



(Photo by Sgt. Brian Rodan, 5th Signal Command PAO)

Civilians with 5th Signal Command reaffirm their oath of office during the Operation Solemn Promise annual commemoration ceremony 16 November 2012 at Lucius D. Clay Kaserne, Wiesbaden, Germany. The ceremony began 5th Signal Command's Army Profession campaign. Throughout 2013, 5th Signal Command held several events that highlighted the five essential aspects of the Army Profession—trust, military expertise, esprit de corps, honorable service, and stewardship of the profession.

The Army Civilian Corps Professionals in the Making

Col. Kim Summers, U.S. Army, Retired

In a 2015 *Military Review* article, author Robert Hynes argues that civilians in the Army, by definition, do not technically meet the requirements to be considered professionals in the Army.¹ His thought-provoking article highlights questions that need to be answered in order for Army civilians to be recognized as full members of the Army Profession. In the author's words, the Army as a profession can be defined from this passage: "It was the combination of these three components—the technical expertise of

warfare, the relationship of trust between itself and the American public, and awareness of the professional responsibilities pursuant to that trust—that collectively established the Army as a profession."² What is significant about this definition, along with the definition provided in Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 1, *The Army Profession*, is that both substantiate why Army civilians *can* meet the criteria for being members of the Army Profession.³ In this discourse, it is necessary that one contextualize the role Army

civilians play in the conduct of national security, specifically in the land domain, and recognize those aspects that certify Army civilians for professional membership. The fundamental question remains: Are Army civilians members of the Army Profession? Once certified, the answer is yes, and here is why.

Understanding Professionalism

It is important to examine those aspects that define professions and the qualifications outlined as characteristics of the Army Profession in order to understand what it means to be a professional and what are the rights of passage for full-fledged membership. Under current definitions, professions have aspects (elements that frame professions) and characteristics (elements that describe a specific profession) articulated in ways that generate formal societal recognition and socially acceptable behaviors in performance of professional tasks.⁴ These acceptable professional behaviors are defined in terms of broad social necessities that require specialized knowledge to perform a unique service society cannot provide itself.⁵ Examples of professions usually include medicine, law, engineering, education, and the clergy. Each of these are examples of callings vice jobs, which society requires to provide a unique service. The unique service outcomes are realized through the behaviors of a profession's members whom society willingly accepts and trusts. In order to garner society's trust, professional competence is necessary. To achieve this level of competence requires mastery of specialized knowledge specific to the profession's unique service. Mastery is demonstrated in the behaviors that are the result of utilizing the specialized knowledge required to perform the unique service.

In the case of the Army Profession, the first defined concept referenced by Hynes, "technical expertise of warfare," is a description of one aspect of professional qualification, a component of specialized knowledge required to be a member of the Army Profession.⁶ It is also embedded in one of the five essential characteristics of the Army Profession, that being military expertise.⁷ The second and third concepts of the article, "trust between itself and the American public" and "awareness of the professional responsibilities pursuant to that trust" are foundational concepts that nest with Army doctrine.⁸ Trust is an essential characteristic of the Army Profession. It is the essence of the

relationship between society and the profession. This trust results in empowerment of the profession to self-govern, regulate, and certify its members. ADRP 1 outlines the criteria for evaluating whether the Army Civilian Corps is in or out: five aspects of a profession, and the five essential characteristics of the Army Profession, which include trust. This article examines these and other aspects and characteristics that define an Army professional. It then raises the question, how do we substantiate the Army Civilian Corps meeting the required aspects and the essential characteristics of the Army Profession? We start with the five aspects of a profession, as outlined in Army doctrine.

Aspects of a Profession

ADRP 1 clearly identifies what the Army considers a profession and a professional. It states that members of a profession—

- Provide a unique and vital service to society, without which it could not flourish.
- Provide this service by developing and applying expert knowledge.
- Earn the trust of society through ethical, effective, and efficient practice.
- Establish and uphold the discipline and standards of their art and science, including the responsibility for professional development and certification.
- Are granted significant autonomy and discretion in the practice of their profession on behalf of society.⁹

The first, provide a unique and vital service to the society served that it cannot provide itself, is self-evident. Security and the common defense with a landpower focus are unique to the Army, and vital.¹⁰ Civilians by the thousands are contributing to that security and defense in all ways necessary to support and sustain the preeminence of the Army's ability to perform the service. Each contributor can take credit for security and defense within the landpower environment as long as they are members of the Army Civilian Corps. One down, four to go.

The second, provide this service by developing and applying expert knowledge, is more problematic but no less applicable. As stated previously, the Army Profession's unique service provided to our society and the Nation is security and defense in the land domain.¹¹

Some would advocate that technical expertise in war fully encompasses that unique service and is by default the Army Profession's expert knowledge. Technical expertise in warfare is an important aspect of expert knowledge and a component of the overall requirement for national security, but to limit the Army's expert knowledge only to technical expertise in war is inaccurate. The *U.S. Army Operating Concept* clearly articulates the scope and complexity of national security requirements in the land domain.¹²

To reduce the Army Profession's expert or specialized knowledge to only technical expertise in war neglects far too many aspects of what is necessary to be successful in the business of security and defense. The scope and diversity of Army missions far exceed tasks associated only with war.¹³ Make no mistake, successful outcomes of war are necessary and critical to performing the Army's unique service, but so are those aspects of preventing, shaping, and winning in the defense of our country in the land domain.¹⁴ These aspects describe landpower with combined arms forces.¹⁵ Landpower is much broader than just technical expertise in war.¹⁶

Another example of the scope of landpower is resident in Army doctrine. Doctrine defines military expertise, one of the five essential characteristics of the Army Profession, as the "design, generation, support, and application of landpower."¹⁷ The Army Civilian Corps is integral to each of these functions, and in some cases it is the major contributor. The spectrum of expert or specialized knowledge is inclusive of war but in no way limited by it.

Army professionals are masters of expert knowledge in the land domain. Inculcating the Army Profession's expectation and commitment to understanding the realm of landpower, which includes the moral and ethical components, as well as its technical aspects, is the key to understanding what the Army Profession's

specialized knowledge truly is. The land domain, and the need for dominant power in it, defines the Army's specialized knowledge and expertise requirements. To understand and support an army to a level required to achieve dominance within this unique domain mandates a specialized focus and deep holistic understanding of what landpower is and what knowledge is required to exercise the profession's unique service.

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There are common skill sets supporting many facets of an army's routine functions that are not specialized professional knowledge. But, effectiveness and optimization are not achieved until there is a shared understanding of what landpower is, and of what the Army's unique contribution to the Nation is. Without this understanding and a commitment to achieving the diverse outcomes mandated in complex

environments, outcomes that assure winning, the dominance of landpower is simply not feasible.¹⁸ I would liken this to a medical doctor who was expected to practice his or her craft without any knowledge of healing.¹⁹ The doctor might have all the technical competencies associated with a specialty but lack the comprehensive understanding of the contextual and cultural aspects of a unique service. The doctor might be able to fix the sickness but could not heal the patient. Understanding landpower for Army civilians is similar to medical doctors needing to understand healing. It is fundamental to their mastery of specialized knowledge. The *U.S. Army Operating Concept* outlines the requirements for dealing with complexity by creating contextual multiplicity. Landpower provides leaders with multiple options that conjure multiple dilemmas in multiple domains with multiple partners.²⁰ This mandates a level of commitment to understanding the intricacies of how each component of the Army Profession fits in order to create, support, and execute landpower. Optimizing landpower requires a personal subscription to the professional culture that drives

results in order to contribute to the larger whole, understanding the intricacies of what landpower is, creating contextual multiplicity, and mastering its tenets. Without a shared understanding of complexity within the security environment from a cultural context of the Army Profession by all cohorts—moral, ethical, and optimal outcomes are compromised.²¹ This realization drove the Army to invest in changing and melding the cultures of Army civilians and soldiers who embrace commitment as a prerequisite for optimized performance within the landpower environment.²² In order to generate a shared understanding of culture and the commitment necessary to operationalize change, the Army must professionalize all its cohorts.

Commitment

Commitment is one of the three certification mandates for professional membership. We can better appreciate the concept of commitment and its value by contrasting it with compliance. Compliant employees exemplify the nonprofessional. (Note the term is nonprofessional vice unprofessional.) Compliance can be all that is necessary to perform a task in the day-to-day workings of a civilian's job. The measure of success is completion or production. Contextual and cultural understanding never enter into the process as there is no need. Compliant employees do not need to see their contributions as part of a larger whole or as the perpetuation of a professional culture. There is no connection to optimizing landpower or even understanding what it is because there is no commitment to do so. As long as the compliant employees complete *x* or produce *y*, they have met the objective—task completion. The Army Profession concluded that compliance was not acceptable if the Army was to

effectively deal with the level of complexity apparent in the current and future security environments. The level of commitment on the part of the Army and its Civilian Corps to master the specialized knowledge inherent in creating and optimizing dominant land-

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Any focus on discounting Army civilians as members of the Army Profession because they use readily available skill sets that embody technical knowledge available in the public sector misses the point of what the Army Profession's specialized knowledge is and how the Army uses that knowledge to optimize its unique

service. The Army is not developing budget analysts or training developers or human resource specialists; instead, the Army is developing committed landpower experts certified in competencies that ensure it can perform the unique service society demands. It just so happens those experts also develop budgets, educate Army professionals, and create training programs. The Army is creating a level of commitment within its Army civilians that will generate great personal sacrifice whether one takes up a weapon or a key board. And, the Army is developing professionals of character who warrant the trust our nation has granted across all cohorts and specialties. The test of membership for the Army civilian is realized by certifying competence in the specialized knowledge of landpower that includes acquiring complete cultural understanding and acceptance, demonstrating character in the conduct of our professional and personal behavior guided by the Army Values, and exemplifying the level of commitment commensurate with the sacrifices of our uniformed partners. It is true there are gaps in the current policies, strategies, and professionalization

programs within the Army Civilian Corps. But, we must not confuse the inadequacy of the current civilian personnel management systems with the requirement to build a professional Army civilian.

The next three aspects of professions, and the remaining characteristics of the Army Profession, can also be shown to warrant professional membership. The remaining aspects of a profession are earned trust, self-regulation through education and certification, and autonomy of action through honorable service.²³ Army professionals live the Army ethic to sustain the essential characteristics of the profession now and into the future—to strengthen trust, the special faith and confidence of the American people, esprit de corps, the bond formed by mutual trust, shared understanding, and stewardship.²⁴

Documentation

To be certified as Army professionals, Army civilians must document how the aspects and essential characteristics are being met within the Civilian Corps. The documentation starts with the aspect of self-regulation. The Corps is self-regulated by its ever-evolving evaluation system, targeted required education, and professional development.²⁵ It also includes the development of professional certification requirements, revisions to leader development certification, and creation of career program standards.²⁶ Next, stewardship and esprit de corps are built through the consistent quality of outcomes that are possible because of Army civilians' application of landpower expertise and the continuity associated with their stability. The resulting effect generates mutual trust. The trust afforded the Army Profession encompasses all its members. Army civilians who are committed to the profession share equally in that trust and its responsibilities. This includes the effective and ethical application of their expertise.²⁷ Finally, autonomy of action is embodied in the organizational constructs and the doctrinal concepts of the mission command philosophy that apply to all.²⁸ This documentation provides ample justification for Army civilian membership, but beyond the academic definitions and documenting the aspects of our doctrinal roots, I would offer another more practical reason why Army civilians are critical to the Army Profession, that being change.

To stimulate critical thinking and debate, *Military Review* occasionally publishes articles that provide differing viewpoints on controversial subjects. For an alternative view on the inclusion of civilians in the Army Profession, we encourage you to read the following article:

"Army Civilians and the Army Profession," Lt. Col. Robert Hynes, PhD, U.S. Army, Retired

Hynes holds that while they fill an important role, Department of the Army civilians do not, by definition, meet the requirements to be considered members of the Army profession.

The original article can be found in our May–June 2015 issue on page 71. For online access, go to

http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/MilitaryReview/Archives/English/MilitaryReview_20150630_art015.pdf.



Ed Campbell, a Task Force Cyclone human terrain analyst (HTA), along with his fellow team members, meets with the chief of police of Kabul in late July 2009 during a landforce engagement in Sarwan Province, Afghanistan. The Afghan police hosted the landforce in honor of a departing American police mentoring team commander.

Army Civilians and the Army Profession

Lt. Col Robert Hynes, PhD, U.S. Army, Retired

One notable difference between the recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and previous conflicts was the omnipresence of U.S. government civilians. More than in any conflict past, civilians were everywhere. No, I am not talking about the locals. I refer to the visible presence of government civilians on nearly every U.S. installation in the war zone. Since the start of combat operations in 2003, civilians from

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Change

Army civilians are necessary members of the Army Profession because of change. The inevitability and velocity of change, along with the magnitude of its impact, warrant the need for all members, civilian and military alike, to be indoctrinated as Army professionals. The ability to deal with complexity and uncertainty, to lead change, to demonstrate mental agility and adaptability, to hold a

strategic perspective, and to understand the scope and the context of landpower's role in national security are but a few of the developmental needs that our Army requires of its civilian cohort—these skills are not readily available in the public marketplace. Even though each civilian will still have functional and technical performance requirements that may be publicly attainable, these skills are far less valuable than expert landpower knowledge, commitment to the point of sacrifice, and character that guides professional stewardship of our corporate responsibilities framed in the context of Army culture and leading in an environment of perpetual change.

To help illustrate this point, we can contrast the Army civilian professional with an auto industry employee. Most auto workers in a given plant on an assembly line contribute to building a vehicle. They insert a part, or connect a bolt, or attach a component—whatever is their task to keep the car or truck moving. There is no need for commitment. Compliance with task completion is what the individual is responsible for as each unit moves by. There is little or no need for competence in specialized knowledge—the task is either accomplished or it is not. And, demonstrating character is not even considered because completing a task is all that is required. In contrast, it takes a culturally assimilated Army Civilian Corps professional, employing his or her specialized landpower knowledge competently, to contribute to the optimal outcomes of a multifaceted problem set, share understanding of the technical standards of quality, and appreciate the moral obligation to succeed guided by the ethical aspects of his or her character, to create a combat system that can operate in a complex environment—that just happens to be a truck. The specialized knowledge necessary to have this level of shared understanding is not something that is readily available within the public sector.

The driving force of change requires a culture that is committed to developing leaders who deal with uncertainty. It creates a climate that values and promotes specialized knowledge of the Army culture and the tenets of landpower across the breadth of its membership, and it creates an environment where all members are committed to leading change. The Army's commitment to developing the Army civilian as a full-fledged member of the profession is strongly influenced by the velocity of change. Army Civilian Corps professionals

are not hired, they are grown. That investment in cultural growth develops Army professionals who are competent, committed teammates of character and who certify as such.

Conclusion

What does this all mean for the Army Civilian Corps and its future? We have dialogued about professional definitions and their utility to the Army Civilian Corps. We have examined the five aspects of a profession, the essential characteristics of the Army Profession, and their application to the Army civilian. We have even considered the effects of change and its impact on why the Army civilian is a necessary member of the profession. But to integrate the Army Civilian Corps as full-fledged members of the Army Profession, it is essential to certify those that meet the criteria. Certifying character, competence, and commitment are the three requirements to justify membership in the Army Profession.²⁹ Competence, as previously discussed includes facets of military expertise and specialized knowledge that span the cohorts. There are those tasks within the facets of military expertise and specialized knowledge that do not apply universally. This realization should never be justification for excluding a cohort. As we have demonstrated, the breadth of knowledge that is the essence of landpower expertise is the criterion for professional certification in competence. The Army is creating certification requirements within its career programs. There is a required civilian leader development program for Army civilians. And, revised learning requirements encompassing landpower's specialized knowledge are an essential component of the Civilian Education System. As long as Army civilians certify in landpower expertise, then competence can be certified. The measurement of commitment and character is much less problematic. Army values, the essential characteristics of the Army Profession, and the aspects of professions are congruent with the Army Civilian Corps as part of the team and in no way impede certification or membership. Revised personnel evaluation systems, Army leader development strategy updates with a civilian annex, and the commitment of substantial resources for training, development, and education demonstrate the progress being made.

The title “Department of the Army Civilian” no longer captures the requirements laid out by our profession. As this article has demonstrated, Army civilians are not members of the Army Profession by decree but by necessity. The aspects and essential characteristics of the Army Profession remain the same for all cohorts. All members of any profession must be certified. They must master specialized knowledge and use it in a moral and ethical manner as they apply their unique service. And, they must never abrogate

through omission or commission the inherent trust afforded by the society the Army serves. We have demonstrated that the Army Civilian Corps meets those criteria. The current situation is not nirvana, nor is the Army Civilian Corps fully professionalized. There are gaps in current policies, strategies, and programs that produce friction in the process. But these inadequacies and gaps do not and will not dissuade the commitment of the Army to building the professional Army civilian. ■

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Notes

1. Robert Hynes, “Army Civilians and the Army Profession,” *Military Review* (May–June 2015): 72.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 1, *The Army Profession* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office [GPO], June 2015), 1-1.
4. *Ibid.*, 1-1–1-2 and 1-4–1-5.
5. *Ibid.*, 1-1.
6. Hynes, “Army Civilians,” 72.
7. ADRP 1, *Army Profession*, 1-1.
8. Hynes, “Army Civilians,” 72.
9. ADRP 1, *Army Profession*, 1-1.
10. ADRP 3-0, *Unified Land Operations* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, May 2012), 1-7.
11. Army Doctrine Publication 1, *The Army* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, September 2012), 2-2.
12. Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Pamphlet (TP) 525-3-1, *The U.S. Army Operating Concept: Win in a Complex World* (Fort Eustis, VA: TRADOC, 31 October 2014), i.
13. ADRP 3-0, *Unified Land Operations*, 1-7.
14. *Ibid.*
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*
17. ADRP 1, *Army Profession*, 1-2.
18. *Ibid.*, 3-1.
19. Louis Lasagna, “Hippocratic Oath, Modern Version,” Tufts University, 1964, as cited in “Bioethics,” Johns Hopkins University Sheridan Libraries and University Museums website, accessed 27 January 2016, <http://guides.library.jhu.edu/c.php?g=202502&p=1335759>.
20. TP 525-3-1, *Army Operating Concept*, iv.
21. ADRP 1, *Army Profession*, A-1.
22. Army Training and Leader Development Panel, *Army Civilian Study*, 30 January 2003, para. 127. See also “Army Training and Leader Development—Civilian Implementation Plan (ATLD-CIV); Civilian Personnel Online website, 5 December 2006, accessed 27 January 2016, <http://cpol.army.mil/library/permis/75b.html>.
23. ADRP 1, *Army Profession*, 1-1.
24. *Ibid.*, 1-5 and 2-4.
25. Army Regulation 350-1, *Army Training and Leader Development* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 19 September 2014), 88, para. 3-64.
26. *Ibid.*, 96, para. 3-80.
27. ADRP 1, *Army Profession*, 1-1.
28. ADRP 6-0, *Mission Command* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, May 2012), 2-1. The distinction between commanders and civilian supervisors is moot due to the need for all to adopt the philosophy of mission command as unified action partners.
29. ADRP 1, *Army Profession*, 1-1.