



AN EXERCISE IN LEADERSHIP

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The Army, as it reshapes and builds down in this post-Cold War period, will continue to demand top-quality leaders. At the same time, though, it will face increasing challenges in its efforts to attract, develop, and train those leaders, one of which will be a shortage of resources.

For officers, the precommissioning experience provides them their first impressions of what leadership is all about. In the Army, precommissioning training comes from several different sources, one of which is the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC).

The following case study examines one way first-rate leaders can be attracted, trained, and developed, in spite of meager resources. The insight and lessons provided by the experiences of the ROTC instructor group portrayed in the study can be applied to any organization or unit that is faced

with the challenge of meeting training requirements with severely constrained resources.

This particular corps of cadets at a large state university had undergone the same decline in popularity—and in enrollment and facilities—as had many ROTC groups at other colleges and universities. By the late 1970s, its apparent decline had seemed complete. The program had barely commissioned the 12 second lieutenants required for it to be considered effective, and few of these were combat arms or career oriented. In fact, its collective cadet performance at ROTC advanced camp barely measured on the performance scale of school rankings.

Then something positive began to happen, and by the summer of 1979, this corps sent 30 cadets to advanced camp and ranked 24th out of 96 schools in the ROTC region. By

the summer of 1982, the corps had more than 40 cadets at the camp and ranked 12th among 106 schools. During that period, it consistently ranked as a top school in its ROTC region, ranking first in 1981.

What had caused this improvement? Changes had begun occurring in the overall university environment, but most telling, the cadre had acquired a new philosophy of leadership. Its guiding premise was that any experience the cadets would get from the program about being officers would be directly proportional to the efforts of the cadre. Next, if the cadets were to compete successfully for assignment to active duty, and achieve professional success once they were members of the officer corps, their experiences on campus would have to give them a proper foundation and an initial advantage.

How did the cadre members—many of them new to the program—apply their new leadership philosophy? They began with an assessment of the cadet's poor camp performance and precipitous drop in the enrollment figures. From this assessment, they considered several possible causes:

- The program had been generally "demilitarized" in response to the anti-military pressures of the late 1960s and the 1970s, apparently in the belief that it would be more palatable if it made fewer demands on the students. The weekly laboratories had been discontinued, for example, and the cadets were no longer required to wear their uniforms to class.

- Also as a result of the demilitarization policy, most of the tactical equipment, particularly operational weapons, had been removed from the campus. Only a bare residue of field equipment and a few AN/PRC-77 radios remained.

- The cadets' involvement in the leadership and planning experience had atrophied in terms of quality, standards, and opportunities.

- The cadets' exposure to formal military training had been progressively and significantly reduced. The only exposure they had to the cadre in any constructive professional sense were a few formal contacts in the classroom. The only interactive, "lead by example" mentoring was done by two of the ten military cadre members responsible for preparing those cadets who were scheduled to attend advanced camp and the officer and noncommissioned officer working with the cadet Ranger unit.

- The preparation of annual training calendars and training guidance needed to be revitalized.

- The cadets had little opportunity to employ such typical Army communication systems and methods as instruction, administration, training, tactics, and the like.

- The cadets received no academic credit for the time and effort they invested in structured leader planning or detailed training activities, even though these were equal to or better than other academic endeavors on campus.

In brief, the overall programs and operations of the cadre and the cadet corps were not functioning as an integrated system, the object of which was the commissioning of

competent, competitive lieutenants.

From these findings, it became apparent that even if more students could be enticed into the program, whatever interest they might have in the Army as a profession was not likely to be sustained. Statistics on cadet retention bore this out. Less than 25 percent of the basic course (freshman and sophomore) cadets moved on to the advanced course (junior and senior). Instead, those students who wanted more of a challenge from their military experience either pursued service academy appointments or took part in Marine Corps and Navy off-campus programs during the summer.

The cadre determined that if this situation was to be turned around, the on-campus program would have to be made more dynamic and challenging, and there would have to be more interaction between cadre and the cadet corps. Although the tougher program might also make it more difficult for the program to meet its enrollment goals, it would also build esprit, generate higher identification with the corps of cadets and, most important, greatly improve the professional competence of the cadets.

In response to these findings, the cadre developed a flexible plan that was based on total cadre involvement. It consisted of several elements, which were then continually refined.

First, the cadre organized as a maneuver battalion staff in terms of structure, though retaining their appropriate TDA titles as necessary. Each cadre member, in addition to his operational mission functions, assumed several other roles—instructor and advisor to a cadet class or tactical advisor to a cadet organization, such as the cadet Ranger company. In addition, each member, in his operational role, had a cadet staff counterpart; for example, the cadre S-1 served as advisor and counselor to the cadet battalion S-1 (see Table 1). These organizational assignments shifted as cadre members departed and others arrived, depending upon the skills and branch experiences of the incoming personnel. The cadre noncommissioned officers were assigned to these functions in their NCO capacity. Generally, the S-4 and S-4 sergeant, for instance, were teamed across all functions, which expanded and greatly improved the cadets' exposure to and interaction with the cadre members. As a result, the cadets had more access to all of the officers and NCOs and their professional military experience.

The cadet battalion was reorganized initially into a traditional line battalion staff structure with two cadet companies (one for cadets at the university's main campus and one for those from the six campuses supported by an instructor group extension center at a smaller college 30 miles away). This organization was later refined into a headquarters detachment and four line companies, each with a functional training mission (Table 2).

This organization supported expanded cadet involvement, leadership, and planning opportunities. It also provided the organizational framework for a mission oriented training program that focused on what is now termed a mission essential task list (METL). It was a functional organization that operated on the principle that the cadets ran the corps of

cadets, while the cadre served as advisors (albeit heavily involved advisors).

The operational mission approach of both the cadre and the cadet corps became more focused, dynamic, and interactive. Advanced camp and commissioning were the orientation, and all on-campus activities were restructured to support the goal of producing the best prepared individuals for each camp event.

Along these lines, all classes (within the guidelines of the Department of the Army and Training and Doctrine Command) were revised to meet both the university's standards of academic excellence and the instructor group's mission objectives. The mandatory MS III (junior) courses in the second semester, for example, consisted of an instructional methods course (three credit hours) and a physical training course (one credit hour).

The instructional methods course used a comprehensive "train the trainer" model, which rapidly placed cadets in the trainer role with multiple assignments (rehearsing, preparing lesson plans, and coordinating for equipment). Hands-on training was used, and the skills trained were those that would be required at camp.

The second course, a Physical Education department course taught by the Military Science department, focused on physical conditioning, with an objective of preparing cadets to take and pass the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT). It also instructed the cadets in command voice, drill and ceremonies, and leading physical training.

The cadet organization augmented the formal instruction. The battalion and company programs were designed to offer challenge and adventure to a young person but were still professionally oriented and focused on military development.

The corps planned and executed two battalion operations a year (one each semester). These "field training exercises" (FTXs) and military skills and marksmanship exercises consisted of a deployment to a nearby Army post, where military skills could be tested, and tactical training and range firing could be conducted. The full exercise was focused on preparing the MS III cadets for the military and tactical skills they would need at advanced camp.

Bi-weekly leadership laboratories were reinstated on campus, and the cadet battalion was assigned the mission of providing the military skills instruction during these laboratories. The laboratories were oriented on drill and ceremonies, customs of the service, and better exposure of all cadets to the Army's organization.

The cadets on the main campus were given unit assignments upon their enrollment and at the beginning of a semester on the basis of their stated preferences. During a semester, although the cadets were expected to support their own company's program, they were welcome to participate with another company's exercises. For the most part, these exercises were voluntary but encouraged. The exception was a requirement that all MS III cadets (juniors) participate in one of the three Company D exercises each semester as a laboratory for their MS III level courses.

Each company was given a mission program to plan and

CADRE ORGANIZATION		
POSITION/ OPERATIONAL FUNCTION	INSTRUCTOR/ SPONSOR FUNCTION	TACTICAL/ ADVISOR FUNCTION
Professor of Military Science & Commandant of Cadets	MS IV seniors	Cadet battalion command group
Instructor Group S-1 (Advisor to Cadet S-1)	MS II sophomores	Cadet Company A
S-3 (Advisor to Cadet S-3)	MS III juniors	Company D (Ranger) advisor
S-4 (Advisor to Cadet S-4)	MS I freshmen	Company C advisor
S-5 (Enrollment Officer, Advisor to Cadet Enrollment Officer)	Support one of the primary instructors/class sponsors as necessary each semester	

Table 1

CADET BATTALION ORGANIZATION	
UNIT	MISSION
Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment (HHD)	Cadet battalion command and control and planning
Company A	Adventure and fieldcraft training
Company B	Drill team and marksmanship unit
Company C	Orienteering and land navigation unit (the unit organized from the extension center campuses)
Company D	Ranger unit

Table 2

execute, as illustrated in Table 3. Usually each program had a capstone activity or exercise.

All of the company training programs required preliminary or refresher training before an FTX. For example, Company D usually conducted two or three two-hour blocks of training once a week before an FTX.

To support the principle of having the cadets run the corps, the battalion organization was expanded to allow as many leadership opportunities as possible. Real missions were assigned that contributed to the overall training mission. Although the cadre served as a resource for information, guidance, and critique, the cadets were responsible for planning and executing the training.

To further support this principle and improve cadet opportunities (and to avoid burn-out among over-eager

COMPANY MISSION PROGRAMS

UNIT	ON CAMPUS	CAPSTONE
Company A	Two FTXs per semester (rappelling, rock climbing, field-craft, tactical movement, map reading)	Plan and execute cadet detachment participation in a naval cold weather survival course at a nearby naval base during the winter break and the drownproofing event at the spring semester battalion FTX.
Company B	Plan and conduct the drill team's programs and operations and those of the marksmanship team (one match per week)	Regional competition matches and marksmanship training on battalion FTXs.
Company C	Three FTXs per semester built around land navigation instruction and select tactical training and execution of land navigation courses.	Orienteering meets and cadre battalion FTX land navigation courses and land navigation training (included map reading refresher—cadets received map reading training in the MS II and the MS III courses).
Company D	Three tactical force on force FTXs per semester. The Ranger School method of experiential training was applied. Cadets of the company chain of command planned and initiated the FTX. At the appropriate points in the exercise, leaders were replaced by other squad or platoon members. At each transition, a critique of the preceding exercise segment was conducted.	48-hour air assault exercise each semester and tactical exercises at battalion FTXs (the patrolling exercise at the spring FTX).

Table 3

cadets), three distinct chains of command were activated during an academic year. On the basis of cadre selection boards, one cadet detail ran the first semester, a second detail the next semester, and a third (somewhat honorary) detail took effect during a short period before and up to graduation. Basically, the details moved cadets from command to staff positions and from higher to lower positions.

Additionally, each of the functional details was required to return to campus early for a planning workshop to prepare and initiate the coordination of the battalion and company operational plans for the coming semester. The workshops also prepared the details to execute these plans; for example, cadre counterpart mentoring and counseling on the duties and responsibilities of a cadet's position.

The cadet system of codifying, planning, and

communicating used the Army's system—training circulars, operations plans, and operations orders. This system not only helped the cadets learn to use these planning and communication devices, they also created a body of institutional knowledge that insured operational continuity and smooth transition from one cadet chain of command to another.

MS IV cadets (seniors) critiqued and rehearsed the training plans and classes prepared by MS III cadets, which was part of the instructional methods course the MS III cadets had to take during the second semester of their junior year.

In an effort to increase cadet participation in the company and cadet corps programs, the cadre was able to align the military science program as a concentration of the university's general business degree program. Additionally, each company program was structured (in accordance with university guidelines) into a course that had a syllabus, texts, and formal assignments. The courses were titled and numbered within formal university procedures for special courses (usually earning one or two credit hours each).

The cadets were carefully counseled about the undesirability of "majoring in ROTC." They were advised that they should pursue balanced academic programs that would lead to accepted degrees. Wherever possible and appropriate, however, academic credit was available for the extensive time and effort they invested in military science. As this program matured, an average of 15 to 20 cadets could be expected to take advantage of the special courses program.

All of the officers and NCOs were actively involved with cadets in the classroom, with the cadet chain of command, and with cadets in the field. Every officer and sergeant spent at least two weekends each semester with their assigned cadet company as tactical staff members (company TACs) and once a semester with the entire corps during battalion FTXs. This approach got all the cadre members involved and also fostered leadership by example. When MS III cadets took their APFTs, cadre members were out in front.

Obviously, equipment had to be obtained to support this aggressive program. Gradually, memorandums of understanding and agreement were developed—with the U.S. Army Reserve (USAR) through the instructor group's supporting installation and with the Army National Guard through the state Adjutant General—that created a good equipment and support system.

This mechanism was actively fostered by the Professor of Military Science through regular liaison visits (once or twice a year) with Army Reserve and National Guard major commands. The geographic region had a National Guard brigade of three rifle battalions, one USAR rifle battalion, and a Marine Corps Reserve rifle company. As the system matured, it produced every item of equipment that was required for cadet military skills and tactical training.

This system was so effective that the capstone 48-hour Company D FTX had full TOE equipment, one OH-58 helicopter for the command group, and six UH-1H

helicopters for air assault insertion and extraction.

Additionally, through agreements with local government and private interests, a 15-by-20-mile training area of wood lot and watershed was created. Other smaller maneuver areas were also available as part of a local training area system, including an Air Force base, which housed reserve units from all three services.

The cadre also determined that there might be some value in reviving an awareness of the cadet corps' history and significance. Various methods of pursuing this awareness were used; for example, obtaining new cadet battalion colors and company guidons. The cadre also obtained cadet corps photographs that recounted events that emphasized the distinct heritage of the university's corps of cadets.

In addition, a selective system of individual cadet awards was used. An awards ceremony was conducted annually in battalion formation; it focused on awards based on sustained merit and academic or military achievement. Curious to note, the cadets seldom displayed more than two or three ribbons on their uniform blouses. Service veterans were encouraged to wear the federal decorations they had earned on active duty to heighten an attitude of military professionalism in the corps of cadets.

To expose the cadets to the Army's social institutions and protocol, the cadre retained and emphasized the traditional military ball, and in an alternate semester, introduced a dining-in.

The cadre also sought opportunities to expand its staff by incorporating reserve officers in the area. Two such officers participated. One was an Army Reserve officer employed by the university who served as an adjunct instructor for the MS I course, the other a Coast Guard Reserve (ex-Armor) officer who taught the Uniform Code of Military Justice portion of the MS IV course.

This plan, its execution, and its refinement produced the results outlined earlier. But the most spectacular result was the response of the cadets. In large part, the success achieved was a product of the cadets and their involvement.

The more apparent and involved leadership of the cadre also played a role, of course, but if the cadets had not embraced the tough demands of a rigorous program, little could have been achieved. Significantly, the entire operation was managed on a tight budget.

The principle that a good, well executed plan with dedicated leadership and thoroughgoing professionalism will produce outstanding results once again proved valid. But it illustrated more than that. Any body of soldiers (cadets, draftees, veterans) that is led with dedication and enthusiasm (which we often think possible only in our elite battalions) will produce outstanding results.

In this case, once the cadets began to understand the mission objectives and the way the unit contributed to achieving these objectives to standard, there was no stopping their competitiveness. And it was they who defined the standard—camp performance. It became a goal of each class to beat the previous year's results—and for five successive years, they did.

The positive collective leadership response of the cadre and the cadets that produced this tremendous success story once again illustrates what can be done when things seem all but hopeless. The 300 percent increase in commissions and the equally spectacular jump in MS III performance at advanced camp attest to what dedicated, professional leadership by example can do.

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