



Spc. Kyle Bickerton (left), assigned to 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, reenlists in the U.S. Army aboard a CH-47 Chinook on 15 March 2024. Bickerton exemplifies the professionalism of the soldiers in the all-volunteer force. (Photo by Sgt. Vincent Levelev, U.S. Army)

Architects of Training

Assessing How TRADOC Makes Soldiers for the All-Volunteer Force

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An examination of the origins of the U.S. Army's current training system displays a historical incongruity. The Army's approach to training has little conceptual and practical relation to the all-volunteer force (AVF), even though its creation

was simultaneous with the advent of the AVF. This training system was not designed with the new volunteer status of military personnel in mind. From the beginning of these systems, their intersection created a potential mismatch between personnel structure

and training methodology. We draw attention to the legacy of the AVF in relation to Army training systems, particularly the creation of the Army's Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC).

Differences exist between an AVF and a draftee Army. To get at the substance of these differences, we explore the interaction between an AVF and TRADOC training requirements to identify potential misalignments and highlight some potential consequences of that mismatch. TRADOC came into being on 1 July 1973, in tandem with and partially as a response to the move to an AVF.¹ TRADOC's "train-evaluate-train" methodology, initially institutionalized in the Army Training and Evaluation Program (ARTEP), is the basis for today's training methodology. The training system was based on the need to raise a tactically proficient Army quickly and was designed to rapidly mobilize and train a large number of soldiers.²

This training model was part of the contingency plan after adopting the AVF; it was not integral to creating the AVF itself. Civilian leaders who advocated for an AVF paid much attention to numerical considerations (such as numbers of recruits and their pay) but did not give as much consideration to the qualitative differential that may be produced by the move from a draft Army to an AVF. Army leaders also gave little attention to the training models and methodologies appropriate to these two force compositions.

To substantiate our sense of a mismatch between force composition and training methodology, we look closely at the creation of TRADOC and at *The Report of the President's Commission on an All-Volunteer Force*—also known as the Gates Commission Report—on the feasibility of an AVF. Viewing the AVF history through the lens of the development of TRADOC reveals that overemphasizing preparation for the tactical level of war may have real consequences for readiness in today's complex operational environment.

Forming General DePuy, the Inaugural TRADOC Commander

A retrospective of the AVF at fifty years is an occasion to consider how Gen. William DePuy's vision for the Army and TRADOC has been realized. To accomplish this important task, however, it is crucial to

understand how the vision itself was formed by sketching some biographical details.

DePuy was the progenitor of TRADOC and its inaugural commander, remembered fundamentally as "an architect for and builder of soldiers."³ "TRADOC was peculiarly his creation, for he was the general staff principal at its birth, and its first commander," reflected Gen. Paul F. Gorman, his deputy chief of staff for training. "[M]ore than any other individual, he established its tone, and set the azimuth upon which it marches to this day."⁴ The focus on training provided by DePuy undergirded TRADOC's approach to preparing soldiers for war, especially with respect to the high value placed on the tactical level

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Sgt. Cooper Hulse, a cavalry scout assigned to the Hawaii Army National Guard representing Region VII, stands at the position of attention while getting his uniform inspected at the 2023 National Guard Best Warrior Competition on 9 July 2023 in Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska. Best warrior competitions across all components of the Army are a product of modern professional training and demonstrate the high quality and professionalism of the soldiers in the all-volunteer force. (Photo by Pfc. Alexandria Higgins, U.S. Army)

of war. This approach continues today in important and fundamental ways.

DePuy served as a battalion commander in the European theater during World War II and as director of special warfare in the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Military Operations, and then as commanding general of the 1st Infantry Division during the Vietnam War. He went on to serve as assistant vice chief of staff of the Army and finally as commanding general of TRADOC from July 1973 to June 1977.

Although he served at many levels of war, DePuy, in his own self-conception, was significantly shaped by his tactical combat experience, particularly from World War II and Vietnam. These experiences formed the tactical genius and down-to-earth practical insight that enabled him to develop TRADOC as an organization with the tactical effectiveness of military formations at

its heart. His influence bled into training models overseen by TRADOC and into the doctrine and policy about how the U.S. Army conducts war. A 2023 *Military Review* article, “Ignoring Failure: General DePuy and the Dangers of Interwar Escapism,” lays out DePuy’s focus on the tactical level of war by contrasting him to the first Combined Arms Center commander, Lt. Gen. John Cushman.⁵ DePuy’s TRADOC maintained a focus on the tactical level of war while its subordinate Combined Arms Center, led by Cushman, wanted military education to address a broader scope of development.⁶ DePuy himself recognized that his experience had both positive and negative effects. DePuy, commenting on the initial development of Field Manual (FM) 100-5, *Operations*, first published in 1976, later related,

Those of us who wrote 100-5 in ’76 had not been (were not) part of the renaissance of



Nguyen Cao Ky, prime minister of South Vietnam, pins decorations on Maj. Gen. William DePuy (center) and Brig. Gen. James Hollingsworth for their leadership during Operation Attleboro, conducted in November 1966 in Tay Ninh Province, South Vietnam. Although DePuy served at many levels of war, when appointed as the first commander of Training and Doctrine Command, his extensive combat experience in World War II and Vietnam heavily influenced formulation of the Field Manual 100-5, *Operations*, that redesigned how U.S. forces would fight in the event of a major military conflict. (Photo courtesy of the Douglas Pike Photograph Collection, The Vietnam Center and Archive, Texas Tech University)

“operational art.” It was not part of our lexicon and not part of our thinking process. It was a deficiency of which we were simply not aware. Ironically Active Defense was in some ways driven by operational considerations but they were German not ours. “Forward Defense” is an operational consideration tactically executed. But of course we did not say so because the operational level was not part of our consciousness. We were tactical guys by self definition and preference. We thought the problem facing the Army was “tactical performance” we [sic] were only half right.⁷

DePuy reflected on the historical realities that gave rise to this tactical focus:

[O]ur 100-5 (the 1976 version) suffered from one fatal, in my opinion, fatal flaw ... It was

that the manual itself was a tactical as opposed to an operational manual ... I just simply admit that we did not explicitly address the operational level of war. Now it was a cultural thing at that time. My generation either took it for granted, which is the nicest thing you can say about it, or didn't think much about it. And we were wrong. And it showed up in Vietnam. I mean we made operational errors in Vietnam because my generation was tactical ... My generation was a tactical generation, because almost all of us who then were at the higher levels in the Army in the '70's ... last half of the '60's and the first half of the '70's and so on. We were World War II Battalion and Regimental Commanders ... we were tactical thinkers. I'm admitting now

our mentality was tactically based on our past experience.⁸

DePuy's comments about FM 100-5 display his mindset during the advent of the AVF, the formation of TRADOC, and the development of the basis for the Army training model that is still used today.⁹ By DePuy's own admission, there was little inclusion of the operational domain, nor by way of inference, the strategic.

DePuy candidly related that deficiencies in operational thinking, even at the highest levels of military leadership, had severe effects in Vietnam:

I'm not being critical of Westy [General Westmoreland]. I think that he and I and all the rest of us, in retrospect, were not professionally acute enough to realize that operationally, as opposed to tactically, we had not solved the problem of North Vietnamese direction and support of the war in the South ... Now I don't think that any of us, we professional soldiers who were supposed to be experts in all that, made that as clear as it should have been. And that is my regret in retrospect. I was a very small cog in a big machine, but my regret is that I didn't urge that more strongly on my superiors in Vietnam and back in Pentagon. That I characterize as "the" only major military failure in Vietnam. We had virtually no tactical failures. It was an operational failure and we didn't perceive it early enough and didn't insist on it strongly enough.¹⁰

DePuy's influence would have lasting effects. At DePuy's military retirement ceremony in 1977, chief of staff of the Army Gen. Bernard Rogers said, "No soldier in the past quarter century has made a greater contribution to our Army, and through that Army to our nation."¹¹ It would be hard to overstate DePuy's significance, especially considering his continued legacy, through TRADOC and the continuance of the approach to training that he pioneered and institutionalized.

The Gates Commission

A commission, staffed by economists and chaired by former secretary of defense Thomas Gates, was formed to evaluate the feasibility of an AVF, largely based on the numbers of personnel needed and the economic costs associated with maintaining it.¹² Published in

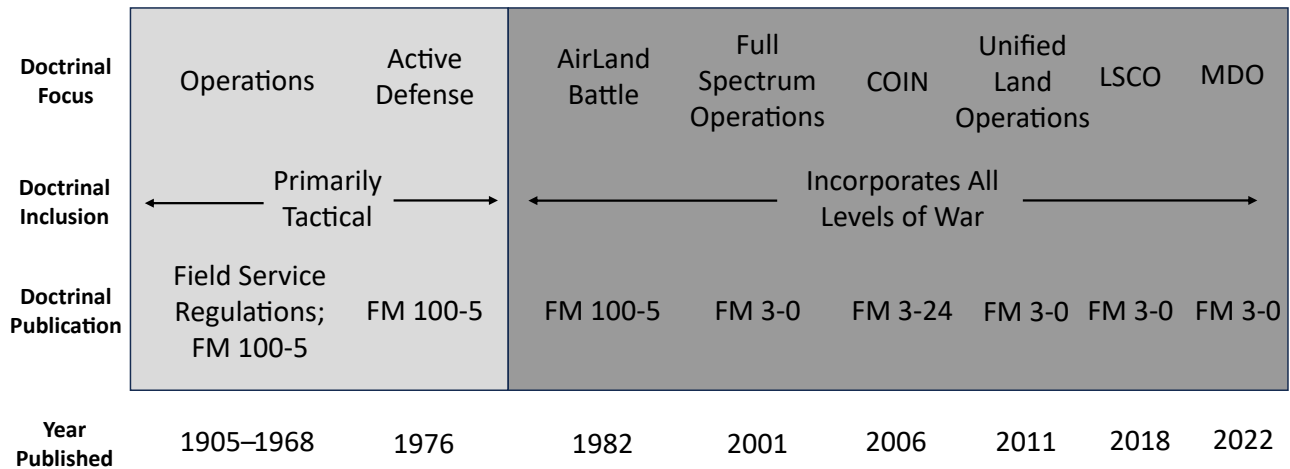
1970, the Gates report was a presidentially mandated assessment of the viability of an AVF. The report focused on the economic feasibility of an AVF, though it also attended to issues around whether and how an AVF would fundamentally alter how to use instruments of national power.¹³ The report did not carefully examine the issues of training that may follow on from a move to an AVF.

The Gates Commission was most interested in the size of the force and the different forms of costs associated with the AVF over and against the draft. Their analysis projected that slightly more than half of the AVF would be comprised of first-term recruits.¹⁴ The commission evaluated what it called the "quality" of the recruits but not their subsequent training or development.¹⁵ The main metric of quality was IQ as measured by the Armed Forces Qualification Test. The commission nods to moral and physical standards but quickly dismisses their importance.¹⁶ Because these standards were largely gauged by a test before entrance into the Army, there was not pressure on the Army itself to develop soldiers across multiple domains— affective, psychomotor, and cognitive—over the soldier's life cycle.¹⁷

Gates and colleagues seemed to envision a combination of short-term and career volunteer soldiers. Their analysis focused on the viability of such an at-that-time theoretical force; they did not yet have categories for the modes of preparation necessary to create and maintain a force that was fundamentally comprised of a different kind of soldier than the draftees of Vietnam or previous conflicts. The commission failed to seriously consider intrinsic and extrinsic sources of motivation, beyond monetary incentives, that would attract and keep a high-quality volunteer force of long-term service soldiers. The commission wanted to right size the force but had a narrow view concerning its quality. The Gates Commission began to consider military training in relation to its proposal for a new AVF Army; in the end it reverted to assumptions grounded in the draft Army.

The TRADOC Training Model in Context

The antecedents of TRADOC's training model provide necessary context for evaluating points of continuity and discontinuity with the Army of the early- and mid-twentieth century.¹⁸ Although prevailing societal



(Figure by authors)

Figure 1. Modern Army Warfighting Doctrine Development and Levels of War

trends, funding, and guidance from senior leaders are all potential drivers of educational change, we aim to highlight a continuity across these changes. This continuity focuses on training soldiers, whether conscripts or volunteers, for the tactical level of war without an equally strong focus on the operational and strategic levels of war, as depicted in figure 1.

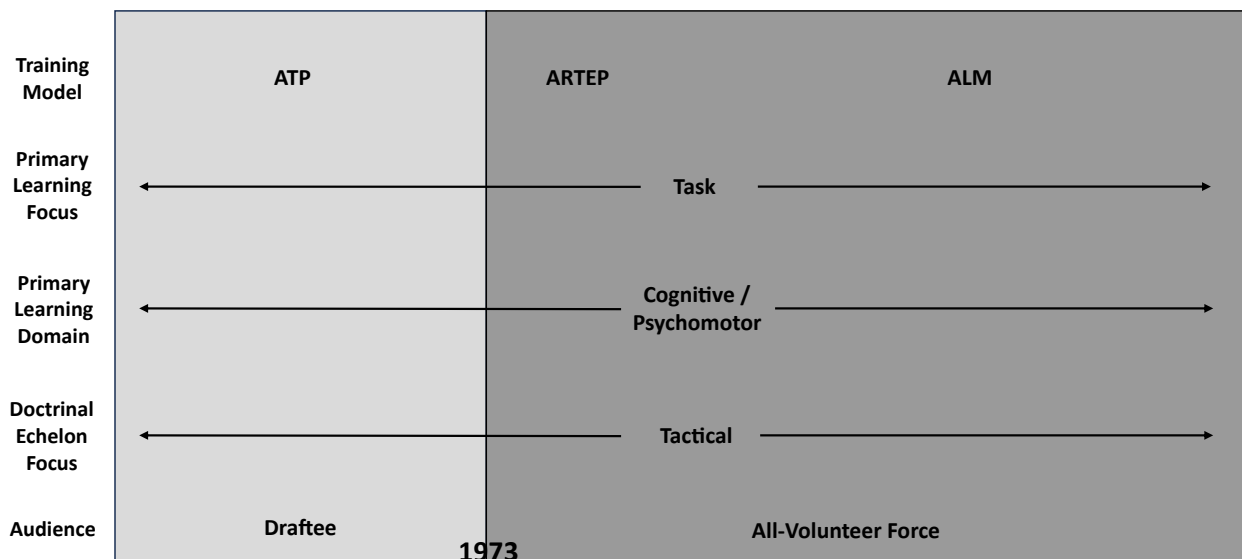
Once President Richard Nixon created the AVF, it was up to the newly formed TRADOC and its commander to develop a plan for implementing the AVF vision through recruiting, training, and retention. Admittedly, “The secretary of the Army was concerned more with the personnel aspects of the new volunteer force than with organizing and preparing it for combat.”¹⁹ This task, then, was left to DePuy.

Figure 2 depicts continuity and difference in U.S. Army training across various changes during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The Army Training Program (ATP) was the legacy program that the Army used to train its personnel before the creation of TRADOC. An “uneven approach to training management” during the previous era left more to be desired.²⁰ The World War I-era program was tied (historically and conceptually) to a draft model of accessions that prepared new recruits for the rigors of combat. DePuy describes the ATP as “a mobilization training program” designed to make many recruits combat-ready in a short amount of time.²¹ Its goal was to create combat-ready divisions, not to develop a standing Army.

The ATP model had a type of cohesion across training modality, doctrine, and strategic end state.

A mismatch among ends, doctrine, and training methodology began to emerge with the creation of TRADOC in the wake of the AVF. TRADOC’s initial ARTEP training model was designed with presuppositions based on the last major war (World War II) for an Army (the draft Army) that no longer existed.²² This sentiment was reflected from the comments of Lt. Col. Donald Vought in a 1973 letter to the editors of *Military Review* where he “suspect[ed] that we may not be preparing to fight the next war in the style of the last one but in the style of the one before the last [World War II].”²³

Although the actual training model, the ATP, was replaced by TRADOC in 1973, the mindset relating to the audience of the training and the goal of the training remained the same. TRADOC’s new training paradigm was still designed to prepare the maximum number of new recruits for combat in a short time-frame. The major difference between the ATP and training methodologies implemented by TRADOC was that progress toward this end was now more clearly able to be specified and tracked—what DePuy described as “a new concept of performance-oriented training, which was a systematic way to go about the setting of training objectives through the tasks, conditions and standards technique.”²⁴ Further permutations of TRADOC training models kept the same



(Figure by authors)

Figure 2. Training Model Continuity and Discontinuity over Time

focus on tactical proficiency. All through this shift there seemed to be little conscious reflection on the training and education needs of an AVF, as opposed to conscripts.

At the time TRADOC was being stood up, the U.S. Army was preparing to meet and defeat the Russians in Europe; victory would depend on tactical prowess with the clearly stated limited goal to “above all else, *prepare to win the first battle of the next war*.”²⁵ DePuy reflected on these realities in an interview with Michael Pearlman:

P[earlman]: There were no Principles of War in the 1976 doctrine and that made it unusual. Could you speak to that?

D[ePuy]: Well, Paul Gorman and I decided because it was a tactical manual, we would take them out. We wanted to change the whole tone of the manual to what I would almost call, an operator’s manual for the division level and below. How to operate a division against a big Russian attack.²⁶

The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff’s official history from 1973 further situates understanding of broader national policy at the time of this tactical focus.²⁷ Army warfighting doctrine focused on tactical competencies, and the Army’s training schema complemented this.

The Yom Kippur War in 1973 brought a new urgency for the U.S. military to consider its tactics

and training in light of new technological realities—what DePuy called the “lethality [of modern precision weapons] in the 1973 Arab-Israeli War.”²⁸ The Army’s role in this matter was given additional immediacy because the national policy focused on land warfare in Europe.²⁹ The Army sought ways to best prepare its personnel for this potential war. DePuy viewed the move to an AVF as a strategic decision on the part of U.S. civilian leaders. He saw the U.S. military’s immediate need as rapidly fielding high-functioning formations—whether draftee or volunteer, soldiers had to be prepared to win the first tactical battle of the next war.³⁰ Under DePuy’s leadership, Army doctrine did not immediately move beyond a tactical focus. FM 100-5, *Operations*, retained and refined this focus, and it was only with its 1982 revision that Army doctrine first formally adopted the operational and strategic domains of war.³¹ The creation of the AVF highlighted, even unwittingly, the growing mismatch that its training regime, in practice, was a holdover from the tactical focus of the draft era. In this new era of the AVF, no longer would America’s Army overwhelmingly consist of first-term draftees who needed to be quickly trained to meet the needs of a single (potentially cataclysmic) event. Instead, in the language of today’s AVF, the standing Army of an AVF would require deep training and education to prepare soldiers “to think



Israeli artillery pounds Syrian forces near the Valley of Tears in the Golan Heights on Yom Kippur, 6 October 1973. The Yom Kippur War in 1973 brought a new urgency for the U.S. military to consider its tactics and training in light of new technological realities—what then TRADOC commander Gen. William E. DePuy called the “lethality [of modern precision weapons] in the 1973 Arab-Israeli War.” (Photo courtesy of the Israel Defense Forces and Defense Establishment Archive)

critically and creatively” in the face of such an event and its second- and third-order effects.³²

The AVF Army needs an operationally and strategically capable, as well as tactically proficient, force. The problem is that, although Army doctrine eventually caught up to this reality, Army training methodology has not to the same extent.³³ The Army’s training model continues today to operate as if, by and large, specified tactical (observable, measurable) tasks matter most.³⁴ Army learning systems acknowledge education and nontask-based training, but there is comparatively little emphasis on these areas; systems such as TRADOC’s Training Development Capability, for example, do not equally support these efforts.³⁵ The Army has not primarily adjusted the trajectory of its training methodology, only its ability to measure waypoints along this

tactical trajectory. The main difference between the ATP model of the First and Second World War armies and the training model of today’s Army—a change inaugurated by the founding of TRADOC—is the ability to assess training effectiveness better and more quickly through specifying how tasks are identified, quantified, and assessed. The formation of TRADOC marked a shift in Army training systems, but the changes may not have gone deep enough. The Army’s overall training approach seems to consider the nature of personnel—draftee or volunteer—as immaterial, or at least tends toward supporting basic draftee competency. Bound up in these realities is an implicit tactical focus. This history has serious implications; a progression from tactical to operational to strategic development is devalued in favor of the tactical.



Soldiers assigned to the 101st Airborne Division's Company A, 3rd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, take part in an urban warfare training exercise in an abandoned town in Saudi Arabia 4 January 1992 during Operation Desert Shield. Subsequent to the establishment of TRADOC, the Army's training focus on professionalizing tactical proficiency in the all-volunteer force had a wide reaching salutary effect among all components of the Army and contributed to the United States' overwhelming victory against Iraq during Operation Desert Storm. (Photo courtesy of the U.S. Army)

A Mismatch Emerges: Training, Doctrine, and Policy

As we've already seen, late in life, DePuy identified significant gaps associated with the Army's overemphasis on tactical effectiveness; whether the Army and TRADOC in particular were listening is another thing altogether. The creation of a skilled tactician, while crucial, is a very different matter than the development of a fully rounded professional who can also operate at operational and strategic levels. The Army's training focus on the tactical, when it intersects with the AVF, would have profound impacts. A non-AVF training model can cut against the formation of fully rounded professionals. In its hurry to train and certify minimally acceptable proficiency, such training does

not place as high a value on professional development across the lifespan.

A narrow focus with continuing effects. Today, well-documented recruiting and retention crises threaten the viability of an AVF.³⁶ We want to think about the role of training in this crisis: Is the Army's current approach to training capable of addressing the unique demands of developing an AVF that is proficient at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels of war? On the fiftieth anniversary of America's AVF, Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III commented, "Today, America's All-Volunteer Force is the strongest military in human history, and it sets the global standard for military professionalism."³⁷ This is a high bar to meet and to sustain. Issues about how to recruit and

retain talent for a standing Army are inherent to the training of this volunteer fighting force.

The connection between task competency and tactical success is foundational to the TRADOC training model and has proven remarkably effective in battle, from Desert Storm/Desert Shield onward. A tactical training model accords with a draftee Army because of the shorter timespans involved—both on the front end of quickly training up new recruits, and on the back end of assuming that most of these recruits will have a short (and tactically focused) career in the Army. There is less need to consider personnel development over the life cycle because there are fewer who will rise to higher levels of responsibility at the operational/strategic levels. The operational and strategic levels of war center more on affective and cognitive competencies, such as leadership, critical thinking, and creativity. Yet the development of a professional Army whose competency goes well beyond tactical proficiency is essential to the AVF. This includes the development of “intangible” soft skills that prove so important for forming leaders of healthy organizations that maintain *esprit de corps*.³⁸ A tactically focused model also has less need to consider retention, how training and education may support this effort, or that intrinsic motivation (such as that afforded by gaining education/certification) could be a recruiting/retention tool.

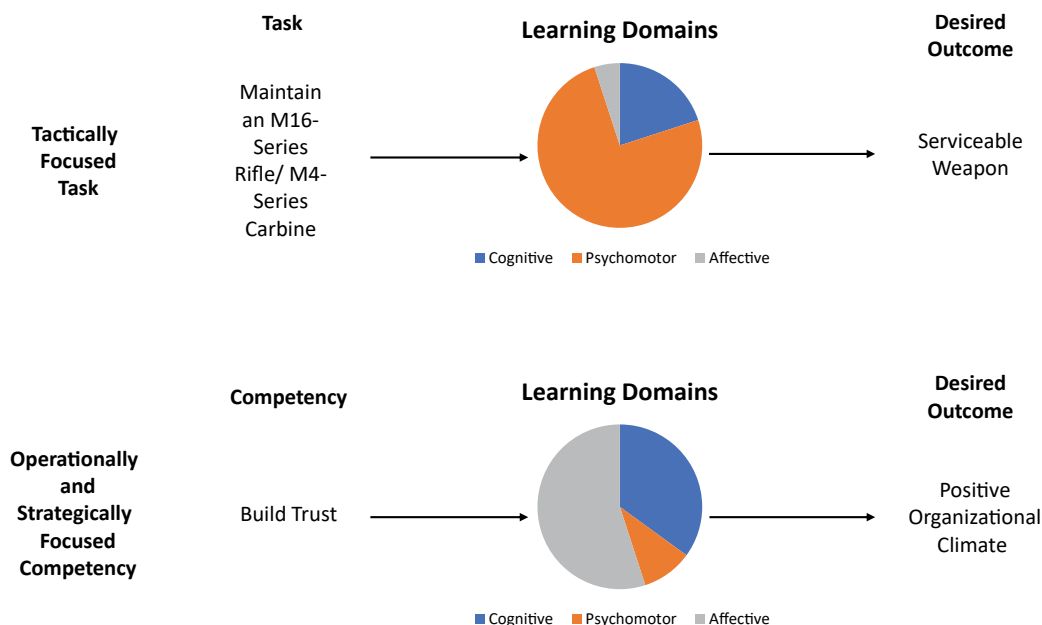
Soldiers must be developed to adjust to changing operational environments (OEs) and to make decisions at the lowest levels—a reality clearly displayed by the Army’s recent mission command doctrine.³⁹ Such development takes time and professional investment; it also takes organizational structures that support this complex professional development.

Tailored to mass production. Professional competency requires, at a minimum, determining where, when, why, and how to complete a task. Such considered judgment cannot be mass produced, but the Army must train and educate for it. As the military OE has become more complex, so too have the developmental needs of soldiers. Specialist professionals developed over the course of a long-term career are necessary to the AVF, and all-the-more so in a multidomain operations environment.⁴⁰

Senior leaders have changed Department of Defense (DOD) policy to reflect this reality more clearly. DOD Instruction (DODI) 1322.35, *Military Education*:

Program Management and Administration, requires a turn to outcomes-based military education (OBME) and necessarily away from training and education driven by specific tasks.⁴¹ OBME focuses on the outcomes produced by military members’ actions, not on the tasks they perform. This shift may seem subtle, but it is tectonic. Training a task is relatively straightforward; creating a professional who can achieve desired outcomes is massively complex. A shift in training focus from task completion to competency across levels of war is also in keeping with realities on the ground. The commander is concerned with outcomes; the tasks that go into creating this outcome are only one part of the whole picture. The DODI itself speaks directly of the need to match education to mission requirements at echelon. Military education “encompasses those educational opportunities specific to creating and sustaining the intellectual capacity essential to the profession of arms, ensuring DOD personnel are adequately prepared to practice their profession commensurate with their levels of responsibility and mission requirements.”⁴² The effective training and education of soldiers must equip them to blend together cognitive, psychomotor, and affective competence to achieve necessary results at all levels of war. The particular composition of knowledges, skills, and behaviors required of soldiers will tend to require broadly similar constellations for like levels of war. Although Army training doctrine recognizes three learning domains, growth in the affective domain becomes increasingly important as a soldier moves through their career, without losing the vital nature of other domains, as figure 3 shows.

A training model developed for a non-AVF is, of necessity, tailored to optimize mass-production of draftee enlistees. Today’s training model is largely indebted to the realities of a draft. By assessing externally observed and easily verifiable factors, this training model ensures that critical tasks can be appropriately completed at scale and en masse. This emphasis on tasks clearly comes into focus with the task-condition-standard model of assessment that lays out the action, context, and goal of training a given task.⁴³ Implicit within this model, and explicit within TRADOC regulations, is that the task, and the degree of task completion, must be externally observable and verifiable.⁴⁴ Such a model makes a lot of sense for tasks like constructing a fighting position or cleaning a weapon, but it obscures



These figures represent the authors' analysis of the associated task and ADP 6-22 competency (para. 5-44–5-47).

(Figure by authors)

Figure 3. Differences in Learning Domain Development

the complex reality of other military requirements like troop leadership and the ethical use of force.

What is at stake here for an AVF is not simply meeting and defeating the enemy in battle—as the initial TRADOC vision had a tactically focused Army meeting the Russians in mind; instead, an AVF must maintain a standing Army capable not only of this contingency but also of many others across a range of professional military functionalities, contexts, and potential enemies. Army learning systems should be revised to better align with DOD guidance on OBME and to support the broad range of soldier competencies required across all levels of war.

Culture of immediacy. Trainees can sense a culture of training that is focused on the immediacy of tactical effectiveness and may feel a lack of being “invested in” or valued. They may feel as if they are treated more like “cogs” in a machine than as persons with worth to the organization beyond the tasks that they can perform.⁴⁵ Volunteers for Army service may not feel they are being professionally developed over the life cycle, but rather they are training to become tactically proficient warfighting machines—in itself an interesting take on

one conception of the professional as a honed means of achieving desired outcomes.

Such a culture can lead to low morale, difficulty with recruiting, and poor retention.⁴⁶ When soldiers inhabit systems that neither support their development across all levels of war nor seem to value them as a whole person, we should not be surprised when they act in keeping with a lack of human worth—most notably through harmful behaviors. What if soldiers felt invested in and valued as professionals? How might this change some of the difficulties the AVF is currently facing?

Part of the examination of underlying training architecture involves considering the root causes of problems currently facing the AVF—ranging from difficulties in recruiting adequate numbers of soldiers to increasing instances of harmful behaviors, including extremism, sexual assault, and sexual harassment among soldiers.⁴⁷ We must consider the possibility that portions of these issues could stem from the way training and education have been handled in the Army since 1973: not as value-added development for volunteer soldiers, but as mass-production commodification of warfighting assets. These are points for further consideration, not conclusions;

substantiating the nature of the relationship between the issues the AVF currently faces and the Army's training methodology will take a variety of assessments. Such assessments should consider that fundamental changes to Army learning systems—including to the “task, condition, standard” model of training—may be warranted for an Army that has gone through many iterations of warfighting doctrine while maintaining largely the same training methodology.

Conclusion

A 1977 RAND report on the AVF remarks, “The advent of the All-Volunteer Force (AVF) ... marks the beginning of one of the largest and most important experiments of its type ever conducted.” It further notes that “the implications of the volunteer force ... touch ... on virtually all aspects of the defense effort ... Dealing effectively with th[e] legacy [of the draft] will be one of the most formidable obstacles that the Department of Defense and the Congress must face during the next decade.”⁴⁸ The AVF has passed the test of time in the sense that the United States has continued to use this force composition model; whether the Army has fully addressed how to train volunteers for all levels of war is a separate but crucially important matter. Has the current model failed in training an AVF? The U.S. military's tactical successes over the last fifty years show the value of training for this level of war. The model, however, may not have fully succeeded either; it may limit military effectiveness within the complex contemporary OE.⁴⁹ Tactical proficiency goes a long way in winning wars—especially wars against opponents with inferior tactics and weaponry. Tactical proficiency alone, however, may not be enough in a war against a near-peer competitor, nor to sustain an AVF. The Army should continue to develop tactical prowess in greater measure, but this should not come at the expense of operational and strategic competency. This is not an either/or dilemma. The problem is that current Army learning systems do not support each equally. Advances in Army doctrine and policy, such as the inclusion of operational and strategic

levels of war beginning in the 1980s, have shored up some deficiencies. But as long as the Army's training model remains mismatched with force structure, doctrine, and the realities of the OE, the very recruits who volunteer for the AVF will be shaped in ways that push against the success of the AVF in fighting and winning our Nation's wars.

The current difficulties that the AVF is facing suggest that changes may be necessary. In 1973, Capt. James Thomas suggested that the move to the AVF might be an ideal time to make “changes in our training procedures ... designed to prepare our soldiers psychologically and morally for the next limited engagement.”⁵⁰ It seems his call may have gone mostly unheeded, even as the Army has moved into and through new challenges. A large-scale combat, near-peer, multidomain operational environment will put unforeseen stressors on TRADOC's training model. These difficulties coincide with current significant underlaps in recruiting, which will only be exacerbated by training requirements on a scale not-yet-seen in the AVF era, should a near-peer war begin. This is to say nothing of the second- and third-order effects of degraded professional development over two decades of persistent war that are beginning to show—seen in effects as diverse as the rise in harmful behaviors and difficulties in recruiting and retaining quality volunteers.

What is clear is that there must be a match among force composition, doctrine, and training needs. Will the United States continue using an AVF? The question must be partly answered by addressing the training model used to develop and sustain volunteer soldiers. Either the Army keeps heading down the current path, hoping for the best, or it must make the necessary changes to prepare for the contingencies of the future. ■

The views expressed here are the authors' own and do not reflect the official position of the U.S. Army or the U.S. Department of Defense.

Notes

1. William R. King, “The All-Volunteer Armed Forces: Status, Prospects and Alternatives,” *Military Review* 55, no. 9 (1977): 3–4. The recession of the draft was the culmination of a herculean effort

wherein “President Nixon and Secretary Laird engineered a drastic change in the sources of military manpower.” Walter S. Poole, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, 1969–1972* (Washington,

DC: Office of Joint History, Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2013), 50, https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/History/Policy/Policy_V010.pdf; see also Robert K. Griffith Jr., *The U.S. Army's Transition to the All-Volunteer Force, 1968–1974* (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1997), https://history.army.mil/html/books/030/30-18-1/cmhPub_30-18-1.pdf.

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3. Bernard Rogers, "Retirement Ceremony, General William E. DePuy," 30 June 1977, transcript, p. 4, box 12, folder 10, William E. DePuy Papers, U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center Archives and Special Collections, Carlisle, PA (hereinafter cited as DePuy Papers).

4. Paul F. Gorman, "General William E. DePuy Eulogy," 16 September 1992, transcript, p. 4, box 2, DePuy Papers.

5. Eric Michael Burke, "Ignoring Failure: General DePuy and the Dangers of Interwar Escapism," *Military Review* 101, no. 1 (2023): 53–54, <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/Military-Review/English-Edition-Archives/January-February-2023/Burke/>.

6. Herbert, *Deciding What Has to Be Done*, 53–56; Burke, "Ignoring Failure," 53.

7. Gen. William DePuy, handwritten note attached to interview by Michael Pearlman, 16 May 1987, transcript, pp. 14, 16–17, 19, DePuy Papers. This was a considered reflection. These comments are from a hand-written note that DePuy added to the transcript of his interview with Pearlman. The note begins: "Please substitute this explanation on page 19.—Pearlman won't mind and I think it is a clarification that needs to be made."

8. *Ibid.*, 24–25; DePuy, interview by Michael Pearlman, 23 September 1986, transcript, pp. 7–8, DePuy Papers. This reality is made even more clear in DePuy's further comments:

"D[ePuy]: ... I fully admit that we were deficient. I was deficient at the next level up—the operational level. It wasn't there. I wasn't thinking that way in Vietnam also and we paid the price for that. I paid the price, too. But I think if I went to Vietnam again with all the thinking I've done in the 23 years since I went to Vietnam, I like to think that I would have been smarter.

"P[earlman]: Today's Army formal education system states there is an 'operational level of war' that never was recognized in your generation?

"D[ePuy]: That's right. We were the workers in the trenches. Up to the time and thru the time you had stars on your shoulders. The move to add the 'operational level' to our intellectual and professional inventory is correct and just in time because we will need it in places like the Persian Gulf."

9. Burke, "Ignoring Failure," 56.

10. DePuy, interview, 16 May 1987, 14, 16–17.

11. Rogers, "Retirement Ceremony," 5.

12. Joshua J. Daily, "The All-Volunteer Force: LSCO, Cost, and a New Implicit Tax on Reserve Forces" (master's thesis, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2019), <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/citations/AD1083235>.

13. Bernard Rostker, *I Want You!: The Evolution of the All-Volunteer Force* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2006), 77, https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2007/RAND_MG265.pdf.

Rostker's history of the all-volunteer force (AVF) for RAND provides valuable insight into studies into the feasibility of the AVF that predate the Gates Commission. We focus most on the work of the Gates Commission because it was stood up by the president and had his ear in particular ways. Rostker even notes that the first meeting of the commission took place in the Roosevelt Room of the White House. Richard V. L. Cooper, *Military Manpower and the All-Volunteer Force*, R-1450-ARPA (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1977), viii–ix, <https://www.rand.org/pubs/reports/R1450.html>. Early analysis suggested, "The removal of the draft has ... altered the entire philosophy under which the military must manage its human resources ... it is essential to address the major areas in need of reform: ... and military training." Fundamental changes to training based on this kind of analysis did not take place.

14. Thomas Gates et al., *The Report of the President's Commission on an All-Volunteer Armed Force* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1970), 133, <https://www.nixon-foundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/The-Report-Of-The-Presidents-Commission-On-An-All-Volunteer-Armed-Force.pdf>.

15. Rostker, *I Want You!*, 5, 35; Cooper, *Military Manpower and the All-Volunteer Force*, vi.

16. Thomas Gates et al., *The Report of the President's Commission*, 44–45.

17. TRADOC Regulation (TR) 350-70, *Army Learning Policy and Systems* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Publishing Office [GPO], 2017), para. 3-2b(1).

18. John A. Bonin and James D. Scudieri, "Change and Innovation in the Institutional Army from 1860-2020," *Parameters* 53, no. 2 (2023): 95–120, <https://press.armywarcollege.edu/parameters/vol53/iss2/13/>.

19. Herbert, *Deciding What Has to Be Done*, 25; Burke, "Ignoring Failure," 53–54.

20. Conrad C. Crane et al., *Learning the Lessons of Lethality: The Army's Cycle of Basic Combat Training, 1918–2019* (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center, 2019), 49.

21. U.S. Army Military History Institute, "Senior Officers Debriefing Program: Conversations between General William E. DePuy and Lieutenant Colonel Bill Muller and Lieutenant Colonel Les Brownlee," 19 March 1979, transcript, section I, p. 14, DePuy Papers.

22. Herbert notes, "All DePuy's ideas were grounded in his experiences in World War II. They were the ideas around which he would try to rally the entire United States Army." Herbert, *Deciding What Has to Be Done*, 21.

23. Donald Vought, "Letter to the Editor," *Military Review* 53, no. 5 (May 1973): 2–3.

24. U.S. Army Military History Institute, "Senior Officers Debriefing Program," 19 March 1979, section VII, pp. 34–35, DePuy Papers.

25. Field Manual 100-5, *Operations* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976), 1-1 (emphasis in original); see also TRADOC Military History and Heritage Office Staff, *Victory Starts Here: A Short 50-Year History of the US Training and Doctrine Command* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2023), 53, <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/Research%20and%20Books/2023/TRADOC-50yr-Book-Final.pdf>; Burke, "Ignoring Failure," 53–54; Bonin and Scudieri, "Change and Innovation," 111.

26. DePuy, interview, 16 May 1987, 23.

27. Walter S. Poole, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, 1973–1976* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2015), https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/History/Policy/Policy_V011.pdf.
28. DePuy, interview, 23 September 1986, 1; TRADOC Military History and Heritage Office Staff, *Victory Starts Here*, 7, 53–54; Burke, “Ignoring Failure,” 53.
29. Poole, *Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy*.
30. Herbert, *Deciding What Has to Be Done*, 26; DePuy, interview, 16 May 1987, 23.
31. L. D. Holder, “A New Day for Operational Art,” *Army* (March 1985): 22–28, 32. Holder was a principal author of the 1982 version of Field Manual 100-5, *Operations*.
32. Military education is supposed to “develop strategic-thinking warfighters who leverage diverse experiences, backgrounds and perspectives to think critically and creatively about using military power to inform national strategy, conduct globally integrated operations, and fight under conditions of disruptive change.” DOD Instruction (DODI) 1322.35, *Military Education Program Management and Administration*, vol. 1 (Washington, DC: Department of Defense [DOD], 26 April 2022), 3, https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/dodi/132235_vol1.PDF.
33. See Robert A. Doughty, *The Evolution of US Army Tactical Doctrine, 1946–76*, Leavenworth Papers no. 1 (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 1979); John L. Romjue, *From Active Defense to AirLand Battle: The Development of Army Doctrine, 1973–1982* (Fort Monroe, VA: TRADOC, 1984). Recent positive developments, such as the use of the learner-centric Army learning model are steps in the right direction. See TRADOC Pamphlet (TP) 350-70-7, *Army Educational Processes* (Fort Eustis, VA: TRADOC, 2018), 39. The Army is still constrained by an overall model, including the processes and systems that are bound up in and perpetuate it, that is set in 1973—with a tactical, non-AVF focus.
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42. *Ibid.*, para. 1-3a.
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44. TR 350-70, *Army Learning Policy and Systems*, para. 3-14b(1).
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