

Professional Military Education for Today's US Army Captains

**A Monograph
by
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Abstract

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The professional education a captain receives is critical to the foundation of his military career. The Captains' Career Course affords the opportunity to prepare these officers for the increasing responsibilities and challenges they will face, but most importantly, it is the last branch technical training that most officers will receive. Therefore, this educational experience is critical to the officer's development and should receive the attention and resources necessary to develop agile and adaptive leaders. Does the Reserve Component Captains' Career Course provide a professional education comparable to the Active Component Captains' Career Course? This monograph will examine the differences in the types of education received attending either a resident or a non-resident Captains' Career Course. It will examine the methods in which three different courses are administered to both the Active and Reserve Components and compare their similarities and differences, as well as their best practices for administering this phase in the officer education system. In today's complex operational environment, an officer's education, both civilian and military, must continue to develop him personally and professionally. The best method of learning is still through resident training in a collaborative learning environment, where shared experiences and understanding will allow for the best possible experience.

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INTRODUCTION

In the Reserve Components, commissioned officers are in one of two categories, either a traditional Troop Program Unit (TPU) Soldier or a full-time member of the Active Guard and Reserve (AGR) program.¹ For many TPU Soldiers, taking time away from their full-time employment is not the ideal solution for continuing their military education. The first opportunity that a Reserve Component officer has at deciding to attend a professional military education course is the Captains' Career Course. Typically this course consists of a mixture of distance learning and resident training, culminating with a two week proponent resident phase at a specific branch school. Some TPU officers have the opportunity to attend the resident course along with their Active Component counterparts, thus reaping the benefits of a collaborative, resident learning environment. However, for the other officers who cannot attend the course in this manner, they must replicate this peer learning environment through the two two-week training sessions.

While the Captains' Career Course is not considered as a transitional period for an Officer between the tactical, operational, and strategic levels of war, it is still a critical point in the young career of company grade Officer. At this point in their service, captains face a key initial professional career decision, either continue with service in the Active or Reserve Component, or resign and get out all together. Deciding to attend the Captains' Career Course signals a renewed commitment to the profession of arms.² Time spent in the rank of captain represents a period of tremendous and increasingly broad professional growth.³ Officers spend the most time at the captain rank, currently an average of 6.3 years for Active Duty and the United States Army Reserve and 7.5 years for the United States Army National

¹ Department of the Army Pamphlet 135-2, *Army National Guard (ARNG) and US Army Reserve (USAR) Full-Time Support (FTS) Program* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, June, 1990) 33, 47.

² William M. Raymond, Jr., Keith R. Beurskens, and Steven M. Carmichael, "The Criticality of Captains' Education: Now and in the Future," *Military Review* (November-December 2010): 52.

³ *Professional Development of Officers Study*, 5 vols., Lieutenant General Charles W. Bagnal, director (Washington, D.C." Head Quarters, Department of the Army, Officer of the Chief of Staff, 1985), vol. I.

Guard.⁴ During this period, Captains will serve on staffs ranging from battalion to Combatant Command with a wide variety of responsibilities. In the 2010 US House Committee on Armed Services Report on Professional Military Education (PME) reflects a trend in the growth of responsibilities of junior officers, stating as a major finding that: “There is an increasing need for additional joint and service-specific subject matter be taught earlier in officer’s careers.”⁵ The US Army must prepare these officers for the increasing responsibilities and challenges they will face. To address this significant educational requirement for captains, the US Army has the Captains’ Career Courses – fifteen different courses across the United States, all with varying standards and conditions.⁶

The professional education a captain receives is critical to the foundation of his military career. It is an officer education system course and sometimes coupled with a degree program through a civilian institution that sets this foundation. The Captains’ Career Course affords the opportunity to prepare these Officers for the increasing responsibilities and challenges they will face, but most importantly, it is the last branch technical training that most Officers will receive. Therefore, this educational experience is critical to the Officer’s development and should receive the attention and resources necessary to develop agile and adaptive leaders. In today’s complex operational environment, an individual’s ability to understand, learn, and adapt is key to success. Through the current methods of instruction, resident training for all Captains’ Career Courses would be the best educational solution for both the Active and Reserve Components in this era of high tempo operations. Does the Reserve Component Captains’ Career Course provide a professional education comparable to the Active Component Captains’ Career Course?

⁴ Lieutenant Colonel Teresa Wardell and Major Gregory Nowak, e-mail messages to the author, December 2, 2010.

⁵ US House. Committee on Armed Services Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations. *Another Crossroads? Professional Military Education Two Decades After the Goldwater-Nichols Act and the Skelton Panel*. 111th Cong., 2nd session, 2010. Committee Print, 111-4.1-2.

⁶ Air Defense Artillery; Adjutant General; **Army Medical Department (AMEDD) which includes six branches (AN, DC, MC, MS, SP, and VC)**; Armor; Aviation; **Chaplain**; Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear; Engineers; Field Artillery; Finance; Infantry; **Judge Advocate General (JAG)**; Military Intelligence; Military Police; Ordnance; Quartermaster; Signal; and Transportation. **Bolded indicates non-Training and Doctrine Command schools.** Infantry and Armor branches have a combined Maneuver Captains’ Career Course conducted at Fort Benning and Ordnance, Quartermaster, and Transportation have a Combined Logistics Captains’ Career Course at Fort Lee with a five week Phase 3 that is branch specific.

METHODOLOGY

This monograph will examine the differences in the types of education received through attending either a resident or a non-resident Captains' Career Course. It will examine the methods in which three different courses are administered to both the Active and Reserve Components and compare their similarities and differences, as well as their best practices for administering this phase in the officer education system. For each of the comparisons, both the past and present versions of both types of courses will be reviewed. Lastly, with the recent Combined Arms Center (CAC) study conducted in regards to the Training and Doctrine Commands Guidance to improve the overall education systems for the officers, Soldiers, and civilians working for the US Army, the directed changes to both the Active and Reserve Component Captains' Career Courses will be examined as well.⁷ Most importantly in regards to the way ahead will be how the Reserve Component Course should ensure full compliance with the educational needs for captains as addressed in Army Regulation 350-1. It is far easier to implement changes to a course that is fully delivered in the resident, face-to-face model, than to implement the same changes to a distance learning on-line model.

This monograph will consist of five sections. The first section will examine the history of the US Army officer education system post World War II until now, specifically concentrating on the Captains' Career Course and its implementing changes through the years. That is followed by a literature review of what has been written regarding the Captains' Career Course and Officer Education from the end of World War II through today, focusing on each of the major boards commissioned to examine the Officer Education System during periods following major conflicts. The third section will compare and contrast three Captains' Career Courses for the Active and Reserve Components, looking at the methods of conducting the training for each of the components. The three courses are the Engineer Captains' Career Course, the Maneuver Captains' Career Course, and the Logistics Captains' Career Course. The next section will review current TRADOC guidance regarding changes to the Captains' Career Course

⁷ Department of the Army, Training and Doctrine Command Pamphlet 525-8-2, *The United States Army Learning Concept for 2015*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, November, 2010), 1-3.

methods of instruction and how this may will impact both components. The last section will include conclusions and recommendations for the Captains' Career Course.

HISTORY OF THE PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION FOR CAPTAINS

Post World War II

Following the successes of World War II, the US Army began paying particular attention to the professional education of its captains.⁸ Although a majority of the World War II Army was demobilizing, the US Army still saw a need to educate and train those remaining in both an active and reserve status. During this time, the US Army convened several boards and conducted numerous studies into the training and education of officers. The recommendations and finding would serve as the basis for the plan for the postwar education of Army Officers.⁹ Specific recommendations and conclusions from the major officer education boards are included in the Literature Review Section of this monograph.

It was during this time, that the rough framework for educating junior officers in the US Army was established. One of the major improvements was the increase in the duration of training from a pre-war twelve week course, to a more substantial twenty week course.¹⁰ This course, called the Advanced Officers Course, occurred sometime between the fifth and twelfth year of service and particularly for the Regular Army Officer.¹¹ This course was designed to provide the officer with instruction in combined-arms operations and the organization and functions of the division general staff.¹² Although similar in career timing like today, there was no requirement for Regular Army officers to attend the course prior taking command of a company sized unit.

⁸ Lieutenant Colonel Kelly C. Jordan, *The Yin and Yang of Junior Officer Learning: The Historical Development of the Army's Institutional Education Program for Captains* (Arlington, VA: The Association of the United States Army, 2004), 5.

⁹ *Report of War Department Military Education Board on Educational System for Officers of the Army* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: US Army Command and General Staff College, 1946), 5.

¹⁰ Jordan, 7.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² *Report of the Department of the Army Board on Educational System for Officers* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: US Army Command and General Staff College, 1949), 7-8.

Korean War Era

During the later years of the Korean War and into the middle 1950s, the US Army once again addressed the system for how company grade officers were educated. Through a series of studies regarding the US Army Officer Education System, the recommendation for continued attendance at successive educational courses was once again emphasized.¹³ Once again, the necessity for course completion was not considered a prerequisite for company command, thus eliminating the reliance on an educational requirement to be selected to lead Soldiers. The course of instruction resembled something similar to a combination of the Basic Officer Leader Course and the Captains' Career Course of today, lasting a little less than a year, with a recommended attendance timeframe between the third and eighth year of commissioned service.¹⁴

The two major studies conducted during this time, the 1949 Eddy Board and the 1958 Williams Board, are credited with the establishment of the modern system of company-grade officer education that has continued to today.¹⁵ Specifically for the professional education of captains is the continued focus on producing branch experts at the brigade level and below in the officer's specific branch of service. Of particular note concerning the education of both the Active and Reserve Components is the recommendations for "all career officers, without regard to component, should attend their branch courses in order to attain the requisite professional skills."¹⁶ However, for the Reserve Component, the course looked more like the course of today, with a combination of both resident and non-resident instruction equating to what the Active Component officers receive in the resident training. The increasing complexity of conflict during this era, led to the need for increased dependence on resident training for career minded officers, no matter which component.

¹³ *Report of the Department of the Army Officer Education and Training Review Board.* (Washington DC: Department of the Army, 1958), 1-2.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 104-105.

¹⁵ Jordan, 9.

¹⁶ *Report of the Department of the Army Officer Education and Training Review Board.* (Washington DC: Department of the Army, 1958), 18.

The Cold War

During the heart of the Cold War, the Army's senior leaders "generally agreed the existing education system was not producing officers with the desired level of military competency."¹⁷ It was also during this time that the established and implemented a system to provide a complete career education and training program that allows officers to accomplish Army missions. This was also the beginning of a new course for mid-grade officers specifically tailored to train staff officer skills, the Combined Arms and Services Staff School.¹⁸ This course would make a substantial impact on captains' education for more than twenty years and supplement the institutional training and education for the officers.

The Combined Arms and Services Staff School consisted of an initial phase of correspondence courses followed by a nine week resident phase. It was also during this time that the Advanced Course was reduced from thirty-five to twenty-six weeks. The US Army chose to emphasize the importance of building professional relationships with their peers in their units, rather than spending prolonged time away attending professional military education course. However, the combination of the Advanced Course with the new Combined Arms and Services Staff School maintained a thirty-five week resident military instruction for the Active Component.¹⁹ For the Reserve Component, the courses remained primarily taught through distance learning followed by a short resident phase.

The Army also concluded from one of the studies from this time that this was one of the greatest periods of professional growth as captains because they were responsible for the command of units, organizations, and Soldiers and engaged in the full range of responsibilities which span all levels in the US Army Organization.²⁰ Through this study it was also determined that "captains learn from their experiences whether in service schools, on field exercise, or from simulations of challenging situations"

¹⁷ *Review of Education and Training for Officers*, vols. (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, Office of the Chief of Staff, 1978), vol. I, page V.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. D-10-4.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Professional Development of Officers Study*, 5 vols., Lieutenant General Charles W. Bagnal, director (Washington, D.C.: Head Quarters, Department of the Army, Officer of the Chief of Staff, 1985), vol. I, 59.

and best through small group instruction.²¹ This conclusion led the Training and Doctrine Command to resource all advanced course instructor-to-student ratio of 1-to-16 for small group instruction for the captains, an instructional methodology that is still followed today.

Post Desert Shield/Desert Storm

After Desert Shield/Desert Storm, two particular outcomes of the war had a significant impact on the US Army's ability to resource its captains' officer education system. One was congressionally mandated requirement for the US Army to provide Active Component officers to assist in the training and readiness of Reserve Component units.²² The second was the reduction in strength of the Active Component officer corps from 88,000 to 64,000 by 2000. Both of these added additional burdens reduced the number of qualified instructors available to teach at the officers advanced courses.²³

In 1993, the Training and Doctrine Command developed a concept for combining the advanced courses and the Combined Arms and Services Staff School into one course known as the Captains' Career Course.²⁴ The main idea behind this new concept was to continue the education on their branch specific skills at the advanced courses and then upon graduation, send the officer directly to Fort Leavenworth to attend the Combined Arms and Services Staff School. Again, the focus here was the education and training of the Active Component officer and not the Reserve Component Officer, who would continue to follow the program of instruction for the Reserve Component course.²⁵

The plan as directed by the Training and Doctrine Commander General Frederick M. Franks, called for a program that would revise and shorten the officer advanced courses, as well as the Combined Arms Services and Staff School (CAS3). The first part of the plan also identified the branch schools as

²¹ Ibid., 61.

²² Lieutenant Colonel Kelly C. Jordan, *The Yin and Yang of Junior Officer Learning: The Historical Development of the Army's Institutional Education Program for Captains* (Arlington, VA: The Association of the United States Army, 2004), 17.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ *TRADOC Reengineering Study* (Fort Monroe, VA: Headquarters, United States Army Training and Doctrine Command, 1993), 9.

²⁵ Ibid., 10-11.

the primary proponent for the branch-specific and technical training and CAS3 as the primary proponent for providing captains with instruction on the staff processes.²⁶ The second part of the plan called for the eventual combining of both courses into one, with all instruction coming from the branch specific schools. This would not only eliminate time away from the units, but would also lessen the burden of requirements for instructors.

It was also during this time, that there was another reduction in the amount of time spent gaining this professional education. Up until 1996, the officer advanced courses averaged twenty weeks and the Combined Arms and Services Staff School was nine weeks. Now, the branch specific training for the Active Component course would be reduced to sixteen weeks of branch specific technical and tactical training, as well as the Combined Arms and Services Staff School length reduction from nine weeks to six.²⁷ These minimal changes were just the beginning of how the Army was restructuring the education systems for captains. The amount of time allocated for the conduct of the Reserve Component course was not affected by these changes and remained twenty-nine days total, with fifteen days of those taught in resident training.

Another of the officer education studies conducted in the late 1990s that concentrated specifically on the captains' officer education recommended that the focus should move more toward how to think and not how to perform a task.²⁸ From this, a task went out to the branch schools to increase the time "spent on analysis and synthesis, creativity, forms of decision making other than deliberate decision making, and moral reasoning and its relationship to Army values."²⁹ These increases in instructional time did not equate to an increase in the course, just a change in the amount of time spent on other requirements. For the Reserve Component courses however, the amount of time spent in a resident course did not change, but remained only fifteen days.

²⁶ Jordan, 18.

²⁷ Ibid., 19.

²⁸ *Officer Personnel Management System XXI Study Final report*, 4 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, July 1997) vol. III, annexes D-E, p.14-1.

²⁹ Ibid., 14-3.

Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom through 2010

In the past ten years, the changes to the Officer Education System and more specifically, the Captains' Career Course have followed the changes brought on by years of persistent conflict. One of the first concepts to change was the name. A recommendation brought about by one of the many studies on officer education during this time, changed from the Officer Advanced Course to a Captains' Career Course, this combined both the Officer Advanced Course and the Combined Arms Services Staff School.³⁰ It was during this time that a major revision of the Reserve Component Captains' Career Courses was included in the studies.

For both the Active and Reserve Component Captains' Career Courses, students and instructors with multiple years of operational experience from service in the Global War on Terrorism have improved the overall conduct of the courses. The course curriculum includes common core subjects, branch-specific tactical and technical instruction, and branch-immaterial staff officer instruction.³¹ The Active Component Course saw an overall increase in the length of time for the course from eighteen to twenty-ones weeks. The Reserve Component Course increased from two phases to five and includes the training from the Combined Arms Exercise, formally called the Combined Arms and Service Staff School.³² The overall educational value for the Reserve Component Course increased significantly through the addition of three more phases of instruction. Although the total amount of time spent as a student in the course is not equivalent to the twenty-one weeks spent in the Active Component Course, the Reserve Component Course totals over 250 distance learning hours and four weeks of resident training.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Department of the Army, Training and Doctrine Command Pamphlet 525-8-2, *The United States Army Learning Concept for 2015*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, November, 2010), 44.

³² Ibid., 37.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Gerow Board

As a result of World War II, the senior leaders of the Army were concerned with the established educational processes and as such convened a number of boards and studies “to examine the training and education of officers.”³³ In the months following the war, the US Army commissioned a board, headed by Lieutenant General Leonard T. Gerow, in order to study the ways in which captains are formally educated in the US Army.³⁴ Although the Gerow Board’s primary focus was on Army schooling for field grade officers, it did address the need for ten month long, branch specific schools for captains through a tiered educational process.³⁵ The Gerow Board, however, failed to discuss the attendance procedures for these branch specific schools as well as not addressing the Reserve Component, but only focused on Regular Army officers. Following the extensive list of recommendations made by the Gerow Board, the Army adopted several of the concepts, including the branch specific basic and advanced courses.³⁶

The Eddy Board

In 1949, the US Army followed the Gerow Board with another formal review board, commissioned to examine the adequacy of the Army’s education system with a primary focus on the training and education of junior officers.³⁷ This board led by Lieutenant General Manton S. Eddy, examined both the basic and advanced courses for Regular Army officers, as well as made recommendations to the US Army that would, when implemented, be the start of the modern junior

³³ Lieutenant Colonel Kelly C. Jordan, *The Yin and Yang of Junior Officer Learning: The Historical Development of the Army’s Institutional Education Program for Captains* (Arlington, VA: The Association of the United States Army, 2004), 6.

³⁴ *Report of War Department Military Education Board on Educational System for Officers of the Army* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: US Army Command and General Staff College, 1946), 5. Here after referred to as the Gerow Board Report.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 6.

³⁶ As reviewed in Tab A in the Gerow Board Report.

³⁷ Jordan, 6.

officer education system.³⁸ Where the Eddy Board recommendations differed from those proposed by the Gerow Board was in the primary focus on the educational process of the junior officer. The Eddy Board proposed the establishment of three levels of education, an orientation course, a basic branch course, and an advanced course.³⁹

Another matter to which the board gave consideration was the subject of associate courses for National Guard and Reserve officers. Very much like today, many National Guard and Reserve officers could not be away from their civilian employers for long periods of time. A solution for this problem might be to have Reserve Component officers attend a series of short courses at the branch schools of approximately two weeks' duration extending over a period of two to three years.⁴⁰ "Between these short periods of actual attendance at the school, the officer could pursue extension courses on his own time, integrating this work into the applicatory instruction given at the school itself."⁴¹ Although this recommendation would have been beneficial for the education of the Reserve Component officers, it was viewed as too costly for the Army as a whole and thus, not implemented.

Of the three major Eddy Board recommendations involving the junior officer education, all tended to have time in service requirements for both the Active and Reserve Components prior to attending the course. As a result of these attendance "thresholds," the "Regular Army officers enjoyed a significant advantage over their Army National Guard and Army Reserve counterparts in terms of professional education for the next several decades."⁴² Attendance at mandatory professional education resident courses, as opposed to the newly recommended associate courses, created a significant gap in the professional development of the National Guard and Reserve officer, some of which is still apparent

³⁸ Lieutenant Colonel Kelly C. Jordan, *The Yin and Yang of Junior Officer Learning: The Historical Development of the Army's Institutional Education Program for Captains* (Arlington, VA: The Association of the United States Army, 2004), 6.

³⁹ *Report of the Department of the Army Board on Educational System for Officers* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: US Army Command and General Staff College, 1949), 1-2. Here after referred to as the Eddy Board Report.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁴² Jordan, 7.

today. Between the release of the Eddy Board Report and the start of the Korean War, the US Army looked at ways to increase the number of Regular Army officers serving.⁴³

The Williams Board

In January 1958 the US Army once again began a study of the Army's school system that would last nearly six months. This newest board, headed by Lieutenant General Edward T. Williams, was to provide the most comprehensive look at the Army's school system yet conducted.⁴⁴ Besides LTG Williams, the Williams Board was staffed with ten other senior officers and given a large amount of resources in order to determine the adequacy of the current officer education system, from the time of commissioning through completion of a senior service college.⁴⁵ While one of the findings from the board determined that the Army's existing school system was generally adequate to meet the needs of the Army from 1958 through 1970, it believed the system could be adjusted and refined.

Specifically, the Williams Board addressed the issues of education and training and the important distinctions between the two. According to the board, "military education meant individual instruction provided by schools and extension courses, given without regard to the student's job assignment or membership in a particular unit, while individual training referred to instruction given to individuals for the purpose of providing training in a particular military specialty."⁴⁶ Unlike the previous two major boards, the Williams Board recommended the consolidation of the two company-grade officer courses, into one comprehensive course lasting as long as one year. This new course would be designed to prepare officers to perform duties at the company through the brigade levels. Included in this recommendation

⁴³ Ibid., 7.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 8.

⁴⁵ *Report of the Department of the Army Officer Education and Training Review Board.* (Washington DC: Department of the Army, 1958), 1-2.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 9.

was the specific window of time for attendance at this school by the company-grade officers to between their third and eighth year of service.⁴⁷

Another important finding and recommendation made by the Williams Board dealt with the policy concerning officer education for Regular Army officers and Army National Guard and Reserve officers. The board recommended that all officers, whether Regular Army, National Guard, or Reserve, attend the course for their branch in order to acquire the necessary professional skills for continued service.⁴⁸ The Board also concluded that branch career schooling, much like the captains' career course of today, should be conducted in a single career course to be attended by essentially all Regular and career Reserve officers, without regard to component.⁴⁹ Very similar to the argument of today for one branch specific course that could apply to all officers, regardless of component, was highly recommended by the Williams Board. Unfortunately this recommendation was not implemented due to lack of funding.

The Daley Board

With the reduction of the Army's school budget by \$5.5 million in 1961, Lieutenant General J.P. Daley was directed by Under Secretary of the Army Stephen Ailes to thoroughly study the Army's school system concentrating on the efficiency to which the system was running and how the Army could maximize operations.⁵⁰ The Dailey Board also reviewed both the Navy and Air Force schools and the centralized ways in which their schools are conducted. The Dailey Board also recommended establishing a chain of command direct from the branch school to the United States Continental Army Command, as well as consolidating as many branch schools as possible into centralized locations.⁵¹ The board also raised concerns over qualifications for instructors in the Army's system and how these might be quality controlled through standardization.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 23-24.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 26.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 26.

⁵⁰ *Report of the Army Board to Review Army Officer Schools*, 4 Vols.(Washington DC: Department of the Army, 1966), 1-2 – 1-4.

⁵¹ Ibid., 2-10 – 2-11.

The board also recommended establishing policies of linking temporary duty schools with permanent changes of station and was also the first to not recommend a general reorganization of the Army School system.⁵² Since the Army was transforming from the pentomic organization to the Reorganization Objective Army Divisions configuration, the board members felt they could not “recommend any reorganization of the Army school system until the implementing instructions for the Army’s reorganization were developed and could be studied to determine the impact and identify necessary changes.”⁵³ These recommendations were not implemented because of budget constraints and the US increased involvement in Vietnam.

The Haines Board

In 1965, the Army again commissioned a board to meet and assess the Army’s officer education and training system. This board, led by Lieutenant General Ralph E. Haines comprised of twelve senior leaders from the Army and one civilian consultant. Unlike the previous boards that concentrated only on the Army’s schools, the Haines Board examined the professional education procedures for other American and foreign military services, as well as the managerial schools of eight large industrial corporations.⁵⁴ The board was challenged with trying “to determine the adequacy and appropriateness of the current Army school system and the education and individual school training of Army officers in light of responsibilities which will confront the Military Establishment for the foreseeable future; and to recommend such changes in direction, structure, or operation of the system or in the academic program during the next decade as will make the greatest contribution to the discharge of those responsibilities.”⁵⁵

⁵² Ibid., 2-11.

⁵³ Jordan, 9.

⁵⁴ *Report of the Department of the Army Board to review Army Officer Schools, 4 vols.* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 1966), Vol. I, page 1.

⁵⁵ Jordan, 10. LTC Jones quoted this directly from the Haines Board Report on the bottom of page one and carried over to the top of page two.

The Haines Board was the first of the boards, to recommend that both a name change for the company-level course and a primary focus change as well.⁵⁶ The board recommended the name be changed to the advanced course with a primary focus of preparing officers for command and staff duties at battalion through brigade or comparable levels in both divisional and non-divisional units, with emphasis on command at battalion level, and for duty as assistant division general staff officers.⁵⁷ The Haines Board also reviewed the initial education and training requirements for those officers serving on Active Duty, but who were not Regular Army. These officers, typically commissioned through either the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) programs or the Officer Candidate School (OCS) programs, would need additional training prior to assuming duties at their first duty assignment. In addition, the board also agreed with the Williams Board that all career officers, regardless of component, should attend a single-type comprehensive branch career course, and that associate career courses should be discontinued.⁵⁸ Unfortunately these recommendations, like those of the Daley Board, were not implemented due to the US Army's increased involvement in the Vietnam War.

The Norris Board

By 1970, Army Chief of Staff General (GEN) William C. Westmoreland wanted another review of the officer education system. GEN Westmoreland chose Major General (MG) Frank W. Norris to head this board. MG Norris had previously served on the Williams Board and was familiar with the process. GEN Westmoreland challenged the Norris Board to “help him revise the officer education system by making recommendations for improved policies for operations of the officer education system” and specifically looking at the curriculums, instructors, and the quality of education given to the officers.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Haines Board Report, 32-34.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 32-33.

⁵⁹ Major General Frank W. Norris, *Review of Army Officer Educational System*, 3 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 1971), Vol. I, 5-4.

Much like the Williams' Board recommendations, the Norris Board also recommended a mix of training and education within the advanced course curriculum.⁶⁰

Specific recommendations from the Norris Board regarding the advanced course curriculum was that it provided a balanced program of reasonable academic effort and a mixture of athletic, recreational, social and family activities.⁶¹ MG Norris also felt that these courses should offer the Army the best opportunity to develop junior officers into dedicated, competent professionals and to retain them beyond their required military obligations.⁶² Another of the more practical recommendations included in his findings was student-centered approaches to classroom instruction whenever possible. The Norris Board concluded by reiterating the Haines Board recommendation of "introducing electives into the advanced course curricula to make them more flexible, adaptable and relevant to each individual student officer."⁶³

The RETO Study

By the late 1970s, the officer educational system was once again facing a dilemma. It was not producing competently educated officers through its current educational framework. As such in 1977, Army Chief of Staff General Bernard Rogers ordered a comprehensive examination of the educational system. GEN Rogers ordered the Review of Education and Training of Officers (RETO) study.⁶⁴ This study was tasked

to determine officer training and education requirements based on Army missions and individual career development needs. Based on these requirements, develop training and education policies and programs which combine self-development, unit development, and institutional development in a phased schedule from precommissioning or preappointment training through career completion. Develop these programs with the prospect of implementation in a constrained resource environment; present the programs to the Chief of Staff, Army for approval and coordinate the integration of approved programs into the FY 1980 – 1981 program.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ Ibid., 14-3 – 14-4.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid., Vol. I, p. 5-4.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ *Review of Education and Training for Officers*, vols. (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, Office of the Chief of Staff, 1978), vol. I, page V.

⁶⁵ Ibid., I-3.

The RETO study group's final report to GEN Rogers covered the establishment and implementation of a system to provide a complete career education program that would take into account the need for continued education throughout an Army career. One of the major contributions by the RETO group to the officer education system was the recommendation for the establishment of what would become the Combined Arms and Services Staff School (CAS3) at Fort Leavenworth.⁶⁶ The group also noted that an officer's education should be based on the basic course, advanced course, CAS3, and on the job training skills acquired through company grade assignments.⁶⁷ Then, once a field grade officer, the education continues on through staff colleges, the War College, and General Officer Education and Training Programs.⁶⁸ Although the RETO study discussed what officers should learn, when they should learn, where this learning should take place, and in what kind of forum, the educational problems that the RETO study group originally convened to discuss were not addressed.

Professional Development of Officers Study (PDOS)

During the Cold War and through the years leading up to and including Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, the Army's educational system went through several more studies. The first of these took place between 1984 and 1985 and was led by Lieutenant General Charles Bagnal, the Army's Professional Development of Officers Study (PDOS) with the mandate "to reexamine all aspects of the officer professional development system as it has evolved since the 1978 RETO study, and to project the applicability of that system and our recommendations out to 2025."⁶⁹ The members of the PDOS determined that the focus of the professional education during the company grade years should be "to develop through a combination of education, training, self-development, and assignments, a captain who

⁶⁶ Ibid., I-21.

⁶⁷ RETO Board Report, vol. II, D-10-4.

⁶⁸ RETO Board Report, page 1. The board was divided into six teams in order to effectively collect enough information regarding each of the many levels in the officer education system. The teams were broken down as follows: Team A looked at Instruction Techniques and Training/Education Strategies, Team B studied Warrant Officer Education and Training, Team C's focus was precommissioning, basic, and advanced courses, Team D looked at the staff colleges, Team E reviewed the War College and General Officer Training and Education, and finally Team M focused on the final report for the RETO Board.

⁶⁹ *Professional Development of Officers Study*, 5 vols., Lieutenant General Charles W. Bagnal, director (Washington, D.C.: Head Quarters, Department of the Army, Officer of the Chief of Staff, 1985), vol. I, 27.

is branch qualified, competent to command at company level, prepared to serve on battalion, brigade, and higher level staffs, and prepared for further branch and/or functional area development.”⁷⁰

Another of the major determinations made by the PDOS that dealt with the professional education of captains was the recommendation for small group instruction as the primary means for administering the courses. According to the PDOS board members, small-group instruction for captains at the advanced courses would “continue to provide an ideal forum for leadership development, peer interaction, and individual assessment.”⁷¹ This method of instruction also carried over into both CAS3 and the Command and General Staff Officer Course as well, with a student-to-instructor ratio of sixteen to one. However, by the end of the 1980s, commanders were impressed by the education the captains received, but complained at the costs of having the officers away from the units for extended period of time, calling for shortened courses and increased time in the positions.⁷² However, with the onset of Operations Desert Shield and Storm, the Army put further studies of the captains’ education on hold until completion of the mission in Southwest Asia.

During the mid-1990s, the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) released several different sets of guidance regarding the way ahead for officer education. In regards to specific guidance given for the captains’ officer education, in 1995, General William W. Hartzog established a four-phased program. TRADOC would systematically implement these phased changes over several years. The first phase of the guidance was to maintain the status quo, that is, a twenty week officer advanced course and a nine-week CAS3 course, with no expectations of those two being sequential and only linked by being considered part of a captains’ educational process.⁷³ The second phase brought the common core training, the technical/tactical training, and the staff training all together into a three phased Captains’ Career

⁷⁰ Ibid., 61.

⁷¹ Ibid., 61.

⁷² Jordan, 17.

⁷³ Ibid., 18.

Course. The plan for implementation was to send the Soldiers directly from the advanced course to Fort Leavenworth in order to attend CAS3, the last phase of the training.⁷⁴

Phase III of the implementation of the TRADOC guidance reduced the overall advanced course length from twenty to eighteen weeks and then followed by the six week CAS3 course. Together, these would make up the two phases of the Captains' Career Course. Phase IV of this operation was scheduled to begin on 1 October 2001 with a two-week Advanced Distributive Learning portion, followed by the branch-specific advanced course portion, and then followed by an additional two-week staff training portion, similar to the Combined Arms Exercise (CAX) course attended by Reserve Component officers.⁷⁵ However, then Army Chief of Staff General(GEN) Dennis Reimer postponed the implementation of Phase IV due to the perceived loss of the interaction that takes place between the branches during CAS3. GEN Reimer did ensure that TRADOC addressed options to reduce the eighteen week branch-specific Captains' Career Course even further.

ATLDP

From June 2000 through February 2001, the Army established the Army Training and Leader Development Panel (ATLDP).⁷⁶ ATLDP was challenged with conducting a comprehensive examination of the Army's officer education system. While preparing to conduct the board, the members conducted research of the previous twenty-five years of officer education and the previous board's findings.⁷⁷ The Report recommended a "new approach that focuses each school on a central task and purpose [that] links schools horizontally and vertically in the educational process, synchronizes the educational and operational experiences of officers, and educates officers to established, common standards."⁷⁸ In the end, the ATLDP advocated a career course that included combined arms training, technical / tactical training

⁷⁴ Ibid., 19.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 19.

⁷⁶ *The Army Training and Leader Development Panel Officer Study Report to the Army*, (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 2001), OS-9-OS-10.

⁷⁷ ATLDP Study, OS-11.

⁷⁸ ATLDP Study, OS-22

and working with lieutenants and NCOs. They did not include or mention staff skills in either the recommendations or their study.⁷⁹

Captains' Career Course Overview

In February 2010, the Combined Arms Center (CAC) Commander created a Study Team from the Command and General Staff College's faculty and students to examine the current Captains' Career Course.⁸⁰ The Team visited all sixteen Captains' Career Courses, made a comprehensive assessment of each based on interviews with key leaders, focus groups and surveys with students and faculty, and review of key documents, and then produced their findings. The timing of the Study provided an opportunity to examine the recently implemented 2009 Common Core (CC) redesign. The Team's mission also included an assessment of whether or not the Captains' Career Courses were developing officers consistent with the requirements of Army Regulation 350-1. Finally, the Team was tasked to assess the curriculum, facilities, governance, staff and faculty, and students. Findings and recommendations would support an overall assessment of whether or not the Captains' Career Courses were meeting the optimal educational needs for Captains.⁸¹ In June 2010, the Study Team briefed the findings from the report and made recommendations for improvements in the Captains' Career Course way ahead. A thorough review of the five key findings of the Study Team, as well as a look at the Army Learning Concept 2015 (ALC2015) proposed construct for the Captains' Career Course is included in a later section of this monograph.

Through this review of the studies on the Officer Education System for the US Army, a key conclusion is that during the last sixty-four years, captains have not been receiving the education they needed to serve the nation. Most attempts to alleviate this shortcoming have suffered from a lack of priorities and resources. The optimal balance between education, training, and experience has been

⁷⁹Jordan, 20.

⁸⁰ Colonel William M. Raymond Jr., "Captains' Career Course Overview" briefing to Lieutenant General Robert L. Caslen Jr., 14 June 2010, slides 2-8, copy obtained from Mr. Steve Carmichael, US Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS, September 2010.

⁸¹ Ibid., slide 3.

elusive, especially with regards to the time required for education. Considering the timing of the various studies, many reforms were not in place long enough to produce results which could prove or disprove their value. The one exception to this was CAS3. Yet CAS3 was eliminated as a course with the assurance that its staff skills content would be retained within the curriculum of the existing Captains' Career Courses. Now that combat-experienced captains serving in both the Active and Reserve Components are the norm their time devoted to professional education is as important as ever in the development of their experiences and training.

ANALYSIS OF THREE CAPTAINS' CAREER COURSES

The US Army's competitive advantage directly relates to its capacity to learn faster and adapt more quickly than its adversaries.⁸² In an era of persistent conflict, an individual's ability to understand, learn, and adapt is the key to success. This is true of officers attending either the Active or Reserve Component Captains' Career Course. This course should prepare officers for leading the Soldiers of the United States through our current time of persistent conflict and beyond. Whether taught in a resident or through distance learning, the course should capitalize on the experiences, previous institutional instruction, and personal self-development to enhance the learning for the officer. The primary reference which defines the purpose of the Captains' Career Course is Army Regulation (AR) 350-1, paragraph 3-32, which states the Course:

Provides Captains with the tactical, technical, and leader knowledge and skills needed to lead company-size units and serve on battalion and brigade staffs. The course emphasizes the development of leader competencies while integrating recent operational experiences of the students with quality institutional training. It facilitates life-long learning through an emphasis on self-development. The curriculum includes common core subjects, branch-specific tactical and technical instruction, and branch-immaterial staff officer training.⁸³

⁸² Department of the Army, Training and Doctrine Command Pamphlet 525-8-2, *The United States Army Learning Concept for 2015*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, November, 2010), 1.

⁸³ US Department of Army, *Army Training and Leader Development*, Army Regulation 350-1, (Washington, DC: US Department of the Army December 18, 2009), 70.

Examining current traits of the Active and Reserve Component Captains' Career Courses, as well as identifying the best practices from some, will assist in making quality recommendations for what the future of the Captains' Career Course should look like.

Engineer Captains' Career Course

The Engineer Captains' Career Course resident training is taught at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. The Active Component Course is a twenty-one week permanent change of station training opportunity and is currently taught four times a year, with an average class size of sixty-four officers.⁸⁴ The course is broken down into seven modules that include Leadership Foundations, Doctrinal Foundations, Defensive and Offensive Engineer Operations, General Engineering Fundamentals, Stability Operations, and concluded with a one week War-fighter Exercise.⁸⁵ Primarily taught in a one-to-sixteen, Small Group Leader to Student, ratio, this course spends forty to fifty percent of the twenty-one weeks in a small group, collaborative learning environment.

The Engineer Captains' Career Course – Reserve Component is a four phase course taught with a mix of Distance Learning and Resident Phases. The Resident Phases, Phase II and Phase IV, are both taught four times a year at Fort Leonard Wood as well. The remaining two phases, Phase I and Phase III are both taught through Distance Learning, utilizing the Black Board system at the Maneuver Support Center. Phase I is predominantly Commander's Fundamental courses and consists of seventy hours of non-collaborative on-line classes. Phase III is the General Engineering course work, mainly the horizontal and vertical construction classes, and also taught through ninety-seven hours of on-line courses. During the resident phases, the average class size is thirty to forty officers, primarily taught in two or three small groups with a mixture of Active and Reserve Component Small Group Leaders, also maintaining the one-

⁸⁴ Major Adam Calderon., "Engineer Captains' Career Course Overview" briefing slides 2-5, copy obtained from MAJ Adam Calderon, US Army Engineer School, Fort Leonard Wood, MO, November 2010.

⁸⁵ Ibid., slide 4.

to-sixteen ratio, but during the distance learning phases, there can be an unlimited number of students since it is a non-collaborative learning environment.⁸⁶

Although drastically better than the previous non-resident training portion of the course, the students taking the current distance learning phases of the course are at a disadvantage when it comes to collaborative, on-line learning.⁸⁷ The classes are interactive, but only from the standpoint of the officer and his computer; there is no shared learning experience with any other officer while taking the class. The previous version of the distance learning phase was a collection of twenty correspondence course booklets, scanned and placed on-line in order to represent that phase of the instruction.⁸⁸ The previous version did little for assisting in the learning environment and only existed to complete a portion of the Reserve Component course. In 2005, a \$2.5 million contracted redesign of the course was conducted with Small Group Leaders and a government contracting organization that improved both the courseware for the distance learning phases of the course and the overall learning experience of the officer.⁸⁹

The Active Component Course takes advantage of site visits for practical exercises in the General Engineering Fundamentals Module, utilizing the other training units located on Fort Leonard Wood. The officers are able to visit Advanced Individual Training horizontal equipment training as they work on upgrading and improving roads and airfields, putting their classroom instruction into perspective. They also visit vertical construction sites where they view electrical, plumbing, and general military construction techniques being taught to Soldiers they may soon lead. These visits to the job sites are only made possible through the coordination between the training units and makes full use of both resident training courses – the Engineer Captains’ Career Course and the Construction Advanced Individual Training Course, a benefit lost in the distance learning training.

⁸⁶ Ibid., slide 2.

⁸⁷ This is from knowledge gained while the author worked as both a Small Group Leader and the Division Chief for the Engineer Captains’ Career Course – Reserve Component at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri from January 2005 through June 2007. The author was also personally involved in the review of the previous Reserve Component course and the implementation of the new Reserve Component course.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

The Reserve Component Course makes full advantage of each of the fifteen days of the resident phases, by conducting training every day of the course. Like the twenty-one week Active Component Course, this phase capitalizes on the small group instruction as well as the shared experiences of the members of the group. In recent years, the group is typically made up of officers with recent deployment experiences, either in a command or staff position, and sometimes from the same organization. Where the Reserve Component officer loses out is through the non-collaborative 167 hours of the two distance learning phases of the course. By not conducting the distance learning classes in a collaborative learning environment, the officers miss out on a shared understanding and the full personal self-development potential that Army Regulation 350-1 says should occur in the Captains' Career Course.

A shared benefit of both the Active and Reserve Component courses is the opportunity to attain a Master of Science degree in Engineering Management from the Missouri University of Science and Technology through concurrent enrollment in both the Captains' Career Course and the course of instruction. A recent addition for the Engineer Captains' Career Course – Reserve Component, this advanced degree has been an additional opportunity for over ten years for the officers who attend the Active Component Course.⁹⁰ After successful completion of the course, either the Active or Reserve Component version, the officer completes several additional classes either on-line or in resident on the campus of Missouri University of Science and Technology and receives the master's degree.⁹¹

Combined Logistics Captains' Career Course

The Combined Logistics Captains' Career Course prepares officers for assignments within the Career Management Field 90A in Army battalions, brigades, and staff positions within and above corps level by training officers on strategic logistics, sustainment, maintenance, movement, and arming

⁹⁰ Lieutenant Colonel Steven K. Knutzen and Major James L. Bunch, "New Opportunity for RC Officers to Earn Engineering Master's Degree," *Engineer*, January-March 2008, 10-13.

⁹¹ Ibid.

operations.⁹² Officers with the basic branches of Ordnance, Quartermaster, or Transportation attend the three phases of the twenty-one week course at Fort Lee, Virginia. Upon successful completion of the course, these officers are awarded the Logistics branch as their primary branch and their previous branch is retained as a secondary Area of Concentration.⁹³ The course is primarily offered to Active Component officers and is conducted six times a year.⁹⁴

The three phases of the Active Component course are divided into fifteen weeks of common core and Multifunctional Logistics resident training taught in a large group instruction at the Army Logistics University culminating Phase 1. The next five weeks, Phase 2, is branch specific training taught using the small group instruction and conducted at one of the three proponent schools. The final phase lasts only one week and focuses on a broad range of common logistical tasks that a logistics officer might face, from Joint to Multinational and covering the strategic to the tactical levels of war. Unlike the Engineer Captains' Career Course, the majority of this course is taught using the large group instructional method.

The Reserve Component Captains' Career Course for the Combined Logistics course begins with a two-week branch specific resident phase. The officers attend the Quartermaster, Ordnance, or Transportation courses to begin this phase of their officer education. Much like the Active Component version of the course, the officers attending the course are taught in a small group, no more than sixteen students per group at the proponent school. For Phase 2 of the Reserve Component course, the students take two on-line courses, the Military Decision Making Process Module and the Support Operations Course, which will assist in the transition to next phase of the course. During Phase 3, the officers attend a two-week resident course taught in a large group setting by the Army Logistics University, also taught at Fort Lee, which completes the qualification for the students as Logistics Branch Officers.⁹⁵

⁹² Major Bryan Fencl., "Combined Logistics Captains' Career Course" briefing slides 1-2, copy obtained from MAJ Bryan Fencl, US Army Logistics University, Fort Lee, VA, November 2010.

⁹³ Ibid, slide 1.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid., slide 2.

One of the major disadvantages for those officers attending the Reserve Component Course is that they miss out three weeks of branch specific training that is not made up through distance learning. Whereas the Active Component officers receive over fourteen weeks of common core and multifunctional logistics resident training, the Reserve Component only receive two weeks of the same multifunctional logistics training and are expected to perform the tasks to the same standard.⁹⁶ There is also no mention of how to replace the education missed by the Reserve Component officers by not receiving the instruction on the broad range of logistics tasks received by the Active Component officers in the Phase 3.⁹⁷ Another disadvantage for both the Active and Reserve Component courses is the lack of advanced degree opportunities for the officers taking the course. Unlike the Engineer Captains' Career Course that offer opportunities to attain master's degrees, the Logistics Captains' Career Course has no such program.

Advantageous for both the Active and Reserve Component versions of the course is the combining of the three functional branches into one, providing the operational force with cross-trained officers able to perform quartermaster, ordnance, and transportation tasks at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of war.

Maneuver Captains' Career Course

The Maneuver Captains' Career Course is a twenty-one week course previously taught at Fort Knox and Fort Benning, but now only taught at Fort Benning. The mission of the Maneuver Captains' Career Course is to train captains in the art and science of Combined Arms Battle Command and battle staff leadership across the full spectrum of operations within contemporary operational environments.⁹⁸ As identified in the Maneuver Captains' Career Course Orientation briefing, the purpose of the course is

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ For the Active Component Phase 3, the officers receive one week of instruction on the following logistics tasks: 1. Logistics Units – Strategic to Tactical; 2. Joint Logistics & Operations; 3. USMC Logistics Operations; 4. Multinational Logistics & Operations; 5. AMC Operations, Organization, Structure & Responsibilities; and 6. Afghanistan Logistic Challenges. This task list comes from Slide 1 of the information received from MAJ Bryan Fencil.

⁹⁸ Major Daniel L. Rausch., "Maneuver Captains' Career Course Orientation" briefing slides 2-14, copy obtained from MAJ Daniel L. Rausch, US Army Maneuver Center of Excellence, Fort Benning, GA, November 2010.

to prepare students for the leadership, training, and administrative requirements of a successful company commander.⁹⁹ It is also used to prepare students to execute the tactical planning responsibilities of battalion operations and training officers through the mastery of company tactics.¹⁰⁰

Much like the previously discussed Captains' Career Courses, the Maneuver Captains' Career Course is conducted at least four times a year for the Active Component and four times a year for the Reserve Component resident phases. Both of the courses also strive to maintain the AR350-1 goal of no more than sixteen officers for every Small Group Leader. No matter which of the two versions of the Maneuver Captains' Career Course an officer attends, he should be able to demonstrate the following skills and abilities: a critical thinking ability, an adaptive and flexible problem solving skill, the ability to effectively communicate his subordinates, proficiency in the science of tactical planning, practice in the art of tactical planning and training management, and lastly, be able to understand the leadership functions of a company commander.¹⁰¹

The Maneuver Captains' Career Course – Reserve Component consists of three asynchronous distance learning phases and two resident phases, Phase 0 through Phase 4. Phases 0 and 1 are both the common core instruction and must be completed before an officer can register and attend Phase 2, the first two-week resident training. Phase 2 consists of over 150 classroom hours of instruction, primarily centered on the fundamental concepts from Phases 0 and 1 with emphasis at the company level.¹⁰² This first two week resident phase is conducted seven days a week, with a collaborative small group as the primary means of learning. The next two phases build upon the tasks learned previously and continue through to battalion operations during Phase 4, the culminating resident phase.

For the Active Component version of the course, Small Group Instruction is also the primary means for delivery. For those officers attending the Active Component Course, the transition from

⁹⁹ Ibid, slide 2.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

company operations, through staff functions at the battalion level, and finishing the course with the company training and electives module.¹⁰³ The last fifteen days of the course build upon the previous blocks of instruction, but utilize the experiences of the Small Group Leaders and students contribute to the overall learning environment. The Maneuver Captains' Career Course conducts the equivalent form of instruction during Phase 4 of the Reserve Component; however, they do not have the same amount of time to allot to the instruction and the officers cannot capitalize on this experience.

The Reserve Component course is able to take advantage of other possibilities within the two resident training phases. For example, many of the officers who attend the Reserve Component course are either in command or have already completed their command time.¹⁰⁴ These officers are able to share their best practices with their classmates and expand upon the small group instruction, whereas a majority of those officers attending the Active Component course have not yet had the opportunity to command and do not have those experiences to share. However, the Reserve Component course attendees cannot maximize their experience in the course while going through the non-interactive distance learning phases. Much like the other two courses addressed in this section, the Maneuver Captains' Career Course – Reserve Component distance learning phases are conducted in a non-collaborative manner, without the benefit of an instructor or other students taking the course at precisely the same time. The best these officers can get is to have an officer from the same unit take the class along with them in the same room, or being able to contact one of the Small Group Leaders by phone or through email if a problem or issue should arise.

Best Practices and Missed Opportunities

Whether in the Active or Reserve Component courses of the three reviewed above, there are many practices that assist in providing quality education for the officer. However, there are also some that are provided for the officer able to attend the Active Component course that are not offered or even

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., slide 4.

replicated in the Reserve Component course. The Engineer Officer attending the Reserve Component course misses out on opportunities to receive hands-on practical experience during the construction modules, only to complete those same classes through on-line distance learning. For the Logistician student, the missed opportunities comes through missing three weeks of branch specific training, with no means of replication. They also completely miss the multifunctional logistics training, yet are required to be proficient in those tasks. As for the Maneuver Captains' Career Course, officers lose out on collaborative learning while conducting the distance learning phases of the course. While the distance learning phases teach the same tasks as taught in the resident training, the courses are on-line and do not include a shared learning experience with others, as it is just the computer and the officer conducting the class.

The Army as an institution recognizes the utility of a resident school education for all officers regardless of component. In discussing the importance of a resident education for a Reserve Component Officer, Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-3 states:

Attendance at resident service schools is the preferred option for all Reserve Component officers since it allows for peer-to-peer interaction and an ongoing exchange of ideas and experiences. It also allows Reserve Component officers to interact with their Active Component counterparts and provide them with information about the Reserve Component. It is understood, however, that not all Reserve Component officers will be able to attend all service schools in residence due to budgetary, time or training seat constraints. For this reason, type of school attendance (resident or nonresident) is not a discriminator for promotion or duty assignment in the Reserve Component. Officers may also attend courses that contribute to the military proficiency of the unit or enhance their specific abilities.¹⁰⁵

Therefore, the Army maintains a divided system of military education for the Captains' Career Course, resident training for Active Component Officers and non-resident training for the Reserve Component Officer. This allows the continuous advancement of Reserve Component officers to positions of increasing responsibility despite the difference in professional military education.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-3, *Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Career Management*. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, February, 2010), 49.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 42-44.

NEW TRADOC GUIDANCE FOR OFFICER EDUCATION

TRADOC Officer Education Guidance

On 30 January 2009, General Martin Dempsey, the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Commander directed a complete redesign of the Captains' Career Course implemented within ninety days.¹⁰⁷ Five days later, while speaking to the Combined Arms Center (CAC) Senior Leader's Conference, GEN Dempsey spoke about his specific concerns for Officer, Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO), and Department of Army civilian education. He spoke of the need not only for a coherent leader development strategy, but a concurrent need to determine what education and training needed to be delivered where to deliver it, and how to deliver it.¹⁰⁸ Later that month, CAC hosted working groups at Fort Leavenworth with school and center Directors of Training (DoTs) and Captains' Career Course course managers with the intent of redesigning the Captains' Career Course to develop leaders who are both technically and tactically competent in full spectrum operations, able to operate in a Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Multinational (JIIM) environment, able to serve as an expert in their branch on battalion and brigade staffs, and command a company sized element.¹⁰⁹

The Captains' Career Course Curriculum Working Group identified specific areas where it believed the common core could assume risk based on branch and installation programs.¹¹⁰ The Working group also identified faculty development as a critical part of both the Active and Reserve Component programs. However, the mission assigned was to implement a redesigned Active Component Captains' Career Course no later than 1 May 2009 that focused on captains' educational requirements for full spectrum operations to meet current and future requirements, with no mention of how to implement

¹⁰⁷ Combined Arms Center. *Operations Order 09-051A (Captain's Career Course (CCC) Educational Model Redesign)*. Fort Leavenworth: Combined Arms Center, 2009.

¹⁰⁸ General Martin E. Dempsey "Our Army's Campaign of Learning." Speech, Association of the United States Army's Chapter Presidents? Dinner, Washington, D.C., October 4, 2009. In AUSA, www.ausa.org/publications (accessed December 3, 2010).

¹⁰⁹ Combined Arms Center. *Operations Order 09-051A (Captain's Career Course (CCC) Educational Model Redesign)* (Fort Leavenworth: Combined Arms Center, 2009) 7.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

changes for the Reserve Component course.¹¹¹ These educational requirements must be achieved through a common core education based curriculum and branch technical and tactical education and training.¹¹² The 1 May implementation deadline shifted to 1 September in order to allow the lesson authors for the common core phase of instruction additional time to develop the additional courseware. This newly developed courseware replaced the previous distance learning common core lessons with instruction built into the resident course. With the implementation of the new common core instruction, school commandants had to condense or eliminate portions of their branch instruction in order to accommodate the new courseware.¹¹³ This also allowed the school commandants the freedom to sequence the delivery of common core courses in the best manner to fit their branch specific instruction and not interfere with the course flow.

Army Learning Concept 2015

In early November 2010, TRADOC PAM 525-8-2, The United States Army Learning Concept 2015 (ALC 2015) was published with the purpose to describe a US Army learning model that meets the all-volunteer Army's need to develop adaptive, thinking Soldiers, and leaders.¹¹⁴ The objective of the ALC 2015 is the creation of a learning continuum that blurs the lines between the Operating and Generating Forces by more closely integrating self-development, institutional instruction, and operational experience.¹¹⁵ The learning process should begin upon entering the US Army and should not end until departing the service. The ALC 2015 learning outcomes are the 21st Century Soldier Competencies that enable victory across the full spectrum of operations in an era of persistent conflict.¹¹⁶ ALC 2015 is focused on both the Active and Reserve Components individual learning that includes initial military training (IMT) and PME, and supports the Total Army School System.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Department of the Army, Training and Doctrine Command Pamphlet 525-8-2, *The United States Army Learning Concept for 2015*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, November, 2010), 1.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

Discussed in the ALC 2015 is the concept for changing how and where the US Army conducts Mid-Grade Level professional military education and specifically in Appendix E, the Captains' Career Course.¹¹⁷ By 2015, the current Active Component Captains' Career Course will be replaced by a tailored, modular learning approach completed over time, followed by a six to eight week common core module taught at an installation regional learning center, and finally a four to six week branch technical/tactical resident module focused on problem solving. In coordination with their chain of command, captains will use the Army Career Tracker to develop a sequence of mandatory and elective learning modules that must be completed to pass established career gates in preparation for future assignments.¹¹⁸ Tailored learning modules will include some self-paced, structured self-development combined with networked links to other students and branch school facilitators in a blended learning approach.

Common core leader development modules will be conducted in a multiple branch face-to-face setting at a regional learning center by on-site faculty, mobile training teams, networked links to individual branch schools, or a combination of any of the previously listed methods, depending on the need of the location.¹¹⁹ At this point in the officer's career, broadening opportunities are also presented for advanced civil schooling, partnerships with industry, and developmental assignments with other government agencies.¹²⁰ The Reserve Component Captains' Career Course will remain in the same configuration as today, completed through a combination of collaborative distance learning modules and brief resident instruction. Before the transition to field grade, captains should have achieved at least half of the credits necessary to earn a Master's Degree.¹²¹

The Combined Arms Center's Leader and Development and Education office, at the Command and General Staff College, has recently created the School of Advanced Leadership and Tactics with an

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 43-44.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 44.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

initial purpose of improving captains' education.¹²² One of the first objectives for the School of Advanced Leadership and Tactics is to develop the initial concept for the transition the Captains' Career Course from what it is today, to the Captains' Career Course 2015 as outlined in ALC 2015.¹²³ Members of the Combined Arms Center Study Team will make up the core of this new organization and assist the fifteen schools as they establish methods for implementing the transition.

Currently the Center for Army Leadership is working to implement the ALC 2015 changes to the 2010 Captains' Career Course model. Upon promotion to First Lieutenant, all officers will complete an assessment and establish a learning requirement baseline for which they can tailor their professional educational needs. The Army Learning Assessment (ALA) establishes a baseline for these learning requirements. If significant gaps are identified in an Officer's foundational proficiency required for resident phases, he or she will be required to complete a preparation course.¹²⁴ The common core resident phase will be completed at the current unit prior to his next permanent change of station, in small group seminar, peer to peer facilitated learning at the on-post Regional Learning Center (RLC) or in a temporary duty (TDY) status and return if no RLC is at his location.¹²⁵ The Officer will then PCS to his next unit, attending the branch specific phase in a TDY status. However for the Reserve Component Officer, attending the course in this manner was not addressed within the ALC 2015.

The branch specific phase is small group seminar, peer-to-peer learning in branch specific topics with the duration based upon each officer's prior training, experience, and education.¹²⁶ In some cases, an Officer will PCS and attend the common core phase at the RLC at the new installation followed by the branch specific phase in a TDY status. Having the ability to attend the common core phase in this manner will allow flexibility to best suit each officer's circumstances and better support ARFORGEN. Upon

¹²² William M. Raymond, Jr., Keith R. Beurskens, and Steven M. Carmichael, "The Criticality of Captains' Education: Now and in the Future," *Military Review* (November-December 2010): 55.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ TRADOC PAM 525-8-2, 14.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 44.

completion of these requirements, the Officer is awarded Military Education Level (MEL) N.¹²⁷

Continuing education consists of distance learning electives and other functional courses, determined by the Officer, his branch, and his operational commander. Once again, the ALC 2015 does not mention the availability of this course of action for the Reserve Component Officers.

COMBINED ARMS CENTER STUDY

In February 2010, the Combined Arms Center (CAC) Commander created a study team from members of the Command and General Staff College's faculty and students, with the mission to examine the Captains' Career Course.¹²⁸ The team visited all fifteen Captains' Career Courses, made a comprehensive assessment of each based on interviews with key leaders, focus groups and surveys with students and faculty, and review of key documents, and then produced a formal report within three months of beginning the study.¹²⁹ The timing of the Study provided an opportunity to examine the recently implemented 2009 Common Core redesign.¹³⁰ The team's mission also included an assessment of whether or not the Captains' Career Courses were developing officers for both the Active and Reserve Components, consistent with the requirements of Army Regulation 350-1. Finally, the team was tasked to assess the curriculum, facilities, governance, staff and faculty, and students. Findings and recommendations would support an overall assessment of whether or not the courses were meeting the optimal educational needs for Captains, both in the Active and Reserve Components.¹³¹

Through this comprehensive study of the fifteen Captains' Career Courses, the Study Team identified more than forty findings and made over seventy recommendations for the Combined Arms Center Commander. The five key findings from the study are:

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ William M. Raymond, Jr., Keith R. Beurskens, and Steven M. Carmichael, "The Criticality of Captains' Education: Now and in the Future," *Military Review* (November-December 2010): 53.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

There is no substitute for a high quality Small Group Leader (SGL). Not only must branches select their best and brightest to serve in these positions, but they also must have a certification and development process that transforms these officers into educators. The curriculum must be current, relevant, and rigorous. Presently, its development and execution faced numerous challenges. There should be increased oversight and rigor in CCC governance, especially a formal process to reconcile common core and branch-specific curriculum. Most CCC classrooms need to be updated with educational technology and configured to support small group instruction. Students overwhelmingly emphasized the importance of the environment provided by a resident course (instead of distance learning): learning from peers and instructors with diverse backgrounds (Army, Sister Service, and International Officers); personal and professional development and networking opportunities; a time for balance between personal and professional commitments and interests.¹³²

In reference to one of the five key Study Team findings, the curriculum should be grounded in the current doctrine and incorporate all relevant lessons learned from the operational environment.¹³³

Incorporating these changes to a course that is fully delivered in the resident mode is not as difficult as implementing those same changes into developed, distance learning modules. For example, for the Reserve Component on-line versions of the same classes taught in the Active Component course, the changes or updates to the courseware must be conducted by the development contractor. These changes could take several months to implement into the curriculum and might be outdated by the time they reach the first student. These same changes to an Active Component course should be implemented as soon as a review is completed. A majority of the schools visited by the Study Team conducted annual reviews of the programs of instruction and assessments of the graduates to ensure that the learning objectives are being met.¹³⁴ Then the changes were implemented prior to conducting the next course.

Another key finding that has implications for the Reserve Component Captains' Career Course was one of the outcomes from the survey's of the Captains' Career Course students. Their overwhelming support for attendance at a resident course, in lieu of a distance learning version, emphasized the many opportunities to learn and grow in a collaborative environment with peers sharing the same interests. Students believed that peer interaction, professional and personal networking, and mentoring from the

¹³² Ibid., 53-54.

¹³³ Ibid., 54.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

Small Group Leaders would be lost in a distance learning environment.¹³⁵ Students highly valued the knowledge they gained from their peers and Small Group Leaders, who brought different perspectives to the classroom.¹³⁶ They also identified the importance of sharing experiences from a variety of different backgrounds and units. This diversity, coupled with their own experiences, and facilitated in a resident learning environment can assist in the understanding of a captains' profession of arms

Although the Study Team did not focus on the Reserve Component course specifically, the findings from the study will lead to improvements for both courses. For the three courses compared in the previous section of this monograph, Small Group Leaders and instructors administer both the Active and Reserve Courses, so the need for high quality Small Group Leaders would assist the educational experience during the resident phases of the course.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

While this monograph only studied three of the fifteen different Captains' Career Courses, there are four salient findings that appear to emerge across these three courses and may indicate links between all fifteen. The first is that because the Captains' Career Course is the last branch technical training that most officers receive, it should have a focused hands-on section of the course in a collaborative learning environment. For example, during the General Engineering Module of the Engineer Captains' Career Course, the Active Component officers are afforded the opportunity during class to visit Advanced Individual Training construction sites and put their classroom instruction into perspective. The Engineer Captains' Career Course – Reserve Component officer does not have this learning reinforcement

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

opportunity because their General Engineering Module courses are administered through distance learning.¹³⁷

Secondly, both the Active and Reserve Component Captains' Career Course have the same enabling and terminal learning objectives. The only difference is the manner in which each of these objectives are taught to the student. One of the major disadvantages for officers attending the Reserve Component Captains' Career Course for the Combined Logistics course is missing three weeks of branch specific training that is not made up through distance learning, but suggested as tasks learned through unit training.¹³⁸ Whereas the Active Component officers receive the branch specific training during the common core portion of their resident course. Either way, both types of officers are expected to perform the task to the same standard and this cannot happen if training is not conducted.

The third finding is that only through a prolonged professional military education is an officer ever to arrive at the state of being considered a professional in his career. Each time the Active Component promotes an officer to a higher rank and assigns him to positions of increasing difficulty and greater responsibility, the Army provides that officers with the best military education possible, thus ensuring that the officer corps has the foundation for cultivating expertise. But in the Reserve Component, the opposite is true. The Reserve Component Officer starts his career by attending a resident Basic Officer Leader Course and then as he increases in rank and higher duty positions, he is required to attend less formal training and more distance learning, truncating the ability of the Reserve Component officer corps in developing their professional expertise.

Lastly, as we discussed earlier in the monograph, the primary purpose of a professional military education remains the development of the intellectual ability of an officer corps in the management of

¹³⁷ This is from knowledge gained while the author worked as both a Small Group Leader and the Division Chief for the Engineer Captains' Career Course – Reserve Component at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri from January 2005 through June 2007.

¹³⁸ Major Bryan Fencl, "Combined Logistics Captains' Career Course" briefing slides 1-2, copy obtained from MAJ Bryan Fencl, US Army Logistics University, Fort Lee, VA, November 2010.

military operations that benefits the society. Without a continuous education, the Reserve Component officer corps will never achieve the status of professional and will never hold the trust of its Active Component Counterparts. The current military education system as designed separates the Active Component from the Reserve Component resulting in an underlying theme of disunity. Where the Active Component officer attends resident courses through Intermediate Level Education, his Reserve Component counterpart primarily attends Reserve Component configured course. This results in the development of two officer corps and not one.

Based on the research for this monograph, there exists a difference in the education that an officer receives attending a Reserve Component Captains' Career Course. The Captains' Career Course should afford every opportunity to the officers to prepare them for the increasing responsibilities and challenges they will face. In today's complex operational environment, an officer's education, both civilian and military, must continue to develop him personally and professionally. The best method of learning is still through resident training in a collaborative learning environment, where shared experiences and understanding will allow for the best possible experience.

Recommendations

To truly assist in the educational process for Reserve Component officers through the US Army Officer Education system, the Army should promote a single system of military education for the Active and Reserve Components. An updated professional military education standard would reflect the twenty-first century conditions and requirements placed on officers serving in both components. During this time of persistent conflict, both components are called upon for operational deployments, with no differentiation between requirements. However, the manner in which the officers are educated clearly shows a difference.

The Army should look at ending all Reserve Component configured Captains' Career Courses in the same manner it ended the Reserve Component Officer Basic Courses in the late 1980s and early

1990s that resulted in every lieutenant attending a resident school to start his or her career as a commissioned officer. Therefore, every traditional Reserve Component officer would attend a resident Captains' Career Course. The benefit of having resident Captains' Career Course qualified company commanders and battalion staff officers outweighs any disadvantage of maintaining the current system. This change alone would close the expertise gap between Active and Reserve Component officers and it would produce greater proficiency in the maneuver and staff skills.

An update to the Joint Federal Travel Regulation must be made to allow Reserve Component officers to attend a resident Captains' Career Course in a Temporary Duty status vice a Permanent Change of Station status. The current system was developed for the Active Component and those Active Guard and Reserve program officers and not for the traditional Reserve Component officer. A new officer education system requiring all officers' attendance at resident Captains' Career Course needs to account for the Reserve Component officers who have different conditions and factors than an Active Component officer. Most resident Captains' Career Course exceed the 140 days that necessitates a Permanent Change of Station by regulation. However, most Reserve Component officers will return to the place they live and work immediately following graduation from the Captains' Career Course. This only reflects the reality of Reserve Component officers not moving their family for the five months or longer to attend a resident Captains' Career Course, thereby requiring that officer to maintain two households. Making the Reserve Component officer travel to a school in a Permanent Change of Station status and maintain two households for essentially the same cost as that of sending the officer in a Temporary Change of Station status seems counterproductive and not reflective of the unique conditions of the Reserve Component.

Another task the Army and Reserve Component leadership could develop a strategic communications plan aimed at businesses that employ Reserve Component Soldiers, to promote the benefits of a resident school education. Having employers of Reserve Component officers visit the school and understand the curriculum and the opportunities of their employees, at no cost to the employer, is a

benefit the Army and the business community could mutually leverage to develop better leaders and more innovative thinkers for the Army and the civilian business. An officer obtaining a masters degree while attending a resident Captains' Career Course in a suitable field would be another benefit for the Army and the civilian business as well.

The greatest challenge to the traditional Reserve Component officer is attendance at a resident Captains' Career Course. It is not unreasonable to factor in the length of the resident course and its impact on an officer's civilian employment. At the same time it would be erroneous to assume that no Reserve Component officer could afford to attend a resident Captains' Career Course either. Therefore, the Army should leverage a creative resident-like concept for all the Captains' Career Courses. If the Army is going to assume risk in the education of a traditional Reserve Component officer who cannot be away from his civilian employment for a long period of time, then the Army should consider the requirements and focus on the terminal learning objectives that support the officer mastering the skills needed to be a competent staff officer and company commander. The officer would receive the quality education by learning from instructors and peers in a collaborative learning environment.

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