

Sustaining Popular Support: The Profession of Arms Challenge

by

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United States Army War College
Class of 2015

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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) 01-04-2015		2. REPORT TYPE STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT		3. DATES COVERED (From - To)	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Sustaining Popular Support: The Profession of Arms Challenge				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) Colonel Joel O. Alexander United States Army				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Commander Michelle D. Winegardner Department of Command, Leadership, and Management				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.					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES Word Count: 6826					
14. ABSTRACT The founding of the nation saw an inherent distrust of the military as an arm of the government. While this wariness is not uniquely American, it expresses society's deeper concern with maintaining the delicate balance between protecting individual liberties and maintaining collective security. America's military was challenged to dispel these concerns and demonstrate its value to the civilian leadership / population. Some challenges remain as a result of external political pressures or shifting societal opinions, while others are "self-inflicted": e.g., poor communication, sexual assaults or other ethical lapses. Today, the U.S. military is viewed highly by much of the nation and enjoys a reputation as a profession of honor and respect. Yet with this cordial relationship--and overwhelming popular endorsement--the profession of arms is faced with the challenge of sustaining that support and promoting understanding of it as a valuable, civil service profession. This paper analyzes historical lessons and trends in public support of the military from America's founding to the dawn of the 20th century and offers recommendations on how the profession of arms can best cultivate enduring, positive relationships between it and the society it represents and serves.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS Society, Respect, Trust, Transparency, Communication					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 37	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT UU	b. ABSTRACT UU	c. THIS PAGE UU			19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (w/ area code)

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

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Abstract

Title: Sustaining Popular Support:
The Profession of Arms Challenge

Report Date: 01 April 2015

Page Count: 37

Word Count: 6826

Key Terms: Society, Respect, Trust, Transparency, Communication

Classification: Unclassified

The founding of the nation saw an inherent distrust of the military as an arm of the government. While this wariness is not uniquely American, it expresses society's deeper concern with maintaining the delicate balance between protecting individual liberties and maintaining collective security. America's military was challenged to dispel these concerns and demonstrate its value to the civilian leadership / population. Some challenges remain as a result of external political pressures or shifting societal opinions, while others are "self-inflicted": e.g., poor communication, sexual assaults or other ethical lapses. Today, the U.S. military is viewed highly by much of the nation and enjoys a reputation as a profession of honor and respect. Yet with this cordial relationship--and overwhelming popular endorsement--the profession of arms is faced with the challenge of sustaining that support and promoting understanding of it as a valuable, civil service profession. This paper analyzes historical lessons and trends in public support of the military from America's founding to the dawn of the 20th century and offers recommendations on how the profession of arms can best cultivate enduring, positive relationships between it and the society it represents and serves.

Sustaining Popular Support: The Profession of Arms Challenge

Even where there is a necessity of the military power . . . a wise and prudent people will always have a watchful & jealous eye over it.

—Samuel Adams¹

Samuel Adams' concern expressed in this 1768 *Boston Gazette* editorial reflects a historical distrust of the military as an arm of the government and a fear of its potential as a master versus civil servant.² While one could argue this wariness is not uniquely American, it does recognize and articulate a basic principle or concern regarding the military: the balance between protecting individual liberties and maintaining collective security. A significant volume of writing exists regarding the importance of civilian control of the military. The author does not intend to counter nor discuss in detail this well-established democratic truism. However, a closer consideration of Adams' statement reveals his much deeper concern regarding societal participation in military affairs. He alludes to the importance of maintaining public awareness and involvement in the nation's armed forces as a method of ensuring positive civil management of a lethal tool of society and its government.³

Throughout our nation's history, the military has faced various challenges in maintaining popular support and promoting understanding as a civil service profession as well as its role in society. Challenges range from manning the force and popular anti-war sentiment to unexpected casualty numbers or breakdowns in professional conduct. While some challenges are a result of external political pressures or shifting societal opinions, others are "self-inflicted" such as poor communication, sexual assaults or other ethical lapses. Authors Jean Callaghan and Franz Kernic highlight the idea that "the military is a *subset of society* at large and closely connected to its environment."⁴

This connection raises several questions: what drives United States popular opinion, views, and understanding of the military as a profession--either as service volunteers or as citizen supporters? How can the United States military contribute to a positive view of the profession of arms despite periods of political ebb and flow or even possible anti-war sentiment? The purpose of this paper is to analyze historical lessons and trends in public support of the military from America's founding to the dawn of the 20th century and offer recommendations on how the profession of arms can best cultivate an enduring, positive relationship between it and the society it serves.

Lessons and Trends

The debate regarding the democratic support of war--regardless of its purpose--has raged since before the founding of the United States and will most likely continue long into the future. Some often equate support for the military as support for war. This fact works directly against the military as it seeks to maintain public support from those it relies upon. In the words of General William C. Westmoreland, 25th Chief of Staff of the Army, "Antiwar sentiment has all too often become antimilitary sentiment."⁵ This antimilitary philosophy can be traced back to the founding of our nation and is rooted in what Author James Abrahamson describes as a popular fear "that a standing army [will] threaten their nation . . . and rob its citizens of their liberties."⁶ Throughout history, America's military has been challenged to consistently dispel this fear and communicate its value to the civilian leadership and the population.

Early Establishment and Foundations

Many early American settlers arrived with religious convictions which ran contrary to the use of force. Some came fleeing persecution from oppressive regimes--often inflicted at the hands of its military. Others sought new economic opportunity, power, or

prestige--sometimes by any means. Class distinction based upon birthright or appointment was of little respect and status or authority was earned through honest, hard work.⁷ This spectrum of ideologies, philosophies, and intentions often made for an interesting mix of principled disagreement with--and a deep-seated distrust of--the professional military establishment. However, early settlers understood all too well the need for security in a hostile land. Far from the centralized government of England, Americans were generally left to their own methods of providing this security. Constant threat of Indian attack necessitated a collective and communal means of defense and support--regardless of beliefs or background.

The establishment of a local militia served this collective purpose. Occasionally, mandatory service (conscription) during this period was forced upon the local populace by British authorities in order to make up for a lack of volunteers or as a result of threats from other colonial powers such as France or Spain.⁸ Under normal circumstances--with some expectation that all should serve--the militia was typically made up of willing volunteers and supplied by the community they represented. Each member of the militia generally acquired and resourced his own supplies. This act of voluntary commitment of personal "treasure"--whether life or property--intrinsicly implied his, and often that of his family's, support for the armed force.

The organizational structure of the militia in the American colonies was also unique from professional European standing armies. As mentioned earlier, all members of the militia unit were drawn from the same community and thus they represented a cross-section of the local society and social strata. Officers--if not appointed by the colonial provincial governor--were elected by the enlisted ranks, which in turn affected

the social interaction of the unit and overall command climate.⁹ The positive result of this structure was in its very fabric: mutual cooperation in collective security. There was little for the general public to oppose since the militia conceptually was seen as “self-protection.” The nature of the militia demonstrated its resiliency and composite representation of the popular will and thus public support for this force remained steady.

The first major popular support challenge to the colonial militia occurred in the years leading up to the American Revolution. The most notable was the initial and obvious tensions rooted in the revolution itself: loyalty to the crown or pursuit of independence. Loyalists opposed armed resistance and patriots supported fighting for independence from England. This difference often fractured the very communities that formed the colonial militias. Of interesting note, though most militias were made up of volunteers, service was all but expected by those opposing imperial rule and a refusal to “muster” was used to brand loyalists or sympathizers.¹⁰ Popular support for the local militia--in this case--served to reflect the social and political will of the community. It was as a result of this inherent volunteer make-up of the militia that it remained central to the will of the populace and thus its unique and enduring character.

The decade preceding 1775 also brought a growing number of British regular troops to the colonies, which caused increasing irritation to a populace used to being left to their own security solutions.¹¹ This friction sowed the early seeds of American distrust in standing armies that still exists deep within the nation’s political and social “DNA.” It clearly contributed to the opinions of some of the founding fathers and framers of the Constitution such as Samuel Adams.¹² Decentralized State/Provincial militias remained the model for local civilian control; however, it was evident that hostilities required the

formation of a larger, more centralized and organized army. The newly established Continental Army reflected this popular concern as it was carefully placed under the subordination to the “civil authorities” and an elected Secretary of War.¹³ This civil subordination of armed forces exists today and forms the backbone and entry point in reflecting the public will upon the military.

Popular support for the Continental Army throughout the battle for independence remained strong. While the idea of establishing a standing army remained a hotly contested political topic, the general public’s support for the war was reflected in its commitment of capital – human and materiel. Not only did industry and agriculture production become focused on the war effort, but as James Abrahamson writes, “Although the Continental Army never exceeded 50,000 men, four times that number (10 percent of the white population) saw some military service and took political stands as members of either the national forces or the states’ militia.”¹⁴ The commitment and support of the population made this possible. More significant however was the social effects of this service on the society as a whole. Service was accepted from many sectors previously disallowed from doing so; from slaves and indentured servants to women and the lower classes. Freedom was offered to slaves for military service with “5,000 blacks [fighting] in the Patriot armies”; thus creating a significant community of free blacks within American society.¹⁵ Women also demonstrated their abilities and commitment to the military with “about 20,000 American women join[ing] the Continental Army” in capacities ranging from nurses to water carriers.¹⁶ Sustaining the public’s support for the military rested in increasing service opportunities to a broad segment of the society it served.

Sustaining the public's support for a standing army in the post-Revolutionary period and throughout the Republic's early years proved to be immensely difficult. Despite the sacrifices and commitment during the war, Americans longed for a return to "normal." Opinion and popular support for the Army deteriorated rapidly. Author James Jacobs remarks that "[i]n war it had been supported only from sheer necessity; in peace some would abolish it altogether."¹⁷ Author Edward Coffman further highlights this dichotomy: "A standing army was simply anathema to those who regarded it as a threat to the republic."¹⁸ It became "despised and feared by many" and was greatly reduced in size "from 1783 to 1788 the weak Confederation Congress maintained it on an ad hoc basis at a strength never more than 700 men."¹⁹ At its lowest point in 1784, the Army had been reduced to two garrisons totaling 80 enlisted men led by a "handful of officers" and one administrative clerk at the vacant War Department.²⁰ Fear of a standing army--rooted in the distrust of the professional military establishment they had seen and experienced from Imperial England--drove political decisions. Most in Congress understood the need for some military force but they sought to size that force to one that could not possibly threaten the government it was designed to support and defend. Public opinion was based upon fear and lack of understanding of the army's long-term value to the nation.

Popular support for the profession of arms during America's formative years boiled down to perception of necessity versus reluctance. The public understood the need for those willing to defend security--whether securing the western frontier or protecting against England's continued imperial ambitions--but they remained wary of a professional force's intentions. This wariness was not lost on those in uniform and some

sought to find ways to ease this tension by promoting respect and confidence in the profession of arms. A fantastic example of this understanding and effort is demonstrated in an 1802 letter from a young Engineer, Major Decius Wadsworth, to his superior the Chief of Engineers,

We ought to act with caution, to ask for as little as possible . . . take Pains to render ourselves useful in various ways . . . [and] keep alive the Attention of the Secretary of War and the Administration, convince them that we are not spending our Time in Idleness, and so stimulate them to allow us what will be necessary to serve the Public with full advantage and Effect.²¹

Major Wadsworth clearly understood and highlighted the importance of demonstrating professional “due diligence” and transparency in pursuing those activities which best demonstrate the military’s utility to their civil masters and to the public at large.

19th Century Development and Challenges

Popular support and respect for the military and profession of arms changed as the nation matured throughout the 19th century. A significant indication of this changing perception was Congress’ recognition of the need to train and educate responsible military leaders and subsequently approved the establishment of the Military Academy at West Point.²² The importance of military prowess, skills, and abilities had long been recognized and advocated by influential leaders such as General George Washington and Baron Von Steuben.²³ Yet this institution--the first of its kind in the United States--not only served to prepare Army leaders to successfully fight and win the nation’s wars, but more importantly provided an educational venue to indoctrinate professional values and civil responsibility.²⁴ These leaders were tried and “combat-tested” in both the War of 1812 and the Mexican War; however, the Civil War represented their first real challenge as professional and trustworthy civil subordinates.

In the century leading up to the Civil War, United States military officers had successfully served at the direction of their elected civil masters without any challenge to their authority. They were historically commissioned or appointed by their state congressman and their allegiance was understandably first to their State and then to the Nation. This “split allegiance” was not seen as conflicting but instead as complimentary. The shattering of the nation during the Civil War directly challenged the durability of this civil-military subordination and allegiance. Whereas most military units--and thus enlisted men – were locally recruited and aligned with a state, officers were more frequently trained and employed at a national level.²⁵ As states seceded from the Union, officers were forced to choose whether to support their home “public” or not. More than two-thirds of Southern officers resigned their federal commissions and chose this route.²⁶ It is not the author’s intent here to discuss the merits of state’s rights or to address the deep societal implications of the conflict. Rather, it is to briefly highlight the moral and ethical dilemmas faced by military officers during this period as they struggled to “choose” how best to demonstrate their allegiance and subordination to civil authority, regardless of side.

The unique motivations and perspectives that drove the states to war against each other also drove public support. The State and Federal governments--on both sides--initially followed what one could describe as the traditional method of seeking volunteers in order to raise military forces.²⁷ The initial groundswell of popular support for the war--and “their” units--was overwhelming. Support was so strong that Northern recruiting offices were directed to stop admitting volunteers altogether and the South “rejected 200,000 . . . because it lacked equipment for them.”²⁸ However, enthusiasm

waned as casualties mounted and volunteers dried up. The South quickly realized its need for more soldiers and implemented the first national conscription in order to fulfill wartime requirements.²⁹ Similarly, despite monetary incentives and patriotic appeals to the states to organize local conscription, sufficient manpower in the North could only be realized through establishing national conscription.³⁰ The length and lethality of the war was beyond anything previously experienced in the nation's brief history and tested popular patience, will, and support like never before.

Despite some instances of those who avoided service or those who vehemently opposed the war, broad popular support for the troops during the Civil War was evident in both the North and the South. Author Steven Woodworth describes what he calls "the age-old covenant between a soldier and the society for which he fights" as one where the soldier faces death for the 'cause' and those at home provide the materiel and "moral support."³¹ Countless examples exist of this consistent, popular support for soldiers in the field throughout the Civil War. Tangible gifts, ceremonies, flags, and letters were the most common form that this moral support took.³² This regular outpouring of public support from "back home" proved critical in sustaining soldier morale. Similarly, facilitating communication from Soldiers back to their community maintained the currency and relevancy of military operations helping sustain local support.

Both sides of the conflict experienced the economic and social strain when large sections of a community's male population went to war. This was felt more significantly in the South than the North given the sparser and more agrarian nature of its society. Author Paul Escott relates how "every farm that lacked adequate male labor, after a

soldier joined the ranks, soon faced . . . diminished yields.”³³ Ironically, communities struggled to provide the necessary materiel to the war effort as a result of their overwhelming support shown in volunteering to join the ranks. In order to sustain public support, the military had to carefully balance recruiting efforts from a broad section of society to avoid undermining the nation’s productivity and economic stability.

Popular support of the military during this period produced social effects on society similar to the advances made during the Revolution. Again, service was accepted from many across the social strata who had not previously been allowed--either out of principle or design.³⁴ Women joined the military and served valiantly as nurses and in some logistical support roles. Service opportunities were still limited; however, some women took on more dangerous tasks such as spies or couriers while “some 400 masqueraded as men to serve as soldiers.”³⁵ Expanded military service opportunities for African-Americans also continued to grow with the first large-scale enlistments--more than 186,000 into six segregated regiments.³⁶ The Civil War also afforded increased opportunities to serve for large, disenfranchised immigrant populations, assisting in beginning to break down many prejudices and social barriers within American society.³⁷ Again, sustaining the greater public’s support for the military rested in continuing to expand service opportunities to the broadest portion of society.

Long standing opposition to a standing professional military in America began to resurface at the end of the Civil War. Capturing this challenge in his prize essay written in 1885, Captain George Price wrote: “as the years come and go the country grows away from the memories of the cost in life and treasure . . . and the present generation can scarcely be expected to fully realize and understand the necessity for keeping an

efficient regular force, of sufficient numbers . . . instantly available in time . . .”³⁸

Politicians and the public at large desired a much smaller Army, yet the military struggled to communicate the value and importance of retaining a professionally trained and ready force. As a result, in the interwar period public acceptance gradually grew to the idea that conscription might best serve the nation’s preparedness for war in the future.³⁹ Yet conscription was seen as necessary only during periods of war and volunteer recruitment remained the norm.⁴⁰ Although not within the scope of this paper, the merits and challenges of conscription in America have been a hotly contested issue and public support has varied throughout the nation’s history. Even the “question of whether a conscript made as good a soldier as a volunteer [has been] debated.”⁴¹ The issue to note here is that despite the method of enlistment, the military diligently worked to communicate the sacrifice and value of each soldier and the public outspokenly supported its military veterans “laud[ing] the invincibility of the American citizen soldier.”⁴²

Popular support for the military profession of arms at the dawn of the 20th century was mixed. As the nation found itself on the precipice of two major wars, the military required careful and artful management of public perceptions in order to man and equip the force. Respect and admiration for the officer corps remained stable, yet many who sought enlistment were often perceived as what Captain Price describes as those “whose only purpose is to obtain food, clothing, and shelter till they may see their way clear to do better.”⁴³ These perspectives--present prior to WWI--contributed to waning popularity of the military service as an honorable profession. President Wilson’s call in 1917 for unity of purpose in waging a war to “make the world safe for democracy”

achieved national unity and began changing many popular views of military service.⁴⁴ During these difficult times, the military quickly capitalized on changing public opinions and successfully promoted the ideals of patriotism, self-sacrifice, and commitment throughout the conflict. Despite the nation's general lack of readiness and understanding of the terrible war ahead of them, the military was quick to communicate the value of their service and sacrifice, thus promoting public support of the profession.

As we have seen throughout America's early history, the military was challenged to dispel fears, demonstrate its value, and expand its ranks to a greater demographic of society in order to sustain popular support for the organization and the profession. America's military has grown from an ad-hoc local volunteer militia to a preeminent, world-class standing force. It has been challenged over the centuries to define itself and its role in a democratic, civil-subordinate society. While faced with numerous changes in the domestic and geopolitical landscape throughout the 20th century and into the dawn of the 21st, much of the foundational experiences and lessons we have discussed still apply.

A Way Forward

Today the United States military finds itself in an enviable position as a profession and as an organization. The profession of arms--and those who serve within it--is currently viewed by large sections of the U.S. population as one of honor, sacrificial service and respect. As an organization, the military enjoys a reputation as one of integrity, decisive action, and mission accomplishment. However, as a result it is often seen as "set apart" from society or even exclusive. This exclusivity has both positive and negative aspects which must be carefully managed and, in some cases, dispelled. History provides us with valuable lessons which can be applied to the present in order

to maintain the profession of arms' reputation and sustain popular support of the military long into the future. These lessons include ensuring the military is striving to reflect the best of the society it serves, maintaining the public's trust and confidence, and increasing communication and outreach in order to promote understanding.

Reflect the Best of Society⁴⁵

Since America's founding and the establishment of militias, the military has generally represented a cross-section of the American population. The nation has always returned to a foundational American principle of volunteerism as the collective and communal means of defense despite occasional and necessary periods of conscription. Ideally, these volunteers represent a composite cross-section of the population, its will, its resiliency, and thus its support. The challenge is ensuring the military not only physically reflects the broadest possible demographic of the populace, but also reflects the best qualities of the society it serves. The range of topics within this subject are nearly endless and history provides numerous examples. We will discuss two current, visible issues upon which the profession of arms can work: inculcating high, ethical standards and broadening service opportunities for women.

Service in the military is currently regarded in America as an honorable and even noble profession. History demonstrates this has not always been the case as public opinion was often based upon fear or lack of understanding, especially during various interwar periods. One could argue that the respect and support which the military currently enjoys is a result of the public's confidence based upon its performance and sacrifice. The profession of arms is often--and in many aspects justifiably--held to a high standard of conduct. Some might argue this high standard is self-described or a self-inflicted paradigm, threatening the establishment of a military caste.⁴⁶ Regardless of the

reasons, ethical and honorable behavior is generally expected by the American population. The military must inculcate high, ethical standards and behave in a way that reinforces and reflects the best aspects of the society which it serves in order to sustain its continued support.

One way in which the profession of arms can do this is by policing itself. Drs. Leonard Wong and Stephen Gerras, professors at the U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, recently published an article which does exactly that. The article, *Lying to Ourselves: Dishonesty in the Army Profession*, discusses their research and analysis regarding a growing indication of ethical lapses and possibly even a “culture of lying” within the force.⁴⁷ Whether their findings come as a surprise or not, the issue here is to highlight that the study was conducted and published by the military itself, reflecting an attempt at self-improvement as a profession. The Army must continue to conduct similar reviews and reflection as it seeks to police the profession and inculcate ethical behavior and standards expected by the society it serves.

History provides numerous examples of expanding service opportunities to broad demographic segments of American society--especially during periods of crisis. Each call-to-arms saw increasing participation and acceptance of various demographic groups previously prevented from service. From offering freedom in exchange for military service to slaves or allowing women to serve in ever increasing roles, history offers a treasure trove of examples and possibilities for further analysis.⁴⁸ However, we will focus here on the specific topic, challenges, and benefits of expanding opportunities available to women in the Army.

Traditional American cultural views on gender roles and historical reluctance to place women in dangerous or life-threatening occupations (including combat) have changed. History demonstrates women have overcome countless cultural barriers in pursuit of increased access to what is often justifiably described as a male-dominated profession.⁴⁹ From the American Revolution to present day, women have consistently demonstrated capabilities to serve in physically demanding and dangerous military roles. Continuing to restrict access for women to all Army Military Occupational Specialties (MOSs) threatens to undermine popular support by a large segment of the society. If the military--and in this case, the Army--seeks to broadly reflect the best of the society it serves, it should remove restrictions and establish strict, gender neutral physical and aptitude qualification standards for all MOSs.

Women currently represent slightly over 50% of the total U.S. population yet only equate to about 18% of the total U.S. military force--active, guard, and reserve.⁵⁰ One could argue that this disparity is a result of the nature of military service and its lack of appeal to most women. While this argument may have some merit, it does not consider the possibility of the long-standing restrictions on women in combat. Former Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta removed these restrictions in January, 2013; however 14 out of 400 total Army MOSs remain closed to women.⁵¹ The Army's Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) in cooperation with the U.S. Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine are collectively reviewing MOS standards for each career field.⁵² The TRADOC is also reviewing "cultural and institutional effects" of allowing women access to those MOSs and in conjunction with Army G1 (Human Resources),

will provide a recommendation to the Secretary of the Army no later than January 1, 2016.⁵³

Restricting women from MOSs also directly undermines Army recruiting and retention efforts, further promotes a male-dominated culture, and further risks contributing to gender bias. Despite the growing number of women in uniform (figure 1), the Army lags well behind nearly all other services.⁵⁴ A potential reason for this may lie in the opportunities available to women. Similar to its sister services, the Army seeks to recruit the nation's best and brightest and retain the most qualified and competent Soldiers--both men and women. Unfortunately, Army recruiters are forced to limit opportunities based purely upon gender versus aptitude or physical abilities. Offering employment in the Army to all physically qualified applicants--regardless of gender--would provide recruiters with an incredibly powerful recruiting tool: "If you meet the standard, then you qualify." Expanding access to women will further expand the global recruiting pool and contribute to increased quality and availability of recruiting prospects.

Women's Growing Presence in the Military
 Percentage of active duty members who are women.

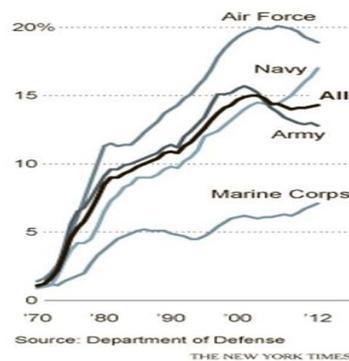


Figure 1. Women in the Military by Service⁵⁵

It would be irresponsible not to consider whether any risks exist in proposing these changes. Allowing women to serve in all MOSs may potentially increase the risks of negative sexual interaction or contact as a result of previously male-dominated MOS cultures.⁵⁶ The Army continues to struggle to root out and eliminate sexual assault from within the ranks and increasing the number of women in previously all-male MOSs may make this challenge even more difficult. However, the Army risks inadvertently undermining its own efforts by continuing to “discriminate” based on gender alone. The author believes this approach has an even greater corrosive effect on popular domestic support and directly affects the trust and confidence of the nation’s population.

Maintain the Public Trust⁵⁷

Similar to reflecting the best of the society it serves, the military must consider ways to maintain the trust of that society as well. History demonstrates that maintaining the trust of the public is a critical aspect to sustaining popular support of the military. While fear of a standing army represented early American concerns, the deeper issue of a fragile *trust* of the military remains embedded in the national psyche; therefore, it is

imperative that the profession of arms make every effort to reinforce--or restore--the public's faith and confidence in order to maintain their long-term trust and support of the profession. Two key "lines of effort" offer current, relevant, and visible opportunities for the profession of arms to demonstrate this commitment. They include displaying zero-tolerance for sexual assaults and demonstrating transparency.

The topic of sexual assault within the military is at the forefront of public and media attention. Beginning with the 1991 Tailhook convention, more than two decades of allegations surfaced from all sectors of the military ranging from training facilities to units in combat.⁵⁸ The resulting public outcry and congressional scrutiny is both understandable and justified. To their credit, the Department of Defense (DoD) has implemented numerous policies and procedures in an attempt to combat these crimes and rebuild public trust. Former Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel's official statement in April of 2013, highlights this commitment, "We must work every day to instill a climate that does not tolerate or ignore sexist behavior, sexual harassment, or sexual assault. These have no place in the United States military and violate everything we stand for and the values we defend."⁵⁹ The destructive impact of sexual assault within the force cannot be overstated and directly impacts the public's trust and confidence. The challenge rests in the profession's ability to police itself and demonstrate quantifiable improvement in this area. To do so, the military must aggressively cull the force of offenders and fully resource a robust victim support and proactive prevention effort.

Sexual assault is a violent crime and criminals are incompatible with service in the United States Armed Forces. Every Soldier, Sailor, Airman, Marine, and Coast Guardsman swears an oath to uphold the rule of law (i.e., The United States

Constitution). If a service member violates this oath, he/she should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law (i.e., Uniform Code of Military Justice). Additionally, in order to eliminate sexual offenders from the force, law and/or policy should be enacted which mandates immediate discharge as unfit for military service.⁶⁰ Only by demonstrating a zero-tolerance for such acts and actively culling the force of these criminals can the military begin to rid itself of any appearance or reputation of condoning these crimes.

Efforts by the Services to improve assistance to victims of sexual assault have been remarkable over the last 2-3 years. Despite the fact that Fiscal Year 2013 saw a significant increase in reported sexual assaults, the author agrees with the DoD's assessment that this is a result of an overall improved confidence in the system and in improved assistance efforts.⁶¹ Much of long-term assistance for victims is reliant on quality improvements in processing and support provided by the Department of Veteran's Affairs. However, the immediate and short-term assistance provided to victims within the Services is of utmost importance in order to sustain this momentum. Victims of sexual assault must be confident that they will receive all available support just as a Soldier is when injured in combat. In order to maintain the public's trust in the military's commitment, it must be vocal in promoting confidence and ensuring easy, confidential access to support services for victims.

The military's prevention effort to-date is focused on training and awareness. While these efforts are extremely critical to restoring trust, additional consideration must be given towards preventing potential sexual offenders from entering the profession in the first place. This must be a dual-pronged approach through both enlisted and officer accessions. The military service academies have made significant progress and have

demonstrated improved oversight in holding offenders accountable.⁶² However, victims continue to convey concern that reporting will affect their reputation and that peers remain silent (thus condoning) when inappropriate conduct or behavior occurs.⁶³ As the potential future leaders of the profession, cadets who engage in substantiated behavior should be immediately removed from the program and prevented from entering service.

In addition to removing offenders within the training centers, further effort toward preventing entry could also entail behavioral screening of all applicants into the Armed Forces. While this will certainly increase costs associated with processing potential recruits through the Military Entrance Processing Stations, the long-term benefit to the organization and profession cannot be underestimated. Qualified behavioral health professionals may be able to effectively identify personnel with a propensity to commit sexually aggressive behavior or acts of violence. Further research should be conducted with this regard to determine whether this is a viable method of preventing potential offenders from entering the force. A concerted campaign which includes culling the force, resourcing victim support, and instituting innovative entry-level screening programs, will help enable the profession of arms to maintain its reputation and the public's trust.

Maintaining the trust of the public also requires demonstrating transparency. The concept of transparency is meant to demonstrate the military's allegiance and subordination to civil authority as well as reduce any public anxiety. The best historical example of the importance of displaying professional "due diligence" and transparency in pursuing activities which best demonstrate the military's usefulness and value. Recalling again the wise words of the young Major Wadsworth in 1802: "ask for as little

as possible [and] keep alive the [a]ttention of the Administration, and so stimulate them to allow us what will be necessary to serve the [p]ublic.”⁶⁴ Demonstrating transparency to the civil leadership and the public reduces potential misunderstandings or distrust, especially during periods of downsizing or questioned necessity.

The current fiscal challenges which the Services face today present such an opportunity for transparency. One cannot miss the steady media barrage and ongoing debate over the federal budget and potential effects of sequestration on the military. Recently, Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter addressed the issue stating,

We . . . can and must do better with getting value for the defense dollar. Taxpayers have trouble comprehending, let alone supporting, the defense budget, when they hear about cost overruns, insufficient accounting and accountability, needless overhead, excess infrastructure, and the like.⁶⁵

His statement clearly highlights the importance of ensuring every effort is taken to exercise professional discipline and fiscal responsibility. While conceptually simple, transparency takes effort and participation at all levels of leadership. If done consistently, it increases the likelihood of sustaining American popular support throughout even the most difficult periods.

Increase Communication and Outreach⁶⁶

The military leadership’s ability to effectively communicate with external stakeholders – to include civil leadership and the populace – is essential in building and sustaining support of the profession of arms. The United States Army War College’s (USAWC) *Strategic Leadership Primer* speaks to the importance of this task as “necessary not only for public representation, but also for shaping the culture and values of the organization as an integral part of the total society.”⁶⁷ History repeatedly highlights the important links between sustaining public support and the military’s ability

to effectively communicate. Whether communicating the sacrifice and value of the service member and the community he/she represents or ensuring their understanding of the relevancy of current military operations--communication is critical. The number and breadth of current issues within this topic abound and they would be impossible to cover within the scope of this work. However, two coordinated avenues offer opportunities for the profession of arms to facilitate understanding and support of the profession as a whole. The military should consider increasing participation in public outreach and pursuing greater participation of military personnel in the local community.⁶⁸

In his book *Bridging the Military-Civilian Divide*, Author Bruce Fleming highlights the importance of cultivating a greater understanding and appreciation between the military culture and its civilian counterpart.⁶⁹ He describes the challenge as two-fold: balancing one's sense of superiority against the other's perceived ignorance.⁷⁰ While this may sound overly simplistic, resolving this challenge requires dedicated and frequent engagement between the two. Fleming highlights the military's obstacle in this regard when he argues, "The ignorance of the military may be a pervasive civilian malaise partly because the military does little to provide facts about itself . . . [and an] unwillingness to portray itself accurately . . ."⁷¹ Reminding ourselves of the earlier discussion of demonstrating transparency, the profession of arms can help improve this by actively increasing participation in public relations and outreach opportunities. In so doing, the military will promote understanding and reinforce confidence of these stakeholders, thus sustaining long-term support and viability of the force.

The venues and opportunities for military outreach are nearly endless. They range from senior leadership speaking engagements--similar to those promoted by the U.S. Army War College--to air shows or "open base" type events. While the latter represents some risk and security challenges as well as potential expense, the benefits towards breaking down barriers or misunderstanding are immense. Increasing the frequency and level of public speaking and/or engagements with the community offers a relatively simple and effective method to interact and facilitate public awareness. With the force drawdown and reductions in military bases across the nation over the last several decades, these types of outreach efforts--especially to an increasingly detached civilian populace--can serve a valuable function in sustaining their support.

History repeatedly demonstrates that the length and lethality of a war can test popular patience, will, and support--both in the conflict itself as well as in the military. This is especially true during periods of combat when the value of the operation is considered questionable compared with the loss in "treasure"--real or perceived. In order to ensure popular support of the military--regardless of their support for the conflict--the military senior leadership must frequently and repeatedly communicate the value, sacrifice and importance of the volunteer. This volunteer represents the critical link between the civil society and its "servant" military. It is important to note that this communication is as vital during times of peace as it is during war.⁷²

Just as the militia represented the local populace and promoted greater integration of the community and the military force, today the National Guard and Reserves represent a similar opportunity. They are arguably the most visible entity--especially in regions with no active military presence--which can readily interact with its

community as well as communicate the profession's value to the nation. Author Thomas Langston highlights that they "are critical institutions in mediating the relationship between a civilian society . . . and a professional military establishment."⁷³ No matter the venue or method, increased communication is key to the military's success in promoting a greater understanding of its value and sustaining popular support of the profession.

Conclusion

From America's founding to the dawn of the 20th century, history offers valuable lessons and insights into how the profession of arms can cultivate enduring, positive relationships between it and society. The nation's early distrust of the military expressed society's deep concern in maintaining the delicate balance between the protection of individual liberties and collective security. America's military was challenged to dispel these concerns and demonstrate its value to the civilian leadership and population. As the nation grew and weathered the early storms of conflict at home and abroad, the respect and admiration of the profession of arms grew as well. The nation's early fears of a standing army that might threaten its liberties have passed, but a lack of understanding and lingering wariness has remained. Barriers to this understanding are due both to political and societal pressures as well as some internally "self-inflicted" by the military itself.

The United States military is currently viewed by much of the nation as one of integrity and mission accomplishment, enjoying a reputation as a profession of honor and respect. Given this cordial relationship and overwhelming popular endorsement, the military is faced with a challenge of sustaining a positive view of the profession of arms. The question the military faces is how--as subordinate civil-servant entity--it can best engage with the society. The lessons of the past offer several possible methods to

assist in this effort as well as helping to break down remaining barriers. We broadly defined these methods as striving to reflect the best of the society, maintain the public's trust, and increase communication and outreach.

Within each method, specific focus areas offer a way forward to help facilitate this difficult effort. First, in order to reflect the best qualities and attributes of the society it serves, the military must continue to inculcate high, ethical standards and seek to broaden service opportunities for women. Similarly, the military must maintain the trust of that society by displaying zero-tolerance for sexual assaults and demonstrating transparency in all that it does. Lastly, the military's ability to effectively communicate with the civil leadership and the populace is essential in building and sustaining support. This can be done by increasing participation in public outreach and pursuing greater participation of military personnel in the local community.⁷⁴ Just as Samuel Adams' wise words exhort "a wise and prudent people [to] always have a watchful & jealous eye over it," it is incumbent upon the military to face the difficult task of working to sustain popular support and promoting understanding as a valuable, civil service profession.⁷⁵

Endnotes

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