ABSTRACT

THESIS: “In Order to Accomplish the Mission:” A Case Study of the Culture and Culture Training in the Ball State Army Reserve Officer Training Corp (ROTC) in 2007

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DEGREE: Master of Arts

COLLEGE: Science and Humanities

DATE: October 2008

The Army Reserve Officer Training Corp (ROTC) at Ball State University is a program designed to indoctrinate, train, and prepare students for careers as officers in the United States Army. In addition to military science classes held on campus cadets are required to attend the Leadership Development and Assessment Course (LDAC) at Fort Lewis, Washington, a 33-day long course that focuses on combat related competencies. It is during this training that students are first taught the precepts of cultural awareness inside a military context. This research argues that cultural awareness training, introduced to cadets as a battlefield obstacle that can impede mission completion, is incompatible with the organizational culture of the Army. Using ethnographic methods as a theoretical framework, this research focuses on Ball State Army ROTC culture and the broader issue of culture as an obstacle. The data reveals the assumptions and symbols that inform the practical application of cultural awareness and mission orientation as well as the difficulties of securing reliable anthropological information. The goal of this paper is a practical body of knowledge that will bridge gaps in the literature and serve as an
invitation for an open dialog between anthropologists, military members of all rank, and policy makers.