STUDENT ESSAY

THE U.S. ARMY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF OFFICERS STUDY:

A CRITIQUE

BY

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THE U.S. ARMY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF OFFICERS STUDY:

A CRITIQUE

INDIVIDUAL ESSAY

by

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THE U.S. ARMY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF OFFICERS STUDY: A CRITIQUE

The development of a professional officer cadre in the Army is of utmost importance to the nation. This essay on officer professional development begins with some examples of constructive media criticism of Army leadership ,then examines a study of officer development, which included opinion preference surveys, and concludes with assessments of how well the study accomplished its purpose. Recently, the senior leadership of the Army has been the focus of criticism from a diversity of sources. A recent book [1] by GEN Palmer, deputy to GEN Westmoreland in Vietnam and Vice Chief of Staff from 1968-1973, is highly critical of high level civilian and military direction. GEN Palmer balances his conclusions with creative concepts for improvement. In the 1980 Military Review issue on "Leadership" there is evidence [2] of systemic problems in officer career development:

> The difficulty is that the environment or structured system within which the American officer must play out his career is weighed heavily against the development and exercise of good leadership. That environment rewards managerialism and obedience to judgement limiting rules.

Further, Savage and Gabriel describe four essential characteristics of an ideal leadership support structure and also assess the degree to which a defined support structure exists. [3] These four pillars of officer development are: limited size of officer corps, assignment stability, published code of military values, and sense of a special calling.

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A charge was made that an officer's career is almost unmilitary because, according to a recent letter to the editor of the Washington Post, defense data shows there is only one chance in six for an officer to work in a purely military assignment. [4] This letter also expresses concern for the low priority accorded the professional development of military leaders. A basic concern about West Point education and training is discussed in an article entitled "Why Waste Money on West Point?" [5] In highlighting lack of emphasis on warfighting, a recent publication calls [6] warriors "an endangered species" and an editorial asks: "Where Have All [7] the Warriors Gone?" Against this background of increasing criticism of Army professional development and its supporting structure, the Army designated 1985 as the "Year of Leadership" and published a white paper. [8]

Since 1983 the Army has published two major studies related to officer careers : the Officer Personnel Management Study (OPMS) and the Professional Development of Officers Study (PDOS). Each of these studies was the subject of an issue of "Commanders Call", OPMS in September-October 1984 [9] and PDOS in March-April 1985. [10] The PDOS effort has produced a weighty five-volume report [11] , dated February 1985, in response to Chief of Staff, Army tasking [12] on 30 May 1984. This report has been widely distributed [13] throughout the Army staff, MACOMS, subordinate commands, the Army schools and special distribution totalling over 2000 copies.

As stated previously, this essay will focus on highlighting and characterizing key aspects of PDOS covering what the study was chartered to do and, for several aspects, how well it did it. Convenient measures of "how well" are found in characteristics of a hypothetical "ideal" or "perfect" military study. Some charactersitics include: clear guidance, independence from undue pressure and influence, dedicated officers, high priority effort, valid data, tested procedures, on-time accomplishment of

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all taskings, innovative results executable within expected resources, long term stability of results, acceptance by senior leaders and instutionalization in policy. An overview of PDOS is presented first to provide a baseline for comparison against an ideal military study. Important factors from the OPMS study previously mentioned will be introduced to provide comparisons to PDOS due to the similar nature of the studies.

In simple terms, PDOS consisted of several steps:

-Needs Analysis (we want Warriors)

-Reality Analysis (not enough Warriors now)

-Goal Setting (develop Warriors)

-Results Projection (Warriors in 2025?)

-Future Trend Analysis (Warrior trend positive)

-Policy Development (improve Warrior development)

-Executability Analysis (Warrior resources planned)

These steps were supplemented with both fundamental principles of officer development and issues resulting from analyses of officer career development. A study excursion was made into adult learning theory. PDOS' methodology is expanded below.

The PDOS study group (SG) consisted of 30 officers from almost all branches and functional areas. Their charter was formally published by the Director of the Army Staff, as follows:

> Evaluate the officer and warrant officer
> professional development system in light of
> the Army's needs during the period 1985-2025.
> To focus on professional military training
> and education in Army schools and units to
> identify systemic strengths and weaknesses.
> To furnish the Chief of Staff, Army,
> recommendations to ensure that our education
> and training system and philosophy will
> provide the professional development of

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officers and leadership needed for the future.[14]

LTG Bagnal, DCG, TRADOC, was designated study director in a 30 May 1984 Memorandum from the Director of the Army Staff.[15] Study milestones covered "initiation" in May 1984 to "report completion" in January 1985, with reports to be made to the Chief of Staff in December 1985. As the study progressed, it was recognized that the scope of the effort exceeded available time and resources. As a result, the warrant officer effort in the tasking was deleted and remanded to a separate study, which has since been completed.

The study directive further defined seven essential elements of analysis:

> (1) Does our education and training philosophy provide officers with the professional development needed for the future?

> (2) Does our education and training system provide the leadership we will need for the future?

> (3) Do we teach the right things in light of our mission (i.e., course content)?

> (4) Do we teach these at the right time for the education to stick and be useful? Consider the effects on assignments.

> (5) Do we teach these at the right places (institutional versus unit; military versus civilian school; correspondence versus resident)?

> (6) Do we teach well enough (methods, resources, quality of institutions)? Do we capitalize enough on technology to help with instructions (e.g., use of remote terminals for instruction from central computer)?

> (7) Are we organized the right way to keep our officer training current and effective (who initiates changes, who reviews, and who provides resources)?[16]

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The PDOS charter references several prior reports: the 1978 Review of Education and Training for Officers (RETO); the 1984 Army Training Roles and Responsibilities Study; and several dated Reserve Component Studies from 1966 and 1967. Additionally, the SG was directed to consider emerging results from the ongoing HQDA OPMS effort previously cited.

A strong goal orientation was maintained in the selection of personnel to accomplish the PDOS effort. A highly dedicated team of officers representing active Army and reserve components, with the assistance of support staff, conducted the study.

Authorized to survey the officer corps, the SG designed and sent a 46 page survey to 436 serving general officers, and a different survey to about 24,000 lieutenants through colonels, both under the signature of the Chief of Staff. Candid responses were requested and more than 14,000 responses were received. Computer analyses of responses weighed heavily in assessing perceptions of the officer corps.

The SG's extensive use of computer technology is exemplary. In no other way could the report of PDOS have been so comprehensively produced and on schedule. Innovation in the future study is a model for those to follow. Duplication of the RETO planning process was a good choice. Use of a telecommunications network provided rapid feedback, particularly in the emerging policy areas. The direct input of specific senior leaders may be much less than indicated, since action officers often prepare responses for senior leaders.

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PDOS' methodology used many sources to define officer professional and leadership development. The following criteria for an "ideal officer" were developed:

-Officers are professional

-Have a Warrior Spirit

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-Progressively master the art and science of war

-Are leaders

-Are action-oriented in their thought process

-Develop a broad base of general knowledge

A qualitative needs analysis identified desired improvements: increasing ability to think and understand the theory of war, improving quantity/quality/expertise of school instructors , and establishing a new philoshophy of officer education and training. Finally, strategic goals[18] were identified to complete the methodology. These goals covered:

o Priority for officer development

   oo Develop a dynamic officer adaptable to change

   oo Officer development consistent with professional development

o Standard of commissioning tightened

o Initial branch qualification for all officers

o Requirements-based development

o Long-term focus: professional values of officers

o Short-term focus: preparation for future assignments

o Total Army scope for officer development

o Prepare officers for command and leadership positions

o New mentor role for officers

o Officer primarily responsible for self-development

The goal of tightening standards for commissioning had been an active Army initiative prior to PDOS. This is not an easy task. In the case of ROTC, for example, colleges/universities may be reluctant to allow the Army to influence civilian educational standards.

Strategic goals shown above are excellent targets for near-term implementation. However, their validity over forty years is questionable.

It does not appear reasonable to expect a forty-year forecast to be precise. A short example shows the fallacy of one typical long-term forecast. Divining the future inflation rate for America by economists is an annual exercise in disagreement, using near-term data as input. Not even a one year target can be accurately forecast by the majority of the economic community.

The PDOS effort attempted to be innovative by developing multiple future scenarios to 2025.[19] The future simulation showed trends indicating that implementation of PDOS policies had a direct effect.Two positive trends were designated "Art and Science of War" and "Common Shared Operational Language." The trend for "Warrior Spirit" was increased only under conflict situations. However, since the model has not been objectively validated previously, these results are tentative and may undermine support for PDOS. A better approach would be to look at OPMS or RETO to see if some near-term results already known could have been duplicated. Model development and validation should preceed a study, not be the last part. On the other hand, however, the future model may prove useful in its own right as an aid to executives' decision-making methodology. It is indeed unfortunate that a first-class, proven future model was not available for this study.

The SG briefed many high-level officials, received information briefings and concluded the study on schedule in December 1985. Based on the published study, the team assessment[20] of PDOS results highlighted seven areas:

   o a philosophy of developing officers,

   o a concept of professional development,

   o policy recommendations,

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o implementation plans,

o resource plans,

o a high-tech policy evaluation methodology, and

o a conclusion that the individual officer is the key
   player in professional development.

PDOS established a structured analytical framework for examining
officer professional development needs by development periods. In
analysing each of the seven officer development periods from pre-
commissioning to senior generals, several system-wide issues[25] emerged
which span the entire officer development process and impact each
significantly:

   -Professional values-an officer's sine qua non

   -Warrior Spirit-readiness to fight and support in combat

   -Art and Science of War-competence actively sought

   -Expert-Integrator-technically proficient and widely
    experienced

   -Decision making-analytical and conceptual skills

   -Common Shared Operational Language-battlefield
    efficiency

   -Self Development-keystone of officer development

   -Mentor-role model for all

   -Common Core-uniform baseline for professional
    development

   -Education and Training Methods-continuous training
    goal

However, much of the above is equivalent to the Army concept of Be-
Know-Do which was first covered in FM 22-100, " Military Leadership".[22]
In this system, "Be" referred to the officer's values, "Know" to the
officer's expertise, and "Do" to the officer's duties.

PDOS also published detailed narrative descriptions of each career

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stage in a very comprehensive manner. These narratives incorporate the concept of a frame of reference, with a new reference point required for each development period. In the narratives, the Be-Know-Do section is tailored to the officer's grade, unlike FM 22-100. Education, training and development is covered in both branch-oriented and school-specific terms. Each career section concludes with major thrusts and PDOS recommended policies.

Experience gained with military qualification standards, which express desired behavior to be demonstrated by lieutenants and captains, and feedback from officer assignments and new career alternatives based on OPMS will both serve to strengthen the focus on periods of development. This is a strong positive contribution of PDOS.

Evidence surfaced in December 1984 that less than sufficient ARSTAFF coordination had been accomplished on key study recommendations. A decision briefing covering PDOS aims, major thrusts and base policies was prepared. During this decision briefing to the Chief of Staff, a lack of staff support surfaced; a compromise was reached to approve PDOS recommendations in principle only; with a further requirement to conduct formal staffing expeditiously and successfully among principals in HQDA. Following this staffing, the Chief of Staff modified recommendations where necessary and the PDOS report, as published, identifies these changes.[23] Most changes kept promotion boards and boards for training separate. Other changes supported equal opportunity for all promotable LTC's and COL's to attain the highest category of military education and a resolve emerged to increase balanced cells of quality by eliminating all designated units.

Assessments of PDOS are presented below, in summary form and compared to an ideal study. The task presented to PDOS was particularly difficult due to many reasons. First, the large scope of diverse efforts with too

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many interrelated conditions, some of which could not be foreseen, and significant emerging results from the earlier-initiated OPMS effort, were each destabilizing. One result was lack of completion of the directed warrant officer study, which was part of the tasking. In addition, there was unexpected media criticism of the study questionnaire's data analyses critical of Army leadership. Further, the limited time available required some study elements to be conducted concurrently and out of logical sequence. Also, inclusion of high-level Chief of Staff-based guidance/comments for "warrior spirit" and "mentor," may have biased the study quite inadvertently.

The above conditions/trends tend to diminish the expected permanence and effectiveness of stated achievements of PDOS. Proposed implementation policies are more difficult to implement quickly, and may be less permanent than prior conclusions from a similar study such as RETO. The OPMS effort, on the other hand, clearly recognized existing conditions previously described above and initiated planning for a new and more integrated study once several planned and ongoing efforts are completed. [24] The remainder of this essay further describes additional assessments of PDOS.

The PDOS report provides an exellent example of the inability of the Army to execute general officer-recommended policies for education and training. MG Meloy, director of training, ODCSOPS, was tasked by the Chief of Staff in 1982 to "evaluate Leavenworth as a training/educational institution", and assess the validity of GEN Marshall's 1933 criticisms about staff and curriculum deficiencies to MG Heintzelman, and determine how well the curriculum of CGSC responds to the needs of those criticisms pertinent in today's environment. Following his January 1982 visit to Fort Leavenworth, MG Meloy concluded that many of GEN Marshall's criticisms

were still valid.

> MG Meloy found faculty quantity, quality and
> stability to be surprisingly poor. He
> indicated the Deputy Commandant job is little
> more than a revolving door and believed that
> the student population is coupled with an
> ineffective student evaluation system that
> promotes teaching form more than substance.
> The diversity of the college material allows
> for little more than superficial treatment of
> any given subject and the course purpose is
> neither sharply defined nor understood by
> students or instructors.25

For General Officer criticisms to exist without action for 50 years is a strong indication that self-correction by the Army is a sorely needed virtue. No study, even PDOS, can remedy major leadership disconnects which persist this long in Army education, training and development. Necessary corrections come from day-to-day management attention, resolution, and persistence.

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At least two system-wide PDOS issues have strong senior leadership interest: "mentor" and "warrior spirit." Each term is found throughout PDOS. "Mentor" is not controversial as a term, but carries a strong resource implication for school-based training. While OPMS surveys identified teaching assignments as unfavored for career enhancement, the PDOS study recommendation is in the opposite direction. Both more and higher-graded officers are necessary under PDOS' "mentor" scenario. A clear picture of career enhancement needs should be established to achieve PDOS goals.

For "warrior spirit" PDOS gives the definition:

> the state of mind and preparedness required
> of each officer which blends all the
> physical, mental, moral and psychological
> qualities for an officer to successfully lead
> the Army in its mission of protecting the
> nation.45

While the term, "warrior", was not defined in the commissioned officer

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survey, almost 90 percent of those surveyed agreed that officers in their work environment expressed values exemplifying a "warrior spirit." Other survey responses [46] show different perceptions. Almost 40 percent of lieutenants thru colonels expressed a need for additional education in warfighting. About 70 percent stated that the current development system does not go far enough in preparing officers for war. These two perceptions cannot be easily reconciled with strong support for "warrior spirit," as a trait of the officer corps [29].

A major complication to PDOS implementation is that the Army staff responsibilities for education and training are divided and fragmented [30]. The PDOS report clearly describes this fragmentation. "There are many agencies in professional development-ODCSPER, ODCSOPS, MILPERCEN, TRADOC, Joint Staff, DOD, AMC, OCAR, NGB, STATE AG's. Their cumulative efforts are not coordinated effectively." While PDOS does not indicate how to improve this situation, one approach could be to establish a personnel command. Such a command could centralize management of the entire officer corps from training to assignments and retention. Lacking a near term fix to this fragmentation of responsibilities inefficient planning and execution of program resources will continue.

PDOS received a strong challenge from the media. PDOS surveys and internal Army analyses of returned surveys, sent by the Chief of Staff to general officers, were leaked to the Armed Forces Journal [31] and to the New York Times in April 1985 [32]. An Armed Forces Journal spokesman stated, in questions to the Department of the Army, that it would publish an article on PDOS in May. The New York Times reported limited officer survey data in April 1985 under the headline "Army Survey Finds Officers Critical," and called the surveys "remarkably candid self-evaluation." The Army was

initially reported to be not willing to provide survey analyses as feedback for the officer corps. An Army discussion paper, March 1985, as quoted by the New York Times, stated:

> We place a tremendous burden on our senior officers. We charge them to perform as statesmen, as spokesmen for their organizations, as stewards of tremendous resources, as role models, as standard-setters, as long-range planners and decision-makers. In short, we demand that they perform as though they were effective corporate executives. In time of peace, there is a blurring of the distinction between 'pure warrior' and 'pure corporate executive.' In both peace and across the spectrum of conflict, we expect our senior Army leaders to be both.34

In order to lessen possible negative impact of the announced Armed Forces Journal report, a "special edition document," entitled "Report to the Officer Corps, Results of the the Professional Development of Officers Study Surveys (PDOSS)" 35 , was distributed to the officer corps under the Chief of Staff signature in May 1985.

The published report 36 is clearly upbeat in tone. However, a statistic under "Professional" shows that only 32 percent of the officer corps is perceived to be focussed on selflessness. No comment appears in the report to explain this negative perception. Clearly, an explanation is desirable, if only to say, for example, "prior Army experience indicates self-assessments of 'selflessness' are too harsh" or that this result "is not consistent with other survey data." This kind of caveat should also be used with the media.

The most important contributions of PDOS may be both a long term structure and plan for officer education and development. However, in another sense, PDOS shows that there is a shortcoming in examining necessary professional development in the context of the future.

Representative recommendations on school-based training emphasize improving
the climate for learning by reducing class size and transitioning from
emphasis on data which has a short retention period to more permanent
data.[37] This appears to be emphasis on short term results. Development of
special skills, such as language or engineering, is not addressed. It is
hard to estimate future Army needs quantitatively in these areas, but
suitable databases do exist in the civilian educational community. Training
and education for special skills need to be initiated early in an officer's
career to insure adequate time to master important hard skills. For
example, if the Army is to maintain a professional capability in space
technology, university and post-graduate programs are necessary
prerequisites. A new program in space studies is underway independent of
PDOS. In addition, the Army must reorient graduate programs which most
often provide officers trained in administration and management with
apparent neglect of the hard sciences. The OPMS study forecast an increase
in the need of technologists for the future Army.[38] This important area is
only covered in general terms in PDOS. Any future study of officer
professional development must account for this deficiency.

The Army relies heavily on technology as a force multiplier. As a two
edged sword, however, technology reduces reliance on the "warrior" as a
major aspect of the profession of arms. Technology competes with the study
of military arts and may be one cause for the current lack of talent
devoted to studying the art of war. Lack of warfighting expertise was a
clear perception of most of the officer corps as reflected in PDOS survey
results. A balance between officer career roles of "warrior", technologist
and manager is not addressed in PDOS recommendations. No blueprint for the
future of officer professional development can be considered complete
without significant analyses and recommendations on balanced career

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management. For a good discussion on competition among career roles, see a recent paper by LTC Baucom.[39]

Several comparisons of OPMS results/conclusions with those of PDOS show opposite positions. The OPMS study forecast a steadily decreasing requirement for "warriors" and a steadily increasing requirement for "technologists".[40] PDOS heralds the "warrior" role of officers. PDOS does not address how an officer corps split so strongly in career requirements can survive. This division has major career implications and, if not properly addressed in perspective, could be a prime cause for a growing perception that an Army career has a minimal chance of providing adequate officer satisfaction.

There are at least three additional areas where OPMS recommendations impact PDOS indirectly. For example, OPMS recommendations regarding officer branch transfers to realign inventory[41] imply retraining, primarily at the third year of service and secondarily at the eighth year. Motivating transferred officers to continue professional development is an accompanying problem area. In a second area, the ability to command at battalion level or above is highly desired by the officer corps according to OPMS.[42] About 70 percent of officers expect to command. However, only about 25 percent of LTCs and COLs are board-selected to command. Because command is highly desireable and career enhancing, and increases "warrior spirit" but is open to only a few, a PDOS area of concern should be to ensure equitable access to education and training leading to command or comparable assignments as early as possible. This is clearly a difficult task due to the few command positions annually available. In the third area, as stated above, OPMS predicts, in a snapshot of the future, that the required percentage of "warriors" is reduced while the support soldier

percentage has increased; and that both the depth and breadth of necessary
skills has significantly increased.[43]   The PDOS future study, in contrast,
used scenarios which did not appear to use skill change as a variable. The
"what to teach " and "when to teach it" of PDOS' education and training
program are clearly impacted.

A military officer's ability to exercise leadership in a unit,
regardless of prior education, training, command support, etc. is much
diminished by the instability of key personnel assignments for the officer,
the boss, peers, and subordinates. PDOS surveys disclosed that officers
often have three jobs per assignment.[44]   Career pressures encourage
frequent assignment changes to increase officer experience and visibility.
A recent report from Ft. Hood stated that between 1982 and 1984 almost
seventy percent of the III Corps key personnel were replaced.[45]   As long
as this personnel turbulence remains a prevalent condition, units will be
less trained for combat and support and officers will have less troop
experience and professional development for future assignments. This
negative factor of personnel turbulence undermines PDOS justification for
increasing officer development resources for education and training.

The following description of a leadership testbed highlights a tested
bottoms-up approach to leadership and incorporates most PDOS goals,
particularly those for "warrior spirit" and "mentor". In 1982, the then-
Chief of Staff, GEN Meyer directed that III Corps become a "leadership
test bed."[46]   The term "warrior spirit" was not mentioned in either the
tasking or report of execution. The III Corps goal was to implement in
1982, in a business-as-usual manner, guidance later given for the 1985
Army leadership goal. The leadership goal became an integral part of the
III Corps mission. The commander, in his concept of operations, described
a strong reason to power down. He stated,

> If we build a climate which is rational and
> supportive, if we clearly state priorities
> and standards, and if we give authority
> commensurate with responsibility, the
> organization will grow in productivity.47

Measures of progress towards the leadership goal have been many: research studies by outsiders identified attributes of excellence in two battalions at Ft. Hood; a 1984 Army War College research team found the climate of military professionalism to be statistically "better" at Ft. Hood; and, in 1984, Ft. Hood was named the U.S. Army Force Command winner of the Commander-in-Chief's Award for Installation Excellence.[48] This is quite an achievement of military leadership and management which proves PDOS concepts are viable in a corps environment, with the commander's support.

Implementation of PDOS has been managed at HQDA by a designated cell in DCSOPS. The cell is operated by action officers (AO) charged with the total program. These AOs also cover DCSOPS training actions on a day-to-day basis. Over time, new priorities may compete with PDOS execution. PDOS resources are at risk because the basis for allocating education and training resources is not yet firmly established. However, PDOS contributed significantly to increasing the connection between requirements and resources.

In effect, the PDOS study shows both achievements and deficiencies. Despite high level support, PDOS does not look like a clear winner, primarily because increased resources, already scarce for training, are needed to execute key policies. Divided responsibilities for resource management and planning, which preceeded PDOS, remain serious problems for resolution. Unintended influence of senior officials explains strong emphasis on "warrior" and "mentor" as career imperatives. However, OPMS forecasts a decreasing number of "warriors" required over time and,

unaddressed in specifics by PDOS, a significant and increasing role for "technologists". Retraining is another area highlighted by OPMS but not PDOS.

The future effort in PDOS is a valuable contribution to management decision making. Management of computer resources provided data for analysis and a rapid response policy network. Both were well executed. PDOS' description of an officer's career in the format of development periods is well done. PDOS did not cover an ongoing Army leadership test bed.

The Army leadership test bed recently demonstrated practical decentralized and out-of-schoolhouse implementations. Many additional leadership/training/education concepts were developed at Ft. Hood. Formal program definitions or exotic terms were neither necessary nor employed. This III Corps achievement clearly demonstrates the critical effects of command emphasis and proper implementation. Both are necessary and sufficient to begin to modify the military culture to achieve PDOS' desired new emphasis on leadership. Success at Ft. Hood leads to the conclusion that decentralized execution of leadership goals, with proper policy in place, is achieveable with only minimal institutional support. Emphasis in PDOS on developing subordinates is old news at III Corps.

ENDNOTES

1. General Bruce P. Palmer, Jr.,USA-Ret, <u>The 25-Year War: America's Military Role in Vietnam</u>, pp. 189-210.

2. MAJ Paul L. Savage and MAJ Richard A. Gabriel, "The Environment of Military Leadership,"<u>Military Review</u>, July 1980, p. 56.

3. <u>Ibid</u>., pp. 56-63.

4. LTC Donald R. Baucom, "Where Have All the Warriors Gone?," <u>Washington Post</u>, 29 December 1985, p. B6.

5. Benjamin F. Schemmer, "Why Waste Money on West Point?," <u>Washington Post</u>, 1 December 1985, p. C1.

6. Colonel Yasotay, pseud., "Warriors: An Endangered Species," <u>Armed Forces Journal International</u>, Sep 1984, pp. 117-119.

7. A.G.B. Metcalf, "Where Have All the Warriors Gone?," <u>Strategic Review</u>, Summer 1985, pp. 5-6.

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