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EVALUATING CADET LEADERSHIP POSITIONS AT THE HIGHER MILITARY AVIATION SCHOOL OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN

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Annotation
This article deals with the evaluating cadet leadership positions at the Higher Military Aviation School of the Republic of Uzbekistan (HMAS RU). It also provides the evidence of a positive relationship between participation in a cadet line position and promotion to Lieutenant Colonel. Furthermore, this article aims to assist in assessing the value of admission criteria, awarding leadership positions, and designing leadership position experiences. Informing decisions in these areas is likely to improve the Higher School's ability to develop effective leaders for the Air Force.

Keywords: evaluating cadet leadership positions, admission criteria, effective leaders, promotion, cadet, higher military aviation education, assessing knowledge of cadet-pilot.

I. INTRODUCTION

"Article 1: An Aviation Cadet will not knowingly make any false statement, written or verbal, while acting in any capacity, official or otherwise, or in any situation reflecting on the Aviation Cadet Corps or the Air Force".
Officer Code and Cadet Honor Code both from
brochure, "Aviation Cadet Knowledge,"
Preflight Training School, Lackland AFB TX,
1959.

The aviation cadet program was the source of most rated officers until the late 1950s, yet few in the Air Force today know anything about the program. In the earliest years of military aviation, formal training was limited. The First World War changed that, and the Air Service instituted the flying cadet program that served as the prototype for the development of Air Force rated officers for over 40 years. Over time, the requirements for entry into the program changed as the needs of the service changed and as technology developed. In the buildup for World War II, a more expansive "aviation cadet" program reflected the changing nature of air force specialties. While the emphasis would still be on pilots, the program produced a large number of navigators and ground duty officers. During the First World War, only a handful of flying cadets trained for other than flying specialties. Unfortunately, command histories and other documentary sources do not always clearly identify the number of cadets who went through the various training programs. Officer students, most often graduates of West Point, aviation cadets, enlisted pilot trainees, and foreign students were commingled in the training program and program statistics often did not provide enough detail to account for each of the different categories of trainee. Also, in general, the historical record focuses primarily on the pilot training program, the largest of the training programs in number of training bases employed and graduates, and provides less

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detailed coverage of aviation cadets in navigator training, and has minimal coverage of other cadet programs. Consequently, this study, too, covers the pilot training program in greater detail.

II. MATERIALS

Let's analyze the history of training program of pilot around the world. In USA, during World War I, the flying cadet applicant had to be under the age of 25, have at least 2 years of college, meet rigid physical standards, and be morally sound. By the end of the war, over 10,000 American pilots received training at 41 stateside bases or at airfields in Europe and Canada. During most of the interwar years, flying cadets could only train to be pilots, and the cadets represented the largest source of air officers in the Army's small air arm. During World War II, a conservative estimate is that 250,000 aviation cadets graduated from pilot, navigator, and specialized training programs. In the direst days of combat, high school graduates as young as 18 qualified for the program, so long as they met qualifying scores on aptitude and medical screening tests. During the demobilization following World War II, the aviation cadet programs shut down briefly as the surplus of pilots and navigators left or were forced from the service. Beginning in 1948, however, the newly established United States Air Force trained about 5,000 pilots annually, most of whom were aviation cadets. The creation of an Air Force Academy in 1955 led, eventually, to the notion that USAF officers must be college-trained. With its emphasis on non-degreed students, the aviation cadet program would end in this brief overview of the aviation cadet program is only the beginning of the story. On the larger stage, the many young men who graduated as rated officers and technical specialists played a significant role in the nation's defense during World Wars I and II, the Korean War, the Southeast Asia War, and much of the Cold War .

Picture 1. Aviation cadets at Randolph Field plan their day`s flying missions (1941) (USAF photo)

Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union into its fifteen constituent republics in December 1991, the aircraft and personnel of the Soviet Air Forces were divided among the newly independent states. General Pyotr Deynekin, the former deputy commander-in-chief of the Soviet Air Forces, became the

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first commander of the new organisation on 24 August 1991. Russia received the majority of the most modern fighters and 65% of the manpower. The major commands of the former Soviet the Long-Range Aviation, Military Transport Aviation and Frontal Aviation were renamed, with few changes, Russian commands. However, many regiments, aircraft, and personnel were claimed by the republics they were based in, forming the core of the new republics' air forces. Some aircraft in Belarus and Ukraine (such as Tupolev Tu-160s) were returned to Russia, sometimes in return for debt reductions, as well as a long-range aviation division based at Dolon in Kazakhstan. During the 1990s, the financial stringency was felt throughout the armed forces made its mark on the Russian Air Forces as well. Pilots and other personnel could sometimes not get their wages for months, and on occasion resorted to desperate measures: four MiG-31 pilots at Yelizovo in the Far East went on hunger strike in 1996 to demand back pay which was several months overdue, and the problem was only resolved by diverting unit money intended for other tasks. As a result of the cutbacks, infrastructure became degraded as well, and in 1998, 40% of military airfields needed repair.

The cadet-pilots and instructor-pilots participated in the First Chechen War (1994–1996) and the Second Chechen War (1999–2002). These campaigns also presented significant difficulties for the pilots including the terrain, lack of significant fixed targets and insurgents armed with Stinger and Strela-2M surface-to-air missiles.

The former Soviet Air Defense Forces remained independent for several years under Russian control, only merging with the Air Forces in 1998. The decree merging the two forces was issued by President Boris Yeltsin on 16 July 1997. During 1998 altogether 580 units and formations were disbanded, 134 reorganised, and over 600 given a new jurisdiction. The redistribution of forces affected 95% of aircraft, 98% of helicopters, 93% of anti-aircraft missile complexes, 95% of the equipment of radiotechnical troops, 100% of anti-aircraft missiles and over 60% of aviation armament. More than 600,000 tons of material changed location and 3,500 aircraft changed airfields. Military Transport Aviation planes took more than 40,000 families to new residence areas.

The short-lived operational commands were abolished. Two air armies, the 37th Air Army (long-range aviation) and the 61st Air Army (former Military Transport Aviation), were established directly under the Supreme Command. The former frontal aviation and anti-aircraft forces were organised as Air Force Armies and Anti-Aircraft Defense Armies under the military district commanders.

III. METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

Leadership has occupied the minds of great thinkers since antiquity. In the first book of his Politics, Aristotle argued that a natural division exists between rulers and the ruled with some “suited to rule and others to being ruled.” Machiavelli devoted a whole chapter of The Prince to discussing factors that cause rulers to be praised or censured. In 1793 George Washington wrote that“The true distinction…between what is called a fine Regiment, and an indifferent one, will ever, upon investigation, be found to originate in, and depend upon the care, or the in attention, of the Officers belonging to them.”

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Today, leadership is viewed within Air Force of Uzbekistan as a critical determinant of mission success. The 6th Air Force Chief of Staff, General-major A.Burkhanov, noted how mission success or failure often depends on individual leaders. In a profession where success can be a synonym for life and failure can be a synonym for death, the stakes for effective leadership are exceptionally high. According to Tyson and White, recent failures of leadership at the highest levels in the Air Force contributed to blunders in nuclear weapon transport, inadvertent sale of classified technology, and nepotism in contracting.

Although leadership is important at all levels, the Air Force expects officers to "shoulder" leadership responsibilities. As a result, having effective leaders in the officer corps is especially important for mission performance. General Thomas Richards of USA translated the importance of military leadership into an imperative for action: "Leadership is a vital part of today's Air Force; therefore, we cannot depend on born leaders-we must build them through formal training and progressive levels of responsibility." Like the other military services, the Air Force uses an "up or out" system and relies on within-organization promotion to fill senior positions. This organizational structure highlights why building leadership competence should be a top Air Force priority: The senior Air Force officers of tomorrow are the cadets and junior officers of today. In order to develop leaders effectively and efficiently, it is necessary to understand the impacts of current leader training programs.

This article examines three aspects of the Air Force educational program:

1. The selection process to become a HMAS RU cadet;
2. The selection process to hold a cadet leadership position;
3. The association between holding a cadet leadership position and promotion as a commissioned Air Force officer.

Academy cadet leadership positions are official positions of authority with specific leadership responsibilities. Cadet leaders are responsible for interacting with cadet subordinates in order to achieve assigned missions. For example, one responsibility of a cadet squadron commander is to ensure the highest morale, welfare, and safety of the cadets in the squadron. Leadership at the Air Force Academy can be studied from many different angles. Research could focus on academic leadership classes, mentor relationships, leadership seminars, or other topics. I chose to study cadet leadership positions in this article for three reasons:

1. Cadet leadership positions help define leadership at the HMAS RU by providing a concrete context. The responsibilities and tasks associated with cadet leadership positions define what leadership means in practice at the HMAS RU. By focusing on the context provided by cadet leadership positions, thinking about cadet leadership can move from nebulous concepts to concrete concepts. For example, instead of thinking about cadet leadership as something unspecific like "a leader motivates subordinates to achieve a purpose," focusing on the context of cadet leadership positions can shift thinking about cadet leadership to something more concrete like "the cadet wing commander motivated the wing officer to decrease the amount of noise during official study periods by showing him complaints from freshmen cadets."

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2. Cadet leadership position participation is easily quantifiable from the records maintained by the HMAS RU. The quantification of leadership position participation is simple but provides a lot of information about the kind of leadership training a cadet received. This quantification of leadership training enables scientific examination using regression methodology.
3. The impact on promotion of participating in each leadership position type can be empirically tested. Leadership position types vary on many dimensions such as duration of authority and assigned responsibilities. Cadets do not participate in every leadership position type, so it is possible to compare the effect size of each position type relative to other effect sizes. It is not possible to perform this kind of comparison for programs all cadets experience such as the core academic leadership class or the leadership seminars. Examining the association between holding a leadership position and officer promotion must account for the possibility that the group holding leadership positions differs in important ways from the group not holding leadership positions. For example, cadets with high performance scores at the HMAS RU may participate in one leadership position type at a higher rate than cadets with low performance scores. Since this article's primary interest is the developmental value of holding a leadership position, it is important to account for selection differences between the position types. This article employs a methodological approach capable of accounting for these selection differences. While understanding the association between holding a cadet leadership position and officer promotion is an important part of this article, informing the decision of whom to admit to the HMASRU and of whom to assign leadership positions is also important. This fact places a great responsibility on military administrators to design both effective selection and training programs.

IV. CONCLUSION

Building an extensive body of research in many contexts is necessary for understanding a complex topic such as leadership. This article adds an incremental contribution to the accumulated knowledge about leadership by providing some details about leadership training in the Higher Military Aviation School of the Republic of Uzbekistan. I provide the following suggestions as logical extensions of this research that I believe will help to unravel some of the many mysteries of leadership.
1) Record participation in all positions intended to offer an opportunity to practice leadership at the HMAS RU. This analysis was partly limited by the fact that participation in some positions was not recorded. Therefore, the data were unavailable to include in the analysis. For example, some of the wing staff, group staff, and squadron level positions were not recorded, so I could not examine the relationship between those positions and promotion.
2) Record who applies for each type of leadership position, so you understand the kind of cadets each position attracts. Application for a position was one variable omitted from my research that I think is important to collect. Recording this information can help defend against claims of selection bias by showing differences in application rates. Recording who applies for a position can also help administrators tailor interventions to increase application rates for groups with below average application rates.

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3) Evaluate each of the HMAS RU leadership positions on the six dimensions recommended following: 1) duration of authority 2) organizational structure 3) discipline authority 4) level type (i.e. tactical, operational, strategic) 5) amount of contact with subordinates 6) amount of contact with superiors. This evaluation can then guide adjustments to the position experiences. If some positions differ greatly from the line positions on these dimensions, adjusting the content of those positions on the differing dimensions may improve effectiveness.

4) Survey line leaders to solicit their opinions about what was developmental about the line position. Despite progress in the scientific examination of leadership, leadership still remains largely a mystery residing in the minds of leaders and followers. Understanding how to train leaders requires delving into the minds of leaders to understand their perspective.

5) Assess why aviation position participation is related to a decrease in rated promotion probability. Surveying current aviation leaders about how they perceive their experience to relate to their officer career and surveying past aviation leaders about how their experience related to their officer career may help to inform why cadets participating in aviation positions are less likely to be promoted to Lieutenant Colonel in rated career fields.

Developing senior officers for the Air Force is a long process involving many programs. This article only examines leadership training at the HMAS RU, but leader training continues throughout an officer's career. Researching the training that occurs in the gap of time between commissioning and promotion to the senior officer ranks is a logical and valuable extension of this work.

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