

**Changes in Forms of Education Provided
by National Institutions:
The Australian Experience**

**RADM Raydon W. Gates
Commander
Australian Defence College**

**ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM
MEETING OF HEADS OF DEFENCE COLLEGES
27 – 31 AUG 01**

**CHANGES IN FORMS OF EDUCATION
PROVIDED BY NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS:
THE AUSTRALIAN EXPERIENCE**

**Rear Admiral Raydon Gates, CSM, RAN
Commander, Australian Defence College**

Introduction

One of the most important functions of the Australian Defence Organisation and arguably any world military force is the education and training of its people. We believe in the ADO that Defence is a knowledge business and that to be competitive we need to seek an edge – we call it the knowledge edge. We consider that our critical assets are the knowledge and skills of the people who defend Australia. There is no doubt that Australia's future security depends on our ability to expand and build on those skills and knowledge. Because of the importance of highly professional and well educated officers to Australia's Defence capability, the education and training of officers has come under intense scrutiny in recent years in a succession of reviews and reports to Government. The outcome has been a process of continual improvement in our educational institutions to allow our officers to meet the challenges of this new century. This imperative has been given extra impetus by changes in the nature of conflict that emphasise joint and coalition operations - flexibility and innovation.

There is now a greater awareness in Defence of the importance of the relationship between people and capability, and the ways in which education and training support defence capability through the development of people. We now have a greater focus on preparing people to apply knowledge and technology as a key capability element, focusing attention on the critical importance of the higher education of those officers destined for command and other most senior positions in the Australian Defence Force. This is made even more important because our future leaders will be faced with issues of growing complexity in an environment of increasing uncertainty. This, in turn, has raised the question of how institutions and processes should be established to support higher education for our senior leaders.

Reform Processes

Significant reforms have been implemented in recent years in the Australian Defence Organisation to meet Government's increased expectations of Defence. These wide ranging reform programs, identified in both the Defence Efficiency Review and the following Defence Reform Program have led to extensive commercialisation of much of the support for Defence operations, and have also led to significant reforms in Defence Education and Training. The Defence Efficiency Review looked at all aspects of Defence Education and Training and identified a broad strategic framework which was developed and implemented by a new organisation; the Joint Education and Training Executive in Defence Headquarters.

This strategic framework has two major elements: the development of improved higher level management of Defence Education and Training through the establishment of internal customer and provider relationships within Defence; and the integration of Defence Education and Training with Australia's national education and training system to make better use of available civilian resources in that sector.

To improve the management of officer education, we have now put in place policies that support clear accountability for education outcomes across the continua of education and training in the joint arena and for the three services. At the same time, we have ensured that these continua are managed in such a way as to eliminate duplication and overlap, and to ensure that education outcomes are relevant to Defence needs. The policy framework has also guided a broader and continuing examination of the relationship between educational opportunities and ADF officer career structures. The Defence Reform Program education and training initiatives have now been subsumed into a wider program of continuous improvement in Defence. However, the momentum has increased as the benefits of an integrated approach to education and training, taking in both military and Service needs, are now readily appreciated. We recognise that we will never again conduct operational activity that is not joint activity. Further, that activity will likely be conducted within a coalition. We must therefore educate and train as we will fight: in joint, integrated and coalition environments.

Another important social factor impacting on the development of educational policy within Defence has been the restructuring of Australia's national education and training system, reflecting Government policy initiatives aimed at improving our national ability to compete in the global economy. The result is an increasingly competitive environment within the higher education sector with a diversity of supply and the provision of more flexible educational services.

A new Educational system for the Australian Defence Organisation

One of the most significant recommendations of the Defence Efficiency Review was to redevelop education for officers at the Colonel equivalent rank where changes to the nature of armed conflict worldwide have caused us to respond with innovation in the way we respond to those challenges. This new education program has greater relevance to Defence's needs, addressing our regional strategic environment and our capacity to operate within this environment. This year, this education will take shape in the form of the one-year Defence and Strategic Studies Course (DSSC) at a retitled Centre for Defence and Strategic Studies.¹

Another significant Defence Reform Program activity was a plan to merge and collocate the three single Service staff colleges.² A smaller defence force flowing

¹ This college, from 1999-2000 was called the Australian Defence College and conducted a two part program version of the current DSSC. Prior to this, this college was titled the Australian College of Defence and Strategic Studies (ACDSS) running a predecessor academic program of strategic study.

² Until 2001, middle-ranking officer education was conducted in three separate colleges to meet single Service needs. Navy focused on management and Defence and Strategic Studies. War-fighting skills were taught elsewhere. Army sought to equip officers with skills needed to win the land battle in a joint environment. Air Force focused on the study of command, leadership and management, strategic studies, Air Power Studies and staff skills. The original collocation proposal sought to achieve efficiencies of about \$4m per annum. The project moved beyond collocation soon after commencement to achieve, in 2001, an integrated single college outcome.

from other Defence Reform program initiatives meant that command responsibility would occur at lower levels and that joint staff training and education would be needed at a younger age. Defence therefore wanted to ensure that greater command and joint education occurred at an earlier time in officers' careers.³

These two major educational initiatives of the Defence Efficiency Review, that is the creation of the new senior course and the collocated staff college, were fundamental in the establishment of the new Australian Defence College. These two institutions, together with the Australian Defence Force Academy, were brought together under my command in January this year as the Australian Defence College. As a two star serving military officer I am responsible to both the Chief of the Defence Force and the Secretary of the Department of Defence for the three units under my command. The Australian Defence Force Academy is commanded by a Service one star Commandant, as is the new Command and Staff College.⁴ The Centre for Defence and Strategic Studies has a one star equivalent civilian Principal.⁵

Australian Defence Force Academy

The Australian Defence Force Academy established in 1986, provides the ADF with tertiary graduates with a balanced and liberal under-graduate education conducted within a military environment. This has been a significant investment for Defence and overall the Services are very happy with the quality of the graduates.

The Australian Command and Staff College

The Australian Command and Staff College runs courses for full and part time officers. Its main course is the full time year-long command and staff course which prepares selected career officers for command and staff appointments in single Service, joint and integrated environments.⁶ The college environment is one where students seek knowledge, value intellectual capital and develop a range of desired behavioural outcomes, including decision making skills, team work, use of critical reflection, flexibility, imagination, adaptability, common sense and innovation, problem solving and working in an environment of complexity and uncertainty. There are three components to the course: an initial common component, conducted in an integrated environment largely by contracted external educational service providers. Studies are conducted into strategy, Australian Defence issues, command, leadership and management and staff skills. Later, students break into single Service groups where the focus of education is on war fighting issues specific to each Service's environment. In the last few months, the course comes together again for detailed study of the planning and conduct of the spectrum of joint operational activity, including military support operations. Successful completion results in a

³ A previous joint educational establishment, the Joint Services Staff College, was the first ADF unit to provide higher education to students from all three services as well as the Public Service. It closed in 1998 after 57 courses and 2,321 graduates, many from our partners in the region and globally. The course prepared officers for joint service appointments. Later, its focus became the operational level of conflict, but within a strategic framework for the employment of joint and combined military forces.

⁴ These military positions are filled by officers selected on merit and balance between the services rather than strictly following rotational rules.

⁵ The ADC also includes a Centre for Professional Development - a centre of expertise in professional higher education which advises the Commander on education issues, manages quality assurance and engages with the higher education sector.

military award, but with additional study and assessment, students can be awarded with a Master of Management in Defence Studies by the University of Canberra.

Centre for Defence and Strategic Studies

The Centre for Defence and Strategic Studies is Defence's senior educational institution with a curriculum concentrating on the Asia-Pacific region. The course is taught exclusively by contractors, most from Australian universities and covers topics such as: the strategic setting and the major players in Asia-Pacific security; defence policy formulation; leadership and management; as well as social, political and economic developments in the Asia-Pacific region. It also includes advanced policy-making, high-level corporate leadership and strategic decision-making, and a comprehensive examination of national and international issues of defence and strategic importance.⁷ Successful completion results in the award of a graduate certificate or diploma. However, like the ACSC, with additional work and assessment, students can gain Masters degrees from Latrobe or Melbourne University.

The Australian Defence College

My charter charges me with the conduct of higher education and professional development. It recognises: the foundation skills, knowledge and attitudes needed by junior officers at the tactical level; the command and staff skills needed for mid-career officers at the operational level; and the knowledge and decision making skills required by senior leaders and managers who operate at the strategic level. To meet this challenge, the three institutions at the ADC deliver high quality graduate and post-graduate academic and other programs to officer cadets, junior, mid career and senior officers and officials.⁸ We also have a responsibility to maintain close relationships with national and international defence and defence related institutions; to foster research on important national and international defence and security matters; and to develop and encourage close relationships among graduates. Indeed, the building and sustaining of networks within and without Australia is something highly prized by Defence. The participation of overseas officers in the ADC is a very important part of the learning process. In 2001 at Weston Creek there are 63 students ranging in rank from Major to Brigadier from 23 different countries. At CDSS half of the course is from overseas. At ACSC about one quarter of those attending are overseas officers.

The ADC's education and training continuum covers the gamut of defence learning activity, from single service training, through to education conducted on-campus at Universities throughout Australia and overseas. Similarly, there is a time continuum of education and professional development from junior officer on entry through to senior ranks as befitting our commitment to lifelong learning for our people.

⁷ Like the ACSC, the CDSS conducts study tours within Australia and to countries in the Asia-Pacific region to provide opportunities to learn about issues pertaining to defence and regional security.

⁸ Attendance by civilians at the ACSC and CDSS is crucial as they provide an important perspective to military officers on Defence issues. Conversely, their interaction with military students affords them a much greater opportunity to understand military specific topics.

The Future

Looking to the near and far future, we intend to further embrace technology and adopt advances in flexible delivery to provide greater access for non-residential audiences through e-learning.⁹

Next year, we will add a Centre for Defence Command Leadership and Management Studies. This high profile centre will be an important player in advancing Defence command, leadership and management initiatives, an area of great need. We are also looking at providing integrated logistics management education to support the formation of our new through-life Defence Materiel Organisation. We may establish a Defence Business or Management School to integrate, rationalise and provide best practice in all forms of Defence business management for both civilian and Service officers. We also hope that the currently separate single service doctrinal think tanks, our Environmental Study Centres, could be collocated at Weston Creek or the ADFA campus, as these independent Service think tanks would generate a significant symbiosis with the ADC colleges. Their ability to undertake cutting edge research will assist us to sharpen our knowledge edge.

There has been marked change over the last three years in the provision of officer education in Australia. We now have a continuum delivering essential professional development across the entire defence organisation. The ADC enhances our capacity to manage this continuum by consolidating expertise within one umbrella institution, allowing better use of resources and harnessing of potential synergies. These changes have not come about easily, or from any desire to achieve a post-Cold War dividend. Indeed, the greater instability and complexities we see in the world requires Australia to look more closely at the contribution made by its Defence Force. The contribution to overall defence capability rests firmly on the ability of its people, and our new educational institution will ensure that they are prepared for whatever challenges the future may bring.

August 2001
Tokyo

⁹ We seek to enhance Reserve Force effectiveness with a mixture of residential and distance learning in command and staff training in the near future.