

Examining Leadership Development in the U.S. Army within the Human Resource Development Context: Implications for Security and Defense Strategies*

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The existing literature presents ample studies on leaders and leadership development in the United States Army. The contribution of many great military leaders of the U.S. are widely recognized both by the military community and the society at large. Reviewing the history of leadership development (LD) in the U.S. Army provides an opportunity to analyze American soldiers' development and transformation as strong leaders. Although U.S. Army training and its value systems, in many ways, have remained fundamentally the same with focus on hierarchy and structure, LD has been repeatedly refined, reframed, and redesigned based on the needs of the time and expectations of the leadership. This paper presents a review of the LD training in the U.S. Army to identify potential opportunities for the military of the Republic of Korea. It focuses on LD throughout critical periods in the history of the U.S. Army and illustrates how LD training has evolved historically. The paper also explores how Human Resource Development (HRD) as a discipline of study and its functions may be instrumental in LD by analyzing the U.S. Army's approach to LD, leadership training, organizational culture, and career development. Implications of LD for security and defense strategies are also discussed.

Keywords: leadership development, human resource development, training & development, U.S. Army, ROK Army, security and defense strategies

Introduction

As an interdisciplinary field, leadership and its practice may exist in all organizations in any given industry or sector. In the case of the American military, leadership is also synonymous with the armed forces of the United States. From the first day of enlistment until the day of retirement, leadership development (LD) is a vital aspect of every soldier's development.¹ The U.S. Army and its expectations for successful leadership development are based on the nation's democratic foundations, values, and standards of excellence.² Many of the greatest American political leaders such as Patton, Eisenhower, and Lee, have roots stemming from their military backgrounds.³

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This paper presents an historical analysis of LD in the U.S. Army and discusses HRD's potential contribution to future LD programs in the U.S. Army.

Nations worldwide are now striving to realign their military structures based on troop reductions and modernization since the U.S. Army proved its transformation effectiveness during the Gulf War and the War in Iraq.⁴ Historically examining LD in the U.S. Army may present some potential benefits for the South Korean military. Since 2006, the Republic of Korea (ROK) has been pursuing "national defense reform" to include streamlining military management;⁵ and it has historically tried to follow the example of the U.S. Army, from military doctrines through weaponry systems.⁶ The primary transformation components for the U.S. Army include training, education, and leadership,⁷ though each present challenges. Incidentally, the ROK Army has been constrained by its own rigidity and intellectual conservatism.⁸ These components suggest how difficult it is to overstate the importance of the human factor in military operations.⁹

The Defense Reform Plan 2020, published in 2005, aimed to transform South Korean military forces from a manpower-intensive force to a capability-based power.¹⁰ Over 200,000 individuals leave the ROK Army annually; and, as of 2011, under the Lee Myung-bak administration, terms for drafted soldiers have been reduced from 24 months to 21 months,¹¹ suggesting action should be taken in the realm of human resource policy to preserve some of the organizational knowledge built and reduce the loss of organizational learning.¹² Additionally, Defense Reform 2020 proposes an increase to around 40 percent of the ROK Army to be officers in order to streamline the force structure in a more-efficient manner.¹³ The expansion of leaders is polarized when considering the overall reduction of forces from the current 650,000 troop levels down¹⁴ to 522,000 by 2022.¹⁵ Nevertheless, the enhanced role of leaders in the ROK will be critical to the effective implementation of Defense Reform 2020.

Civilian-sector organizations struggle to develop and utilize leaders, leading to a "leadership gap." This gap represents the difference between the need for leadership and the resources available to develop it.¹⁶ In its long history, the United States Army consistently trained individuals considered to be strong leaders and demonstrated a willingness to adapt and evolve institutionally based on its organizational needs. In reviewing the history of the Army's LD programs, it became apparent how deeply embedded leadership training is within almost all of the organizational efforts and activities. This paper sheds light on the U.S. military's perspective of leadership and illustrates the approaches taken towards developing successful and sustainable leadership. It also discusses how Human Resource Development (HRD) as an interdisciplinary field may contribute to the U.S. Army's efforts on LD programs and training, which aims to help its soldiers become leaders in their ranks and posts.

This paper begins with a brief discussion of LD and LD programming, followed by a review of the U.S. Army training manuals as well as manuscripts from the Department of Defense. Databases including ERIC, Emerald Management eJournals, SAGE Journals, the American Psychological Association, and Taylor & Francis Online Journals were utilized when reviewing LD programming in both military and civilian contexts. Selections included conceptual pieces and empirical research as well as news publications, which significantly contributed to our understanding of LD programs and the U.S. Army's beliefs about leadership. Articles referenced also used in identifying areas HRD can inform the Army's LD efforts and goals.

Leadership and Human Development

Leadership is a critical component of all environments, though likely even more important in the military, where split-second decision-making is often required to save lives. Leaders select, equip, and influence followers, each of whom brings unique backgrounds and skill sets, to willingly accept and expend energy to benefit an organization's mission and objectives.¹⁷ The leader is able to exert influence on others by conveying a vision for the future that resonates with followers.¹⁸ Though a comprehensive theory of leadership still needs developing,¹⁹ companies and organizations continue to invest heavily in the development of leaders.²⁰ These investments are made through focused training aimed at developing individuals into strong organizational leaders.

Focus on LD programming has become common in the last two decades to address the need to prepare, develop, and improve leadership skills.²¹ The U.S. military has been utilizing LD programming for the greater part of the past 200 years, starting during the Revolutionary War.²² These programs appear to emphasize concerted and formalized organizational efforts toward leader improvement²³ and should be realistic, practical, and provide opportunities for growth.²⁴ LD programming can be and has been offered throughout all ranks of the military, though positions involving influence over others are restricted. Today, for military personnel to grow into positions of leadership, they must participate in some form of advanced LD programming.

HRD has three primary functions in the organization: training and development, organization development, and career development.²⁵ Organizations have long emphasized the development of their employees in order to more successfully complete their mission. HRD professionals place greatest emphasis on the long-term sustainability of the organization by addressing primary existing challenges.²⁶ Though the employee's best interest will likely be considered, the needs and interests identified by HRD professionals are aligned with what is best for the organization.²⁷ Noticeably, the U.S. government may have operated the first structured HRD program, when the Training Within Industry program was conducted during World War I and World War II.²⁸

The Army as an Organization

The U.S. Armed Forces is a huge, diverse conglomerate that plays a key role in both the national and worldwide levels,²⁹ with the Army being the most easily identifiable organization in the armed forces. Though less than one percent of the country's population is serving on active duty as compared with eight percent during World War II,³⁰ the military remains a viable career option for many. While each has their own reason to serve, the organization has a common goal to fight and win the nation's wars by providing prompt, sustained land dominance across the spectrum of conflicts and reestablish peace through victory in combat.³¹ Army leaders have the responsibility to train and develop their soldiers to perform swiftly and effectively to ensure mission accomplishment.

Many Army veterans are proud to call themselves soldiers while both service members and civilians tend to respect the organization because of its rich past. Since America declared its independence, the country has claimed victory in every war its

soldiers have participated in.³² Success of that magnitude influences soldier morale while civilian support has grown since the Vietnam War.³³ Public confidence in 1975 was only 20 percent amongst 18–29 year olds but has steadily risen to today's 70 percent approval rating.³⁴ Unlike the perception change by civilians, the Army's approach to LD training and programs as well as its strategy to develop leadership in all its levels and ranks has remained consistent.

Structure and Leadership Perspective

Much of the organization's structure and values remain unchanged as many of the U.S. Army's leaders resist meaningful system revisions.³⁵ The Army maintains its traditional form including a clear hierarchical structure with limited flexibility for subordinates,³⁶ and clear prescriptions about how leaders and subordinates are expected to act.³⁷ Creativity has not been considered a vital quality for soldiers; instead, being very structured and narrow in focus to start and then proceeding with a slow regression to some flexibility has been prioritized.³⁸ Respect for leadership is a value instilled immediately upon beginning basic training and continuously refined throughout the duration of service.³⁹ In turn, leader soldiers are expected to motivate, address challenges, and respond to changes.⁴⁰

Though the U.S. Army has not given great attention to learning in general, and the institutionalization of learning in particular,⁴¹ great emphasis is placed on leadership development. Learning to be a better soldier begins with learning to be a leader in the Army. Army leaders are committed to developing values-based leadership for the well-being of soldiers as well as their families.⁴² They are decisive, innovative, adaptive, and possess situational awareness.⁴³ At the West Point Military Academy, for example, cadets recite that the unit commander is responsible for everything the unit does or fails to do.⁴⁴ Soldiers learn that Army leaders are anyone who, by assignment or role, influences others to accomplish organizational goals.⁴⁵ Subordinates may create a leadership role by taking charge to accomplish assigned or undiagnosed tasks, without the need for a formal title.⁴⁶ By promoting LD throughout the duration of a soldier's career, the entire organization transforms to a stronger and more confident group.⁴⁷

Levels of Leadership Development

The U.S. Army recognizes three intervals of leadership with each relating to a different purpose. The direct, organizational, and strategic levels of leadership are dependent on the interactions and expectations for leading soldiers.⁴⁸ Military leaders influence others through direct one-on-one training on up to policy development in Washington, D.C. A soldier's rank does not necessarily correspond to which leadership level they are at, as new officers and highly experienced officers can be on similar or opposite ends of the spectrum.⁴⁹ Still, leaders from all levels are likely to begin their career filling a direct leadership role in the U.S. Army.

The direct level of leadership is perhaps the most widely recognized stage of leading others. These leaders are likely to be responsible for up to eight to ten individuals within their squad or training session. The focus is on the team and on

direct improvement⁵⁰ with clear attainable goals to be accomplished within a session or short period of time.⁵¹ Face-to-face interactions along with small group learning activities are frequently used at this level.⁵² An example of direct leadership would be teaching a small group of soldiers about first-aid awareness in the field. Effective interactions are critical for leadership development at this level.⁵³ This first stage of leading allows soldiers to develop communication and leadership abilities, while increasing knowledge and skills amongst squad members.

At the organizational level of leadership, unit commanders and senior leaders review the needs of the battery or battalion. Organization-level leaders are expected to lead groups ranging in size from 50 to 500 soldiers, though the number of soldiers they regularly interact with remains similar to that of a leader in a direct leadership position. LD for organizational leaders emphasizes increased understanding of the organization's goals while reducing direct training of soldiers to perform specific tasks. In addition to the requirements at the direct level, leaders begin to manage multiple priorities and tailor resources to meet organizational needs.⁵⁴ The leader might provide a vision or empower others⁵⁵ to make decisions. Individual instruction is rare since the organizational focus tends to be unit-wide on systems and policymaking.⁵⁶ Leaders who are successful at this level of leadership have an understanding of the big picture, are skilled at complex decision-making, and are strong problem solvers.⁵⁷

The strategic level is considered the pinnacle of leadership in the U.S. Army, where the leader's role is to guide change and shape the entire institution for future success.⁵⁸ Similar to the CEO of a Fortune 500 Company, those at the strategic level develop strategies in support of the organization's mission and connect day-to-day operations with the organization's long-term goals.⁵⁹ While daily training must be considered in planning, national and global perspectives are more impactful dictators for the direction of strategic level planners.⁶⁰ These leaders must be attentive to how changes they make would impact their subordinates that range from the hundreds to the hundreds of thousands. Likely contributing to the importance of making sound decisions, strategic-level leaders must be aware of external influences and be apt at corporate level business management in order to be successful.⁶¹

Major Historical Periods

The official birth date of the U.S. Army has been debated through history. Militias were present for years before the armed forces declared its official birth year as 1775.⁶² In fact, each colony established and maintained militias soon after the establishment as Indians and European rivals competed for land.⁶³ There were few documents available to demonstrate how training and enlistment was conducted, making formal training for soldiers difficult to evaluate and plan. Instead, each man in the militia was expected to participate in "musters," or training days, with other unit members.⁶⁴ Soldiers gathered to learn and gain understanding; however, without formal training documents, they ultimately had limited knowledge.⁶⁵ Since the days of militias, numerous influential leaders, training programs, and manuscripts have contributed to the development of today's U.S. Army.

Revolutionary War

The Revolutionary War offered an opportunity for the Army to begin forming an identity. Arguably the first significant improvement related to a uniformly trained Army occurred around 1778 when a new leader emerged. Friedrich von Steuben, a Prussian volunteer serving as George Washington's inspector general during the Revolutionary War, was highly influential with regard to establishing discipline in the military.⁶⁶ Until von Steuben, literature on military training and guidelines in the country was almost nonexistent.⁶⁷ Washington assigned von Steuben to oversee training of the inexperienced troops at Valley Forge.⁶⁸ Eventually, von Steuben translated his work into the Army's first official document and established uniform practices for each service member.

Civil War

The Civil War marked the first time leadership development was an identifiable part of soldier training. In particular, increased attention was given to the relationships between the leader and subordinate.⁶⁹ Colonel Joshua Chamberlain was a successful leader during the time and, though he had no formal training in management and leadership, he understood the importance of managing the Army and developing leaders.⁷⁰ Chamberlain valued mutual trust, respect, and effective communication styles more than officers before him.⁷¹ His application of each component into the training process complimented personnel and development strategies already in place. Those strategies and emphasis on development continue to exist today in the Army's leadership manuals and training.

First Training Manual

The Officer's Manual, a comprehensive manuscript written in 1917, provided detailed descriptions of how officers in the Army were expected to act. After reviewing the book, guidelines laid out for officers appear highly specific, as attention to detail begins appearing in greater depth. One of many examples described how an officer, if possessing knowledge of a lady attending a party on her own, was expected to ask to be her escort for the evening in advance, as this type of behavior was considered polite and gentlemanlike.⁷² This case demonstrates not only how soldiers were expected to act but also shows their opinions toward women. The rules outlined also included appropriate ways to respond to a party invite and how to properly address a lady in public. Upon inception into the Army, soldiers were expected to read the Army Regulations, the Manual of Guard Duty, the Manual for Court Martials, and the Field Service Regulations⁷³ in order to possess the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to be competent, skilled, and effective service members. By requiring officers to read each manual, the Army made a major stride toward a uniformed approach to leadership development.

The U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC)

The U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) was established in 1973 as a single proponent for training reforms and leadership development.⁷⁴ Until the

military ended involvement in the Vietnam War, a formal training center did not exist. Advancements in technology as well as changes in time, manpower, and firepower were all impetuses in the evolution of battlefield strategies.⁷⁵ These advancements forced the United States to revisit training procedures and documents, ultimately leading to the development of TRADOC. In the 1970s and 1980s, TRADOC pushed through sustained programs of training reform and doctrine revision and fundamentally transformed the Army into a modernized training force.⁷⁶ The organization works to develop leaders—both soldier and civilian—and guide the Army through doctrine.⁷⁷ TRADOC continues to contribute significantly to the Army's strategy for LD training and programs provided to its members.

Characteristic Issues

During the formation of the U.S. Army, von Steuben recognized a significant difference in attitude between European and American soldiers. The United States was created because of a set of beliefs its citizens had that differed from European values, including a more individualistic viewpoint, freedom of choice, and minimal government oversight.⁷⁸ Americans were against blindly following the laws of the ruler, which led to their separation from Great Britain. Similar to adult learning theories, adults will learn and adapt when they believe in the need for change and, alternatively, will resist if there is not an apparent need. American soldiers needed to know why they were being expected to perform prior to fulfilling an order.⁷⁹ This forward-thinking philosophy contributed to a culture change where, for adult learners, the “why” was as important as the “how.”

Further, von Steuben believed American soldiers were fast learners, practical, and able to adapt.⁸⁰ Perhaps in part because of a soldier's expectation for understanding before performing, von Steuben began documenting his expectations, followed by corresponding rationales. In his training, he challenged soldiers to improve hygiene and their appearance to reduce health risks and promote personal conduct.⁸¹ The change presented an opportunity to increase retention, transfer skills from experienced soldiers to the novices, and improve the physical well-being of all soldiers. Eventually, his teachings and beliefs were put in writing when he produced the Army's first training doctrine.

Soldiers now possess an attitude of openness to learning and continuous improvement. They are expected to challenge themselves to be knowledgeable about tactics, technical systems, tendencies, and the needs of people.⁸² This mindset can be emotionally exhausting for soldiers but certainly contributes to creating a mentally strong organization. Lifelong learning, already noted as a central belief in the U.S. Army, is an individual's choice to pursue knowledge, the comprehension of ideas, and demand to expand depth to each learning area in order to continue to progress.⁸³ Training opportunities are abundant at every rank for those meeting the standards. Emphasis on continuous improvement is reinforced through the promotion and retention of service members who continue to pursue education opportunities.

The U.S. Army has viewed developing leaders as a critical component of training and an important lifelong learning strategy.⁸⁴ Each service member is expected to demonstrate the Army's core values in every step of their private and public lives, as illustrated through the acronym LDRSHIP.⁸⁵ Thus, the values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless-service, honor, integrity, and personal courage guide soldiers in their

professional and personal lives.⁸⁶ In its *Training the Force* manual, the U.S. Army defines LD as a deliberate, continuous, sequential, and progressive process that develops soldiers and civilians into competent and confident leaders capable of decisive action.⁸⁷ These concerted and concentrated efforts continue to revolve around emphasis for soldiers to be exceptional.

Army leaders demand the most out of soldiers by using tactics to reinforce the need for mental and physical strength in order to survive in battle.⁸⁸ Darwin's theory of natural selection, which suggests individuals with characteristics most useful to the population survive while those with harmful traits are eliminated,⁸⁹ is an interesting paradigm with basic training in the U.S. Army. Characteristics the Army strives to develop often take place during intensive training sessions. Boot camp is an opportunity for drill sergeants to identify those new recruits who do not have the mental wherewithal to survive. This tough, realistic training provides the best chance of success on the battlefield,⁹⁰ and it offers a clear visual of those not meeting the prescribed standards. Even after initial training, soldiers who do not continue to develop themselves may be expelled as they fall behind the latest training updates or may lack the special skills needed by the Army.⁹¹

LD programs and training in the U.S. Army continue to evolve as learning strategies further emphasize effective teaching and leadership practices. Recently, military trainers have moved away from the traditional authoritative approach to one that is more participative through shared learning experiences.⁹² In the past, incessant yelling was a common method of training employed by drill sergeants during the first weeks of boot camp. Training objectives, previously focused on the creation of immediately responsive soldiers without questioning authority, have changed. As Vergun notes, blind obedience is out and critical thinking orientation is in.⁹³ Today, training still incorporates a level of yelling, but is perhaps employed in a more constructive manner. While interactions by drill sergeants can still be intense, they are spending less time screaming and more time developing skills.⁹⁴ Drill sergeants have been told to "cool it" and eliminate intimidation tactics used for decades⁹⁵ while soldiers learn how to respond if they or any of their fellow soldiers are physically abused.⁹⁶ Soldiers learn that physical contact is against Army regulations and is a policy now being strictly enforced. These changes are all due to the U.S. Army's need to accommodate for unconventional warfare.⁹⁷ Twenty-first century conflicts are now characterized by unforeseen and unpredictable methods⁹⁸ where soldiers must be trained to make decisions based on previously unknown tactics. Still, the new and more passive approach has opponents concerned about the well-being of the military's future.

Some soldiers with years of experience now claim the military is lax and training is less effective. These experienced soldiers are pushing U.S. Army leaders to revert to more aggressive training methods. Lieutenant Colonel Power, a commander with the Army's Basic Combat Training Unit at Fort Benning, Georgia, refutes the "soft" claims, and he was emphatic in his belief that current soldiers are as good as ever.⁹⁹ Echoing those sentiments, Lieutenant Colonel Forbes, a second commander of Basic Combat Training at Fort Benning, stated that the U.S. military is now thinking smarter and producing more fundamentally fit soldiers.¹⁰⁰ Army leadership appears to be recognizing that soldiers have voluntarily enlisted and decided they want to serve their country. Soldiers in basic training want to serve their country, and they need to know how to do so.¹⁰¹ This change at basic training is expected to help the

enlistee become a fully functional soldier rather than someone limited to blindly following orders.¹⁰² While the debate over the best approach for boot camp will likely continue, other characteristics about the U.S. Army remain a fixture.

Human Resource Development in the U.S. Army

HRD paradigm focuses on improving learning and performance. Learning is frequently mentioned throughout the Army's history. Von Steuben described how adults in America learn¹⁰³ as the Army was being created, and by the early twentieth century, technical education was included in the Army's training manuals. Moss referred to officers without any technical education as greatly handicapped, emphasizing the Army's attention and focus on learning and continuous improvement.¹⁰⁴ In developing soldiers as leaders, they are also being prepared for leadership roles outside of the military. Moss' remarks about receiving an education outside of the Army demonstrate the military's belief in developing adults to be soldiers while also growing as individuals through education.¹⁰⁵

Education in institutions is not the only form of learning for soldiers. Soldiers are also challenged to learn from previous wars and battles. They mimic historical conflicts and discuss the experience with their comrades in order to grow and develop¹⁰⁶ through experiential learning. Experiential learning theory refers to learning that takes place upon action and reflection of a previously occurring event.¹⁰⁷ Officers are expected to critically analyze historical events and challenge the tactics in their own practice while practicing in the field. They reflect on what worked and what could be improved upon.¹⁰⁸ Moss posits that the learner interprets the situation and reacts how they best see fit.¹⁰⁹ This learning process is further aided by the use of Army regulations and doctrines where well-known battles are broken down and described for readers.

The purpose of learning for soldiers is similar to the reasons other adults participate in lifelong learning. To verify learning has occurred, the military frequently includes an assessment after each training period with a superior officer. Assessments and evaluations are used extensively in the U.S. Army for soldiers of all ranks. They are helpful in determining proficiency and the potential of leaders against organizational standards.¹¹⁰ One of the more commonly used assessments is called the After Action Reviews (AAR). AARs focus on the collective group, the leader, and the individual's task performance.¹¹¹ Extensive use of this assessment has shown improvements in performance of subordinates.¹¹² The military's exceptional use of AARs has even led to their introduction in the civilian jobs market¹¹³ as these tools demonstrate learning gains while providing leaders the opportunity to discuss improvement opportunities. The collaboration between a leader and a soldier in AARs demonstrates how training is a team-effort in the Army.¹¹⁴

Formal and Informal Leadership

In much the same way HRD distinguishes formal and informal learning, the Army differentiates formal and informal leadership as well. While formal learning includes planned learning activities in schools and classrooms¹¹⁵ formal leadership is assigned to leaders in positions of authority and responsibility.¹¹⁶ In both instances,

learning and leadership responsibilities are predetermined. Subordinates are required to give respect to those in charge because their leaders have been assigned a position of power. The military negates even the suggestion of insubordination toward superior officers, no matter the opinion of the subordinate, similar to the level of respect given to leaders in many Asian cultures. The definition is fitting for formal leadership but not with respect to legitimacy.¹¹⁷ On the other hand, informal leadership is offered to all soldiers, regardless of their ranks.

Informal leadership empowers soldiers to lead others not because of rank, but rather, because of a choice made to step up and lead an unspecified portion of a mission. "Leaders often must extend their influence beyond the chain of command."¹¹⁸ Similar to informal learning, where learning happens spontaneously and is unstructured,¹¹⁹ informal leadership is not assigned but rather "happens" when soldiers take the initiative to lead. An example of informal leadership is when a soldier, working with his peers, takes charge of a clean-up process that is left for his or her respective squad to take care of. In this situation, no one possessed power over the group but a job needed to be completed. This type of leadership can be seen anywhere in the organization but should not undermine formal leadership practices.¹²⁰ If a soldier outranks another, the highest-ranking soldier has the right to make the final call. Still, informal leadership is taught and promoted as a way of team-building for all soldiers wearing the uniform.

Both formal and informal leadership are critical components of the U.S. Army's LD programs and training. Rather than conflicting with each other, they complement by aiding the development process of all soldiers while ensuring structure remains in place. Soldiers right out of boot camp are often assigned to teach refresher courses on basic skills necessary for all soldiers to be effective. While these soldiers hold little to no authority because of their rank, they immediately have the opportunity to start developing themselves as leaders in a safe environment. Therefore, formal leadership may be developed because of informal leadership training opportunities provided by organizational leaders.

Organizational Training

The U.S. Army has a complex and thorough training system in place for the development of its soldiers. The institutional component is made up of training schools including the Officer Education System (OES), the Warrant Officer Education System (WOES), and the Non-Commissioned Officer System (NCOES).¹²¹ Each school is refined to meet the specific training needs of soldiers based on their rank and role in the service. For example, training at West Point Military Academy focuses on campaign strategies and generalship but has no courses related to strategy.¹²² Additional examples of institutional learning in the U.S. Army include training centers for Battalion Motor Officers, First Sergeants, and Airborne units.¹²³ These focused training programs and activities enhance not only the quality of a soldier but their overall preparation for battle and defense.¹²⁴

Operational Training

Operational training is perhaps the most widely used learning method in the U.S. Army. This type of training involves all situations where soldiers actively practice

performing their jobs. Soldiers train on machines and implement their learning in the field. These environments can be dirty, frightening, and physically and emotionally demanding.¹²⁵ Realistic training has shown to be critical to troop effectiveness when in combat. Regular Army, Army National Guard, and Army Reserve units spend an immense amount of time training and retraining in field exercises to ensure they are highly proficient when called upon. The reason for the large amount of training is simple: in no other profession is the cost of being unprepared as high.¹²⁶ Army leaders have the task of preparing, executing, and evaluating effectiveness of all training programs.¹²⁷ If complacency ever sets in, the entire organization would be susceptible to future attacks and breakdowns.

Continuous Improvement

Members of the U.S. Armed Forces are encouraged to be leaders and engage in continuous development as evident from the fact that soldiers not advancing their knowledge are struggling to keep their positions within the military.¹²⁸ The Department of the Army suggests that this is why successful strategy for continuous improvement requires a team approach.¹²⁹ Soldiers need to be supported and they need to understand what is expected of them in order to improve and enhance their skills. Improvement starts with assessments of the strengths, weaknesses, potentials, and learning needs.¹³⁰ Leaders have to be attentive to ensure learners are receiving support in their individual learning objectives.¹³¹ Clear feedback will help guide soldiers to find opportunities for continuous improvement that fit their needs and those of the Army.

Successes

For most soldiers, the Army can lead to a lifelong career full of opportunities, both while serving and after transitioning out. Those who complete their enlistment contract of two, three or six years without infractions are typically honorably discharged and receive considerable recognition. Compared to their same-aged civilian counterparts, veterans who complete their term of service possess a wealth of knowledge and have completed their first career. These adults have been taught dependability, problem-solving, and other soft skills critical in today's workplace.¹³² Undoubtedly, such skills and abilities would provide many advantages to the army veterans after transitioning to the civilian professions. Furthermore, it can be argued that such skills are crucial for successful and effective leadership in a given setting.

Challenges

The opportunities soldiers have are not without risk. Leadership training along with much of the other learning that occurs in the military does not translate easily for civilian employers.¹³³ The majorities of organizations proactively seek to hire veterans¹³⁴ but are challenged to align their skills with position openings based on misconceptions.¹³⁵ Soldiers in transition, because of unawareness to successful résumé development practices, do not make the process easier. Veterans are challenged to transfer leadership skills onto a one-page résumé to demonstrate their employability. The Legislature in the United States is developing programs to help veterans transfer

these skills, as well as offer tax credits to employers hiring veterans.¹³⁶ Today, as many as 200,000 veterans are actively seeking employment with more likely to follow.¹³⁷ Until government-led programs are fully developed and staffed, veterans will continue to face immense challenges when seeking employment.

Obstacles continue to arise as policies and perceptions change. Ricks argues the military is becoming more conservative while Morris argues it is becoming more masculine.¹³⁸ Loughrin and Arnold likely agree with Morris' assessment as female leaders in the military continue to be significantly under-represented as sexism barriers remain.¹³⁹ Vojik suggests the reason women continue to be excluded from combat is because of the desire to preserve the view that men are the warriors.¹⁴⁰ The Army's culture is one of exaggerated, extreme masculine attributes and behaviors.¹⁴¹ Barrow added simply that "War is a man's work."¹⁴² Equal opportunity has long divided soldiers as physical limitations have led to generalizations about where women should and should not be allowed to contribute. If women are able to demonstrate they are like men in relevant respects, then a change in policy should happen.¹⁴³ This change has now happened as Defense Secretary Leon Panetta argued, "If they can meet the standards, there is no reason why they shouldn't have the chance."¹⁴⁴ In fighting to change these limits, women won their battle to fight on the frontlines but still frequently face the displeasure of their male counterparts as well as a portion of female soldiers. Ninety-nine percent of women are unable to compete with men physically, which is why there are no women in any of the major sports, which is an argument recently used by a retired female sergeant.¹⁴⁵ Other soldiers express concern about the long-term effects of serving on a woman's body.¹⁴⁶ This debate will likely not be settled anytime soon and mirrors the slow progression of many other changes in the military.

Leadership Development Programs in the U.S. Army & Human Resource Development

This paper argues that HRD can contribute to the advancement and enhancement of both leadership development programs and training and the culture associated with leadership in the U.S. Army through its learning and performance paradigms at the individual, team/group, and organizational levels. At the individual level, HRD can help LD programs to improve and enhance themselves through helping develop effective training programs as well as integrating learning as a core process in the Army that is not only supported but also rewarded at all levels, and in all forms, and formats. Furthermore, HRD can assist with assessment of the effectiveness of these programs to ensure that transfer of training is taking place; and if not, conduct necessary diagnostics and make the improvements that would eliminate all factors impeding learning. Leadership is a process and it involves both a leader and his/her followers. Therefore, at the group/team level, HRD can help LD programs and training become an integral part of the group/team processes and support related team/group outcomes.

On many occasions, soldiers are placed in groups/teams and are assessed by their performance. HRD can help improve performance outcomes through learning and problem-solving at the group/team levels. Finally, at the organizational level, HRD can be instrumental in helping the U.S. Army in its efforts to engage in continuous improvement through learning and performance evaluation. Learning is the funda-

mental part of development and evaluation is needed to assess the existing levels of learning and future directions for learning. Both are vital for leadership development and leadership effectiveness. "Although the importance of leaders and their leadership practices are widely discussed from a conceptual point of view, there are very few empirical studies that examine the relationship between leadership practices and organizational performance."¹⁴⁷ Further studies are needed to explore the potential role and contribution of HRD to leadership development efforts in military settings.

Implications for Security and Defense Strategies

The U.S. Army will continue to serve as a protective umbrella for Americans as well as its allies and friends around the world. Immense capital is annually spent on safer equipment and more powerful weapons as the U.S. Army makes technological advancements that reduce the need for a large force. This movement away from manpower to machines will continue to be costly but will save lives. At a time when budget cuts are being made, a greater understanding of the development of soldiers is critical. Government officials will ultimately continue to spend massive dollar amounts to ensure sustained military strength and the safety of the United States and its allies.

Throughout history, the Army has remained fundamentally consistent as new systems, tactics, and trainings have essentially been variants of old ones.¹⁴⁸ Soldiers are trained to be leaders and protect the country.¹⁴⁹ They are expected to continue learning and developing themselves. However, while a traditional approach to learning and leadership remains, the branch of service has demonstrated an ability to adapt. Changes over the past 20 years in the United States' global political situation have added complexity to Army leadership.¹⁵⁰

The U.S. defense transformation since the early 2000s has had a significant global impact on U.S. allies, including the ROK-U.S. alliance.¹⁵¹ Many observers suggest that the U.S. Army's unsatisfactory performance in Operation Iraqi Freedom Phase IV was due to problems ranging from political leadership to ineffective weapons systems.¹⁵² If the U.S. Army has not been able to adequately adapt to counterinsurgency, the ROK Army may end up in a similar situation.¹⁵³ In 2001, President George W. Bush spoke of initiating a culture change in the military to include rewarding forward-thinking instead of discouraging it.¹⁵⁴ This culture change shifts a mindset where instead of frowning upon soldiers who actively seek more-efficient training, procedures, and practices, they are instead recognized in a positive light.¹⁵⁵ Additionally, the new defense strategy in the United States aims to address the changing strategic environment, in relation to defense spending cuts, troop drawdown, and increases in Asian importance.¹⁵⁶ In response, South Korea is rethinking their own defense strategies to allow greater adaptability and autonomy,¹⁵⁷ though further analysis of the U.S. Army experience in Iraq remains an important task.¹⁵⁸

Success of future military leaders will also depend on their ability to develop relationships with various government, multinational entities, and nongovernmental organizations.¹⁵⁹ The ROK military has in turn identified developing defense diplomacy and cooperation with the United States as one of eight national policy guidelines.¹⁶⁰ Ongoing transformations of both Korean and American forces provide an opportunity

to strengthen and expand alliance cooperation,¹⁶¹ as does the Joint Vision for the Alliances of the ROK and U.S. program developed in 2009.¹⁶² This is also important for the security and defense strategies of both nations. Both the United States and South Korea recognize the significance of this challenge and have thus taken steps to adapt military partnerships toward reality.¹⁶³ Fortunately, the U.S. Army as a whole will likely continue to increase emphasis on soft skills training instead of exclusive physical and specialized training of soldiers. The ROK Army remains committed to the U.S. Army's development procedures and will likely continue to emphasize culture, organizational learning, and structure.¹⁶⁴ Still, to successfully implement defense reforms, South Korea must show greater adaptability.¹⁶⁵ South Korea's revised power engagements will help promote human development; a key goal of U.S. foreign policy and a necessary element for increased stability.¹⁶⁶

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