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Key Ingredient in Army Leader Development: Graduate School

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Key Ingredient in Army Leader Development

Graduate School

Maj. George Fust, U.S. Army

Developing adaptive leaders is the bridge to overcoming readiness shortfalls and the unpredictability of future conflicts, and the increasingly ambiguous nature of threats in the contemporary operating environment coupled with finite resources makes leader development a reasonable goal.[1] However, leader development as employed by the Army is ambiguous and vague. What type of leader is the Army striving to develop? Strategic leaders? Operational leaders? What evaluation mechanisms are in place to determine if a leader has become more developed in responding to ambiguity?[2] These questions deserve continued debate and understanding but will not be the focus here. Instead, this article will tackle one small piece of the larger puzzle: graduate-level education.

Rigorous advanced education is a bridge between strategic and operational leadership.[3] It provides individuals a greater intellectual tool set for dealing with complexity, and it is arguably one of the best institutional opportunities to build strategic thinkers.[4] Further, advanced education opportunities can "help shape strategic leaders" by cultivating a foundation for critical thinking.[5] The best place to begin this research project is by examining the education of the Army's current strategic leaders, those at the three- and four-star level. These individuals embody the culture and values of the organization. A systematic analysis of one component of their career path, graduate school, can provide insight into the value placed on it and identify potential shortcomings. Utilizing a robust resume dataset of senior officer education contextualizes the data within trends in scholarship and Army strategy in order to provide the U.S. Army feedback to better understand the results of its current graduate school policy. A secondary purpose of this study is to identify how to better leverage graduate school to develop strategic leaders who can then be more effective in strategic-level positions.

The Current Leader Development Process

A review of the Army's current leader development process will help us understand where graduate school can be leveraged to improve strategic thinking. The Army defines strategic leaders as representing "a finely balanced combination of high-level thinkers, accomplished warfighters, and geopolitical military experts."[6] If we accept that advanced education "fosters breadth of view, diverse perspectives, critical and reflective analysis, abstract reasoning, comfort with ambiguity and uncertainty, and innovative thinking, particularly with respect to complex, ill-structured or non-linear problems," then we can conclude it is a necessary step to develop strategic leaders.[7] The logic follows that any shortcomings in the Army's graduate school application will likely result in shortcomings in leader development and thus a suboptimal force.[8]

The Army has made great strides recently to better prepare leaders for the changing international environment. The prioritization of leader development was a necessary first step in the process. The visionary insight of Gen. Ray Odierno, the thirty-eighth chief of staff of the Army, culminated in *Army Leader Development Strategy 2013* (*ALDS 2013*).[9] The document explains the importance of leader development and outlines a plan

Maj. Gen. Robin Fontes (*right*), then commander of Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A), meets with Maj. Gen. Monawari (*far left*), commanding general of Afghan Logistics Command, and Brig. Gen. Fahim (*second from left*), commander of the Afghan National Army Material Management Center-Afghanistan on 9 August 2017. Fontes is a 1986 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy. She then graduated from the University of Washington with a master's degree in international relations and from the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies. She speaks Russian, Dari, and Farsi. (Photo courtesy of Sgt. 1st Class E. L. Craig, U.S. Army/CSTC-A)

for the Army to achieve its stated goals. The strategy suggests ends, ways, and means alignment and specific tools to aid in the process. *ALDS 2013* is a great starting point for assessing and promoting leader development, but it does not go far enough in capturing the importance of advanced education. Annex E of the document does highlight strategic leader ends and ways; however, it stops short in institutionalizing strategic thinking across the entire force. *ALDS 2013* also does not offer enough specific details for measuring its effectiveness, likely because the document is not intended as a standalone product. The overarching strategy of *ALDS 2013* is nested with other mutually supporting strategies including the Army Education Strategy, which is visually represented in figure 1 (on page 110).[10]

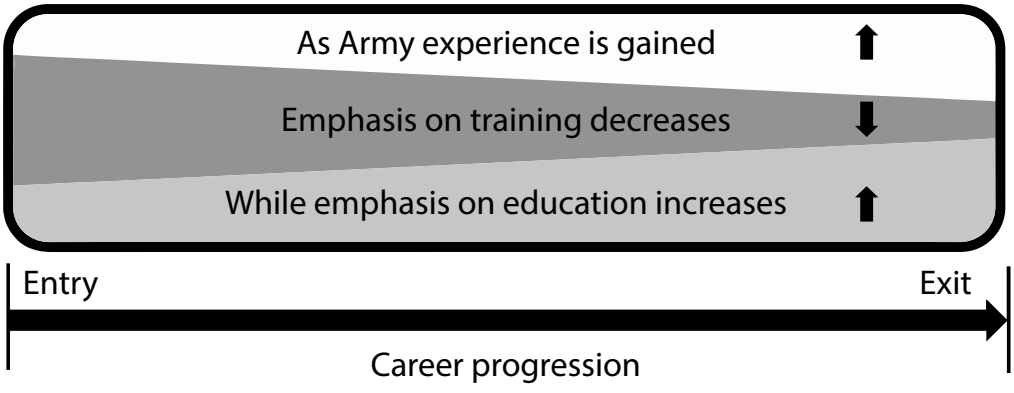
As figure 1 indicates, the Army places increasing emphasis on education as a career progresses. Therefore, any education opportunity has increasing returns on investment. One can conclude that the sooner an Army leader attends graduate school and the more such opportunities exist, the better it will be for the Army. The next section evaluates the degree to which the Army's renewed emphasis on leader development translates to more graduate school opportunities. But before reviewing those

results, a look at the larger conversation on strategic leader development plans is helpful.

Where the *ALDS 2013* falls short, there does exist a growing body of literature related specifically to developing strategic thinkers in the Army. This body of research offers insight into why it is important for the Army to specify the process and expected outcomes for development of strategic leadership. The large volume of literature available in the "developing strategic leaders" genre is a favorite topic among attendees at the Army's Command and General Staff College (CGSC) and in military-related publications.[11] The key theme among these publications is that the Army can be better at developing strategic leaders. The recommendations suggest that the Army should identify strategic leaders earlier in their career timeline and that the Officer Personnel Management Directorate (OPMD) should be adjusted to better develop strategic leadership skills. The arguments center on the idea that the increasing complexity and interconnectedness of the international environment is outpacing the antiquated Army leader development model. This theme is not unique to today's generation. Articles have been routinely published for the past fifty years extolling the inability of the Army to keep leader development on pace with contemporary affairs.[12] In short, what worked in the past will not work today. We cannot rely on luck but must instead design a system to develop the strategic leaders the Army needs.

An outlier to this plethora of publications argues that the Army system is good enough.[13] The outlier's dissertation employs three case studies, only one from the modern era, and it lacks empirical evidence. The lack of robustness and potential bias of this outlier diminishes the potential findings. Of more concern, the paper fails to consider that the case studies selected could have been lucky (exactly what the larger community argues) or that they had the appropriate development for the their time period. The paper also fails to adequately differentiate varying levels of leadership (operational versus strategic) or the subcategories of leader development.

The subcategory of graduate school within the larger strategic leader development genre is routinely addressed by academics and the military alike. Countless quantitative and qualitative articles have been published with varying degrees of effectiveness.[14] This article serves as a contemporary update that seeks to leverage a new dataset and method of identifying senior leader trends. The larger body of strategic leader development literature will be used to highlight schools of thought related to better integrating or reforming how graduate school should be employed in the development of Army officers.



(Figure from TRADOC Regulation 350-70, *Army Learning Policy and Systems*, 2017)

Figure 1. Relationship of Experience, Training, and Education

Before continuing, it is useful to formally outline the definition of the term "strategic leader" as it will be used throughout this article. A summary of how the Army defines a strategic leader is "a leader who is an expert, not only in his own domain of war fighting and leading large military organizations, but also in the bureaucratic and political environment of the nation's decision-making process."[15] Further, it is important to differentiate a person in a "strategic leadership position" from someone who is an actual "strategic leader."[16]

Training versus Education

The resounding theme of literature published on the topic of Army strategic leader development is clear: the

Army needs strategic leaders but is not doing enough to develop them. Arthur T. Coumbe argues in *Army Officer Development: Historical Context* that "the apogee of graduate education in the Army took place in 1972," and that "the Army's commitment to, and emphasis upon, fully funded graduate education for officers gradually eroded after 1973."[17] A shift in priority by Gen. William DePuy in 1973, "one that subordinates intellectual and strategic astuteness to tactical and operational expertise," is what led to the cultural shift and decline in graduate school attendance.[18] Are we still operating under the same culture despite rhetoric declaring leader development is the priority? If the leader development focus is tactical and operational leadership, then the Army is on the right track. If, however, the shift is toward education, then steps must be taken to increase graduate school opportunities.

Jeffrey McCausland and Gregg Martin argued in a 2001 *Parameters* article that there is a "significant qualitative difference" between "training" and "education."[19] They go on to explain that "education is all about teaching *how* to think and what the *questions* ought to be …. Training is most frequently used when the goal is to prepare a leader or an organization to execute specified tasks. It often includes repetition of task, not unlike an athletic team learning to execute plays."[20] If we agree with the Army's newest operating concept, then it is even more critical to invest in graduate school as a method to educate and develop strategic thinkers:

> This concept, for the first time, focuses on all three levels of war; tactical, operational, and strategic. The environment the Army will operate in is unknown. The enemy is unknown, the location is unknown, and the coalitions involved are unknown. The problem we are focusing on is how to "Win in a Complex World."[21]

In an unknown environment, leaders will not know what play to execute. They must be prepared to think through problems and respond to dynamic situations. Merely promoting the vague concept of leader development is not enough. The Army must leverage all broadening opportunities of its members to maximize the benefit to their strategic development. One such broadening assignment is graduate school. As previously argued, advanced education is one of the best institutional mechanisms for developing strategic thinking. So where does the Army currently stand?

Senior Leader Trends

The logical starting point for a discussion focused on leader development is with those who have achieved the senior leadership positions of the organization. Within the Army, those positions are at the three- and four-star level. The Army's officer management system is a closed hierarchy whereby the institution selects those its deems most qualified to advance. While the president, and ultimately the Senate, have final approval, the Army has great discretion in selecting its senior leaders.[22] Therefore, those it selects for promotion "reflect the character traits and leadership qualities that the organization seeks to sustain" and thus the "character traits the Army prefers within the institution."[23] By reviewing the graduate school trends of the Army's three- and four-star officers, we can get a glimpse of what the Army values and if changes have occurred. The database used for the study includes all three- and four-star officers who retired or served after 1986, including officers who commissioned as far back as year group 1943.[24] The database uses standardized resume data that includes graduate degrees attained and the institution conferring the degree. With approximately 500 observable datapoints (102 four-star and 391 three-star officers), the database offers a sizable basis for understanding the Army's senior leader graduate school experience.

Degrees Earned by Generals

Over time, a master's degree has become necessary for advancement, though it is not a formal requirement. While some career paths in the Army such as those of lawyers and doctors require a specific advanced degree, most do not. Where an officer acquires a degree is not

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Table 1. Number and Percentage of Degrees by Type Earned by Four-Star Officers

Degree type	Number of degrees earned	Percent of degrees earned
Administration (public)	13	10%
Administrative/personnel management	2	2%
Administrative education	3	2%
Advanced military studies	1	1%
Applied mechanics	1	1%
Area studies	1	1%
Business	1	1%
Business administration	8	6%
Business management	1	1%
Civil engineer	1	1%
Civil government	1	1%
Electronic warfare	1	1%
English	5	4%
History	6	5%
Human resources	1	1%
Information technology	2	2%
Instructional technology	1	1%
International relations	12	9%
International relations and economics	1	1%
Law	1	1%
Logistics management	4	3%
Management	5	4%
Master of arts	1	1%
Mathematics	1	1%
Mechanical engineering	3	2%
Military arts and science	9	7%
National resource strategy	1	1%
National security/strategic studies	20	15%
Nuclear engineering	1	1%
Operations research	3	2%
Philosophy	2	2%
Philosophy, politics, economics	2	2%
Physical education	1	1%
Physics	1	1%
Politics, economics, government	1	1%
Political science	6	5%
Psychology	3	2%
Public and international affairs	1	1%
Sociology	1	1%
Systems management	1	1%
Total	**130**	**100%**

(Table by author)

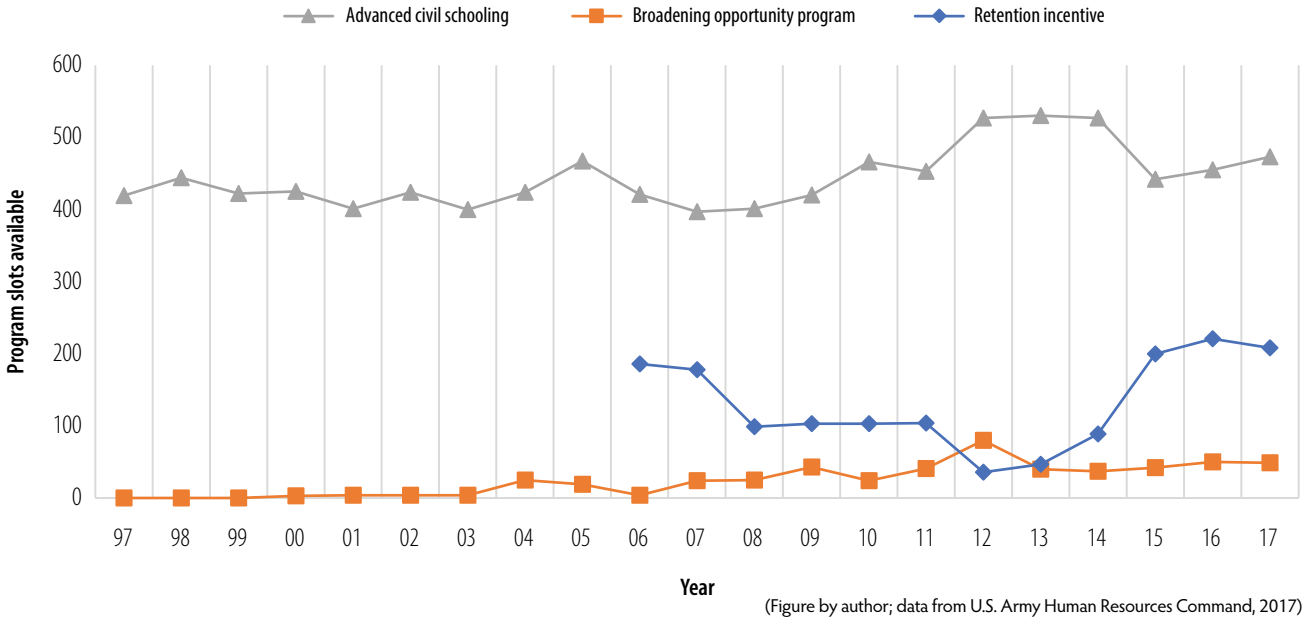
considered important. The Army considers a degree from Duke University in political science to be equivalent to an online degree in any subject. There is no institutional mechanism in place to incentivize attaining a degree from a challenging program. Nor is there a requirement or incentive to attain a degree with relevance to strategic leadership. All that matters is that an officer gets a graduate degree, preferably around the midcareer mark. Of the ninety-seven four-star officers in the dataset used for this study, forty different graduate degree types have been attained out of a total of 130 earned graduate degrees (see table 1).[25]

Given the diversity of degrees at the senior-most level, it can be inferred that even greater diversity exists at lower ranks. If one accepts the universal benefit of graduate school as the development of critical thinking, then the recommendation would simply be to expand the number of graduate school slots available for in-resident programs to maximize program benefits. If, however, the Army maintains or decreases its current number of slots, then it must maximize utility. One method is to dictate specific degree programs. There is ample precedent in the Army's history to support this course of action.[26] In 1966, the Army commissioned a study titled "Report of the Department of the Army Board to Review Army Officer Schools" (later known as the Haines Board) that "stipulated that such training [graduate school] must be for recognized and specific Army requirements."[27] Today's requirements (if enacted) should dictate that these programs be related to national security, international relations, political science, or strategic studies.[28] Of the degrees earned by the observed four-star generals, 33 percent fall into the national security/strategic studies category. The remaining 67 percent do not. This lends evidence to the importance of graduate school's ability to develop strategic thinking skills regardless of degree program. A closer look at the Army's current graduate programs will help illuminate a way forward.[29]

Current Graduate Programs

The U.S. Army's current graduate studies program is composed of three major categories: Advanced Civil Schooling (ACS), Broadening Opportunity Program (BOP), and Retention Incentive. ACS has seven subgroupings: Acquisition, Basic Branch, Functional Area, Professor Army War College, PhD, Special Branch, and U.S. Military Academy.[30] The groupings indicate the specific use of the degree and are mostly generated by funding allotments. For example, the U.S. Military Academy grouping provides a master's degree to those who are en route to teach at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York. Another major category is BOP. The four subgroupings under the BOP category include congressional fellow, Harvard strategist, Joint Chiefs of Staff intern, and scholarship. Much like the groupings under ACS, the BOP groupings indicate the intended use of the degree following completion.

Finally, the Retention Incentive category has three subgroupings. These include Expanded Graduate School Program, Graduate School for Active Duty Service Obligation, and Performance-Based Graduate School Incentive Program for Top-Performing Basic Branch Captain. The Retention Incentive groupings are intended as incentives to retain specific year groups or top performers. All the groupings within the three categories are fully funded by the Army. The other primary option for acquiring a graduate degree is tuition assistance. This option is utilized while the officer is working full-time and at his own expense. As such, it falls outside the scope of the research presented here.

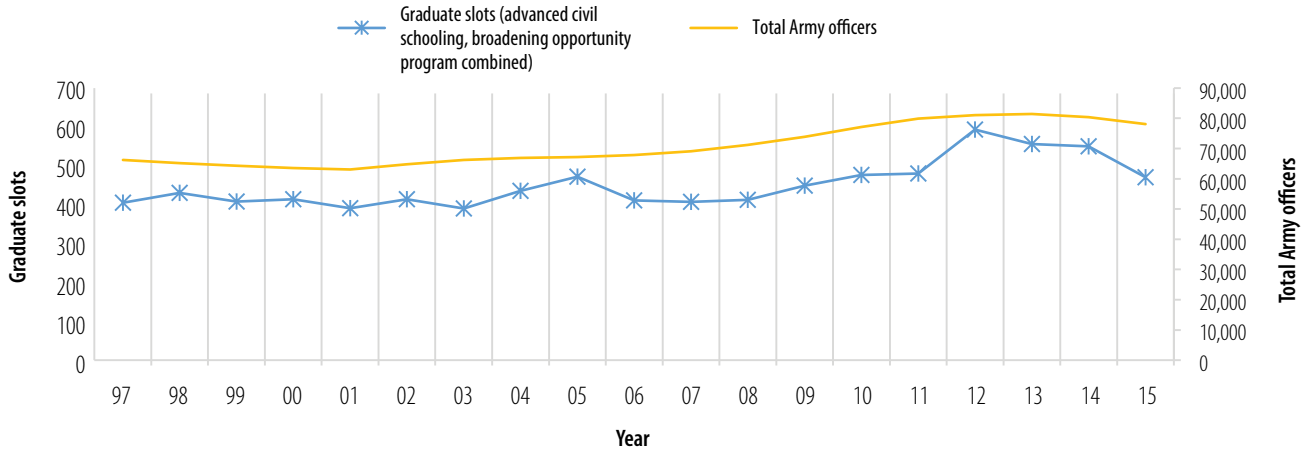


(Figure by author; data from U.S. Army Human Resources Command, 2017)

Figure 2. Army Graduate Program Slots Available by Year and Category

Figure 2 is a visual representation of the Army's three categories for officers to acquire a graduate degree paid for by the Army. This figure demonstrates trends over the last twenty years. The information is helpful for two reasons: it shows the trajectory and the total number of slots over time.

The key takeaway from figure 2 is the stagnant nature of graduate school slots over the past twenty years. This is especially true if one considers the new directive to prioritize Army strategic leader development, *ALDS 2013*, was published in 2013. The year following the publication had a net decline in ACS slots. In other words, the rhetoric does not match the execution. Another point that stands out is the relatively low total number of program slots. There have been on average fewer than five hundred ACS slots available per year since 1997. Figure 3 (on page 114) highlights how this compares to the total officer population across the same time frame. This



(Figure by author, data from http://www.cna.org/research/pop-rep)

Figure 3. Army Officer Total and Graduate Program Slots Available by Year

figure also suggests a stagnant trajectory for program slots over the past eighteen years in the two primary strategic degree-producing categories: ACS and BOP. The number of graduate program slots is largely dependent on the total officer end strength.

If the Army assumes that more strategic leadership will be required to face an increasingly ambiguous threat environment in the future, then the *graduate slots available* trend line should be increasing at a faster rate than the total officer population. The Army's closed personnel system requires a "long time horizon to observe change in senior army leadership."[31] For example, officers who complete a graduate degree in 2017 are not eligible for senior leadership positions for at least a decade or more. It is thus imperative that the Army provide more graduate school opportunities at a faster rate. Figure 3 clearly shows that the graduate school slots available are in proportion to the number of available candidates. The percentage of slots available to the total population has averaged .64 percent since 1997.[32] In 2015, that rate was .61 percent, slightly lower than the average.

An alternate demonstration of this data also suggests that the total numbers of slots are too low. Table 2 (on page 115) shows the number of active duty officers in the Army in 2015 by pay grade.

Those primarily eligible to attend graduate school are at the O-3 (captain) and O-4 (major) pay grade. Taking just the O-3 pay grade into consideration, the Army has around 29,000 officers and fewer than 600 graduate school slots available as demonstrated in figure 2 (on page 113). There are even fewer slots when the categories that will not reach the four-star level (such as special branch, functional area, and acquisition) are removed. In 2015, this would have generated 484 graduate school slots for a population of 29,166 (45,738 if you include those eligible at the O-4 pay grade).

This number of slots is simply too low when accounting for attrition, nonadvancement, and the increasing complexity of the threat environment. Junior leaders are increasingly asked to make decisions with potentially strategic-level impacts. Where a senior leader can rely on years of experience, a junior leader must rely on his ability to think critically. In-resident graduate programs provide officers the best environment to develop as critical thinkers because such programs allow officers to set aside other tasks to focus entirely on building the skills of strategic leadership. To guarantee a greater likelihood of success at the strategic level, the Army must provide more in-resident graduate school opportunities.

Civilian versus Military Degree-Producing Programs

How important is the difference between civilian and military degree-producing programs? Does it matter if an officer receives his only graduate degree from a military school? At set points in an officer's career he will attend military schools. Examples include CGSC and the Army War College. Over time, these schools have become accredited and are capable of conferring graduate degrees. Officers attending military schools have the option of

Table 2. Active Component Commissioned Officer Corps by Pay Grade for Fiscal Year 2015

Pay grade	0-1	0-2	0-3	0-4	0-5	0-6	0-7	0-8	0-9	0-10	Total
Total	8,132	12,181	29,166	16,572	9,302	4,201	139	126	48	11	**79,878**

(Table by author, data from http://www.cna.org/research/pop-rep)

increasing their workload in order to pursue an advanced degree. In short, they are not mandated to complete the requirements for a graduate degree but have the option. Recently, the Army determined that all officers would attend intermediate level education in some capacity with the top 50 percent of majors attending CGSC as residents.[33] This increase in students resulted in a subsequent increase in faculty and capability for the school to confer graduate degrees. Many officers with limited flexibility in their career timeline will take advantage of the degree offering while foregoing an opportunity to complete an advanced degree at a civilian institution. Recall that the source and type of the master's degree is not institutionally important if critical thinking is the most important goal. If, however, the Army seeks to maximize the graduate school experience to develop strategic leaders, these leaders "must be schooled in matters both military and political" in order to become "masters of the geopolitical realm."[34] Military officers will receive other forms of professional military education throughout their careers that will make them experts in the warfighting domain.[35] Graduate education is the best opportunity to train them in the geopolitical context necessary for strategic leaders. If degree-producing military schools balance their curriculum to include a healthy dose of international relations, political science, security studies, etc., then any trends toward officers only obtaining their degree from military schools will not be inherently negative.

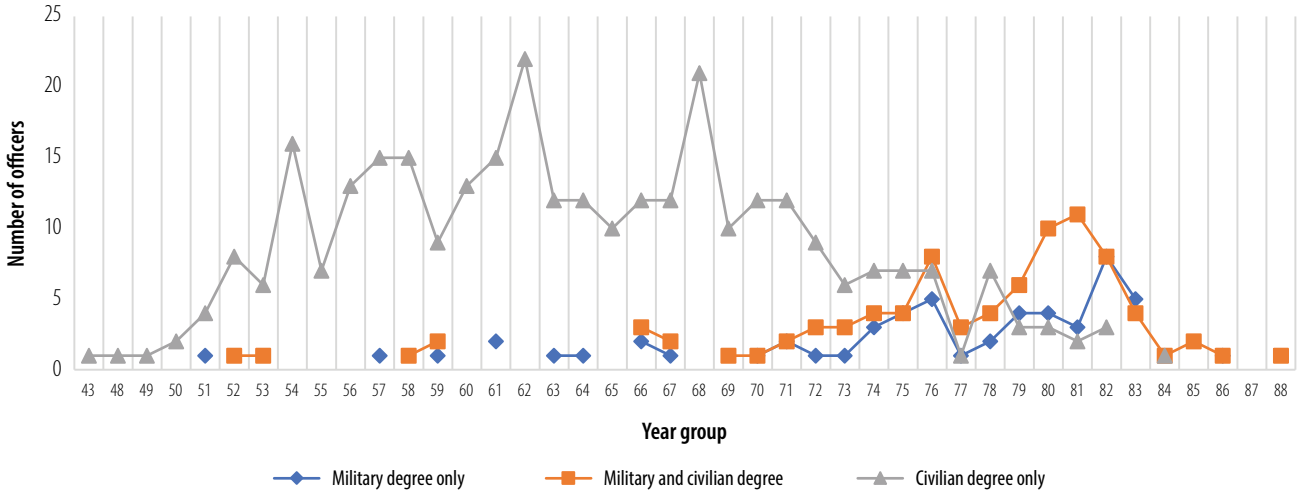
The resume dataset highlights degree trends among Army senior leaders. The data is divided into three categories: officers who obtained a degree only from military schools, officers who obtained a degree only from civilian schools, and officers who have obtained a degree from both a military and a civilian school. A simple time-series line graph represents the data shown in figure 4 (on page 116). It should be noted that the youngest active duty four-star generals are from year group 1982. Therefore, the data will drop because only three-star generals are represented after 1982.

The results of the data show that there is a decreasing trend in attaining a degree only from a civilian institution, with a corresponding increase in acquiring a degree from a military institution. There is also an increasing trend in attaining a degree from both a civilian and military institution. Army senior leaders are still obtaining degrees from civilian institutions but are also more likely to get a degree from a military institution.

The results of figure 4 show a positive trend toward the central goal of this research: *to provide the U.S. Army feedback to better understand the results of its current graduate school policy*. Military institutions control their curriculum and can tailor it to precisely develop strategic leaders. However, the benefits of allowing military officers to broaden themselves at civilian institutions cannot be overstated. Thus, a combination of attending both is optimal. Current trends indicate progress in this regard. The follow-up question then becomes whether this was intentional. The Army can benefit from a holistic approach to generating strategic leaders by encouraging attendance at civilian institutions through an increase in the total number of slots available. Additionally, other structural changes in the Army's OPMD would be necessary to institutionally incentivize attending a civilian graduate school. This would ensure a larger pool of officers with a formal critical-thinking foundation is available to draw on.

Options for the Future

The Army has always striven to develop leaders. Various programs and structural changes have been implemented to adjust training to reflect contemporary threats. Today's ambiguous threat environment requires another shift focused on developing strategic leaders. The above research has identified several weaknesses in



(Figure by author)

Figure 4. Graduate Degrees Awarded by Year Group and Type for Three- and Four-Star Officers

the Army's use of graduate school to maximize strategic leader competency. There are, however, three approaches that can help maximize the Army's strategic leader development process: the Junior Officer Strategic Leader Development Program (JOSLDP), Scales's 350 method, and a culture shift toward education.[36]

Option 1: JOSLDP. In 2007, Maj. Larry Burris published a paper on how to best develop strategic leaders. His central finding was that a centrally selected, four-year program focused on a small group of officers (twenty to thirty per year) would be the best approach to identify and develop the Army's future strategic leaders. The JOSLDP approach would select the best strategic candidates from across the Army. The candidates would then complete their military education (possibly attaining a graduate degree from a military institution) in their first year of the program. Year two would be spent in a civilian graduate school "resulting in a master's level degree in strategy, national security studies or foreign affairs," whereby the thesis project would "have to address a strategic issue currently being faced."[37] Year three would consist of service as an intern on the joint or Army staff, and year four would be in a non-Department of Defense agency.

The JOSLDP approach coincides with the research presented here in several aspects. Hand-selecting the best officers for the program will generate an incentive and promote the seriousness of the Army with respect to developing strategic leaders. This approach will also overcome the deficiencies of program slots tied to population density by forcing officers to focus extensively on strategy-related degrees. Finally, the approach intentionally builds on the success identified by sending officers to both a military and civilian institution for graduate degree completion.

Option 2: Scales's 350 method. A more recent approach, published in 2016 by retired Maj. Gen. Robert Scales, "seeks to guarantee that only those gifted with strategic genius become strategic decisionmakers and commanders."[38] To accomplish this, Scales's method counsels selecting about 350 young officers to attend a civilian graduate school "to study the art of war."[39] After graduate school, they would attend the School of Advanced Military Studies in residency for two years in order to meet the "requirements for a PhD in strategic studies."[40] Later in their career, the cohort would attend another version of the School of Advanced Military Studies at the U.S. Army War College. The program should be rigorous and supervised by the highest levels of the Army staff. Additionally, Scales argues that there should be a set number of duty position quotas to ensure members of the program are placed into strategic positions. Attrition, resignations, and retirements

Lt. Gen. Paul E. Funk II (*left*), then commanding general of Combined Joint Task Force-Operation Inherent Resolve, and Iraqi Maj. Gen. Najm Abdullah al-Jibouri (*right*), commander of Nineveh Liberation Operation, walk through a busy market 4 October 2017 near the University of Mosul. Funk attended Montana State University where he received a bachelor's degree in speech communications and earned a Reserve Officers' Training Corps commission as an armor officer. Later, Funk earned a master's degree in administration from Central Michigan University, and his most recent educational experience was as a War College Fellow at the University of Texas Institute for Advanced Technologies. (Photo by Spc. Avery Howard, U.S. Army)

would winnow out all but the best and justifies 350 officers as the starting number.

Scales's 350 method differs from the JOSLDP in several ways. The Scales method places officers in positions to utilize their strategic expertise between schooling, whereas the JOSLDP is a continuous four-year program. Scales's approach seeks to groom strategists over the length of a career and therefore many more initial applicants would need to be accepted to account for attrition. The method ensures strategic thinkers will reach the senior-leader level because of the size of the candidate pool. Similar to the JOSLDP approach, Scales's 350 method seeks to dictate the graduate degree program into a strategic studies field. It also seeks to expand the number of graduate students to meet future demand. Finally, the approach seeks to maximize the benefits of both civilian and military graduate degree institutions.

Option 3: Culture shift toward education. The goal of this option is to formally recognize civilian graduate education as critical to developing strategic leaders capable of winning in a complex world. To execute this plan, additional resources need to be allocated to increase the number of officers attending fully funded, in-resident graduate schools. The number of slots should not be tied to population density but rather the needs of the force. To accommodate an increase in midcareer officers rotating out of tactical units, the OPMD should be restructured. These updates would include an increase in the total number of

officers at the O-3 and O-4 pay grade, incentives for promotion for officers who attain degrees from both civilian and military schools, incentives for advancement for degrees attained in specific fields deemed critical to strategic leadership, and the removal of year groups to allow officers a utilization tour following graduate school completion. These structural changes will incentivize advanced education and influence a culture shift toward education.

Final Thoughts

There is inherent tension between preparing for the tactical fight (training) and dedicating time to learning how to think critically (education). If leader development is the Army's priority, then the organization has a responsibility to clearly articulate how much of each category is desired. This article has demonstrated the Army's consistent commitment to graduate school opportunities. It has also revealed trends among its senior leaders. The Army can use this data to fine-tune its policies to meet emerging needs. The periodic cycles of tactical versus critical thinking skills is again at the forefront of conversation because of the changing threat environment.[41] Army doctrine and rhetoric from senior leaders is pointing toward critical-thinking skills rather than tactical.

This research article focused on the graduate school aspect of developing strategic leaders and determined three key areas of improvement. First, the Army must provide more graduate school opportunities.[42] An increase in the pool of officers with a graduate degree in strategic studies increases the probability of promoting to the senior-leader level someone with a related degree. Secondly, careful consideration should be given to maximize the utility of graduate school degrees earned by officers. This may include dictating the degree earned. Finally, the Army must take a deliberate approach to encourage and incentivize graduate degree completion at both military and civilian schools.

Three approaches were outlined that would facilitate a solution to this article's central research goal of providing the U.S. Army feedback to better understand the results of its current graduate school policy. The approaches can be integrated with various structural and budgetary changes.

Because leader development is a central goal of the Army to address future national security issues, every aspect of the process must be analyzed. This article was an effort to analyze the graduate school portion of that process for senior officers. Graduate school can deliver the foundation necessary to win today and tomorrow. ■

Notes

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25. A total of 102 four-star officers are in Fust's database. One officer does not have degree information available and four only have a BS degree.

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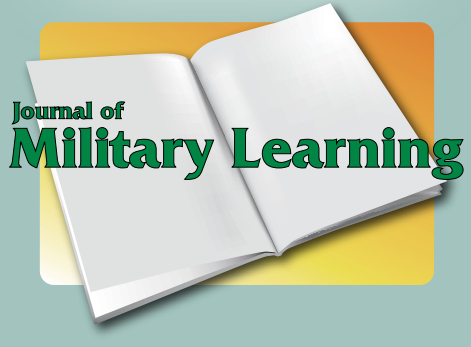

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