

Strategy Research Project

Generating Strategic Leaders: Defining the Future by Analyzing the Past

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Class of 2017

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			Form Approved--OMB No. 0704-0188		
The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing the burden, to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.					
1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 01-04-2017		2. REPORT TYPE STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT		3. DATES COVERED (From - To)	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Generating Strategic Leaders: Defining the Future by Analyzing the Past			5a. CONTRACT NUMBER		
			5b. GRANT NUMBER		
			5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER		
6. AUTHOR(S) Colonel Joseph E. Escandon United States Army			5d. PROJECT NUMBER		
			5e. TASK NUMBER		
			5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER		
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Professor Richard O'Donnell			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER		
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army War College, 122 Forbes Avenue, Carlisle, PA 17013			10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)		
			11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)		
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Distribution A: Approved for Public Release. Distribution is Unlimited. To the best of my knowledge this SRP accurately depicts USG and/or DoD policy & contains no classified information or aggregation of information that poses an operations security risk. Author: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PA: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES Word Count: 8,924					
14. ABSTRACT A critical assessment of the U.S. Army's corps of general officers attributes performance in Iraq and Afghanistan to a failure to select, educate, and promote officers with the requisite strategic leadership competencies to achieve victory. The Army also recognizes that success in future conflicts will require strategic leaders with a depth of knowledge and skill sets beyond those required for the tactical realm. Several former general officers have proposed the introduction of professional development models to address these strategic leadership shortfalls. Using one of these models, this strategy research project examines the careers of four Army general officers that embody the quality of military genius – Fox Connor, George Patton, William DePuy, and Colin Powell. Each officer was examined within a framework that assesses the importance of background, education, operational assignments, institutional assignments, to include professional military education, self-development, and mentoring by senior officers. Self-development is assessed within the theory of autodidacticism, or the ability of an individual to be self-taught. The findings of this study illuminate which traits account for the development of genius and provides the basis for recommendations for generating future senior leaders.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS Strategic Leadership, Leader Development, Self-development, Autodidacticism, Genius					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 43	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT UU	b. ABSTRACT UU	c. THIS PAGE UU			19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (w/ area code)

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(8,924 words)

Abstract

A critical assessment of the U.S. Army's corps of general officers attributes performance in Iraq and Afghanistan to a failure to select, educate, and promote officers with the requisite strategic leadership competencies to achieve victory. The Army also recognizes that success in future conflicts will require strategic leaders with a depth of knowledge and skill sets beyond those required for the tactical realm. Several former general officers have proposed the introduction of professional development models to address these strategic leadership shortfalls. Using one of these models, this strategy research project examines the careers of four Army general officers that embody the quality of military genius – Fox Connor, George Patton, William DePuy, and Colin Powell. Each officer was examined within a framework that assesses the importance of background, education, operational assignments, institutional assignments, to include professional military education, self-development, and mentoring by senior officers. Self-development is assessed within the theory of autodidacticism, or the ability of an individual to be self-taught. The findings of this study illuminate which traits account for the development of genius and provides the basis for recommendations for generating future senior leaders.

Generating Strategic Leaders: Defining the Future by Analyzing the Past

Paul Yingling's provocative article, *A Failure in Generalship*, ignited a debate concerning how the U.S. Army selects its general officers. Yingling's 2007 article presented a scathing assessment of how America's generals failed in Vietnam, and at the time of publication, were failing in Iraq. His primary premise was that the Army's general officer corps failed to select officers with the requisite competencies to provide the level of leadership required for strategic success. Instead, the general officer corps selected officers into its ranks that were made from the same mold, shared the same experiences and lacked strategic understanding and vision. The underlying accusation was that the Army was myopically focused at the tactical level and lacked a requisite strategic culture.¹

A decade later the Army remains engaged in seemingly endless conflict in Afghanistan, Iraq, and the broader Middle East. The situation is often criticized as the result of a lack of strategic competence. Concurrently, the Army is evaluating past performance, attempting to fix shortcomings, and determine how best to man, train and equip the force to "win in a complex world." The *Army Operating Concept* acknowledges that the character of conflict is changing at an unprecedented pace and demands the Army win not only at the tactical and operational levels, but especially in the strategic realm.² This conclusion is generating debate in and out of the Army concerning many critical issues, one of which concerns how to best generate senior leaders with the requisite competencies to operate and win at the strategic level.

The establishment of a development framework is key to increasing the strategic competence of the Army's leaders. The first step in crafting such a framework is to examine examples of strategic excellence, particularly that which can be considered

genius. The purpose of this strategy research project is to explore genius, or what Clausewitz termed the “appropriate gifts of intellect and temperament,” to isolate the decisive traits of highly effective generals.³ In *The Savior Generals*, historian Victor Davis Hanson explored how five great commanders salvaged wars that appeared to be lost. Hanson’s analysis focused on discerning common traits among commanders from Themistocles to General David Petraeus.⁴

The savior generals display commonalities of character and disposition that encouraged contrarianism of all sorts – professional, political, and social...this natural independence of mind and need to reject past conventional thinking were critical, and were probably innate rather than merely acquired characteristics.⁵

This conclusion is at odds with the Army’s institutional belief that leadership competence is generated through a program of professional development emphasizing the acquisition of competencies and attributes through experience, education, and training in various domains.⁶

Exploring the intersection between the U.S. Army’s leader development model and Hanson’s conclusion reveals that a high level of self-development, enhanced by mentorship, generates genius.⁷ This paper examines the careers of four general officers, each identified as having a particular type of genius. The starting point for this examination is to define the qualities of generalship, or strategic leadership, as it is known in Army doctrine. This is followed by a discussion of the Army’s professional development framework and an introduction to two proposed models for generating strategic leaders. An explanation of autodidacticism, or the theory of being self-taught, will illustrate the importance of self-development, especially when supported by mentorship. This study will conclude with a series of findings that identify the decisive elements for

the development of genius. Finally, recommendations are provided that help inform the selection of future strategic leader generation models.

Strategic Leadership

Before examining how best to develop strategic leaders it is imperative to first define what a strategic leader is, and what competencies he or she must possess. For the purpose of this discussion the term strategic leader is defined as an Army general officer, who exercises strategic leadership.⁸ Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 6-22 *Army Leadership*, defines strategic leadership in the following manner.

Strategic leaders represent a finely balanced combination of high-level thinkers, accomplished warfighters, and geopolitical military experts...America's complex national security environment requires an in-depth knowledge of the diplomatic, informational, military, and economic instruments of national power. Strategic leaders understand the interrelationships among these instruments and use them to achieve strategic ends.⁹

According to the U.S. Army War College's *Strategic Leadership Primer*, strategic leadership is defined as

The process used by a leader to affect the achievement of a desirable and clearly understood vision by influencing the organizational culture, allocating resources, directing through policy and directive, and building consensus within a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous global environment which is marked by opportunities and threats.¹⁰

The definitions by themselves may not seem well connected, but taken together they create a framework to explain what a senior leader should be, know and do.¹¹

The *Primer* fills in the void of what the strategic leader should know, or rather what competencies the leader should possess. Defined, "Competencies are the knowledge, skills, attributes, and capacities that enable a leader to perform his required tasks."¹² The *Primer* categorizes these competencies in the following way:

- (1) *Conceptual*: Frame of Reference Development; Problem Management; Envisioning the Future.
- (2) *Technical*: Systems Understanding; Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, Multi-national (JIIM) Relationships; Political and Social Competence.
- (3) *Interpersonal*: Consensus Building; Negotiation; Communication.¹³

The intent of the Army's professional military education system is to serve as the foundation for building these competencies. The experience gained through operational and institutional assignments further develops the officer and enables greater capability throughout his career.

These competencies are supported by a broad and rich frame of reference developed throughout the leader's life that enables the leader to deal with tremendously complex issues and events. Although theoretical and historical readings can make salient the knowledge, skills, and abilities related to any strategic leader competency, most often these competencies will be developed through hands-on experiences, especially if linked to some sort of candid feedback mechanism. Future strategic leaders should balance identified weaknesses with challenging jobs and opportunities in order to stretch and develop current skills.¹⁴

According to the *Primer*, "competencies can be developed through education, but are often developed by reflective experience."¹⁵ This is further enhanced by crucial feedback provided by mentorship. This approach clearly subordinates the role of education to experience, and fails to address self-development as a contributing factor to the development of a broad strategic frame of reference. The fact that most Army officers do not receive their first formal strategic leadership education until attendance at a senior service college, twenty years into their careers, can be considered a contributing factor to the service's adherence to a culture that is tactically-focused.

Proposed Strategic Leader Development Models

Two recent works seek to address how to improve the quality of strategic leadership through adoption of models aimed at ensuring that future strategic leaders

receive education and broadening experience earlier in their careers. Written by retired Army general officers, these works examine problems and propose various solutions. In the Atlantic Council's *The Future of the Army: Today, Tomorrow, and the Day After Tomorrow*, Lieutenant-General (Retired) David Barno and Nora Benshael, examine the strategic problems facing the Army and recommend a broad range of solutions. Barno and Benshael believe that "Making the Army more adaptable will require leaders who are well-educated at both civilian and military schools, and who spend time reading and thinking deeply about war."¹⁶

According to Barno the organizational solution to the problem is a return to the "dual track" system, whereby officers are required to serve in both their branch specialty, as well as in a functional area throughout their careers.¹⁷ For example, an infantry officer will serve in branch specific tactical assignments such as company commander and battalion operations officer. Each of these jobs will be followed by assignment in the officer's designated functional area. Hence, the infantry officer who is designated as a foreign area officer, will potentially serve a tour as a defense attaché or work at a combatant command. Such experience will build regional expertise and language skills, enhance strategic leadership competencies, and enable a broad strategic frame of reference. Barno and Benshael argue that eliminating the dual track system in the 1990s left a significant capability gap.

Fewer and fewer Army senior leaders – and especially its generals – have neither the top tier academic credentials or the diversity of assignments that would help them think creatively about the wide range of challenges facing the Army and contribute effectively at the strategic level within DoD [Department of Defense] or the wider interagency arena.¹⁸

Barno also notes that "Army senior leaders need to mentor the service's rising stars to invest in and value educational and broadening pursuits – and, command boards

recognize, incentivize, and reward these choices as vital contributions to the future of the service.”¹⁹ Overall, Barno and Benshael advocate an organizational personnel management solution and a loose system of mentorship. Unfortunately, this proposal lacks the ability to establish a competing model that values the development of strategic leadership competencies along with tactical competence.

Retired Major-General, and former Army War College Commandant, Robert Scales, goes much further in proposing change. In a 2016 *Army* magazine article entitled “Are You a Strategic Genius?” Scales explored the basic problem of how to build better strategic leaders for the Army. Scales’ approach is a sweeping organizational and cultural change that addresses the criticism that general officer selection boards choose officers from the same tactical mold.²⁰ In effect, the Scales proposal appears similar to previous proposals to establish an American general staff system.²¹ In Scales’ assessment, the solution is selection of the Army’s best junior and mid-level leaders to become “Strategic Jedis.”²² For Scales, military education is the key to success. Scales proposes adaptation of the Army’s School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS) to select, train and promote a portion of the Army’s future strategic leadership. In this model, one-third of all general officers will be selected from this group, serving in the Army’s most strategically sensitive positions. In Scales’ appraisal, the Army can effectively address the current tactical – strategic divide, and be able to select strategic leaders that excel in this realm, without necessarily needing to excel in the tactical realm.²³

Scales’ solution penetrates the problem from an organizational perspective and generates an alternate development path that can compete with the current system.

This model has the potential to establish a culture that values strategic competence, but also creates an issue that has traditionally been anathema to the Army and the American public – military elitism.²⁴ Scales counters potential criticism with the argument that large organizations, especially businesses, select and groom their future strategic leaders through such a process. The negative effect of such a system may produce an elitist culture that stifles initiative, creativity, and innovation and develops a body of leaders that are susceptible to group-think.

While most readers of Scales' article will focus on his proposed system, it is his discussion of genius that is the most intriguing part of his analysis. Examination of this aspect of strategic leadership excellence is highly relevant, as both those inside and outside the Army institution often look to the great captains of the past to define what constitutes strategic excellence.²⁵ Critics such as Yingling, who deride the Army for a preference of tactical excellence over strategic ability, often point to General Dwight D. Eisenhower as the shining example of an officer with no combat experience and limited tactical command experience, but who excelled as a strategic leader. This example lends credence to the idea that strategic competence is mutually exclusive of tactical and operational level proficiency. Scales seems to think so as well. To make the point he categorizes strategic leadership into four distinct categories required by the Army to fulfill its institutional and warfighting requirements.

- (1) *Combat Genius*: Generals George S. Patton and Stanley McChrystal are representative of those “who fight beyond the plan and innovate as they fight...their demonstrated genius affects the future course of warfare...”²⁶

(2) *Political Genius*: Generals Colin Powell and David Petraeus. “They possess the skills to influence wartime policy while remaining subservient to their civilian masters.”²⁷

(3) *Institutional Genius*: Generals Peter Chiarelli, Creighton Abrams, and William Depuy are on this list due to their “ability to manage a very large institution and represent its equities in tune with the needs of the nation.”²⁸

(4) *Anticipatory Genius*: Scales does not provide any examples, but defines this genius as “the unique ability to think in time and imagine conceptually where the nature and character of war is headed.”²⁹ Lieutenant-General H.R. McMaster and Major-General Fox Connor are representative of this category.

What is most intriguing about the use of these examples is that none of the personalities mentioned were the product of the kind of professional development system espoused by Scales. Yet, they still developed a level of genius worthy of emulation today. So, this presents the following question: from where is genius derived?

Exemplars of the Profession: Marshall and Eisenhower

In the modern era, Generals of the Army George C. Marshall and Dwight D. Eisenhower are the exemplars of the military profession, and especially strategic leadership excellence. In an era when the Army had not yet fully transitioned from a frontier constabulary to a modern force with a truly strategic outlook, it is truly amazing that Marshall and Eisenhower developed the competencies required to organize, train, and equip the Army for a global conflict. What is even more remarkable is that both officers performed in the highest of civilian political positions, Eisenhower as President of the United States, and Marshall as both Secretary of State and Defense. Both

performed exceptionally well, as evidenced by their abilities to navigate the political, diplomatic and military challenges posed by the first years of the Cold War. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that both officers were the product of a professional development model that forged strategic leadership competencies.

Challenging this assumption is General Marshall's alleged admission that he was unprepared to be the Army's Chief of Staff.

It became clear to me that at the age of 58 I would have to learn new tricks that were not taught in the military manuals or on the battlefield. In this position I am a political soldier and will have to put my training in rapping out orders and making snap decisions on the back burner, and have to learn the arts of persuasion and guile. I must become expert in a whole new set of skills.³⁰

Review of both officer's careers provides evidence that the development of their genius was not the result of the components espoused by Barno and Scales. Neither Eisenhower nor Marshall possessed an advanced degree from a civilian university. While both officers served in some unique broadening assignments, neither had the benefit of working in a functional area. Both Marshall and Eisenhower attended the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College and the Army War College. Nonetheless, they did so in an era when both institutions were maturing under the mandate of the Root Reforms.³¹

The one experience that points to their enhanced development is their interaction with Major-General Fox Connor. As a mentor, Connor encouraged Eisenhower and Marshall to read and think about problems of strategic significance.³² This resonated with both officers, primarily because they possessed a significant capacity for self-development. Biographies of both officers illustrate their voracious appetites to read and learn well outside of the educational and experiential boundaries of the Army

development model. Mixed with Connor's mentorship, this generated a high level of strategic leadership excellence most consider to be genius.

Autodidacticism

According to Army Field Manual 6-22, *Leader Development*, "self-development bridges the gap between the operational and institutional domains, and sets the conditions for continuous learning and growth."³³ Doctrinally, self-development is divided into structured, guided, and personal components.³⁴ Most appropriate to the assessment of the case studies below are guided self-development, which is "recommended, optional learning intended to enhance professional competence" and personal self-development, which is focused on objectives that enhance professional development."³⁵ While included in Army doctrine as a pillar of leader development, in practice self-development is informal and random.

In order to understand genius, an examination of autodidacticism, as a form of self-development is essential. The word *autodidactic* stems from the Greek. Simply translated it means *self-taught*.³⁶ While the term itself is not in general use, most people are aware of historical figures that are widely known to have taught themselves a certain subject without the benefit of formal education or training. *Wikipedia* lists several of the most famous - da Vinci, Goethe, Darwin, Edison, Einstein, Jimmi Hendrix, Steven Spielberg, and Benjamin Franklin.³⁷ While this encompasses a wide sphere of artists, scientists, and inventors, autodidactic is not a term commonly applied to military leaders, although figures such as Alexander, Caesar, and Napoleon potentially qualify.

In *The Passion to Learn: An Inquiry into Autodidacticism*, Joan Solomon and several other scholars provide "first-hand stories about children and adults in different, but autonomous learning circumstances."³⁸ This work does not provide a general theory

of autodidacticism, but attempts to provide observations and draw conclusions about those who can be considered self-taught.³⁹ In one of her own chapters, Solomon explains that "We need a word [self-taught] to describe a range of people who prefer to teach themselves or to pick up knowledge from non-teaching situations, in one way or another."⁴⁰ This definition sets the stage for consideration of the two general explanations for autodidacticism: (1) Intellectual Curiosity; and (2) rebellion against formal, socially sanctioned learning (i.e. formal education).⁴¹

Autodidacts included in the category of intellectual curiosity can learn within the formal, socially sanctioned education system. Nonetheless, their intellectual curiosity provides greater impetus for learning, especially in subjects outside of the formal education process. Albert Einstein is an excellent example of this, as he was highly educated, but the work for which he is best known was learned outside of his formal education.⁴² In the second branch of autodidacticism, rebellion, individuals rebel against the formal structure. This includes not only how the material is presented, the teaching method employed, such as the Socratic Method, but also the very environment provided. *The Passion to Learn* is primarily focused on identification and categorization of those who do not learn in the modern education system, as well as the identification of how people teach themselves. As seen in the Eisenhower and Marshall examples, self-development requires the qualification of theory to clearly identify the unique component that proves decisive to the development of genius. Autodidacticism serves as that qualifier.

The below case studies will examine each of Scale's four types of genius. A common framework for evaluation is used to assess each senior leader. The framework

examines the background (i.e. upbringing), and early education of each officer. This is followed by reviewing the career path of each officer through the lens of the Army leader development framework, which focuses on training, education, and experience within three distinct domains: (1) Operational, (2) Institutional, and (3) Self-development. Hence, each officer's operational and institutional assignments, to include professional military education and advanced civil schooling, are reviewed. The role of self-development, within the construct of autodidacticism, is also examined. Evaluation of mentorship, as an enabler of self-development concludes each case study. Based on the case studies, findings and recommendations are provided for consideration.

Major-General Fox Connor

Major-General Fox Connor is little known outside of Army circles, and usually only to those with knowledge of the careers of Marshall, Eisenhower, and Patton. His personal and professional interaction with these leaders is generally acknowledged as the premier example of mentorship.⁴³ Fox Connor is also an example of Scales' *anticipatory genius*. Connor's power of foresight is evident by his ability to discern the changing character of warfare through his experience as an exchange officer with the French Army prior to World War I.⁴⁴ Following World War I General Connor's assessment of the Versailles Treaty correctly predicted another world war.⁴⁵ Through his anticipatory genius Connor envisioned that a new type of leader was required to meet the challenges of the future strategic environment. Connor's mentorship of Eisenhower, Marshall, and Patton ensured that the U.S. Army possessed the adaptive leadership required to expand the Army, build effective coalitions, execute successful joint and combined operations, and nurture the development of new technology to develop

maneuver warfare capability. All of this significantly contributed to America's victory over Germany and Japan.

Very little documentation of General Connor's Army career exists, other than what Edward Cox, his primary biographer, was able to piece together and publish in his biography entitled *Grey Eminence: Fox Connor and the Art of Mentorship*.⁴⁶ Nonetheless, this work provides sufficient evidence for examination of Connor's career and professional development. Connor was born in Mississippi in 1874, and raised in a small, rural town. His family had a tradition of military service in the Revolutionary War and the Civil War, which motivated Connor to aspire to be a career soldier.⁴⁷ Connor did well enough in his studies to secure a nomination to the United States Military Academy at West Point. As a cadet, Connor did not exhibit above average ability in his pre-commissioning studies or training, but managed to graduate seventeenth out of fifty-nine in the West Point Class of 1898. He was well known for accumulating demerits and walking tours due to infractions of discipline.⁴⁸ Commissioned an officer in the field artillery, Connor did not see active combat service during the Spanish-American War, although he did serve in the post-war occupation in Cuba.

General Connor's operational assignments were random by today's standards. Like most officers, Connor led platoons and commanded batteries, building his overall tactical proficiency. Yet, he did not command at the battalion level. During the early years of his career Connor developed and honed his skills as an artilleryman, becoming the Army's foremost expert on artillery.⁴⁹ This led to an exchange assignment with a French artillery regiment just before World War I. This experience informed Connor's understanding of both the design and acquisition of artillery, as well as new innovation

in tactics.⁵⁰ During the war, Connor served as the operations officer of the American Expeditionary Force under General John J. Pershing.⁵¹

General Connor also served in a variety of institutional assignments during his career. Throughout his early career he served as an instructor, teaching gunnery and artillery doctrine. As one of the first field artillery officers allowed to attend the prestigious U.S. Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC), Connor came to the notice of the school's commandant, Brigadier-General Franklin Bell.⁵² Subsequently, Bell served "as a role model for Connor as a self-taught professional officer who read French, Spanish, and German."⁵³ This relationship led to Connor's selection for attendance at the U.S. Army War College, and upon graduation was selected to be an instructor at the college, often teaching higher ranking and more experienced officers.⁵⁴ Prior to World War I, Connor served as an inspector general for field artillery.

While Connor excelled in both his operational and institutional assignments, it was within the self-development domain that he truly excelled. Connor's daily routine was to study long into the night, reading various books on tactics and strategy. Many of these books he read in French, as they were not available in English at the time.⁵⁵ As Edward Cox points out "Connor had started studying French and Spanish as a cadet, but taught himself German as a captain in order to read about strategies being created in the Prussian Kriegsakademie."⁵⁶ Eisenhower's personal account, from the time he served as Connor's executive officer in Panama, notes that that Connor required Eisenhower to not only write a daily operations order, but to read numerous volumes from the general's personal library, including works by Shakespeare, Nietzsche, and

most importantly Clausewitz.⁵⁷ At the time Clausewitz was not very well known to the American Army, let alone as venerated as he is today.⁵⁸

As previously mentioned with the discussion of General Bell, mentorship was a significant factor in the development of Fox Connor's anticipatory genius. As an autodidact, Connor was largely self-taught. However, his exposure to mentors like his very first battery commander, who was an avid reader and writer of military history, helped unlock his genius for further development.⁵⁹ Mentors such as Bell and Pershing ensured that Connor was provided with key developmental assignments that broadened his frame of reference.⁶⁰ While Connor was extremely well read, he was able to transfer that knowledge into a greater understanding of World War I, which he passed on to his protégés. In this regard he ensured that both Eisenhower and Marshall understood the importance of fighting with allies and "arranging allied commands," which of course were a cornerstone of U.S. victory in World War II.⁶¹

General George S. Patton, Jr.

Carlo D'Este, one of General Patton's numerous biographers, entitled his work *Patton: A Genius for War*. In the Scales framework, Patton is as an example of *combat genius*. Patton is also a member of Fox Connor's triumvirate of mentees.⁶² Patton was, and remains to this day, both a controversial and revered figure. His operations in North Africa and Sicily, and especially his lightning advance across Europe following D-Day, are recognized as great studies in combat leadership and genius worthy of emulation. Conversely, General Patton's genius included neither political decorum nor understanding of his strategic environment, and this ultimately led to his relief as commander of the Third Army.

In order to understand General Patton as great combat commander, it is necessary to understand George Patton. Patton was a member of a wealthy Virginia family that migrated to California following the Civil War. Unlike Marshall and Eisenhower, Patton grew up in a wealthy and influential family that valued its martial tradition. Patton's grandfather, and namesake, served in the Confederate Army and was killed during the war. Patton was the third generation of his family to attend the Virginia Military Institute, although he subsequently graduated from West Point. Patton was raised on stories of great historic battles, and this was reinforced by interaction with the legendary Confederate raider, John Mosby.⁶³ Like Fox Connor, Patton knew from the earliest age that he wanted to be a soldier.⁶⁴

In his psychological profile of Patton, D'Este assesses the basis of Patton's controversial behavior as dyslexia. This not uncommon learning disability, meant that Patton struggled to learn how to read, not attending formal schooling until the age of eleven.⁶⁵ Patton wrestled with this disability throughout his life, as can be seen in his writing, which was plagued by grammar and spelling errors.⁶⁶ Subsequently, he had to work extremely hard to pass the academic entrance exam required to attend West Point. Although he did so, it took him an extra year to graduate due to academic deficiencies. While it cannot be assessed that Patton taught himself to overcome his disability and academic problems, he had much help in doing so, it was his disability that drove his desire to teach himself many skills and absorb vast amounts of knowledge.⁶⁷

Patton's operational assignment history was nothing out of the ordinary for the early Twentieth Century Army. Commissioned a cavalry officer upon graduation from

West Point in 1909, Patton served in cavalry leadership positions during the early years of his career. He gained his first combat experience while serving as an aide-de-camp to General John J. Pershing during the Punitive Expedition in Mexico in 1916. As a member of the American Expeditionary Force during World War I, Patton served as the company commander for Pershing's headquarters. Subsequently, he moved to a position in the newly formed tank corps and participated in several actions, earning awards for valor and combat leadership. It was during this time that Patton gained a reputation as an excellent combat commander and an adherent of the tank. Following the war he commanded a tank brigade. With de-mobilization of the Army, Patton continued to serve in cavalry units, commanding at the squadron and regimental levels. During the 1930s Patton was assigned to the Hawaii Department, serving as both the command's operations and intelligence officer. With the spectacular success of the German Army in Poland and France, the Army re-formed armored units. Patton was promoted to general officer and commanded at the brigade and division level prior to America's entry into the war.

General Patton's institutional Army experience was rather limited. Patton was a graduate of the Cavalry Service School, CGSC, as well as the Army War College. As a young lieutenant stationed at Fort Meyer, Virginia he served as a social aide for both the Chief of Staff and the Secretary of the Army.⁶⁸ Notably, Patton served as an instructor at the Cavalry School from 1913 to 1915, and also served as a member of the Army General Staff during early 1920s.

As is well known, Patton was a self-taught military historian, displaying an enormous depth and breadth of knowledge concerning great battles from antiquity to

World War I. One of his close acquaintances perfectly captured the effect of Patton's autodidactism.

Houdeman [a French Colleague] found Patton a keen student of war, and for the brief period that they were together they were inseparable, their riding, shooting, and fencing augmented by a study of battles and wars, particularly those of Napoleon. Houdeman would later write that Patton's historic campaigns of the Third Army in 1944-45 reminded him of Napoleon at his best "from [the] overall strategy right to the psychological approach of the commander himself."⁶⁹

Patton spent a great deal of time reading and thinking about war, certainly more than was provided in the Army's formal education system. Additionally, Patton expended considerable effort writing articles for professional journals covering diverse subjects from cavalry, to how tanks should be employed in war, as well as the basic principles of warfare.⁷⁰

There are other aspects to Patton that illustrate his self-taught abilities. As a young officer Patton requested and was allowed to attend the French Cavalry School in Saumur, in order to study fencing under the world's foremost expert.⁷¹ Patton took this knowledge to the Mounted Service School where he became the U.S. Army's Master of the Sword, a position he recommended for creation.⁷² He subsequently designed the U.S. Army new Cavalry saber, dubbed the "Patton Sword," and re-wrote the associated doctrine.⁷³ Patton also participated in the 1912 Olympics in the Modern Pentathlon, where he placed fifth. In preparing for the event, he had no coach or formal training.⁷⁴

From his origins as a cadet, Patton was well known among his peers as a shameless self-promoter.⁷⁵ Nonetheless, his competence and deep study of war attracted the attention of numerous mentors, such as Fox Connor and General Pershing. But for his mentors, the challenge was keeping Patton out of trouble and motivated to stay in the peacetime Army.⁷⁶ On several occasions mentors intervened on

Patton's behalf, one such case being General Connor's positive evaluation of Patton after Patton's removal from the Hawaii Department operations officer post.⁷⁷

General William E. Depuy

General William E. DePuy is considered by many to be the father of the modern U.S. Army, and as such is an exemplar of *Institutional Genius*. As the Vietnam War drew to an end, the U.S. Army's senior leadership re-focused its efforts on preparing to fight the Soviets on the plains of Europe, reinvigorate a demoralized force, and transition to the All-Volunteer Army. As the Assistant Vice Chief of Staff of the Army (A-VICE), and subsequently the founder and first commander of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), DePuy was the architect of that transformation. His ultimate achievement was to "make TRADOC the key institution in fact for rationalizing training, force structure, weapons and equipment requirements, and doctrine."⁷⁸

Unlike Patton, DePuy possessed the ability to maneuver through institutional culture and bureaucracy to effect change in the Army. While serving as the A-VICE, DePuy convinced the Secretary of the Army, the Chief of Staff of the Army, and numerous senior Army commanders of the need to break the Continental Army Command into two commands. One of the commands, TRADOC, was to focus on establishing training standards and the development of doctrine.⁷⁹ The other major command, U.S. Army Forces Command, was charged with training and deploying operational units. In his role as TRADOC commander, General DePuy oversaw the reorganization of the Army's various branch schools and the establishment of specific standards for how soldiers and leaders were to be trained. Following the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, DePuy was instrumental in capturing the lessons of that war and articulating the implications to American tactics and weapons systems. Ultimately, DePuy's lasting

legacy was the revitalization of U.S. Army doctrine and the publication of Field Manual 100-5, *Operations*. The expression of DePuy's efforts was the U.S. Army's one-hundred hour ground war that drove the Iraqi Army out of Kuwait.

William DePuy grew up in the open spaces of North Dakota in a middle class family. An average student, he attended South Dakota State University, where he joined the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC). He graduated in 1938, earning a regular Army commission. DePuy's first combat experience was in World War II, where he served with the 90th Infantry Division. Following D-Day the division earned a reputation as a unit marred with incompetent leaders and high casualty levels. DePuy concluded the war as a battalion commander with three silver stars for valor in combat. His experience in the 90th Division greatly shaped his thinking and ignited a passion to change the Army for the better.⁸⁰

DePuy's post-war operational assignments consisted of command of an infantry battalion and infantry regiment, both in Germany. As a Colonel, DePuy served as the G-2 counterintelligence officer for United States Army Europe. In Vietnam, DePuy served as the Operations Officer for Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, followed by command of the 1st Infantry Division. In all of his command assignments he continually developed new tactics in order to adjust to the battlefield environment. Like Patton, DePuy was a prolific writer. In order to promulgate the tactical changes that he desired, DePuy wrote such articles as "Platoon Battle Drill" and "Eleven Men, One Mind," all with the aim of improving the Army's tactical competence.⁸¹

General DePuy's institutional assignments provide greater fidelity concerning the development of his genius. In the 1950s DePuy attended the Defense Language

Institute, learned Russian and subsequently served as a military attaché in Budapest. He also served a tour with the Central Intelligence Agency, where he focused on China. DePuy was a graduate of CGSC, the Armed Forces Staff College, and the British Imperial Defence College. Overall, he saw little value in the professional military education that he attended. In fact, he compared his experience at CGSC to that of the now defunct Combined Arms and Services Staff School, which taught captains to be staff officers.⁸² However, General DePuy noted his time with the British as a positive experience that helped to broaden his horizons for strategic leadership.⁸³

DePuy had a wide-ranging series of institutional assignments, primarily on the Army staff, which helped to shape his mastery of maneuvering the institutional Army and the Pentagon bureaucracy. Following CGSC DePuy served in the Army G-1, working enlisted personnel policy as the Army transitioned back to a volunteer force. According to General DePuy he found his time in Washington D.C. professionally rewarding, and subsequently did not maintain a myopic focus on serving in operational assignments.⁸⁴ Following battalion command DePuy worked for the Chief of Staff of the Army's Initiatives Group. In this assignment, he contributed one of the chapters to General Maxwell Taylor's book *The Uncertain Trumpet*.⁸⁵ As DePuy articulated, his job working in a small group of talented young colonels was to influence members of Congress and the press with regard to the Army and its conventional capability.⁸⁶ During the early 1960s General DePuy served as the Director of Special Warfare in the office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations. Subsequently, he served as the Director of Plans and Programs in the Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development.

As General DePuy notes, it was a very important job in his development, and one that prepared him to serve as the A-VICE.⁸⁷

DePuy's self-development was informed by his assignments working on the Army Staff. In numerous jobs General DePuy used his experience and autodidacticism to build his genius. DePuy possessed a formidable analytical mind and penchant for management that was respected and valued in the McNamara Defense Department.

Some civilian leaders in the McNamara era regarded Army management as primitive and were unimpressed by generals (and admirals) as managers. But, DePuy stood out as a general who "got it." His appreciation of the facts and analytical intelligence, and his crisp presentation in speech and writing had won him the respect of both the civilian and uniformed sides of Pentagon leadership.⁸⁸

This was additionally enhanced by DePuy's "innate sense of timing."⁸⁹ DePuy was a master at shaping his environment to enable change. He did much of this through using small teams of the Army's best mid-grade officers to identify problems and build creative, workable solutions that could quickly navigate the Army bureaucracy.⁹⁰ DePuy was also a master at identifying the key players that were required to ensure the success of the decisions that his changes required.⁹¹ While DePuy's career was supported by numerous senior officers, such as Generals Maxwell Taylor, William Westmoreland, and Creighton Abrams, he did not appear to have any one significant mentor to help shape his genius. In a comprehensive oral interview of his Army experience, DePuy mentioned numerous key figures, and it appears that he absorbed knowledge from all of them.⁹²

General Colin L. Powell

The final case study examines General Colin Powell, the first African-American Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff, President George W. Bush's first Secretary of

State, and a one-time public hopeful for president. A 1994 *Newsweek* cover story called him “the most respected figure in American public life. He is an African-American who transcends race; a public man who transcends politics.”⁹³ Scales labels Powell an officer with *political genius*. As the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Powell deftly managed the military’s transition following the end of the Cold War, full implementation of the Goldwater-Nichols Act, the U.S. invasion of Panama, and the first Gulf War to expel Saddam Hussein from Kuwait. Later in his chairmanship, Powell expertly navigated the new political landscape associated with the Clinton Administration. In effect, Powell challenged President Clinton’s initiative to end the ban on homosexuals openly serving in the military, as well as commitment of American forces to the civil war in Bosnia. His promulgation of the Powell Doctrine had an immense impact on best military advice and served as a direct challenge to the unbounded use of American military force.⁹⁴ Any other general officer would have faced dismissal, in what today would be considered a challenge to civilian control of the military.

Colin Powell was born and raised in New York City, the son of Jamaican immigrants. Although an average student, Powell gained admittance to New York City College, where he continued to struggle academically.⁹⁵ It was not until he joined Army ROTC that, by his own admission, he began to take an interest in academics. He found that he liked the Army and decided to pursue it as a career, commissioning into the infantry in 1958.⁹⁶ As a junior officer Powell served as a platoon leader and company commander. From 1962 to 1963 he served as a combat advisor to the Vietnamese Army. Several years later, as a major, Powell returned to Vietnam and served as a

battalion executive officer for a short time until he was pulled to AMERICAL Division headquarters to serve as the deputy operations officer and operations officer.⁹⁷ In the early 1970s General Powell served as a battalion commander in Korea and as a brigade commander in the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault). While Powell never served as a division commander, a critical gateway to multi-star assignments, he was selected to serve as a corps commander and finally as the commander of U.S. Army Forces Command. Both of these assignments were cut short by his selection as National Security Advisor to the President and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

General Powell's institutional Army assignments were somewhat limited. Powell attended CGSC, graduating number two in his class, and also attended the National War College. Following battalion command he attended George Washington University, earning a master's degree in business administration. Subsequently, he served on the Army Staff, working for then-Lieutenant General Depuy. As part of DePuy's small group of insiders Powell learned how to effectively operate within the Army bureaucracy, an important part of his development.

Powell's outstanding performance led to a series of assignments on the civilian side of government. During his time working for DePuy, Powell was selected for a coveted White House Fellowship. Although a reluctant participant in the program, Powell later stated that the fellowship was a key assignment that taught him the essence of political effectiveness.⁹⁸ As a White House Fellow, he served in the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), where he came to the attention of Caspar Weinberger and Frank Carlucci, both of whom played prominent roles in the Reagan Administration and shaped Powell's later career. Caspar Weinberger's assessment of Powell bears

citing: “He clearly knew more about the subject matter of almost any meeting than did any of the other participants. He also knew exactly what had to be accomplished at each meeting, and as a result he was able to participate in the most effective way possible.”⁹⁹ The job at OMB gave Powell a clear understanding of how money drives budgets and politics, a critical skill for strategic leadership.¹⁰⁰ Following brigade command Powell served in the office of the Special Assistant to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense, where he worked for John Kester. Subsequently, Kester took Powell with him to the Department of Energy. Powell later served as the Senior Military Assistant to the Deputy Secretary of Defense, and during the early years of the Reagan Administration was the Senior Military Advisor to Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger. The 1987 Iran-Contra Affair produced a wide shake-up of the National Security Council, and Powell was asked by Carlucci to serve as the deputy National Security Advisor. When Carlucci became the Secretary of Defense, he recommended Powell assume his job as the National Security Advisor to President Reagan.

General Powell exhibited many of the competencies critical to strategic leadership. His experience over several decades of service contributed to the development of a broad set of military and political competencies. Nonetheless, it was his capacity as an autodidact that enabled him to develop a broad political frame of reference. In effect, Powell taught himself how to be a highly effective operator in an environment well outside his professional military education and training.

While General Powell’s political genius was shaped by civilian mentors such as Weinberger, Carlucci, and Kester, Army mentors ensured his military career remained on track. Throughout his career General Powell was challenged by his desire to follow a

traditional army career path and the desire of civilian mentors to employ his political genius. The lack of division command and short stints in other key commands had the potential to prematurely end Powell's career. It was only the intervention by Army mentors that ensured Powell's continued progression.¹⁰¹ As one of his primary mentors, General John Wickham advised "You are not going to have a conventional Army career. Some officers are just not destined for it."¹⁰² Another key mentor, Army Chief of Staff General Carl Vuono ensured a key job was saved for Powell following his time as national security advisor.¹⁰³

Summary of Findings

The purpose of this paper is to answer two fundamental questions: (1) What is decisive to the development of genius; and (2) How can the Army use this understanding to develop a system to identify, select, train, and manage future strategic leaders? Four case studies, reflective of the Scales framework, served as the basis for analysis. Each case study examined how the associated senior leader developed a particular genius. The case studies reviewed personal and academic background, operational assignments, institutional assignments, self-development, and mentorship to discern the role that each of these components played in forging genius. The below chart provides an overall assessment of the impact of the specified components. Each component is evaluated for each leader according to the role that the component played in the development of the individual's particular genius. Checks indicate that the component was of value, but not decisive, to the development of genius. The one minus in the table below indicates the component was an area where the subject struggled to create value. Pluses indicate the component was decisive to the development of genius.

Table 1. Developmental Assessment of Genius

	Connor	Patton	DePuy	Powell
Background	✓	+	✓	✓
Academic Achievement	✓	-	✓	✓
Operational Path	✓	✓	✓	✓
Institutional Path	✓	✓	+	+
Self-Development	+	+	+	+
Mentoring	+	+	+	+

The chart above illustrates the overall findings of this work. In the case of background, or the formative years prior to commissioning, evidence indicates that, overall, personal formation did not play a decisive role in building genius. DePuy and Powell came from humble backgrounds and saw military service as a way to improve their lives, as opposed to a calling. Connor and Patton were both raised in families with links to soldiering, and both sought a military career from an early age. Patton's upbringing, enhanced by his dyslexia, can be considered decisive. Examination of academic backgrounds revealed average, and in some cases even below average, academic achievement. The rare case is Patton, who struggled with dyslexia. This issue prevented academic achievement from enhancing the development of his genius.

Assignments in the operational and institutional domains served to provide each individual officer with the requisite leadership experience desired in strategic leaders. Each of the four leaders examined had a rich operational assignment history which built tactical and technical skill and refined leadership competencies. While Powell's operational assignments often lacked sufficient time, he nonetheless served effectively

in the assignments and built competence. Institutional assignments is where the officers divided into two distinct groups. Connor and Patton served in various institutional assignments, but these jobs were not of significance to their development. For DePuy and Powell, institutional assignments did play a significant role. Both senior leaders had very unique career paths that prepared them for the positions of responsibility that they ultimately held. In the case of professional military education, the evidence suggests that CGSC and the War College did not play a decisive role in developing genius.

Evaluation of the case studies does show that self-development played a decisive role in the success of Connor, Patton, DePuy, and Powell. In modern times the U.S. Army charged each generation to seek self-development as a means to mastering the profession of arms. Army professional military education, operational, and institutional assignments, especially instructor assignments, provided an excellent framework for self-development where tactics were concerned. But as many critics have noted, the U.S. Army, until recently, was not focused on strategy. Hence, there is not a framework to build strategic leaders and those that advise them. Self-development, in the form of autodidacticism, does help to explain how some rise to the level of genius. In the end, Connor, Patton, DePuy, and Powell all possessed traits that contributed to their development beyond the scope of operational and institutional assignments. Connor was a self-taught student of war, serving in an institution that valued anti-intellectualism. Patton displayed a high level of autodidacticism. The necessity of overcoming his dyslexia, his participation in the Olympics, his development of the cavalry saber, and his voracious appetite for understanding history, make him notable as an officer that was largely self-taught. DePuy developed a keen understanding of the Pentagon and the

bureaucracy. His grasp of management principles and his ability to navigate the bureaucracy affected sweeping institutional change. Finally, Powell, although potentially a reluctant political operator, grasped the world of the political environment around him and taught himself how to shape that world.

The evidence associated with each case study also indicates that mentorship was a critical enabler of self-development. Mentorship served two purposes. First, mentorship enhanced self-development. Second, mentors served a significant role in keeping each officer on track to attain positions of senior leadership. General Connor's self-development was enhanced by his exposure to his first battery commander and his interaction with General Franklin Bell. Additionally, Bell ensured that Connor's career remained on track. Subsequently, Patton's self-development was encouraged by Connor. Connor, among other officers, ensured that Patton's career was not cut short, despite Patton's best efforts to derail himself. The cases of DePuy and Powell are somewhat different from those of Connor and Patton. There is no evidence to indicate that DePuy had a prime mentor that enhanced his self-development. The evidence does show that senior leaders such as Generals Westmoreland and Abrams, among others, understood DePuy's genius and ensured that he served in significant assignments that ultimately led to his selection as the TRADOC commander. There is no doubt that DePuy's reputation among the Defense Department's civilian leadership also contributed to his career advancement. Powell was mentored not just by military senior leaders, but most importantly by civilian leaders such as Weinberger and Carlucci. Powell's exposure to leaders such as these greatly enhanced the self-development that led to his effectiveness in the political and interagency environments in which he

operated. In the case of both DePuy and Powell, self-development had a greater association with experience than the study of history or technical innovation. DePuy and Powell developed their competencies well outside the framework, culture, and experience of the military profession.

Recommendations

Before providing recommendations it is useful to contextualize the conclusions drawn from the four case studies. First, the four senior leaders evaluated clearly show that the U.S. Army provides a professional development framework that generates effective strategic leaders. Literature that examines shortcomings, such as the Yingling article, as well as the Army's articulation for the need to produce leaders focused on winning at the strategic level, suggest a need to do better. Second, the case studies indicate that the system the Army employs to build strategic leaders must have as its keystone the unique traits of the individual officer. Adherence to this principle will ensure that a development model, whether it be the Scales, Barno, or some other model, will enhance the ability of the individual to develop his or her own genius. One conclusion that should not be drawn from this paper is that the Army should develop a system focused on finding the next "Genius," such as a Patton or Petraeus. The case studies clearly indicate that the development of each individual's particular genius is of greater overall value to the Army. The following recommendations serve to make these conclusions actionable.

Modification of Existing Evaluation Reports

Under current policies the officer evaluation report (OER) is the primary tool used to select officers for schooling, promotion and command. Yet, the OER is one-dimensional, with reports that focus on performance in tactical command and key

developmental assignments outweighing others. The OER does not evaluate potential traits that could enhance strategic competence. Evaluation of self-development (i.e. adaptive autodidactic abilities) competency, especially with regard to history, strategy, politics, language, and cultures, is one way for senior raters, particularly at the colonel / O-6 level, to identify company grade officers who demonstrate strategic leadership aptitude. This information can then be used to place the appropriate officers into broadening assignments that build strategic competencies at an earlier stage of their career, while ensuring that tactical competence remains the keystone.

Talent Management

Self-selection, or an officer's drive to seek assignments that fulfill inherent self-development desire is another important factor to consider. In order to leverage this the Army should develop a mature talent management system that facilitates an individual officer's desire to follow a unique career path that ultimately builds strategic leadership competencies. When combined with the recommendation to modify evaluation reports, programs such as the Harvard G-3 Strategist Program and Joint Chiefs of Staff Intern Program can be filled by officers that have proven themselves to have leadership and tactical competence, but also possess the desire to serve as strategic leaders.

Formalize Mentoring

Mentoring will remain a decisive component for building strategic leaders. While mentoring take place across all levels of the force, it is only semi-formalized in the senior leader ranks. Retired general officers, or grey beards, are often employed to serve as mentors to active duty general officers. In some cases, as at the U.S. Army's School for Command Preparation, retired general officers are employed to share their experience with future battalion and brigade commanders. This experience is

invaluable, as the retired officers feel free to share the advice they wished they had received prior to serving in strategic leader positions. These officers are also aware of the developmental shortfalls present in the current model for selecting and developing strategic leaders. Establishing a small team of retired general officers whose job it is to identify and develop future strategic leaders will greatly enhance any future model. These retired strategic leaders could visit installations across the Army and talk to battalion and brigade commanders to identify junior officers who exhibit desirable traits, in particular, autodidacticism. These officers could then be formally mentored to ensure that they develop their full potential. Such a program should not be a guarantee of promotion or selection for command, but will help to effectively manage those with the most potential to excel at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels.

Endnotes

¹ Paul Yingling, "A Failure in Generalship," *Armed Forces Journal*, May 2007, <http://armedforcesjournal.com/a-failure-in-generalship/> (accessed January 16, 2016).

² U.S. Department of the Army, *The U.S. Army Operating Concept: Win in a Complex World*, TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, October, 31, 2014), iii. The Army Operating Concept clearly articulates the need to think about war holistically, as opposed to a series of successful tactical operations. "This concept, for the first time, focuses on all three levels of war; tactical, operational, and strategic. The environment the Army will operate in is unknown. The enemy is unknown, the location is unknown, and the coalitions involved are unknown. The problem we are focusing on is how to 'Win In a Complex World'... 'Win' occurs at the strategic level and involves more than just firepower...The key to a Strategic Win is to present the enemy with multiple dilemmas."

³ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993), 115.

⁴ Victor Davis Hanson, *The Savior Generals: How Five Great Commanders Saved Wars That Were Lost – From Ancient Greece to Iraq* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2013). In *The Savior Generals*, Hanson analyzes five case studies of military commanders – Themistocles at Salamis, the Byzantine general Flavius Belisarius, General William Sherman and the March to the Sea, General Matthew Ridgway in Korea, and General David Petraeus in Iraq.

⁵ Hanson, *The Savior Generals*, 239-41. Hanson further notes that “Savior generals are not mere cowboys. Most were keen students, even scholars, of war. If while in the shadows they garnered little notice, they nevertheless used their time in obscurity to systematically review contemporary tactics and strategy of an ongoing losing war. In their prior tenures, they were open to innovation and experimentation without the burdens of supreme military command. As outsiders in their ideas about sea power, logistics, total war, or counterinsurgency, they were largely left alone when the war went well – only to receive a sudden call to arms at a time of near defeat, when more conventional choices were long exhausted.”

⁶ U.S. Department of the Army, *Leader Development*, Field Manual 6-22 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, June 2015), 3-1. Army doctrine specifically outlines the following fundamentals for leader development. “Every part of the Army is vested in maximizing its human capital to prevent, shape, and win in the land domain. Every individual that makes up this capital is—or can become—a pivotal leader. While the Army employs many strategies in the development of leaders, the most influential of these coincide with the time spent in operational assignments for Soldiers and while at work for Army Civilians. Working in real settings—solving real problems with actual team members—provides the challenges and conditions where leaders can see the significance of and have the opportunity to perform leadership activities. Leaders encourage development and learning in their subordinates in every aspect of daily activities and should seek to learn something new every day. Self-development can occur anywhere, so it is an important aspect of development in organizations. Other settings, such as education, can apply the principles that are effective and efficient for development in units. Units and organizations operate in a more decentralized manner than educational and training centers. Decentralization makes the sharing of effective practices necessary and beneficial. Educational institutions and training centers are organizations that can adopt these same leader development principles for their own staffs, students, and trainees.”

⁷ Army doctrine defines mentorship as “The voluntary developmental relationship that exists between a person of greater experience and a person of lesser experience that is characterized by mutual trust and respect. (AR 600-100).” U.S. Department of the Army, *Army Leadership*, Army Doctrine Reference Publication 6-22 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, August 2012), 7-11.

⁸ This strategy research project is ultimately linked to how the U.S. Army selects its general officers, and the leadership competencies that these officers are expected to possess, or *generalship*. Current literature uses the terms general, senior leader, and strategic leader to identify general officers. Strategic leadership has replaced generalship in common use. Army Doctrine Reference Publication 6-22, *Army Leadership*, states that “Strategic leaders include military and civilian leaders at the major command through DOD levels,” although it does not specifically label strategic leaders as general officers. The U.S. Army War College’s *Strategic Leadership Primer* states that “Strategic leaders most often operate at the enterprise level where various organizational sub-systems converge to support common purpose...Military leaders often attribute the title ‘strategic’ to individuals who are, in fact, ‘leaders at the strategic level’ as opposed to ‘strategic leaders.’” Providing further complexity, the *Primer* states the following: “Top leaders of any organization, including staff members, share the responsibility of strategic leadership. *Realistically, only one or two percent of the members of an organization will ever attain strategic leadership rank or position, but, anyone working directly for a strategic leader should be well-versed in strategic thinking concepts in order to adequately support and advise the leader.*” In order to better align with Army doctrine, the terms strategic leader and strategic leadership are used in this paper.

⁹ U.S. Department of the Army, *Army Leadership*, Army Doctrine Reference Publication 6-22, 11-1.

¹⁰ Stephen J. Gerras, ed., *Strategic Leadership Primer*, 3rd ed. (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, Department of Command, Leadership, and Management, 2010), 2.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 58-60. Appendix A of the Primer discusses the evolution of strategic leadership competencies over several decades. The 1998 *Strategic Leadership Primer* uses the “Be, Know, Do” typology. This terminology is used here due to its familiarity with Army audiences. Current Army doctrine uses a typology of competencies and attributes. The term trait, which is a synonym for attribute, is used in this paper. According to Frederick O’Donnell “While character traits may contribute significantly to the development of certain competencies, they are genetic and cannot be developed.” While some traits are genetic, it must be considered that some may also be the result of environment. While attributes are similar to traits, for the purpose of this paper a distinction is made, since Army doctrine identifies attributes that can be molded by development. The purpose of this paper is to identify traits that contribute to the development of genius. In other words, traits that are inherent to a particular individual and cannot be developed from ground zero. Frederick M. O’Donnell, *Developing Strategic Leader Competencies in Today’s Junior Officer Corps*, Strategy Research Project (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, March, 2013), 7-8.

¹² *Ibid.*, 28.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 28-34.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 34.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 28.

¹⁶ David Barno and Nora Bensahel, *The Future of the Army: Today, Tomorrow, and the Day After Tomorrow* (Washington, DC: Atlantic Council Brent Scowcroft Center for International Security, September 2016), 38, http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/images/publications/Future_of_the_Army_web_0921.pdf (accessed March 30, 2017).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 39.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Robert H. Scales, "Are You a Strategic Genius?" *Army*, November 2016, 25.

²¹ William L. Hauser, “Leadership for Tomorrow’s Army: An American General Staff System,” *Parameters* VIII, no. 3 (1978): <http://forum.globalsecurity.org/showthread.php?35968-Leadership-for-Tomorrow-s-Army-An-American-General-Staff-System> (accessed March 28, 2017). Hauser’s 1978 article is one of several works that advocates the establishment of an American general staff system based on the German model.

²² Scales, "Are You a Strategic Genius?" 28.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid., 26.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., 27.

³⁰ Gerras, *Strategic Leadership Primer*, 1.

³¹ Donald Vandergriff, *The Path to Victory: America's Army and the Revolution in Human Affairs* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 2002), 41-53. The "Root Reforms" refer to the professional development system that Secretary of War Elihu Root shepherded through Congress between 1899 and 1903. These reforms were the outgrowth of the desires of General William T. Sherman and General Emory Upton, who sought to transform the Army officer corps into a modern, professional force in line with the European model. Vandergriff's analysis also points to the influence of "business progressivism" aimed at maximizing efficiency. The reforms were seen as only partially successful in modernizing the Army due to the "army traditions of anti-intellectualism and anti-professionalism." These factors ensured that the Army remained focused on tactical problems, instead of forging a culture that also valued strategic competence.

³² Edward Cox, "Grey Eminence: Fox Connor and the Art of Mentorship," Presentation to the U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, PA, May 2, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UdjJ3d4107q&feature=youtu.be> (accessed January 15, 2016).

³³ U.S. Department of the Army, *Leader Development*, Field Manual 6-22, 4-1.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid. According to Field Manual 6-22, guided self-development is "mandatory learning." Personal self-development is undertaken for the purpose of achieving personal goals, such as attainment of an advanced degree. Some personal goals are professionally enhancing, and could contribute to building strategic leadership competencies.

³⁶ Joan Solomon, ed., *The Passion to Learn: An Inquiry into Autodidacticism* (New York: RoutledgeFalmer, 2003), 3.

³⁷ Wikipedia, "Autodidacticism," <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Autodidacticism> (accessed January 15, 2016).

³⁸ Solomon, *The Passion to Learn*, 2.

³⁹ Joan Solomon, "Theories of Learning and the Range of Autodidacticism," in *The Passion to Learn: An Inquiry into Autodidacticism*, ed. Joan Solomon (New York: RoutledgeFalmer, 2003), 3. Before exploring these theories it is useful to understand what Solomon believes narrows the

scope. Solomon does this by making note of the fact that humans are all self-taught to a large degree. From the time that we are children we learn as we experience the world around us. This can come in the form of imitation, as well as through the instruction of our parents.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Wikipedia, "Autodidactism."

⁴³ Edward Cox, *Grey Eminence: Fox Connor and the Art of Mentorship* (Stillwater, OK: New Forums Press, 2011), vii.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 39.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 77.

⁴⁶ Ibid., xvi. As Edward Cox notes, Fox Connor had all of his notes, journals, and other documents burned upon his death. Therefore, Cox's work serves as the primary source for examination of Connor.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 1-4.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 21, 31.

⁴⁹ Ibid., xvii.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 41-42.

⁵¹ Forrest C. Pogue, *George C. Marshall: Education of a General, 1880-1939* (New York: Penguin Books, 1963), 170.

⁵² The term U.S. Army "Command and General Staff College," is used throughout this paper. The college was previously known under different names, including the General Service and Staff College.

⁵³ Cox, *Grey Eminence*, 32.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 36.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 89.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 89.

⁵⁸ Russell F. Weigley, *The American Way of War: A History of the United States Military Strategy and Policy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973), 210. American historian, Russell Weigley provides an examination of the influence of Clausewitz upon the U.S. Army during the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries.

⁵⁹ Cox, *Grey Eminence*, 23.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 36.

⁶¹ Ibid., 78.

⁶² Cox, *Grey Eminence*, 95. Edward Cox contrasts Fox Connor's mentorship of Patton in the following passage. "Conner's relationship with Patton resembled that of an older brother. He did not have to ignite a passion in Patton for studying strategy as he had with Ike [Eisenhower]. Likewise, he did not expect the same level of intellectual discussion the he shared with Marshall. Patton was not a scholar, though he did have a piercing intellect. He was not a coalition builder, as Ike grew to be. Patton was a warrior, pure and simple. Conner recognized that in his character and sought to develop and hone that warrior spirit." In the mid-1920's Patton served as Connor's G-2 in the Hawaii Department. Connor ensured that Patton received a laudatory evaluation report after Patton had had difficulties with the previous commander.

⁶³ Carlo D'Este, *Patton: A Genius for War* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1995).

⁶⁴ Martin Blumenson, *The Patton Papers 1885-1940* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1972), 39-41. Patton's writing assignments in elementary school are filled with assessments of ancient Greek and Roman generals and great battles, clearly indicating Patton's obsession with following the same path as his heroes.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 46-47.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 42. Blumenson's collection of General Patton's personal papers is filled with examples of spelling and grammar errors. From June 13, 1902: "the common people of ancient times were very ignorant, as is the case with many in modern times [sic] also."

⁶⁷ D'Este, *Patton: A Genius for War*, 47. D'Este's assessment of Patton addresses the greater impacts of dyslexia, such as feelings of shame and a desire to "justify themselves...it becomes a near obsessive driving force..." Such a driving force was the inherent trait that drove Patton's autodidacticism.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 130.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 141.

⁷⁰ Charles M. Province, ed. "Military Articles and Essays by General George S. Patton, Jr.," <http://www.pattonhq.com/pdf/files/vintagetext.pdf> (accessed March 30, 2017). A large number of essays and articles can be found in this document, amply illustrating the depth of General Patton's vast knowledge and ability to self-teach.

⁷¹ Blumenson, *The Patton Papers 1885-1940*, 257-259.

⁷² D'Este, *Patton: A Genius for War*, 145.

⁷³ Ibid., 139.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 131.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 77.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 358.

⁷⁷ Cox, *Grey Eminence*, 95-99.

⁷⁸ Paul H. Herbert, *Deciding What Has to Be Done: General William E. DePuy and the 1976 Edition of FM 100-5, Operations*, Leavenworth Papers, No. 16 (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute / Command and General Staff Press Publications, 1988), 106.

⁷⁹ The U.S. Army Continental Command (CONARC) was the single forerunner to TRADOC and FORSCOM, encompassing many of the responsibilities the new commands now hold.

⁸⁰ James Kitfield, *Prodigal Soldiers: How the Generation of Officers Born of Vietnam Revolutionized the American Style of War* (Washington, DC: Brassey's, 1995), 69. During its initial months in combat, the 90th Division suffered a 300 percent casualty rate. As Kitfield notes, "Two division, two regimental, and three battalion commanders were relieved during the fighting..."

⁸¹ Richard M. Swain, *Selected Papers of General William E. DePuy* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute and U.S. Army Command and General Staff College Press, 1994), <http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/cgsc/carl/download/csipubs/SelectedPapersofGeneralWilliamDepuy.pdf> (accessed February 25, 2017).

⁸² Romie L. Brownlee and William J. Mullen III, *Changing An Army: An Oral History of General William E. DePuy, USA Retired*, Center of Military History Publication 70-23 (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History), 102, http://www.history.army.mil/html/books/070/70-23/CMH_Pub_70-23.pdf (accessed February 25, 2017).

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 117.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 103.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 113.

⁸⁶ See Maxwell D. Taylor, *The Uncertain Trumpet* (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1960). In 1960 the Chief of Staff of the Army, General Maxwell Taylor published *The Uncertain Trumpet*, as a way to influence public opinion with regard to the Army's conventional warfighting capabilities. At the time, American strategy was based on President Eisenhower's policy of Massive Retaliation.

⁸⁷ Brownlee and Mullen, *Changing an Army*, 119. It was in the A-VICE job that DePuy launched his campaign to forge TRADOC and re-build the Army. In force development, DePuy was able to fuse strategy, doctrine, programmatics, and force development into a coherent whole that rationalized Army capabilities.

⁸⁸ Charles D. Allen, ed., *General William E. DePuy: Preparing the Army for Modern War*, Working Paper (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, May 6, 2010), 1-2. Note: This working paper is comprised of edited Chapters 14, 15, and 17 from Henry A. Gole's *General William E. DePuy: Preparing the Army for Modern War* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2008), 213-235, 237-274, 293-298.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ Herbert, *Deciding What Has to Be Done*, 23. “During his [DePuy’s] tenure in Washington, he developed a vigorous bureaucratic style that included isolating bright, relatively junior officer from other chores to brainstorm specific problems and come up with comprehensive conceptual recommendations. These could quickly gain the approval of superiors and, with it, the authority to guide detailed planning, thus avoiding the tedious and diluting process of gaining approval of a detailed plan from every affected staff agency before sending it to a higher authority.”

⁹¹ Kitfield, *Prodigal Soldiers*, 157-58.

⁹² Brownlee and Mullen, *Changing an Army*.

⁹³ Joe Klein, “Can Colin Powell Save America,” *Newsweek Online*, September 10, 1994, <http://www.newsweek.com/can-colin-powell-save-america-189390?tid=relatedcl> (accessed: March 6, 2017).

⁹⁴ The Powell Doctrine refers to General Powell’s rules for the employment of military force. It is derived from the very similar Weinberger Doctrine, which aims to ensure that the use of military force is both necessary for the achievement of national security objectives, as well as sufficient in terms of utilizing the force required to accomplish the desired objective. These doctrines are an outgrowth of the American experience in Vietnam.

⁹⁵ Colin L. Powell with Joseph E. Persico, *My American Journey* (New York, Random House, 1995), 35.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 36-38.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 135-140.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 161. In a 1991 interview with the *Los Angeles Times*, Powell stated “I saw politics for the first time, I saw high policy for the first time, so that was a defining experience...the whole thing is greased by compromise and consensus...” Rudy Abramson and John Broder, “Four-Star Power: Colin Powell’s Career Has Proceeded With the Certainty of a Laser-Guided Missile. How Much Higher Will He Go?” *Los Angeles Times Online*, April 7, 1991, http://articles.latimes.com/1991-04-07/magazine/tm-348_1_colin-powell/5 (accessed: March 6, 2017).

⁹⁹ Caspar W. Weinberger with Gretchen Roberts, *In the Arena: A Memoir of the Twentieth Century* (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, Inc., 2011), 294.

¹⁰⁰ Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 165.

¹⁰¹ Bob Woodward, “The Powell Predicament (Part 1 of 2),” *The Washington Post Online*, September 24, 1995, https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/lifestyle/magazine/1995/09/24/the-powell-predicament/870b4141-6e4c-4886-aa5d-a33035420d4f/?utm_term=.112fb6a968c2 (accessed: March 6, 2017). Bob Woodward notes that after Colin Powell received a less than favorable evaluation report as an assistant division commander, Army Chief of Staff, General John A. Wickham, assigned him as the military assistant to Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger. Wickham also ensured Powell’s assignment to command a corps, without having served as a division commander.

¹⁰² Powell and Persico, *My American Journey*, 228.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 389.