



Cadets visiting Thailand in 2013 learned about local food, culture, and language. They taught conversational English to school-age children using games as a tool to reinforce English vocabulary.

U.S. Army Cadet Command photo

Cadets in Strategic Landpower

Managing the Talent We Need

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The emerging concept of strategic landpower refers to the application of landpower toward achieving overarching national or multinational security objectives.¹ The Army is developing its approach to employing landpower as a globally responsive and regionally engaged Army. Through regionally aligned forces that provide combatant commanders with capabilities for regional missions, the Army will

engage forward and maneuver strategically with its partners. As Field Manual 3-22, *Army Support to Security Cooperation*, states:

Whether providing humanitarian assistance training in Southeast Asia, providing mobile training teams in Africa, or developing interoperability with European partners and regional security organizations, the Army as part of the joint force conducts security cooperation activities to help shape the environment and prevent unstable situations from escalating into conflict, in support of combatant commanders and to achieve national security objectives.²

Against this backdrop, what skills will Army leaders need? How can the Army develop leaders who will achieve success in applying strategic landpower? The answer is to start as early as possible in a leader's career. Future Army leaders need to gain critical skills as cadets, when education can lay a foundation in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, languages, and world cultures. Cadets need to use those skills from the beginning of their careers.

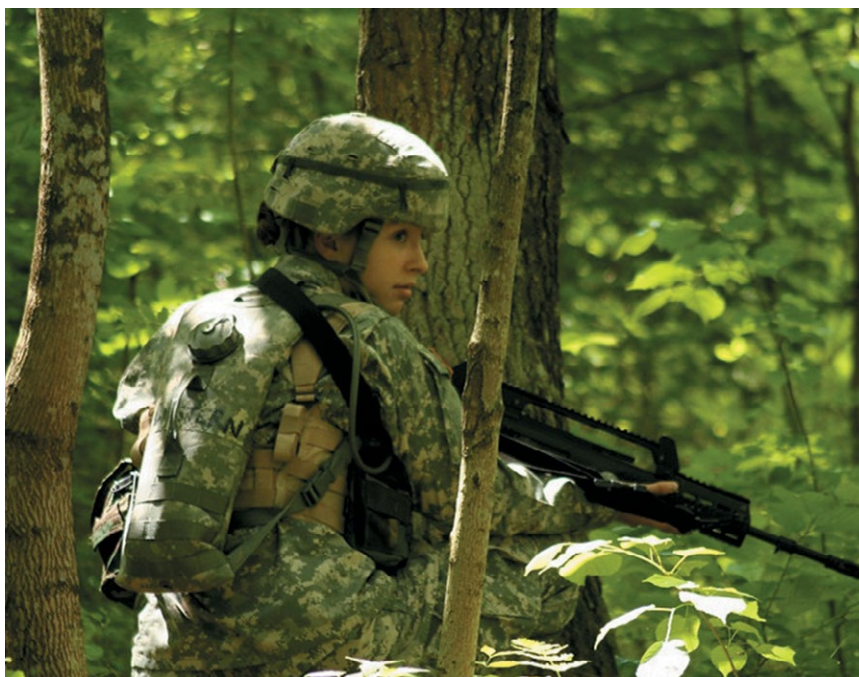
To manage the talent it will need, the Army should ask in what ways education, experiences, and training during college will prepare cadets to apply strategic landpower as officers. The strategic landpower concept can guide how the Army prepares its officers during their undergraduate study and their initial years of service. The Army already has taken some steps toward preparing new second lieutenants for future assignments, but it should improve how it recruits students and manages their careers as officers.

In August 2013, the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, U.S. Army Africa (USARAF), and U.S. Army Cadet Command cooperated to provide cultural understanding and leadership development to a group of cadets. The new program embedded three Reserve Officer Training

Corps (ROTC) Cadets with USARAF country desk officers who accompanied the cadets to Lesotho, Zambia, Djibouti, Uganda, and Italy. According to Maj. Christopher D. Sturm, International Army Programs liaison to USARAF, the skills, experiences, and cultural awareness the cadets gained would provide an important baseline for their future positions.³ Sturm said, "Ultimately, our Army is stronger in the near and far term because of engagements like this."⁴ The Cadet Overseas Training Mission is one small example of how cadets can gain experience that will prepare them to apply strategic landpower. Such programs should be expanded.

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

The Army's approach to recruiting and training cadets has much room for improvement; it has changed little in 20 years. The ROTC program should entice elite students *and* ensure the Army gets the best possible return on its investment. Currently, the main incentive is college scholarships, but career fields are not guaranteed. Cadets take Army ROTC classes in addition to their chosen area of study. Near the end of their senior year, they are assigned a basic



A cadet practices tactics and movement while on a Cultural Understanding Language Proficiency (CULP) mission to Lithuania in 2013. The cadets trained with the Lithuanian military, taught conversational English, participated in humanitarian outreach projects, and learned about local culture, values, and language.

Photo from U.S. Army Cadet Command

branch, along with all other graduating cadets. The criteria for branch assignment typically are unrelated to their field of study. A mechanical engineer could be assigned to the transportation corps, or a history major could be assigned as an engineer. According to a report in the *AUSA [Association of the United States Army] News*, the Army has increased its emphasis on recruiting young men and women for ROTC with backgrounds in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (known as STEM).⁵ At the recruiting website www.goarmy.com, the only evidence of this is that potential students can find a link that allows them to see the names of technical careers available in the Army.⁶

Several opportunities exist to earn advanced civilian education degrees while in the Army. These opportunities are through fellowships, broadening assignments, and functional area transfers. The Army expends great effort to make sure officers it selects for assignments in professional fields such as financial management, supply chain operations, or international affairs eventually gain the necessary academic preparation. Unfortunately, the first chance officers have to serve in, and study for, such professional disciplines typically is at the four- or seven-year mark of their careers. These opportunities are past the service obligation for officers who earned undergraduate degrees with ROTC scholarships, so any STEM graduates would have to extend their service to use the skills the Army wants them to have.⁷ The Army's model provides a disincentive to STEM students because it is at odds with the nature of STEM careers. The model likely negates potential benefits to the students and to the Army.

Imagine you are a computer science student at a prominent U.S. university. Your skills will be in high demand as soon as you graduate, and your salary in the private sector could be substantial. You have an interest in military service, and you would also like some financial assistance with college. Under the current model, if you accept an ROTC scholarship

targeted to a STEM field of study and you complete your degree, you will spend your first four years in the Army replacing your new technical knowledge with training on tank gunnery, assembly area operations, or logistics. After four years, you will have forgotten most of the technical knowledge you learned in college, or it will have become obsolete, or both. The Army will not concern itself with this issue because it will continue hiring contractors to run its computer systems and networks. The Army pays lip service to the need to recruit students with STEM expertise, but with the piecemeal way it manages their careers, the Army squanders the



Romanian soldiers and U.S. Army ROTC cadets study a terrain map in preparation for land navigation training during the cadets' 2013 CULP mission to Romania.

Photo from U.S. Army Cadet Command

talent it manages to recruit and the money it invests in scholarships.

Instead, the Army should frame its targeted ROTC scholarships within a new career planning model. Rather than offering STEM scholarships isolated from any career plan, the Army should develop a career planning system with a continuous trajectory starting from college. It should take into account a cadet's talents and interests years before commissioning to branch assignments. Instead of interrupting the development of cadets' expertise by placing STEM graduates in typical roles for four or seven years, and then offering them technical opportunities, the Army needs to develop its STEM officers in a continuous



Photos from U.S. Army Cadet Command

Cadets on a 2013 CULP mission to Togo visit with Queen Essoham of Pya who rules over eight villages, including her own, and is one of nine leaders under the prefect of the Kara region. They discussed various medical issues that affect her village, such as malaria and HIV.

education and career plan starting as cadets and continuing as lieutenants.

U.S. Army Cadet Command reported in September 2013 that it had awarded 348 STEM scholarships worth \$8.4 million.⁸ These scholarships offers were, no doubt, extended to some of the best and brightest college freshmen in America—scholars, athletes, and leaders. The average SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) score for all Army scholarship recipients was more than one standard deviation above the national average.⁹ However, the proportion of STEM majors receiving scholarships remained low (estimated at about 20 percent or less of the total).¹⁰

Bluntly put, the basics of infantry maneuver have changed very little over time. The tools needed to lead a

transportation platoon have changed very little as well. The Army does not need financial managers from the Wharton School to fill these roles. It needs financial managers from the Wharton School to fill financial management roles.

To improve the use of ROTC STEM scholarships, high school students still should compete nationally. Selected students still should major in their discipline at a school of their or the Army's choosing, depending on how the program was arranged. Upon graduation, new lieutenants should be assigned to a basic combat branch for no more than a few years, to "learn the Army." After this period—and most important, before critical STEM skills could atrophy or become obsolete—the lieutenants should be transferred to

another branch or functional area corresponding with their STEM knowledge. Biochemistry majors could be assigned to CBRN (chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear) defense units. Computer scientists could be assigned to cyber units. Materials engineers could be assigned to research and development. These positions should be tailored to the talent rather than filled by the usual approach of plugging in an available person to fill the needs of the Army at the time.

Senior Army leaders have said the Army needs highly educated officers to fight and win the technologically advanced wars of today and tomorrow. If this is true, the force needs a better way to recruit and use the talent it covets. Using the same approach as usual and hoping for different results is not going to work.

Language and Culture

Central tenets of the strategic landpower are regionally aligned forces and an emphasis on the human interaction in war. Effectively recruiting and training talent for regionally aligned forces is imperative, and among the most important skills needed are language and culture skills. Given that most of the Army's

near-future talent is or soon will be enrolled full-time in higher learning institutions, it makes good business sense to find students who already know or are studying languages and cultures. The best language learners and nonnative speakers of any language are those who started learning additional languages when they were young and maintain their skills through ongoing use and study.

Currently, the Army does not seek to identify future lieutenants with skills in, or even an aptitude for, foreign languages. As we reposition ourselves after two long campaigns, the strategic landpower concept can guide us to correct this faulty practice. The Army should require, or at least encourage, all cadets seeking a commission to take foreign language classes while enrolled in ROTC. Near commissioning, the Army should administer the Defense Language Proficiency Test. The Army could use language proficiency scores to assign officers to regionally aligned units in which they could use their language skills right away. As with STEM graduates, the Army should ensure lieutenants with language skills get to use them before they start forgetting. This practice would be an example of true talent management. Language learners need ongoing



U.S. Army cadets participated in physical training with Togolese cadets at Pya, Togo, in 2013.

Photo from U.S. Army Cadet Command

travel and study opportunities to keep language skills current: foreign language skills are perishable. If the Army expects to have officers—and not just contractors—who can support the new *engagement* warfighting function with needed language skills, it should rethink how it manages foreign language programs.

Administering the Defense Language Proficiency Test to cadets is convenient for the Army because college and university ROTC departments have access to the examinations. The test is already funded. Test control officers are available, and Army Regulation 11-6, *Army Foreign Language Program* (2009), authorizes testing.

Beyond the languages needed to engage and connect with host-nation partners, the Army has realized its leaders need an understanding of cultures, histories, and numerous local or regional characteristics. Encouraging the study of history is one way to provide this type of knowledge, but the history requirement for ROTC cadets consists of a single military history class.

Programs such as ROTC's "Cultural Understanding and Language Proficiency Program" help students gain regional expertise. Other study abroad programs are available. The Army could benefit by developing more officer candidates through in-depth study of certain cultures and languages and promptly assigning new graduates to the regions studied.

The U.S. Army Cadet Command has begun offering security cooperation training as part of an increased emphasis on language, regional expertise, and cultures. Each year, as many as 1,400 cadets receive the opportunity to participate in three-week training events with host-nation militaries. Teams of 10 cadets provide rudimentary English language instruction, participate

in medical training exercises, and embed with unit training. The cadets learn to appreciate the challenges of cultural differences and language barriers. Many look back on this training as career and life changing.

An infantry platoon leader, for instance, with a basic ability to speak French or Arabic—having earned college credit for a regional studies course or study abroad program perhaps in Morocco—would be invaluable to a battalion commander conducting a security force assistance mission in North Africa. The Army could ensure it has hundreds more new officers entering with these types of skills every year.

The End State

Science, technology, engineering, mathematics, language, and cultural expertise will be core skills for Army leaders in the near future. The Army must prepare its leaders to apply strategic landpower starting when they are cadets and continuing right into their first assignments as lieutenants. A focus on STEM is imperative for the Army to gain technical expertise. Cyber-based mission command systems, web-based training venues, satellite communications, and even basic office automation are the technological instruments for an expeditionary army. Proficiency in at least one additional language will be essential—even a speaking proficiency level of 1+ (able to maintain predictable face-to-face conversations and satisfy limited social demands) can help leaders engage host-nation partners. The strategic landpower concept is ideal for guiding how the Army prepares its officers during their undergraduate study and their initial years of service. ■

Notes

1. For the complete definition of strategic landpower, see U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, Strategic Landpower Task Force white paper by Raymond T. Odierno, James F. Amos, and William H. McRaven, "Strategic Landpower: Winning the Clash of Wills" (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office [GPO], 2013), <http://www.tradoc.army.mil/FrontPageContent/Docs/Strategic%20Landpower%20White%20Paper.pdf>.

2. Field Manual (FM) 3-22, *Army Support to Security Cooperation*, (Washington, DC: GPO, January 2013).

3. Terysa M. King, "Cadet Overseas Training Mission Furthers U.S. Army Africa Efforts," Army Public Affairs website, News Front

Page, 20 August 2013, http://www.army.mil/article/109579/Cadet_Overseas_Training_Mission_furthers_U_S_Army_Africa_efforts/.

4. Ibid.

5. "Future Army Leaders Train Today for 'Uncertain Times,'" AUSA [Association of the United States Army] News archives online (November 2012), <http://www.ausa.org/publications/ausanews/archives/2012/11/Pages/FutureArmyleaderstraintoday-for%E2%80%98uncertain%E2%80%99.aspx>.

6. See www.goarmy.com.

7. Ibid.

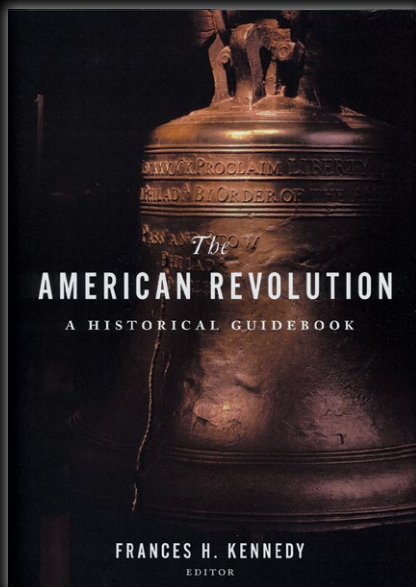
8. U.S. Army Cadet Command scholarship application and award data for high school seniors graduating in the academic year 2013.

9. Data for 2013 calculated by author based on "Data: SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) Program Participation and Performance Statistics," College Board website, <http://research.collegeboard.org/programs/sat/data>.

10. Complete Army ROTC scholarship data for the 2013-2014 academic year were not available. The estimate of STEM scholarships as 20% or less of the total is based on comparing the fall

2013 STEM scholarships to all ROTC scholarships for the 2012 to 2013 academic year—in which about two thousand ROTC scholarships worth about \$41 million were awarded. As the total amount for ROTC scholarships is expected to decline due to shrinking budgets, the percentage attributable to STEM scholarships could be slightly higher. See University of North Georgia website's "Army ROTC Scholarships FAQs," <http://ung.edu/military-college/scholarships-and-grants/army-rotc-scholarship-faqs.php>.

MR We Recommend



The American Revolution: A Historical Guidebook

Frances H. Kennedy, editor, Oxford University Press, New York, 2014

In 1996, Congress commissioned the National Park Service to compile a list of sites and landmarks connected with the American Revolution that it deemed vital to preserve for future generations. Some of these sites are well known—such as Bunker Hill, Valley Forge, and Fort

Ticonderoga—and in no danger of being lost; others less so—such as Blackstock's Plantation in South Carolina or Bryan's Station in Kentucky—and more vulnerable. But all are central to the story of our nation's fight for independence. From battlefields to encampments, meeting houses to museums, these places offer us a chance to rediscover the remarkable men and women who founded this nation and to recognize the relevance not just of what they did but also of where they did it.

Edited by Frances H. Kennedy, *The American Revolution: A Historical Guidebook* takes readers to nearly 150 of these sites, providing an overview of the Revolution through an exploration of the places where American independence was articulated, fought for, and eventually secured. Beginning with the Boston Common, first occupied by British troops in 1768, and closing with Fraunces Tavern in New York, where George Washington bid farewell to his officers on December 4, 1783, Kennedy takes readers on a tour of the most significant places of Revolutionary history. *From the publisher.*