

JPME: Are We There Yet?

Congressman Ike Skelton

In the lead article for the May 1992 edition of Military Review, Congressman Ike Skelton reviews the implementation of recommendations made by the House Armed Services Committee Panel on Military Education concerning joint professional military education. Skelton re-emphasizes the need for joint education for today's military officers.

IN LATE 1987, the Panel on Military Education of the House Armed Services Committee began its review of joint education at the command and general staff colleges of the four services. We issued our preliminary recommendations in November 1988 and our final 206—page report in April 1989.¹

The panel recommended the establishment of a two-phase joint specialty officer (JSO) education process as part of a wide-ranging series of recommendations concerning intermediate and advanced professional military education.

The panel recommended that Phase I be provided to all students attending a service intermediate college. We made this recommendation because we strongly believed that officers of all four services at the major/lieutenant commander and lieutenant colonel/ commander rank should have an understanding, if not expertise, in multiservice matters—"jointness." Familiarity with doctrine, organizational concepts and command and control of the forces of each of the four services was to be included in the curriculum of all four service intermediate schools. In addition, the students would be introduced to the joint world—the joint planning processes, joint systems and the role played by service commands in the unified command structure.

We recommended that Phase II, the detailed, in depth course of study in the integrated deployment and employment of multiservice forces, be accomplished at the Armed Forces Staff College (AFSC), Norfolk, Virginia. The idea was that only the small percentage of intermediate school graduates en route to assignments as joint specialists would attend the AFSC. They would build on the knowledge they had gained during the Phase I course of study.

I am pleased to report that this key recommendation of our panel, the establishment of a two-phase JSO education process, was enacted by the Department of Defense. As proof, some of those now attending the course of study at the US Army Command and General Staff College (USACGSC), Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, or at another service's staff college will, upon graduation, proceed to Norfolk to attend the AFSC.

Service Expertise First

The Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 did much to promote the concept of jointness among the four services. Likewise, our panel's efforts have gone far in promoting jointness in the area of professional military education. We realized that one of the ways to promote better joint planning and joint operations was through professional military education and the development of the JSO. (The other important tool for improving joint operations is for the services to span or more joint training exercises.)

However, we also recognized that the successful JSO first had to be an expert concerning his respective service. While each of the four intermediate service schools now has a role in promoting joint education, each one still has the primary function of educating officers to become competent in their respective warfare specialties. The USACGSC, for example, must provide Army officers a firm foundation on the merging of separate Army branch elements into integrated Army combined arms forces that can conduct land warfare with the support of air and naval forces. This is to be done at the operational level.

An Army officer must thoroughly understand the capabilities, characteristics, strengths and weaknesses of Army forces. He or she must have a very good understanding of the integration of combat, combat support and combat service support elements employed in the conduct of successful Army operations.

The opening shots fired during the commencement of the air campaign during Operation *Desert Storm* were fired by Army Apache attack helicopters. Their mission succeeded in destroying a number of Iraqi early warning radar sites. The success of the mission allowed coalition aircraft to surprise the Iraqi air defense force on the first night of the war. This was crucial in allowing the coalition air forces to gain air supremacy. Their losses that first night over Iraq were zero.

The story behind the story was one of interservice cooperation. While the Army possessed the attack helicopters that took out the radar sites with laserguided Hellfire missiles, it was US Air Force special operations aircraft, MH-531 Pave Low enhanced configuration helicopters that acted as pathfinders for the Army choppers. As General H. Norman Schwarzkopf sought recommendations from his staff, Army officers needed to understand the navigational limitations of the AH-64 Apache. On the other hand, Air Force officers on the commander in chief (CINC)'s staff needed to know that Air Force special operations Pave Low helicopters could provide the navigational guidance lacking in the Army attack helicopters.

This example illustrates the requirement for JSOs on joint staffs to be experts on their respective services. An Army infantry JSO would have needed to understand the capabilities and, more specifically, the navigational limitations of Army AH-64s. Similarly, an Air Force fighter pilot JSO would have needed to know that the Air Force had in its inventory not only fixed-wing aircraft but also Pave Low special operations helicopters able to help the Army AH-64s overcome their navigational limitations for the crucial mission against the Iraqi early warning radars.

Jointness and Joint Education at the Command and Staff Colleges

Our panel report listed the attributes of the JSO—a thorough knowledge of his or her own service, some knowledge of the other services, experience operating with other services, trust and confidence in other services and the perspective to see the “joint” picture. Ultimately, a JSO must “understand the capabilities and limitations, doctrine and culture of the other services.”²²

Joint education at the command and staff colleges of the four services has come a long way since our panel

began its work. Last year, we held hearings to assess the progress made by the various intermediate and senior-level schools to implement the recommendations we had made. Prior to the hearings, we asked the General Accounting Office (GAO) to assess the implementation of the various recommendations. The GAO report on the two Army schools (USACGSC and the US Army War College) came out in March 1991. It noted that the USACGSC had implemented or partially implemented 29 of 31 recommendations.³ The next month, the panel had the opportunity to hear Major General John E. Miller, the deputy commandant of the USACGSC, discuss the progress made on implementing our panel's recommendations two years earlier.

CGSC Situation Report

The story on joint education at intermediate-level military educational institutions is a positive one, not simply for the Army but for all the services. Each has in place a Phase I course. At Fort Leavenworth, the effort has been one to include the Phase I material throughout the six blocks of instruction. I have had the opportunity to examine the curriculum from the previous academic year and can see the amount of time devoted to joint matters. My instincts tell me that the balance of instruction between land-force capabilities and joint capabilities is about right. And I believe that it is done in the proper fashion—more Army—specific courses in the early part of the curriculum, with greater attention to joint issues toward the end of the course.

It would be interesting to hear from both faculty and students whether they also believe the balance between Army and joint matters is just about right. I am sure if there are concerns about this issue, that letter touching on the subject will appear in future issues of *Military Review*. Those who would want to write me directly are encouraged to do so.

Another positive development at Fort Leavenworth concerns the increased number of sister service students attending USACGSC. Both the Air Force and the Navy have increased the number of students at the school. This academic year, the Air Force total was scheduled to reach the 80-student mark. This coming fall, the naval services will also reach the 80-student mark (60 Navy and 20 Marine).

The Navy has been able to improve both the number and quality of students at Fort Leavenworth because of our panel's efforts to have the Navy provide more line officers to other service intermediate and senior schools. This was a cooperative endeavor on the part of both our panel and the Navy. I believe that we have been successful. This means that there should be a

greater number of Navy officers in the seminar groups that meet throughout the year at USACGSC.

Four years ago, not every seminar had a naval officer. Others that did, had officers who were either lawyer, supply officers or other who would never command a ship, a submarine, an aviation squadron or some larger combat formation.

The Panel on Military Education of the House Armed Services Committee report listed the attributes of the joint specialty officer (JSO)—a thorough knowledge of his or her own service, some knowledge of the other services, experience operating with other services, trust and confidence in other services and the perspective to see the “joint” picture. Ultimately, a JSO must “understand the capabilities and limitations, doctrine and culture of the other services.”

Student/Faculty Mix. Yet, our panel was somewhat disappointed that its recommendations for student and faculty mix of officers from the three military departments were not followed. The first recommendation called for intermediate service schools to have student body mixes of two officers from each of the two nonhost military departments in every student seminar. This was to be achieved by academic year 1995-1996. So, at Fort Leavenworth, that would mean that in each seminar there would be two Air Force officers and two Navy officers (or one Navy officer and one Marine officer).⁴

Our faculty mix recommendation at the intermediate level called for 80 percent from the host school and 10 percent from each nonhost school military department. We called for its implementation by academic year 1990-1991. By academic year 1995-1996, the comparable figure were to have been 70 percent and 15 percent from the other two military departments.⁵ In both the student and faculty mixes, the recommendations of our panel were relaxed by the Military Education Policy Document (MEPD) issued under the guidance of the chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff in May 1990. The MEPD sets guidance in the area of joint education. While its recommendations set the minimum level in the matter of both student and faculty mixes, the USACGSC viewed those minimum levels not as floors but as ceilings. While the situation of student and faculty mixes is better today than it was four years ago, it is not as good as our panel believe it could be.

Study of Military History. Another area that our panel report stressed was the study of military history, especially in helping to develop strategists. In our visit

to Fort Leavenworth in 1988, the study of military history was confined to 51 hour and limited to the American experience of war in the 20th century. Army officer, especially those who will rise to command at the corps or theater level, need a thorough understanding of military history that reaches back over the ages.

The recent war in the Persian Gulf exhibited elements of campaigns fought in previous wars. I am confident that Schwarzkopf's familiarity with those campaigns, through his study of military history, helped him design the strategy that resulted in the overwhelming victory won by the allied coalition over Iraq. The lessons for him to draw upon could be found in military actions spanning more than a century.

The six-week air campaign allowed American and coalition aircraft to pound away at Iraqi installations and forces so that when the ground campaign finally went forward, resistance was comparatively light. Maybe the World War II Battle of Tarawa acted as a cautionary tale about halting a bombing campaign too early. During that amphibious landing, Marine forces suffered heavy casualties because the island had not been hit hard enough with air and naval gunfire.⁶

The placement of Army and Marine forces along the border between Saudi Arabia and Kuwait was reminiscent of Sir Bernard L. Montgomery's North African Campaign, which used deception to defeat the German Afrika Korps at El Alamein.⁷ And, finally, the famous “left hook” that struck with such force and surprise against the right flank of the Iraqi ground force may have derived its inspiration from our own Civil War. At the battle of Chancellorsville, General Robert E. Lee, too, dispatched forces under General Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson around the right flank of General Joseph Hooker's Union troops and routed them in a manner that was daring and aggressive.⁸

The examples of how history may have been used in *Desert Storm* simply underscore the point that a profound understanding of military history is crucial for any officer attending the US Army Command and General Staff Officer Course (USACGSOC) at Fort Leavenworth. Since our panel visit in early 1988, the USACGSOC has broadened its study of military history to include 18th century warfare. The seeds of future American military victories can be found by plowing deeply the fertile soil of military history.

Military Education in the 1930s

During the Great Depression of the 1930s, in a far harsher budgetary climate than that of today, all of the services found themselves reduced to “pauperdom.” The sizes of the forces were drastically cut, and modernization programs were, at first, postponed and then



canceled. The Army, which during the Great War had numbered more than 2.3 million, was reduced to less than 138,000 by 1934. In a crisis, the Army could have fielded 1,000 tanks, all obsolete; 1,509 aircraft, the fastest of which could fly 234 miles per hour; and a single mechanized regiment, organized at Fort Knox, Kentucky, led by horse-mounted cavalymen who wore mustard gas-proof boots. The United States had the 16th largest army in the world, with Czechoslovakia, Turkey, Spain, Romania and Poland possessing larger armies.

Too poor to train and equip their forces, the Army, the Navy and the Marine Corps took advantage of a difficult situation by sending their best officers to various schools—to study, to teach and to prepare for the future. The Infantry School at Fort Benning, Georgia; the Command and General Staff School at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas; the Naval War College at Newport, Rhode Island; the Army War College in Washington, D.C.; and the Marine Corps schools at Quantico, Virginia, experienced a renaissance.

It was during the interwar years, the “golden age” of American military education, that such renowned World War II military leaders as George C. Marshall, Dwight D. Eisenhower, Joseph Stilwell, Omar N. Bradley, Chester W. Nimitz, Raymond Spruance and Henry “Hap” Arnold benefited from study at intermediate—or senior—level war colleges. William F. “Bull” Halsey Jr., who commanded the Central Pacific amphibious campaign against the Japanese during World War II, attended both the Army and Navy War colleges. Marshall taught at the Army War College and was the assistant commandant of the Army Infantry School.

During this same period, the Marine Corps devoted considerable effort at Quantico, its seat of learning, putting together the doctrine of amphibious warfare used to such telling effect, from Guadalcanal to Okinawa, in

the Pacific campaigns of World War II. The naval-oriented Fleet Marine Forces became the spearhead of the Navy’s Orange Plan, the basic outline for executing a war against Japan, which was adopted in 1926! The best summation for the period was made by Nimitz, who noted that the entire Pacific Campaign had been thought out and fought in the classrooms of the Naval War College during the 1930s. The only unforeseen event was the use of kamikaze suicide aircraft attacks on US Navy warships during the latter stages of the Pacific war. In short, we won the victories of the 1940s in the command and staff and war college classrooms of the 1920s and 1930s.

Military Education in the 1990s

Shifting from the recent past to the more uncertain future, I want to touch on the important task of educating our country’s military leaders, present and future. A first-rate officer education program—from lieutenant to general—will prepare today’s military officers for tomorrow’s challenges by providing them the most important foundation for any leader—a genuine appreciation of history. I cannot stress this enough because a solid foundation in history gives perspective to the problems of the present. And a solid appreciation of history provided by such a program will prepare today’s military officers for the future, especially those who decide to spend 30 years in one of the services. They will become this country’s future strategists.

In the March 1989 issue of *Parameters*, the US Army War College quarterly, General John R. Galvin, supreme allied commander, Europe, describes why our country needs strategists in each of the services and at all levels. “We need senior generals and admirals who can provide solid military advice to our political leadership,” he writes, “and we need young officers who

can provide solid military advice, options, details, the results of analysis to the generals and admirals.” He lists three elements in an agenda for action:

- Formal schooling.
- In-unit education and experience.
- Self-development.¹⁰

The Army established its School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS) in 1983 to provide the Army with officers specially educated for military operations.

It is expected that the graduates of this one-year, follow-on course of the intermediate command and general staff course will become the commanders and general staff officers of the Army.... One idea that merits serious study is the establishment of a Joint SAMS course under the auspices of the AFSC.... [available to] graduates of the four command and staff colleges.

In brief, the military student should learn the historical links of leadership and be well versed in history’s pivotal battles and how the great captains won those battles. Successful military leaders of yesteryear were indebted to their military predecessors. Jackson’s successful Shenandoah Valley Campaign resulted from his study of Napoleon’s tactics, and Napoleon, who studied Frederick the Great, once remarked that he thought like Frederick. Alexander the Great’s army provided lessons for Frederick, 2,000 years before Frederick’s time. The Athenian general, Miltiades the “Younger,” who won the Battle of Marathon in 490 B.C., provided the inspiration that also won the Battle of El Alamein in 1942; the Macedonian, Alexander the Great, who defeated the Persians at the Battle of Arbela in 331 B.C., set the example for the Roman victory at Pydna 155 years later. The English bowmen who won Crecy in 1346 also won Waterloo in 1815; Alexander A. Vandegrift, Bradley, Montgomery or Douglas MacArthur, who won battles in the 1940s, might well win battles a century or so hence. Thus, I believe that every truly great commander has linked himself to the collective experience of earlier generals by reading, studying and having an appreciation of history.

A military career includes a lifelong commitment to self-development. It is a process of education, study, reading and thinking that should continue throughout an entire military career. Yes, tactical proficiency is very important, but so too is strategic vision. That can only come after years of careful reading, study, reflection and experience. Those at the USACGSC who finish their course of study should be aware of the natural

yardstick of 4,000 years of recorded history. Thucydides, Plutarch, Sun Tzu, Carl von Clausewitz, Napoleon, Alfred T Mahan and Sir Halford John Mackinder have much to offer those who will become tomorrow’s future generals and admirals. Today’s officer corps must be made aware of this inheritance.

Winston Churchill put this idea in these words, “Professional attainment, based upon prolonged study, and collective study at colleges, rank by rank, and age by age ... those are the title reeds of the commanders of the future armies, and the secret of future victories.”¹¹

A Joint School of Advanced Military Studies

As I survey the past four years, I see much progress that has been made in fostering joint education at the four intermediate service schools and at the AFSC. The recent publication of Joint Publication 1, *Joint Warfare of the US Armed Forces*, underscores the efforts of the services to promote jointness.¹² In many ways, our panel’s work simply reinforced and accelerated trends that had already been underway in the services.

Professional military education is an important element in the development of tomorrow’s senior military leadership. The Army established its School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS) in 1983 to provide the Army with officers specially educated for military operations. It is expected that the graduates of this one-year, follow-on course of the intermediate command and general staff course will become the commanders and general staff officers of the Army. Cross-pollination has worked to the extent that both the Marine Corps and the Air Force have established equivalent courses (the School of Advanced Warfighting for the Marine Corps and the School of Advanced Airpower Studies for the Air Force).

One idea that merits serious study is the establishment of a Joint SAMS course under the auspices of the AFSC. It would be similar to the follow-on schools at Fort Leavenworth, Quantico and Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, but would have a joint focus. Such a school would seek applicants from graduates of the four command and staff colleges.

The details of such a course need to be worked out. Here are some suggestions. The student body should initially be composed of 60 officers, 20 from each military department. They may even be AFSC graduates who stay on for further study. Such a school would allow the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the unified commanders to have a pool of officers well grounded in the planning and conduct of joint operations. It would be a course of study that would be added to rather than

supplant the current second-year courses found at Fort Leavenworth, Quantico and Maxwell. One advantage of such a course would be to have Navy participation.

In 1923, Major George C. Marshall, the future World War II Army chief of staff, described the regular cycle in the doing and undoing of measures for the national defense. He observed that “we start in the making of adequate provisions and then turn abruptly in the opposite direction and abolish what has just been done.”¹³ Today we are in the midst of making one of those changes in direction.

World conditions have changed, the Cold War is over. The challenge now is to reduce the size of our military effort without putting at risk our national security. There are still threats to American interests in the world that cannot be ignored. While Americans want a reduction in military spending, they do not want to reduce spending in such drastic fashion that we risk undoing all the hard work and money spent since 1980 in restoring the military. Americans also understand George Washington’s wise counsel, “To be prepared for war is one of the most effectual means of preserving peace.”¹⁴ I am convinced that they will support measures needed to maintain an adequate and credible national defense in order to preserve the peace that we enjoy today.

But these next few years for those in the military will be difficult ones nonetheless. As we reduce the size of the services, professional military education should

not be forced to take its “fair share” of the cuts. The fact is that smaller forces will have to be more capable forces. That means continued high levels of training and efforts to improve professional military education. Doing business in a joint fashion will become even more necessary.

During the Great Depression of the 1930s, in a far harsher budgetary climate than that of today, all of the services found themselves reduced to ‘pauperdom.’ ... Too poor to train and equip their forces, the Army, the Navy and the Marine Corps took advantage of a difficult situation by sending their best officers to various schools—to study, to teach and to prepare for the future.

Eisenhower got it right more than 30 years ago, when in a message to Congress, he noted, “Separate ground, sea, and air warfare is gone forever. If ever again we should be involved in war, we will fight it in all elements, with all Services, as one single concentrated effort. Peacetime preparation and organizational activity must conform to this fact.”¹⁵ Building on the accomplishments of the past few years, the enactment of the Goldwater-Nichols Act in 1986 and the greater effort in both service and joint professional military education will allow us to have a greater chance for securing a lasting peace. **MR**

Notes

1. US Congress, House Armed Services Committee, *Panel on Military Education Report* (Skelton Report). Report to the Committee on Armed Services House of Representatives. 101st Congress, 1st Session, 21 April 1989.
2. Panel on Military Education Report. 55.
3. US General Accounting Office, Army: Status of Recommendations on Officers’ Professional Military Education, March 1991. NSIAD-91-121BR, 2.
4. Panel on Military Education Report. 128.
5. *Ibid.*, 127.
6. Illustrated History of World War II (Pleasantville, NY: Readers Digest, 1984), 236 (excerpt from Strong Men Armed [Random House Inc., 1962]).
7. Illustrated History of World War II (Pleasantville, NY: Readers Digest, 1984), 292 (excerpt from The Memoirs of Field Marshal Montgomery [The World Pub. Co., 1958]).
8. Peter Batty and Peter Parish, *The Divided Union: The Story of the Great American War 1861-1865* (Topsfield, MA: Salem House Books, 1984), 129.
9. William Manchester, *The Glory and the Dream: A Narrative History of America, 1932-1972* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company, 1974), 6.
10. GEN John R. Galvin, “What’s the Matter with Being a Strategist?” *Parameters* (March 1989), 2.
11. Panel on Military Education, 12.
12. Joint Publication 1, *Joint Warfare of the US Armed Forces* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 11 November 1991).
13. George C. Marshall Jr., 1923 Address to the Military Schools and Colleges Association, “The Effect of School Histories on National Defense.” (Unfortunately, this photocopied speech does not reference the book from which it was taken.)
14. John Bartlett, *Familiar Quotations* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company, 1968), 461.
15. GEN Edward C. Meyer, “The JCS—How Much Reform is Needed?” *Armed Forces Journal International* (April 1982), 84.

The Honorable Ike Skelton, US House of Representatives, Democrat, Missouri, has represented Missouri’s Fourth Congressional District since 1977. He is a senior member of the National Security Committee, ranking minority member of the Subcommittee on Military Procurement and member of the Subcommittee on Military Personnel. He has authored two other articles for Military Review: “Joint and Combined Operations in the Post-Cold War Era” (September 1993) and “Inspiring Soldiers to Do Better than Their Best” (January-February 1996).