



# Cadets in Strategic Landpower

With the help of U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, U.S. Army Africa partnered with United States Army Cadet Command to create a mutually beneficial opportunity to embed cadets within an Army Service Component Command to advance USARAF Theater Security Cooperation efforts and help cadets achieve USACC goals of cultural understanding and leadership development. This Cadet Overseas Training Mission, which is the first of its kind for USARAF, imbedded three Reserve Officers' Training Corps cadets with USARAF country desk officers to accompany the cadets to Lesotho, Zambia, Djibouti, Uganda and Italy. During their trip, the cadets met with key leaders within U.S. embassies and senior leaders from Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa as well as partner nation militaries.

CPT JD Mohundro and LTC Adrian Bogart



## Cadets in Strategic Landpower

### *Managing Upfront the Talent We Need*

by

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*Dateline VICENZA, Italy, August 20, 2013. The U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, U.S. Army Africa, or USARAF, partnered with United States Army Cadet Command to achieve Cadet Command goals of cultural understanding and leadership development. A first of its kind for USARAF, this Cadet Overseas Training Mission embedded three Reserve Officers' Training Corps Cadets with USARAF country desk officers to accompany the cadets to Lesotho, Zambia, Djibouti, Uganda and Italy.*

*Maj. Christopher D. Sturm, International Army Programs liaison to USARAF, said the skills, experiences and cultural awareness the cadets learned on this mission will provide an important baseline for their future positions. Ultimately, Sturm said, "our Army is stronger in the near and far term because of engagements like this." Cadet Jacquelyn L. Kessler, from the University of California at Berkley, said "The Army is transitioning to a mode where they want to create Soldiers and leaders who can adapt and assimilate into other cultures and are sensitive to the differences between our nations." Kessler went on to say that "These events give us a taste of what is to be expected in our future careers: friendly engagement with our partner nations working toward a common goal."<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.army.mil/article/109579/Cadet\\_Overseas\\_Training\\_Mission\\_furtheres\\_U\\_S\\_Army\\_Africa\\_efforts/](http://www.army.mil/article/109579/Cadet_Overseas_Training_Mission_furtheres_U_S_Army_Africa_efforts/)

The Cadet Overseas Training Mission is just one example of how Cadets can gain experience in Strategic Landpower during college, there are others. Cadets have a unique opportunity to tailor their college education to build skills immediately available for their responsibilities in Strategic Landpower, once commissioned. Cadets, who can benefit their military occupation now, will have a marked advantage once becoming fully involved in Strategic Landpower, and here is how.

### **Strategic Landpower**

Strategic Landpower is the application of landpower towards achieving strategic outcomes across the range of military operations. Employing Strategic Landpower protects the Nation and advances U.S. interests. We maneuver strategically to maintain strategic balance, with forward engaged and creatively employed forces who deter conflict, build partners, gain understanding, enable others, and achieve positional advantage. Expeditionary maneuver occurs to restore strategic balance, exploiting understanding and positional advantage through the informed, discriminate application of landpower in close, sustained operations among the people. Strategic Landpower leverages an agile mix of lethal and non-lethal action to control events and provides the intellectual foundation for more effective operations during peace, conflict and war

The Army has several components for Strategic Landpower. Regionally Aligned Forces engage forward and maneuver strategically. Partnership strengthens bonds between Armies and promotes stability. If a crisis occurs, the Global Response Force is quickly available to deploy with Operationally Significant Forces conducting expeditionary maneuver to resolve conflict or war. The emerging concept of Force 2025 conducts operations to prevent, shape and win with Force 2025 Maneuvers building the expeditionary Army.

Against this backdrop, how does a Cadet focus education, experience and training during college, towards being ready for Strategic Landpower as an officer? What steps can have already have been taken, so a newly minted second lieutenant arrives at the first assignment ready to deploy?

## **The Strategic Landpower Cadet**

As warfare extends into the cyber domain – and becomes more technological in all domains – the chance to recruit officers with stronger science and math backgrounds could not come at a better time. Concurrently, as we move more and more into combined or coalition warfare, so must our language and cultural skills progress. To build the skills which Army officers require being globally responsive and regionally engaged, the Army should modify the way it recruits those officers. Strategic Landpower is a unique opportunity not only to build the Future Army, but its officer talent as well. Strategic Landpower officers are masters in the science of expeditionary warfare, disciplinarians of applying landpower and artful in managing the operational environment. They solve physics problems; communicate effectively across diverse audiences and are leaders of humanity. All this, can start as a Cadet.

### **Science and Technology**

Recently, senior Army leaders made it clear that increasing the percentage of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) graduates is a priority. This strategy is clearly wise because of the rapid advancement of technology. Even though this strategy is not currently tied to any operations change, this is easily remedied by models the Army already uses for advanced schooling. To understand where we should go, we first should look at where we are.

The Army has been using the same basic method to recruit, train, and access ROTC Cadets for more than 20 years. Candidates are offered scholarships to attend college, where they take Army ROTC classes in addition to their area of study. Near the end of their senior year, they are assigned a basic branch along with all other graduating Cadets. The criteria for branch assignment are unrelated to their study area.

Under the current system, it is equally likely that a mechanical engineer could be assigned to the Transportation Corps, as a history major could be assigned as an Engineer. Although the Army has rightly realized that it needs more officers trained in science and math, our planning could adjust to either recruit them or utilize their skills. The improved system should entice elite students, and optimize the best return on the scholarship investment.

As an example, 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 takes great effort to ensure officers selected for specialty assignments are armed with the academic knowledge required to succeed in fields such as financial management, supply chain operations, or international affairs. Strangely, the first chance an officer has to serve in these types of jobs is at the four or seven year mark of their careers. These opportunities are past the service obligation for officers from ROTC, so any STEM graduates would have to extend their service to use the skills the Army wants them to have.

Imagine that you are a computer science student at a prominent American university. Your skills will be in high demand in the current and future employment markets and your salaries promise to 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, you will spend your four years in the Army replacing your computer science knowledge with information on tank gunnery, assembly area operations, or logistics. By the time you leave the service, you will likely have forgotten most of the skills you earned in college, while the Army hires contractors to run its networks.

This simplistic example shows opportunity to recruit more STEM graduates. To improve recruiting of educated STEM officers, the Army should offer targeted ROTC scholarships which manage incoming talent. Instead of blanket scholarships and prior to commissioning branch assignments, tie Cadet's talents early in their college career. Instead of using highly technical graduates in normal roles for seven years and then offering them technical opportunities, grow technical officers as Cadets.

In 2013, the Army offered scholarships to 7,765 students attending such top-tier universities as Princeton and Michigan. These scholarships offers were extended to some of the best and brightest rising college freshmen in America – scholars, athletes, and leaders. The average SAT score for scholarship recipients was more than one standard deviation above the national average. However, the recipients include a disproportionately low number of STEM majors.

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.

In the “targeted scholarship” idea, high school students compete for a certain number of STEM-specific ROTC scholarships nationally. Selected recipients then major in the appropriate discipline at either the school of their choosing or at a school of the Army’s choosing, depending on how the program was arranged. Upon graduation, the new lieutenant would be assigned to a basic combat branch for a short period of time, two to three years in this example, to “learn the Army.” After this period – and most importantly, before the critical STEM skills atrophy – the lieutenant would be transferred to another branch or functional area commiserate with his or her technical knowledge. Biochemistry majors would be assigned to CBRN Defense units. Computer Scientists would be assigned to cyber units. Materials engineers would be assigned to research and development, and so on. These positions would be tailored to the talent, not just a normal "needs of the Army" assignment.

The Army has highlighted the fact that it needs highly educated officers to fight and win the technologically-advanced wars of today and tomorrow. However, it needs to develop a strategy to recruit and use the talent it covets. Using the same techniques 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. In order to ensure we have the talent needed as we strategically maneuver and conduct expeditionary maneuver, properly recruiting and training our future talent is imperative. Given that the population in question is already enrolled full-time in higher learning institutions, it makes good business sense to tap into these capabilities to fill this role.

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, we have the chance to correct this. The Army should require, or at least

encourage, all Cadets seeking a commission to take foreign language classes while enrolled in ROTC; and near commissioning, administer the Defense Language Proficiency Tests (DLPT) for the language they learned in college, high school or elsewhere, so as to gauge language proficiency. This equips the Army with a mechanism to assign officers to regionally-aligned units where they can use their language skills – talent management at its core. If we expect our officers to execute and win in the *engagement* warfighting function, the Army should arm itself with the leaders who achieve this end. Building that capability in our Cadets is a logical progression to ready new officers for Strategic Landpower as they enter the Army.

A second benefit of administering the DLPT to rising Cadets is the time and infrastructure associated with taking the test. University ROTC departments already have access to the software and computer hardware needed to access the DoD information network. The test is already funded, assessable by a Common Access Card or username and password access. Test control officers are available and Army Regulations, (AR 11-6, section 5-4) authorizes USMA and contracted Cadet testing.

Beyond the languages needed to engage and connect with host nation partners, the Army has realized that its leaders need an understanding of cultures, local histories, and regional nuances. Currently, ROTC Cadets are required to take a single military history class prior to commissioning. A Cadet should not be constrained to single study. There are numerous opportunities such as ROTC's Cultural Understanding and Language Proficiency Program to gain regional expertise. Study Abroad programs are another venue. Self-study is also a great means to understand areas of interest. The Army could benefit by seeking those officers with in-depth study of specific areas – the history major discussed earlier, for instance – and seek to assign that new officer to their area or region of expertise. Subsequently, Cadets should be credited with Regional Studies, as they meet course graduation criteria.

As part of its recently increased emphasis on language, regional expertise, and culture, the U.S. Army Cadet Command began offering security cooperation training. Each year, as many as 1,400 Cadets are offered 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 imbed with unit training. This provides Cadets an opportunity to appreciate the challenges associated with cultural differences and language barriers. Many look back on this training as career- and life-changing opportunities.

This influx of knowledge would provide the advantage, on-the-ground, when applying Strategic Landpower within the human domain. An Infantry Platoon leader, with a basic ability to speak French or Arabic, who has earned constructive credit for the Regional Studies Course from a Study Abroad program in Morocco, would be invaluable to a Battalion Commander conducting a security forces assistance mission in North Africa. Now picture hundreds more officers with these same types of skills coming into the Army next year.

### **The End State**

As we look across the Army emerging from 13 years of war and see what is certainly ahead of us, Strategic Landpower is the overarching construct which makes an expeditionary Army globally responsive and regionally engaged. There are a number of areas of concern which challenge our nation's security, and knowing the operational environment, the "ins and outs", of where we can easily project where we will be, is not only advantageous, but required.

Whether it is Africa, Asia or cyber, trouble spots are out there. They will gain our attention sooner or later and being well rehearsed, well prepared and ready to launch is a mandate, as the alert to respond time gap shortens. Years passed before the United States was involved in World Wars I and II, the Gulf War was months and this war was minutes. For the future, expect the United States to be pulled into conflict or war at the speed of information. Strategic Landpower will be immersed in a joint, interagency, international and multi-national environment, operating among the populace and with little or no time to build combat power.

What that means for future Army officers, is that the investment in Strategic Landpower starts as a Cadet. Key tenets of which are; science and technology, and language and culture to produce well-rounded leaders of character who are critical thinkers and problem solvers. The focus on STEM is imperative for the technical skills

ahead. Cyber based mission command systems; web-based training venues, satellite communications and basic office automation are the technological instruments for the expeditionary army. Language proficiency in at least one language is a must. A DLPT score of 1/1 is more than adequate to engage host nation partners at the basic level. For example, if you speak French or German, chances are you can engage across the majority of Africa. Our officers who speak Korean, Chinese, Japanese and other Asian languages are optimal for assignment in the Pacific. Once in, the Defense Language Institute provides great opportunity to sharpen language skills or learn another. Traveling and studying abroad is highly valuable, seek opportunities to do so, whether through a Cadet program or one offered in College.

As the Commanding General of the U.S. Army Cadet Command has stated; "Tomorrow's Army leaders are going find themselves in a variety of complex circumstances on an ever changing battlefield," Major General Jefforey Smith explained. "The safety of the men and women they lead, the success of the missions on which they are sent and the function of the units in which they are assigned all depend on whether they are creative, competent, adaptive, critical thinkers." Science and technology, language and cultural expertise, these are the core skill sets for tomorrow's Army Strategic Landpower leaders, and it all starts as a Cadet. ✪

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