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PREPARING OFFICERS FOR JOINT DUTY:
AN ANALYSIS OF U.S JOINT PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION

by

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A paper submitted to the faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Joint Military Operations Department.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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Currently, the JPME system is meeting the intent of the Goldwater-Nichols Act. It has been effective in making the officer corps more educated, aware of, and concerned about joint warfare than ever before.

Yet, today’s JPME is not adequate to prepare officers to make JPME2010 and JV2010 a reality, particularly in the areas of JTF operational effectiveness, the on-going challenges associated with the Armed Forces Staff College, and educating a majority of both active and reserve officers in JPME Phases I&II.

The answer lies in new, non-traditional, visionary educational approaches that leverage technology in order that more officers receive joint education when and how they need it.

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Joint Professional Military Education (JPME) is more important to the U.S. Armed Forces today than it has ever been. It is imperative that far more of the officer corps, active and reserve, understand joint operational art and doctrine to face the challenges that the 21st Century will present.

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The answer lies in new, non-traditional, visionary educational approaches that leverage technology in order that more officers receive joint education when and how they need it.
In 1996, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General John M. Shalikashvili, outlined his vision for Joint Professional Military Education (JPME) for the 21st Century and its relationship to the accomplishment of the objectives found in Joint Vision 2010 (JV 2010):

"The U.S. military of the future must be an effective, joint organization based on dominant battlespace knowledge if we are to remain the preeminent force our nation expects. Joint Professional Military Education will play an extremely important role in building the type of Armed Forces outlined in a concept under development, Joint Vision 2010." ¹

With the ever-changing national security environment that the United States (U.S.) faces now and in the future, the importance of relevant and timely JPME will remain a key consideration in the preparation of its officer corps for the future joint battlefield.

Due to its importance, the JPME system has been studied several times since its inception as a result of the Department of Defense Reorganization Act (commonly known as the Goldwater-Nichols Act) of 1986. One recent and extensive review of the U.S. professional military education system was the 1998 (Phase I) and 1999 (Phase II) JPME 2010 Study.

The purpose of the JPME 2010 Study was to:

"define joint professional military education requirements and identify an educational process/system that will prepare officers for current and future challenges. The study will result in a proposed course of action that will deliver a joint education program that prepares leaders to meet the demands of current and future joint, interagency, and multinational environments, such as described in Joint Vision (JV) 2010." ²

This study, conducted by representatives of the Joint Staff, Regional Commanders-in-Chief (CINC) Staffs, National Defense
University, and each of the Services, serves as the point of departure for this paper.

Based on the findings of the JPME 2010 study and further research into the U.S. JPME system, this author will argue that although fundamentally sound in many aspects, there is clearly a need to improve the current JPME system to meet the needs of officers assigned to joint duty now and in the future in order for the vision of JV 2010, and accordingly that of JPME 2010, to become reality. Specifically, this paper will identify needed improvements and possible solutions in three areas: Joint Task Force (JTF) proficiency, JPME Phase 2 at the Armed Forces Staff College, and Reserve Component JPME.

Congressman Ike Skelton accurately pointed out the importance of professional military education at the Conference on Military Education for the 21st Century Warrior held in January 1998:

"PME is a part, an extremely important part, of a process to develop the officer corps from each of the Services. To win at all levels - tactical, operational, and strategic -- we must be ever mindful that second place does not count on the battlefield."³

The Current JPME System

The Officer Professional Military Education Policy (OPMEP) which is promulgated by the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), assigns the primary responsibilities and learning objectives for each of the Service and Joint Professional Military Education schools. To ensure that these institutions comply with the Chairman's guidance and directives regarding military education, they are evaluated through the process of accreditation
of joint education, an on-site inspection conducted every five years.4

In addition to the school accreditation process, there are numerous regulations and policies governing the education, assignment, promotion, and career management of officers assigned to joint duty. This is to ensure that joint organizations do not get "short-changed" when it comes to getting quality, joint-educated people from the individual Services.5

Further, since 1 October 1989, there has been a requirement that at least 50 percent of the joint duty assignments allocated to each Service be filled by officers who have been selected or nominated as Joint Specialty Officers (JSO). Joint Specialty Officers are those who have completed JPME Phases I & II. Phase I is incorporated in the curricula at the intermediate and senior Service colleges. It focuses on the fundamentals of joint operations, provides for an initial understanding of joint matters, and facilitates the joint " acculturation" process -- officers gaining a joint perspective, and learning how to "think joint." Phase II, taught at the Armed Forces Staff College, builds on the concepts of Phase I, and emphasizes the specific procedures of joint planning and operations that prepare officers for an operational-level joint staff assignment.6 Additionally, the National War College and the Industrial College of the Armed Forces offer both phases of JPME in their curricula.

With these military education institutions, accreditation processes, and officer management systems in place, it can be argued that the current JPME system is in good standing, meeting
the intent of the Goldwater-Nichols Act in educating the U.S. officer corps in joint matters and perspectives, and thus not in need of reform. The Requirements Team for Phase I of the JPME 2010 Study further reported from its Senior Leader interviews that "there was no expressed fundamental discontent with the current JPME system."°

The question remains, considering the operational tempo of the U.S. Armed Forces and the increasing demands of joint duty placed on both active and reserve officers, is the current educational system of sufficient quality and quantity to achieve current objectives and those envisioned in JV2010? This author contends that it is not in the three critical areas previously mentioned.

**JTF Proficiency**

"The crisis response mechanism of choice today is the Joint Task Force. Currently, the United States has ten standing JTFs and six ad hoc JTFs operating around the world...This means that 2,600 officers assigned to these headquarters must be sufficiently joint proficient to operate as a JTF at a moment’s notice."°

Joint operations conducted by JTFs are clearly how U.S. forces operate now, and will become more prevalent in the future. This implies that a much larger portion of our officer corps will be required to perform effectively in a joint environment -- at present, many cannot.

During his remarks at the 1998 Conference on Military Education for the 21st Century Warrior, ADM Dennis Blair, USN, then Director of the Joint Staff, focused on education and its relationship to combat effectiveness for today's force:
"I think our point of departure here must be the war-fighting effectiveness of the joint force. How do we educate -- not train but educate -- the commanders and their staffs for the maximum combat effectiveness of the force?"³

The answer to ADM Blair’s question is of paramount importance to the war-fighting CINCs and other senior military leaders. This was clearly reflected in the interviews conducted by the JPME 2010 Requirements Team which provided the overall assessment that there is a "lack of proficiency in JTFs among many officers."¹⁰ Who are these officers that occupy positions on a JTF staff and what knowledge do they lack?

There are basically three methods by which a JTF staff may be created and personnel assigned to it, normally in a crisis situation. One way is an ad hoc staff formed by solicitation of personnel from anywhere in the world, usually by rank and warfare specialty, typically with no requirement for any previous joint experience, and from two or more Services.

A second way is for the headquarters of a numbered Fleet, Air Force, Marine Expeditionary Force, or Corps to serve as the core of a JTF staff, which is then augmented by non-organic personnel through solicitations as previously mentioned.

A third technique is that of a standing JTF headquarters and staff whose personnel continually train and operate together, with a lesser requirement for augmentation.¹¹

Thus, officers can find themselves on a JTF staff through various means, typically in crisis situations, and they usually do not have the requisite knowledge or experience to perform effectively. Numerous JTF lessons-learned documents reflect that
many of the officers assigned to JTF staffs arrive with little or no proficiency in joint operations or planning.

LTG(R) Robert D. Chelberg, former Chief of Staff of Headquarters, European Command (EUCOM), illustrates both the problem and what JTF staff officers need to know in his review of EUCOM operations:

“Our experience with officers detailed by our components to staff our JTFs shows that few will have been trained by joint educational programs, and fewer still will have experience in combined operations. Prospective JTF staff members must know not only the capabilities and limitations of their own service and sister Services, but also those of non-Department of Defense agencies and probable coalition partners. Our officers must be subject matter experts in their field and politically and culturally astute, fully understanding the broader implications of their actions.”

An example of JTF staff challenges was Operation Uphold Democracy in which the 240-member 10th Mountain Division staff was augmented by 400 service members to comprise the staff for JTF-190. One of the observations from that operation was that “JTF augmentees do not adequately serve the operational needs of the JTF commander unless they have the prerequisite skills to perform at the JTF staff level...Most augmentees to JTF-190 were more junior in grade and experience than the Manning document requested.”

Operation Bright Star '94 provides a second example of JTF personnel not adequately trained in joint operations:

“ARCENT was not fully resourced or trained to operate as a JTF nor did it identify positions within the JTF headquarters requiring personnel trained in joint operations. Consequently, only a few persons within the JTF headquarters (mainly those with previous joint headquarters experience) had knowledge of joint operations.”
Clearly these examples illustrate that there is a lack of, and need for, education, training, and proficiency in joint operations within the U.S. officer corps. Since JTFs will remain the primary organization that deploys in crisis situations, educating the officers, both active and reserve, who will man JTF staffs is a formidable challenge for the future of JPME.

**Armed Forces Staff College**

"Separate ground, sea, and air warfare is gone forever. If we ever again should be involved in war, we will fight with all elements, with all services, as one single concentrated effort...There is a need for a school which will conduct short courses of approximately five months' duration in joint staff techniques and procedure in theatres and joint overseas operations."\(^{15}\)  
-- General Dwight D. Eisenhower in a memorandum to Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, 17 April 1946

Based on this memorandum, the Armed Forces Staff College (AFSC) was established in 1946. Under its original charter, the AFSC was tasked to "perform the same role in the joint education arena as the staff colleges in the Services."\(^{16}\) Its current mission statement, adopted in 1990, reads: "To educate staff officers and other leaders in joint operational planning and warfighting in order to instill a primary commitment to joint and combined teamwork, attitudes, and perspective."\(^{17}\)

To a certain extent, it can be argued that the AFSC is achieving its current mission for those officers fortunate enough to attend the 12-week temporary duty (TDY) course in Norfolk, Virginia. Despite its high-quality curriculum, faculty and instruction, the AFSC has been the subject of nine separate
studies since 1989, largely due to difficulties associated with the congressionally mandated 12-week TDY format.\textsuperscript{18}

The problem for the CINCs is that two-thirds of the officers who attend AFSC are TDY and return, while only a third attend en route to the CINC staffs. Thus, the CINCs are losing officers for three months and are forced to operate understaffed. They further argue the merit of sending an officer to the AFSC, considering that the officer could amass three months of joint training and acculturation “on the job.”

The curriculum at the AFSC is also the subject of continuing scrutiny, as some CINCs complain there is little improvement in officer joint skills as a result of AFSC attendance. They contend that “AFSC is doing a good job teaching skills to officers who rarely apply them immediately, while officers with no access to AFSC must perform the same skills in the field.”\textsuperscript{19} This comment speaks to the fact that, although AFSC focuses on the joint operational art, ninety-two percent of its graduates serve in joint billets at the strategic level in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Staff, and CINC Headquarters.\textsuperscript{20}

Officers and their families are clearly not content with the “TDY en route” format because there is no housing available at the AFSC. This creates a particular challenge for families who cannot remain in housing at the former duty assignment, cannot stay at the AFSC, and cannot go to the gaining command, because they are not yet assigned there.

The JPME 2010 Study Phase II Team examined several different options for resolving the TDY problem without requiring a change
in legislation. They reviewed ideas such as: embedding the 12-week course in the Service colleges, making the course mandatory en route to an officer's next assignment, changing the curriculum to be shorter and more skill-oriented, and even closing the AFSC. All options proved to be infeasible for a variety of reasons, and thus the team never found a solution.

The JPME Phase II portion of the AFSC is a very complex challenge for joint officer education and management. It is not this author's intent to examine in detail all of the issues surrounding the AFSC, but rather to point out some of the key problems involved and needed resolution in the future.

**Reserve Component JPME**

In August of 1996, the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs hired the Logistics Management Institute (LMI) to evaluate the issue of joint education requirements for Reserve Component (RC) officers. LMI found that there were 4,400 joint duty positions filled by RC officers and requiring joint education.

Currently, many of these officers lack the joint education and training required to perform effectively in these joint positions. Due to the nature of RC service with monthly weekend duty and the two-week annual active duty period, there is no opportunity for officers to attend JPME Phase II at the 12-week AFSC. Additionally, JPME Phase II is not offered in a non-resident format.
The RCJPME issue is further outlined in a memorandum from the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs:

"Increased reliance on Guard and Reserve forces in support of our nation's military commitments brings with it a greater demand for Reserve Component (RC) participation in the joint arena. In an effort to enhance the rapid and smooth integration of RC forces into the active forces, RC officers must be properly educated to meet JPME needs. Currently across the DoD, there exists no comprehensive program of instruction that will provide RC officers with JPME beyond the current level (Phase I)..." \(^{23}\)

-- Memorandum establishing a Senior Level Working Group to address the problem of advanced JPME in the Reserve Component.

Based on the problems referenced above, there is a dearth of RC officers with advanced JPME knowledge and competency, although many require it. Of the 4,400 RC officers assigned joint duty, there is a requirement for advanced JPME in 1,224 of these joint positions.\(^{24}\) Further, in a survey conducted by the Reserve Forces Policy Board in 1998, nine CINCs argued in writing that Reserve Component JPME needed to be addressed.\(^{25}\)

The Reserve Component is going to have an ever-increasing role in joint operations of the future. It will require the appropriate joint education to fulfill that role effectively.

**Solutions for the Future**

The preceding discussion indicates that there are issues which need to be addressed within the U.S. JPME system if current and future joint force officers are going to be fully equipped with the knowledge they need to conduct operations in the joint environment. Many questions arise from this premise: Where is
JPME headed? How will the problems mentioned be addressed? How will JV2010 be realized from an educational perspective?

A good starting point for answering these questions is to articulate the JPME 2010 Vision established by the JPME 2010 Phase II Study Team in 1999:

"Joint Professional Military Education is the educational component of a seamless continuum of joint professional learning for all officers of the Total Force. It includes an integrated system of distinct, complementary centers of military educational excellence that uses resident, non-resident, distant and distributed learning in a virtual environment to complement Joint and Service officer professional development programs. JPME is available to American civilian leaders and the officers of other nations; draws from the best experts and institutions; and is supported and promoted by the entire national leadership, both military and civilian." 26

“What does it mean?” and “How do we get there from here?” are two logical questions that arise when looking at the JPME 2010 Vision.

Essentially, JPME 2010 calls for joint education for all officers, active and reserve, as well as select civilian leaders and international officers. This education would be implemented by traditional resident and non-resident means, but also by distant and distributed learning via a virtual learning environment.

For clarification, some definitions are in order. Distant learning is “the use of technology to transmit or receive lectures or curriculum at remote sites...or pedagogy outside of the formal school setting.” Distributed learning is “the use of common materials (lesson plans) at remote sites for adjunct faculty to teach the course.” 27 A virtual learning environment is a common operating/learning infrastructure using technology and electronic media such as the Internet (and Intranets), the World Wide Web,
and video-teleconferencing to enhance instruction and connect students, instructors, educational institutions, and training facilities.\(^2^8\)

With the JPME 2010 Vision and these concepts in mind, the JPME 2010 Phase II Study Team developed a course of action for "how to get there."

At the heart of the proposed solution for the future of JPME is the establishment of a Joint Center of Operational Excellence (JCOE) at the AFSC. The intent of the JCOE will be to "teach and train officers in the joint operational art from the genuinely joint perspectives of the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; the Unified Commanders; and operational and tactical Joint Force Commanders, and to export excellent teaching of joint operations to the Armed Forces as a whole."\(^2^9\)

Within the JCOE, the JPME 2010 Phase II Study Team envisioned creating a nine-month, resident, Joint Intermediate Staff School (JISS), which is the joint equivalent of a Service college. Additionally, it proposed a second-year, School of Advanced Joint Education (SAJE), a joint equivalent to the Army's SAMS or the Air Force's SAAS for instance. Both these options for the JCOE were heavily debated when presented to the Military Education Coordination Conference (MECC) in April 1999, largely based on the issue of limited resources and manpower to create and maintain these schools. The Phase III Study Team will review them further.\(^3^0\)

There were, however, three significant concepts involving the purpose and use of the JCOE as an "exporter" of joint education
that were universally accepted by the MECC and show promise of being implemented in order to remedy some of the problems addressed earlier.

The first idea is a resident, TDY en route JPME II course offered for eight weeks during the summer at the AFSC. There were several advantages to this approach. Officers will have just finished JPME I at their Service schools and will be prepared for JPME II instruction. The course will be shorter, thus putting less hardship on the officers and their families. The instruction will also be more condensed and probably of greater value to the student officers since they will be en route to a joint assignment, and there will be an even stronger core faculty at the AFSC, providing the JISS concept survives.\textsuperscript{31}

The second initiative is for the establishment of non-resident, on-location JPME II courses made available to all officers of the Total Force, conducted in a distributed learning manner by AFSC adjunct faculty at Joint Learning Centers (JLCs) created at various CINC and joint headquarters. A robust, highly-networked, virtual learning environment as previously mentioned would be a key element of this concept. This proposal would eliminate the need for "TDY and return" to the AFSC. In addition, the JLCs could provide instruction and training specifically tailored for operations in that region. This option also would provide for a far greater number of officers becoming JPME II qualified, and thus more of them prepared to work effectively in joint billets.\textsuperscript{32}
A third solution is establishing a nine-month, non-resident JPME I&II qualifying course which mirrors the resident course for those who are unable to attend the AFSC, particularly RC officers. This option would rely heavily on the virtual learning environment and joint educational products exported from the JCOE.\textsuperscript{33}

An example of the type of alternatives that the virtual learning environment and JCOE present is one that mixes both resident and non-resident instruction. This idea is being considered by the Reserve Component and is called the “Bookend Educational Model.” It consists of a two-week active duty period in which officers attend an initial resident course at the National Defense University. That course is followed by a non-resident distance learning period of roughly eight months in which officers continue their joint education through seminars, CD-ROMs, video teleconferencing, and other forms of media provided by the AFSC and the JCOE via the virtual learning environment. The final phase or “bookend” consists of another two-week active duty resident course held at the AFSC. This model has great potential for getting a vast number of RC component officers the joint education they need.\textsuperscript{34}

Conclusion

Joint Professional Military Education is more important to the U.S. Armed Forces today than it has ever been. It is imperative that far more of the officer corps, active and reserve, understand joint operational art and doctrine to face the challenges that the 21st Century will present.
Currently, the JPME system is meeting the intent of the Goldwater-Nichols Act. It has been effective in making the officer corps more educated, aware of, and concerned about joint warfare than ever before.

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The answer lies in new, non-traditional, visionary educational approaches, a few of which were mentioned, that leverage technology in order that more officers receive joint education when and how they need it.

The Honorable Deborah Roche Lee, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, during her remarks at the Conference on Military Education for the 21st Century Warrior held in January 1998, accurately summarized the future of JPME and the contention of this paper:

"In today's joint environment when technology is changing the way we work and think, the need for diverse individual and collective skills among soldiers and leaders remains paramount. Given the inherent complexities of jointness, and with ad hoc alliances and coalitions being the norm, Joint PME is now, more than ever, a critical component of military strength. Simply put, the highest educational standards and opportunities must be maintained for officers assigned to joint elements."
Notes


12 Robert D. Chelberg, Jack W. Ellerton, and David H. Shelley, "EUCOM - At the Center of the Vortex." Field Artillery, October 1993, 16.


16 Ibid., E-2.


19 Ibid., np.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid., E-8-13.

22 Ibid., G-1.


24 Ibid, 4-5.


26 Ibid., I-1.


30 Ibid.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid.

33 Ibid.


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