



## **PME Investigation Paper No 2 (June 2017)**

# **NATIONAL STYLES OF PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION**

*This is the second in the series of open papers produced under the sponsorship of the Australian Army's Director General Training and Doctrine (DG TRADOC). These papers investigate targeted facets of professional development through comparative analysis. They aim to generate a robust discussion about the future of the Australian profession of arms on land, and about Army's future needs in the spheres of professional development and professional military education. Comments should be directed to [claire.vonwald@defence.gov.au](mailto:claire.vonwald@defence.gov.au).*

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The Australian Army develops its personnel through training, education and experience. A primary tool of this development process is the the All-corps Officer and Soldier Training Continuum (ACOSTC), which is supplemented by Joint Professional Military Education (JPME) for selected individuals. This process is an effective one. However, as a result of the [Ryan Review](#)<sup>1</sup>, the Australian Army is looking for opportunities to enhance the professional development process. As a critical element of the professional development framework, the curriculum or topics list for military education may be one such opportunity.

This paper investigates the basic professional development systems and key military education topics from the armed forces (or similar organisations) of a number of nations. It does this seeking two outputs. Firstly, it seeks to see if there are 'national styles' to professional frameworks, and what impact a nation's 'way of war' or strategic situation has on how they educate. Secondly, it seeks to identify lessons that the Australian Army can use in the review and development of a military education curriculum for the development of our own military professionals. The nations discussed in this paper were selected to capture information from a range of military

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<sup>1</sup> Ryan, M. (BRIG) *The Ryan Review: A study of Army's education, training and doctrine needs for the future*, Commonwealth of Australia, April 2016

organisations of varying size, strategic situation and cultural background. The availability of information on military education curriculums was also a selection criteria.

## **WHAT ARE OTHER COUNTRIES DOING?**

### **Canada**

The Canadian Forces Professional Development System (CFPDS) is a “career-long, comprehensive, integrated and sequential development process of education, training, self-development and experience”<sup>2</sup>. It is designed to ensure the “ethical, social and intellectual development of Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) personnel and the accumulation of a significant Professional Body of Knowledge to deal with the broad range of leadership and staff responsibilities throughout the full spectrum of military activities that can be anticipated during an individual’s career”<sup>3</sup>. The professional development competencies the CFPDS is designed to deliver are expertise, cognitive capacity, social capacity, change capacity and professional ideology. This capability requirement is defined in Officer and Non-Commissioned Member General Specifications.

The curriculum for the CFPDS is based on the Professional Body of Knowledge (PBK), which comprises core, supporting and specialised bodies of knowledge. Core Knowledge is the unique, theory-based knowledge at the core of the Canadian Profession of Arms. It includes, “tactics and tactical doctrine, the broad and deep discipline of operational art, the operational, technological, logistical and social dimensions of strategy, civil-military relations, command and leadership theory and practice, and the theory and practice of military professionalism.”<sup>4</sup> Supporting Knowledge “includes everything necessary to support a large organization whose primary function is to operate effectively across the spectrum of conflict, up to and including combat. This expertise is normally organized through highly differentiated systems of support, such as the communications, logistics, human resources, legal, and professional development systems. Also in this category is a very wide range of expertise encompassed in such disciplines as Canadian history, military history,

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<sup>2</sup> “Canadian Armed Forces Professional Development,” *National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces*, accessed 17 February 2017, <http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/training-prof-dev/index.page>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., accessed 17 February 2017

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., accessed 17 February 2017

political science, psychology, sociology, anthropology, and management theory, among others.”<sup>5</sup> Specialised Knowledge is particular to groups whose expertise is not specific to the military such as doctors, lawyers, clergy, engineers and psychologists. The PBK is described in a range of CAF documents and publications ranging from strategy statements to doctrine.

The CFPDS has evolved in the environment of the [Canada First Defence Strategy](#) of 2008, which requires Canadian Forces to “be able to deliver excellence at home, be a strong and reliable partner in the defence of North America, and project leadership abroad by making meaningful contributions to international security”.<sup>6</sup> The curriculum described above is assessed to be broad enough to develop military professionals who can meet these requirements and adapt should the requirements change.

### **United States Marines**

The United States Marine Corps Officer Professional Military Education [Continuum](#)<sup>7</sup> describes the USMC approach to developing war-fighting expertise, decision-making ability and critical thinking ability. It details the learning outcomes required for officers in three military education levels in five learning areas: leadership; warfighting; joint, interagency and multi-national operations; regional and cultural studies; and communication studies.

Similar detail on the curriculum for NCO could not be sourced. However, there is an Enlisted Professional Military Education [Policy](#)<sup>8</sup> released by the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff which requires all military organisations to provide PME for their enlisted members. The learning areas within this policy include leadership, military capability and organisation, regional knowledge and culture, joint operations, and national strategy.

PME for the USMC is coordinated by the [Marine Corps University](#), whose mission is “to develop, deliver, and evaluate Professional Military Education and training through resident and non-resident programs to prepare leaders to meet the cultural, ethical,

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., accessed 17 February 2017

<sup>6</sup> *Canada First Defence Policy*, Department of National Defence, Canadian Government, 2008, p.3

<sup>7</sup> *Marine Corps Officer Professional Military Education Continuum*, Marine Corps University, January 2011

<sup>8</sup> Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 1805.01B *Enlisted Professional Military Education Policy* dated 15 May 2015

and operational challenges of a complex security environment”<sup>9</sup>. The MCU faculty includes both military staff and civilian academics, and encourages research as well as quality teaching.

The USMC PME curriculum as described above is delivered in the context of the capstone concept [Expeditionary Force 21](#)<sup>10</sup> of 2014<sup>11</sup>, which refocuses the USMC on security cooperation activities and crisis response (without forfeiting warfighting ability).<sup>12</sup> Expeditionary Force 21 also reinforces the joint, interagency and multinational nature of the USMC operating environment. Noting that the curriculum is guided by direction from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the USMC version is assessed as sufficient to educate individuals to achieve the outcomes required by Expeditionary Force 21, but also broad enough to be readily adapted a range of other tasks and situations.

## Singapore

In a similar fashion to the Canadians, The Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) define a [Leadership Competency Model](#)<sup>13</sup> to guide the professional development of their people. The model incorporates the following competencies:

- Conceptual Thinking - critical thinking, creative thinking and ethical reasoning.
- Social - communicating to influence and interpersonal effectiveness.
- Mission - planning, decision-making and execution.
- Developmental - developing people, developing teams, and improving the organisation.
- Self - self-awareness, self-management and personal mastery.

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<sup>9</sup> “Vision Statement,” *Marine Corps University*, accessed 6 March 2017, <https://www.usmcm.edu/about-us/vision-statement> accessed 6 Mar 17

<sup>10</sup> *Expeditionary Force 21 Forward and Ready: Now and in the Future*, Headquarters United States Marine Corps: Washington, 4 March 2014

<sup>11</sup> The 2014 concept has been superseded by the [2016 USMC operating concept](#), but a corresponding update to the USMC PME curriculum is not available.

<sup>12</sup> *Expeditionary Force 21*, 2014, p.10

<sup>13</sup> “SAF Leadership Competency Model,” *Ministry of Defence Singapore*, accessed, 17 February 2017, [https://www.mindef.gov.sg/imindef/mindef\\_websites/atozlistings/saftimi/units/cld/keyideas/lcm.html](https://www.mindef.gov.sg/imindef/mindef_websites/atozlistings/saftimi/units/cld/keyideas/lcm.html)

Formal SAF Professional Military Education and Training (PMET) is provided through undergraduate and post-graduate study, self-directed online learning and e-workshops. Topics that support the development of these leadership competencies include military studies, military technology, military leadership, finance management, human resources, military law and justice, military logistics, military security, military training and national service affairs.<sup>14</sup>

The [Centre for Leadership Development](#) is a key organisation in the development of SAF leaders. The Centre undertakes research, and develops timely and relevant leadership development practices, processes and programmes, which enable Commanders and Leaders to implement effective leadership development.<sup>15</sup>

The [defence policy](#) response to Singapore's strategic situation is built on the "twin pillars of deterrence and diplomacy".<sup>16</sup> This requires a strong and capable SAF as well as a sound understanding of international relations and foreign policy. The curriculum outlined above is clearly targeted towards developing a professional military force, but appears less capable of generating individuals with an awareness or understanding of Singapore's strategic situation. There is not a clear link between the defence policy statement and the PME curriculum. As with other PME curriculums discussed in this paper, the SAF curriculum could also support other military roles, tasks and operating environments.

## China

While information regarding education and training in the People's Liberation Army (PLA) is not as easily accessible as the equivalent information on "western" military forces, some [detail](#) on their military education is publicly available. The 2008 Outline of Military Training and Evaluation (OMTE) emphasised several key characteristics of the future battlefield that are important for PLA training and exercising<sup>17</sup>: scientific and high-tech, informationalised, joint and/or integrated, complex electromagnetic

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<sup>14</sup> "SAF Education Office," *Ministry of Defence Singapore*, accessed 17 February 2017, [https://www.mindef.gov.sg/imindef/mindef\\_websites/atozlistings/saftimi/SAFTIMIUnits/SEO.html](https://www.mindef.gov.sg/imindef/mindef_websites/atozlistings/saftimi/SAFTIMIUnits/SEO.html)

<sup>15</sup> "SAF Centre for Leadership Development," *Ministry of Defence Singapore*, accessed 6 March 2017 <https://www.mindef.gov.sg/safti/cld>

<sup>16</sup> "Defence Policy and Diplomacy", *Ministry of Defence Singapore*, accessed 03 May 2017 [https://www.mindef.gov.sg/imindef/key\\_topics/defence\\_policy.html](https://www.mindef.gov.sg/imindef/key_topics/defence_policy.html)

<sup>17</sup> Kamphausen, R., Lai, D. and Tanner, T. (Eds), *Learning by Doing: The PLA trains at Home and Abroad*, Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, November 2012

environments and combat-like conditions. This focus is reflected in the [topics](#) taught to Chinese military members, which include: mechanised technology, electronic technology command, military thought, military strategy, military history, operational command, military planning, military geography, foreign military studies, infantry weapons and equipment, tactics, unit management, armed forces command and troop management.<sup>18</sup>

There is a clear link between China's assessment of the likely future operating environment and the PLA curriculum. However, the curriculum is also comprehensive enough to be readily adapted to other roles, tasks or operating environments.

## **Georgia**

Information about Russian military education curriculums is also difficult to access. However, a limited amount of information on military education in the former Soviet republic of Georgia is available, and this may provide some insights. The [National Defence Academy](#) of Georgia delivers an integrated academic and military program that provides graduates with a Bachelor Degree in Management, Information Technology, or Defence and Security along with a 'minor' in general military administration<sup>19</sup>. The opportunity then exists to attend the Junior Officer School and undertake Officer's Initial Military Education, although no details on the content of this education could be sourced.

According to the [Strategic Defence Review 2013-2016](#), Georgia's defence policy is designed using a threat-based methodology rather than a capability-based methodology.<sup>20</sup> In this environment it could reasonably be expected that the military education curriculum would reflect these threats, although there is no evidence to support this assertion. The PME curriculum seems designed to provide a broad understanding, and develop individuals with the ability to adapt to a range of scenarios.

## **NATO**

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<sup>18</sup> Kamphausen, R., Scobell, A. and Tanner, T. *The People in the PLA: Recruitment, Training and Education in China's Military*, Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, September 2008, pp.101

<sup>19</sup> "Academic Studies," *David Aghmashenebeli National Defence Academy of Georgia*, accessed 6 April 2017, <http://eta.edu.ge/en/academic-education/bachelor-school>

<sup>20</sup> *Strategic Defence Review 2013-2016*, Ministry of Defence, Georgia, 2012, p.5

In addition to individual countries, it is of note that established alliances also give direction on professional development and education. NATO has published a professional military education curriculum for both officers and non-commissioned officers<sup>21</sup>. The documents are designed as a start point for NATO member nations to develop their own national curriculums, and purport to foster intellectual interoperability and greater professionalism in allied armed forces.<sup>22</sup>

The **Officer curriculum** describes courses, learning outcomes, and topics for three sequential phases of officer development in three themes: the Profession of Arms; Command, Leadership and Ethics; and Defense and Security Studies. Topics include officership, military operations, military leadership, command and control, military thought, military ethics, communication and media, international and national security, civil-military relations and cultural awareness.

The **NCO curriculum** describes courses, learning outcomes, and topics for four sequential levels of NCO development in three themes: the Profession of Arms; Leadership and Ethics; and NCO Core Competencies. Topics include military ethos, NCO-Officer relations, military history, modern military operations, military leadership, ethics, instruction, developing personnel and unit management.

The introductory comments in these curriculums indicate that they support a 'western' approach to educating military officers and NCO. The topics are comprehensive and are assessed as readily adaptable to a range of individual nations' strategic situations and capability requirements. Their actual impact on the approaches and curriculums of NATO-contributing nations is difficult to establish.

## **THE SAME BUT DIFFERENT**

There are similarities within the models discussed above. A number of topics are consistent including military theory, military history, military operations, command, strategy and international relations. The models are based on a vision of what a member of the profession of arms needs to understand and be capable of, and they recognise the different requirements for officers and non-commissioned officers. All of

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<sup>21</sup> *Generic Officer Professional Military Education Reference Curriculum*, North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, 21 Sep 11 and *Non-Commissioned Officer Professional Military Education Reference Curriculum*, North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, 19 Oct 13

<sup>22</sup> *Generic Officer Professional Military Education Reference Curriculum*, 21 Sep 11, p.4

the models could be used to develop individuals who can adapt to a range of roles, tasks or operating environments. So, it is perhaps more useful to consider the differences.

The Chinese curriculum includes topics specifically related to high-technology weapons systems and informationalised conflict. The assessment is that this is a direct response to the Chinese view that success in future conflicts will be dependent on effective use of high-tech weapons systems and an ability to cope with information. The focus on information technology in the Georgian system could be interpreted in a similar way.

Canada's supporting PBK includes psychology, sociology and anthropology presumably to support the development of the social capacity and change capacity competencies. Although other models recognise that knowledge and skill in these social fields is important, this does not translate into specific topics on the curriculum. The emphasis on these "soft" skills may be a reflection of relatively inward-looking focus of the *Canada First* Defence Strategy.

The importance of self is not consistent. The Singaporean model includes a "Self" competency, and the Canadian model specifies self-development as a component of the CFPDS, but this same focus does not extend to the NATO, USMC or Chinese models. Perhaps this indicates a differing culture of professional development and personal responsibility in those armed forces.

Leadership is a component, or the primary objective, in many military professional development models. However, there is no mention of leadership in the Chinese topic list. Command and troop management are included, but not leadership. The professionalization of the military is a relatively recent trend for China, where the focus has been on quantity (achieved through conscription and mandatory national service) rather than quality, and this may explain the exclusion of leadership as a PME topic.

There is a varying emphasis on 'outward-looking' topics. The USMC curriculum specifies consideration of regional and cultural issues, the Chinese curriculum includes foreign military studies, the Georgian curriculum includes a focus on defence and security, and the NATO curriculum includes cultural studies; but this external focus is absent from the Canadian and SAF models. This exclusion is perhaps consistent with Canada's focus on defence at home and support to the defence of the North American continent. However, with a policy of deterrence and diplomacy, Singapore's exclusion of these



outward looking topics is difficult to explain – unless there is a flaw in the causal link between defence policy and the PME curriculum.

## **“SO WHAT” FOR THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY?**

The ACOSTC is an effective professional development tool, as well as being subject to ongoing review and refinement as employment specifications change. What can this brief review of military education curriculums contribute to this review and refinement process?

It is difficult to separate the training and education curriculums of the professional development models reviewed here. Intuition can identify some topics that are focussed towards knowledge or intellectual capacity rather than physical skills, but often there is no distinction between the two. *Observation 1 for the Australian Army – we should not focus on separating training from education. The professional development model should include integrated and mutually supporting training, education and experience.*

The differences in the models discussed are based on the way that the human or intellectual capability requirement is defined. A different capability (knowledge “requirement” or competency) equates to a difference in the topics that are included on the curriculum. *Observation 2 for the Australian Army – an understanding of the human capability requirements of the range of ranks and roles is key to developing an appropriate military education curriculum.*

No two models or curriculums are the same. While the intent of these curriculums is often very similar – development of appropriately educated, skilled and qualified military individuals – the detail of the methods and curriculums used by each nation or organisation are invariably different. *Observation 3 for the Australian Army - there is no single ‘right’ solution for a military professional development curriculum. Rather there is a need to identify the Australian strategic context and human capability requirement (now and into the future), and then design an adaptive structured curriculum to support it.*

The PBK or content is critical to achieving focussed professional development objectives. In some of the models discussed the content to be delivered in military education is clearly described in doctrine, policy or other references. In other cases, an

organisation is specifically tasked with articulating, developing and maintaining the curriculum. *Observation 4 for the Australian Army – the relevant PBK for the particular Australian 'need' requires to be carefully defined, maintained and reviewed. This should be a specified task for a selected Army organisation, and (similar to philosophical doctrine) approved at the highest level.*

## **CONCLUSION**

This research has identified a range of professional development/military education topics that could be applicable to the Australian Army. Each of the models considered has positives and negatives, and is a response to the specific environment and requirements of each armed force. Similarly, the professional development framework and military education curriculum that is adopted by the Australian Army needs to be a response to its particular current and future circumstances and be developed with an awareness of the lessons identified here.