet of the US Army's commissioning process for nearly the entire history of the nation. Other industrialized nations such as Great Britain and Germany which historically have not mandated higher education in their commissioning systems have now adopted systems which either require or encourage it.

Such an association ensures that the educational background of officers is sufficient to master the intellectual aspects of the military art and science of the future. Additionally, associating pre-commissioning training with an academic program which also exposes prospective officers to more of the intellectual basis of the society which they are expected to serve. Existing ROTC and West Point programs associate university training with military training; Marine PLC is successful at separating the military and civilian periods; and the British and German programs incorporate educational experience after military aptitude is established. The key question is not whether university training is

beneficial, but rather when to incorporate it into pre-commissioning programs.

The second conclusion of the study is an "if-then" corollary of the first. If the US Army acknowledges that a college education is a positive aspect of pre-commissioning programs, then provisions need to be made to ensure access to all prospective officers. At present, US Army programs take as a given that the available pool of officers are already college bound. ROTC students are already enrolled at a college or university and candidates seeking admission to USMA also fall in the college bound category. The German system of screening applicants during initial entry training and then providing an educational opportunity to the most qualified should be considered.

By making a college education one of the benefits of commissioned service, the Army may improve the pool of potential officers from all areas of society. As costs escalate many high quality students may not be able to attend college. Some of these students may be encouraged to join the Army if they have an opportunity to obtain a college degree if selected for pre-commissioning training during enlisted initial entry training.

The third conclusion reached is that there is merit in ensuring that potential officers are provided the maximum possible exposure to purely military environments during their pre-commissioning period. Programs such

as those in the Swedish and German Armies which require potential officers not only to complete initial entry training, but also to serve in leadership positions in this environment could be used as a model. Successful examples of this concept also exist within the United States.

USMA conducts two programs for cadets. The Drill Cadet Training Program (DCLT) assigns third year cadets as assistant Drill Sergeants in initial entry training units for eight weeks. This summer training exposes cadets to the soldiers and NCOs they will lead as commissioned officers. Additionally, they gain experience in the basic skills required of soldiers and their ability to perform in a military unit environment is evaluated. If a cadet does not participate in this program then they participate in the Cadet Leadership Training Program (CLTL) the next summer. CLTL participants serve as 3d Lieutenants in line units for eight weeks. As with the DCLT program the cadets are exposed to the responsibilities of leaders in a unit environment.

In addition to the West Point programs, a limited number of ROTC cadets are selected to participate in an Active Duty Orientation (AOT) program. These cadets spend three weeks with an active duty unit following ROTC summer camp in the summer of their junior year. Although the AOT program is not as comprehensive as the

DCLT and CTLT programs, it does provide exposure to the military environment for these potential officers.

The fourth conclusion reached as a result of conducting this study is that regardless of any alternatives chosen, or changes made to existing systems, the US Army must maintain the ability to rapidly expand the officer corps in times of national crisis. This expansion capability must provide for officers already trained as well as a program to rapidly screen and provide minimum essential training for new commissioned officers.

There are two programs which currently meet these requirements: the Reserve Officers' Training Corps and Officer Candidate School. Both of these programs assist in meeting the requirements of the US Army during mobilization. The OCS program is specifically designed to rapidly expand the number of junior officers available to the Army in an emergency; however, ROTC must also be considered in this category. Not because it is a short term expandable program, but rather because officers commissioned through ROTC are a source of leaders in the US Army Reserve and the National Guard. Whether the two programs, as currently configured, are retained to meet this need or alternative commissioning programs are developed, the capability to expand the officer corps must not be lost.

The final conclusion of the project does not deal directly with the process of developing alternatives

to existing programs. It is a conclusion based on my review of previous efforts to address the issue of developing alternative strategies. I have concluded that a number of studies, within the Army and external to it, have proposed alternatives to existing strategies. The recommendations which follow draw upon these previous efforts.

#### **Study Project Recommendations**

Three recommendations have been developed as a result of the conclusions documented above. The first is an alternative to the existing service academy system. The second identifies an alternative commissioning strategy which could be implemented within existing college-based commissioning programs. The final recommendation provides an alternative to the existing ROTC program.

Based on the research conducted in all aspects of the project, I believe that the service academies should be retained as a primary source of officers for the US military. West Point, Annapolis, and the US Air Force Academy are all highly regarded degree granting institutions which provide entry into the officer corps for high quality candidates from all levels of society. The question is whether three academies are needed?

The first alternative strategy recommended is to combine the three service academies into a single United States Armed Services Academy. Potential officers from all branches of service would attend a single institution

where the values, traditions, and roles of the military officer would be taught. Students could "major" in a particular service or service specific training could be deferred until after commissioning.

This alternative has several significant advantages. The first is the obvious resource savings which accrue from combining three institutions into a single service academy. Operating three service academies is not cheap. Consolidating the precommissioning training for all military officers would clearly provide a more cost effective system; however, cost should not be the primary determinant.

A single service academy would also support the efforts of the US military to become more "joint". A document published by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 1990, entitled Military Education Policy Document, specifically addresses the requirement for joint service education during pre-commissioning training. The policy states that:

"In concert with the introduction to one's own service, students should receive an overview of the joint arena, its history and purpose, to commence the process of thinking from a joint perspective at the most formative stage".<sup>31</sup>

This focus could be best achieved at a single institution where "jointness" would be the rule rather than the exception.

A single service academy system has been seriously considered in the recent past. In 1944 when military

leaders were considering establishing a separate academy for the then Army Air Corps, Harold Smith, the Director of the Budget proposed the creation of a combined service academy instead of adding another institution to the system.<sup>32</sup> In addition to Smith's proposal, several civilian authors have espoused a single service academy. Most of these proposals were developed during the 1970s during a period of general disenchantment with the military education process, and focused on exercising greater civilian and academic control of the military's pre-commissioning program.<sup>33</sup> Regardless of the bias of the proposals, they do reinforce a number of significant points which should be considered if the concept of a single service academy is to be pursued.

All cite the obvious resource savings of a single academy system, as well as noting that a single academy would attract a broader spectrum of student by minimizing candidates' biases for or against a particular service. Although the advantages of jointness are not specifically addressed since this is a recently articulated goal, several authors do stress the advantages of establishing a common culture among potential officers. Adopting a single service academy may appear to be a radical change to existing commissioning programs, but in an environment of increased jointness and decreased structure and size, this alternative definitely merits serious consideration.

This alternative involves a significant change in

the role of USMA in commissioning officers; however, it does not directly affect ROTC in any way. ROTC could be maintained in its present form regardless of changes implemented at West Point. A more likely scenario for the future will involve changes to ROTC programs as well. The second study project recommendation specifically addresses possible modifications to programs with an affiliation with civilian colleges and universities.

Under this alternative, young men and women who believe they have the potential and desire to become a commissioned officer would be offered the opportunity to attend a six or seven week evaluation program. Admission to the program would be based on current officer selection criteria and could be revised based on the needs of the service in the future. The content of the screening program would be similar to basic combat training (which is a seven week POI).<sup>34</sup> Additional emphasis would be placed on evaluation of the candidate's potential for service as an officer.

At the end of the screening program selected students would be offered the opportunity to attend colleges with financial assistance provided by the Army. The pool of potential attendees could range from high school graduates to college sophomores, and in view of the financial assistance offered, the available college spaces would probably be very competitive, ensuring the highest possible quality officer leaders for the Army.

The difference between this proposal and the current ROTC system is that the Army would specify what civilian institution the potential officer would attend. By selecting the participating colleges and universities, the Army could ensure that an appropriate mix of civilian institutions were represented. This would ensure that future officers were recruited for needed academic disciplines, from all geographical regions. This alternative could also be tailored to include traditional military colleges and existing affirmative action programs which ROTC detachments at Historically Black Colleges now accomplish. The number of participating colleges and universities could be expanded or contracted in response to anticipated force structure changes. The college portion of the program could also incorporate the officer requirements of the Reserve Components by affiliating selected schools with state officer recruitment programs. This proposal would allow the US Army to potentially reduce the number of ROTC detachments throughout the country saving significant resources and manpower.

The program described above would also permit a major modification to the military instruction conducted during the academic year. The potential officer would have already completed a basic military screening program. He or she would understand basic soldier skills and possess a general understanding of military organizations. This would allow on-campus instruction to focus on more advanced

skills and leadership concepts. Military training and assignment to units during the summers could also be expanded. The end product of this alternative would be a newly commissioned officer whose ability to perform basic military skills has already been established; has received a more comprehensive military education; and meets an army need with respect to academic skill, gender, race and geographical background. Additionally, the new officer would also have had greater exposure to the military environment prior to joining his or her first unit.

An additional benefit of this screening program could be as a source of high quality enlisted soldiers. If the existing BCT POI was used as the basis for the training, candidates not selected for college attendance could be offered the opportunity to attend Advanced Individual Training and remain in the Army. Although I believe the program should not place the candidate in an "either or" situation. If not selected for college attendance, the candidate should be released with no service obligation.

The third and final alternative commissioning strategy also applies to current college based commissioning strategies. Simply stated, the Army could adopt a commissioning strategy based on the concept of the Marine Corps PLC described in Chapter Three. The structure and concepts of this strategy have been validated by

the Marine Corps. An Army version of the program could be implemented either as a replacement for the existing ROTC structure, or as a substitute program at schools which may lose their ROTC program as a result of force structure reductions.

In the course of conducting research for this study project, I found that I was not the first to propose the establishment of an Army PLC. In 1978 the Army completed a multi-year study of all aspects of the training and education of officers. This study, entitled Review of Education and Training for Officers (RETO) conducted an in-depth look at every aspect of officer training, to include pre-commissioning programs.<sup>35</sup> Among the recommendations of the RETO study group was a proposal to consider establishing an Army PLC. The program was viewed as an augmentation to existing ROTC programs to broaden what was seen as an untapped recruiting market.<sup>36</sup>

This proposal must be viewed in light of the problems confronting the Army in the late seventies. During that period the Army was concerned with increasing the number of individuals commissioned. Today, an Army PLC program may be an equally valid alternative for opposite reasons. The closing of ROTC detachments may necessitate establishing an off-campus program to ensure continued access to college educated officers.

In addition to the RETO study, a Marine Corps officer, Major Phillip E. Tucker, wrote a master's thesis at the

US Army Command and General Staff College describing a program he called the Army Collegiate Commissioning Program (CCP). This program is essentially the Marine PLC in Army clothing.<sup>37</sup> Major Tucker concluded that a CCP could be a "feasible supplement to existing programs in terms of procurement potential, productivity, cost

<sup>38</sup>  
effectiveness, and retention". Both the RETO study and Major Tucker's proposal reached the same conclusions: An off-campus, two summer program could be a viable alternative source of commissioned officers.

I believe the logic of these two efforts is just as valid today. As noted earlier, the pendulum may have swung to the opposite extreme. The Army is now looking for programs which can commission a lesser number of officers while committing fewer training resources to accomplish the task. A PLC/CCP strategy, either in place of existing ROTC detachments, or in conjunction with them is a viable alternative commissioning strategy.

The PLC/CCP alternative continues the association with civilian colleges and universities. The difference between PLC/CCP and ROTC is the amount of military training conducted during the academic year. ROTC programs are designed to incorporate military training as part of the student's regular academic program. PLC/CCP places no requirements on the potential officer during the academic year. All training is conducted during the summer. There is no requirement to staff and equip instructor

detachments, nor to provide financial assistance to students while they are in college. Overall, the PLC/CCP option definitely merits consideration as a possible alternative commissioning strategy.

None of the three alternatives proposed above are mutually exclusive. All three could be implemented independently, or they could be combined to totally restructure the way the US Army selects and trains its officers. When I began the research for this project, I was certain there was a simple, effective means of selecting and preparing officers for the US Army which had simply been overlooked. I was convinced that there was a much better mousetrap out there just waiting to be found. After considerable research, I am now sure of two things.

First, that a number of very intelligent and hardworking men and women have expended considerable energy to ensuring that the Army is well led. And second, that the programs which currently prepare officers to serve as commissioned officers in the Army are among the best in the world. These commissioning strategies have met the needs of the the Army for a considerable period of time. Unfortunately, in the immediate future some of these programs may not be affordable. The alternatives proposed in this study project provide another look at the problem of ensuring that the officer corps provides the soldiers of the Army with the best possible leadership.

END NOTES

<sup>1</sup>GEN Gordon R. Sullivan, "Maintaining Momentum While Accomodating Change", Army 41 (October 1991): 27.

<sup>2</sup>Walter Millis, Arms and Men (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1956), 17-18.

<sup>3</sup>Lee S. Harford Jr., "The Cadet Command Heritage: A Brief History of the Total Army's Primary Commissioning Source, 1783-1990", Department of the Army, United States Army Cadet Command, 2.

<sup>4</sup>American State Papers: Military Affairs, VII. Quoted in Lee A. Harford Jr. "The Cadet Command Heritage: A Brief History of the Total Army's Primary Commissioning Source, 1783-1990", (Fort. Monroe, V.A.: United States Army Cadet Command, 1990), 2.

<sup>5</sup>John P. Lovell, Neither Athens nor Sparta? (Bloomington, I.A.: Indiana University Press, 1979), 23.

<sup>6</sup>Stephen E. Ambrose, Duty, Honor, Country: A History of West Point (Baltimore, M.D.: Johns Hopkins Press, 1966), 290.

<sup>7</sup>Harford, 3.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 5.

<sup>9</sup>Millis, 115.

<sup>10</sup>Harford, 7.

<sup>11</sup>U.S. Department of the Army Memorandum, "Historical Overview of Officer Producing Programs", Headquarters 3d Battalion (OCS), 11th Infantry, Fort Benning Georgia, 1. (hereafter referred to as HQ 3-11 INF Memorandum).

<sup>12</sup>Harford, 11.

<sup>13</sup>HQ 3-11 Inf Memorandum, 2.

<sup>14</sup> Lovell, 42, 45.

<sup>15</sup> HQ 3-11 Inf Memorandum, 2.

<sup>16</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, Army Regulation 145-1: Senior Reserve Officers' Corps Training Program: Organization, Administration and Training (Washington, D.C.: 21 January 1987), 25. (hereafter referred to as "Regulation 145-1").

<sup>17</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, Army Regulation 351-5: US Army Officer Candidate School (Washington D.C. 14 February 1982), 6. (hereafter referred to as "Regulation 351-5").

<sup>18</sup> Lovell, 28, 72.

<sup>19</sup> C.D. Atchinson, HUP 2,3,4: ROTC and National Security (Colorado Springs, CO: Type Art Press, 1972), 52.

<sup>20</sup> James L. Holloway, "The Holloway Plan--A Summary View and Commentary", Proceedings November 1947, V 73, N 11. 21.

<sup>21</sup> Regulation 351-5, 7.

<sup>23</sup> Martin Van Creveld, The Training of Officers (New York: The Free Press, 1990), 23, 43.

<sup>24</sup> Gwyn Harries-Jenkins, "The Education and Training of Military Elites" The Educating of Armies, ed. Michael D. Stephens, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), 28.

<sup>25</sup> J.R. Barany, "Military Higher Education in Hungary", Journal of Armed Forces and Society, Spring 1989, 15, 373.

<sup>26</sup> Cathy Downes, Special Trust and Confidence: The Making of an Officer, (London: Gainsburg House, 1991), 72, 74.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 77.

<sup>28</sup> Jack E. Morgan, "Education and Training of the German Army Officer", United States Army Training and Doctrine Command Liaison Officer, Technical Report T-22-80, 30 June 1980. 1, 4.

<sup>29</sup> Björn Swärdenheim, "The Training of the Swedish Army", The Educating of Armies, ed. Michael D. Stephens, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), 103.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 104.

<sup>31</sup> Office of the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, "Military Education Policy Document" U.S. Department of Defense, (Washington D.C., Government Printing Office, 1990), II-4.

<sup>32</sup> John W. Masland and Laurence I. Radway, Soldiers and Scholars: Military Education and National Policy, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1957), p 114.

<sup>33</sup> Lovell, 278.

<sup>34</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, "Program of Instruction 21-114: Basic Combat Training" (Ft. Benning, Georgia: U.S. Army Infantry School, 1 July 1990), 5.

<sup>35</sup> U.S. Department of the Army, Review of Officer Education and Training, Vol2, (Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army), C-3.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, C-5.

<sup>37</sup> Phillip E. Tucker, The Army Collegiate Commissioning Program: A Feasibility Study, (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1977), 66.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 3.

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