

HONORS PROJECT

"Education and the Military: Strange Bedfellows?"

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I recommend this thesis for acceptance by the Honors Program  
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Our nation is presently engulfed in a period of widespread social questioning, dissent, and strife. This wave of social "activism" has permeated almost every institution of the so-called "establishment" within our society. It would be highly improper and unfounded of me to term this movement either right or wrong; for any such connotation would be based upon an individual's concept of good-bad, right-wrong. Consequently, without polling the entirety of the population of this country as to their feelings on the matter, and why; it would be totally unjustified for me to make a blanket statement on this topic as so many radicals, politicians, and other "qualified" persons have chosen to do. It is obvious, however, some of the targets which this social "upheaval" has chosen to concentrate upon. Certainly some of the major of these must be industry, the military, and education in the United States. The "military-industrial complex" has been discussed high and low, over and under, for several years. Is there, however, a "military-educational complex"? If so, just what is it? In the course of this paper, I will attempt to show that there definitely is a form of "military-educational complex", and reflect upon its strength. I will deal with the United States in general, and Ball State University in specific. I will also attempt to compare education and the military to each other in the light of my experiences and activities within each. Finally, I will draw conclusions based upon the material within the paper in an effort to offer suggestions for the betterment of both education and the military, and the subsequent improvement of our nation as a whole.

Is there a "military-educational complex"? To answer this question,

we must first arrive at acceptable definitions of each of the three terms. Let us begin with "military". Military could be used to denote any or all branches of the armed services. Military may also pertain to the science of war or the management of violence. As relates to the purpose of this paper, the latter of the two aforesaid definitions of "military" is more preferable and shall henceforth be employed as the accepted definition of the term. Education, unlike military, is not a very specific term. Education may be defined to fit the purpose of this paper as the training, teaching, developing, and cultivating, both mentally and morally, of either a person or a great multitude of people. The third term of the triangle, complex, is perhaps the key term of the entire phrase. It ties the other two, military and education, together in some form of union. Consequently, the definition of complex is of considerable importance. Initially, we shall use the rather loose definition of complex as a whole made up of complicated or interrelated parts. Ultimately, this definition will become less generalized as the paper progresses. Having now arrived at suitable definitions for military, education, and complex; we may proceed to answer the question, "Is there a 'military-educational complex'?".

In answer to this question, I would say "yes". There are several reasons underlying my answer which lead me to believe that not only is there a "military-educational complex"; but it is perhaps equal in strength to the oft-mentioned "military-industrial complex". One obvious factor which relates the military to education is the Reserve Officers Training Corps programs which occupy positions on not only hundreds of college campuses; but also in a similar number of high schools through the form of Junior

Reserve Officers Training Corps programs. On the college level, these ROTC programs are generally offered in either two or four year blocks of instruction which results in the commissioning of the individual enrolled as either a 2nd Lieutenant in the Army or Air Force, or as an Ensign in the Navy, upon that individual's graduation from college. This is a prime example of the simultaneous interworking of both the military and the educational structures of our country. The students involved study to become professional military personnel at the same time in which they are studying to become teachers, engineers, lawyers, doctors, etc. Such coincidental study cannot help but interrelate both factors within those students participating. Also, the federal government financially sponsors the establishment of such units on various campuses throughout the nation; thus, making them independent of a great many outside influences.

Another reason underlying my positive response to the query, "Is there a 'military-educational complex'?", is the existence of private and State-supported training schools which are based on military concept and routine. Examples of such schools on the college level would be the Citadel and Virginia Military Institute. At these schools all students are exposed to the military concept while earning a college degree. This is achieved through compulsory enrollment in the sponsored ROTC programs which will also result in a military commission upon graduation. At schools such as these, the best traits and lessons of each system are taught in a composite form to insure the maximum potential for absorption by the student. Once again, we find the military and education joined together in a close-knit union, working toward a common purpose - the molding of a better oriented individual.

Still another way in which the military and education are related is through the means of educational research grants. The military structure of our government comprises the United States' largest and most abundantly financed research and development organization. Advanced students and professors are often the recipients of large grants offered by the military in order to competently research and develop new techniques and products. Grants and awards of this type serve to draw the purposes of the military and education closer together, both in search of a common goal - the progress of mankind.

Still a further way in which these two principle factors in American society are related is through educational opportunity grants and plans offered by the federal government for not only veterans; but also for members of the armed forces currently on active duty. These include benefits under the G.I. Bills, Veterans Administration, educational delays, Operation Bootstrap, etc. Certain provisions of the G.I. Bills provide for financial assistance to veterans seeking enrollment in an accredited college, university, or technical institution; thus, providing for increased educational opportunities for persons with a military background. This further promotes the interrelation of the military and educational structures of this country. Operation Bootstrap is similar, in that it provides financial assistance for military personnel on active duty to further their education at selected colleges and universities throughout the country. In short, these opportunity grants provide educational experiences for persons who might otherwise be unable to afford or obtain them.

Certainly what must be classified as a primary junction of military-

educational philosophy and practice are the service academies of West Point, Annapolis, and the Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs. Here specially selected male students from across the nation are introduced to a unified military-educational curriculum structured similarly to the various private and State sponsored military training schools which I have previously mentioned. At the academies, the students number among the best physically, mentally, and emotionally which our country has to offer. Once again, graduation results in a commission in the armed forces and a specified length of active military service.

On the high school level, there are also several highly recommended military training schools. Numbering among these would be Culver in Indiana, Missouri Military Institute, and Kentucky Military Institute in Louisville. Schools such as these provide high school age, and sometimes younger, students with educational opportunities structured around the basic principles of military life, such as discipline, honesty, leadership training, and resourcefulness. Often courses offered by such academies are geared toward a college preparatory curriculum. Certainly the affiliation of the military and education is in strong evidence in these schools, as it has been in those examples previously mentioned.

The previous examples have highlighted the direct interrelation between the military and education. There are, however, other means by which the two are associated ; these consisting of a more indirect nature. One of these would be the demand placed on the economy of the United States by its military exercises. This demand takes the form of the need for new products and processes. civilian employees in the areas of advanced skill

and degree requirements, and a sizeable labor force of civilians to man vacancies in other support functions necessary to the Armed Forces. All of these demands result in turn in a demand upon education. The educational structure of this country is responsible for educating people to meet these demands. These people will be educated in the fields of science, business, engineering, administration, etc.

A further indirect connection which the military and education have in common is the responsibility placed on education for producing individuals capable of leading and staffing our armed forces who possess not only a strong sense of responsibility for their actions; but also, a deep and abiding faith in the possibilities of America coupled with their obligation toward it.

In the preceding few pages I have discussed the reasons underlying my answer of "yes" to the question - "Is there a 'military-educational complex'?". I feel that the strength of these various programs, academies, schools, grants, demands on the economy, etc., lends considerable support to the validity of my answer. Ball State University is host to and participant in several of these programs. Of obvious note is the 230TH Detachment of Air Force ROTC which is composed of 29 Juniors and Seniors enrolled in the course with the ultimate goal of a commission in the Air Force and a minor in Aerospace Studies. In addition to the Air Force ROTC, there are several undergraduate and graduate students taking courses at Ball State as part of the "Operation Bootstrap" program. There are also a considerable number of students furthering their education at Ball State via the terms and conditions of the G.I. Bills. These veterans are thus receiving

their educational opportunities largely at the expense of the federal government in repayment for their service in the Armed Forces of the United States. Due to its history as primarily a Teacher's College, Ball State has not been a recipient of any significant number of research and development grants of military origin. With its recent University status, Ball State may possibly look toward a brighter future in terms of these grants.

Having established the existence of a "military-educational complex" within the United States, and demonstrated through example its presence at Ball State University; allow me now to present a yet more specific case regarding the close union of the military and education. I propose to compare these two often stated opposites as to just how similar they truly are. My qualifications for such an undertaking are based largely upon my observation and participation within each. In education, I am within one quarter of graduating from Ball State University with a Bachelor of Science degree and the subsequent privilege of applying for my secondary teaching license. I have now completed all of my Education courses required by the University for graduating on the teaching curriculum. Of perhaps even greater importance is my very recent completion of student teaching, which provided me an opportunity to check the value and validity of the Education curriculum at Ball State. With regard to the military, I am a member of the Ball State Air Force ROTC program and am within but a few weeks of receiving a reserve commission in the United States Air Force. During my two years experience within ROTC and its mandatory six-week summer training camp, I have had ample opportunity to observe both the virtues and the faults of this program. Within the ensuing pages I shall offer comparisons

of my experiences within both in an attempt to discover their similarities and their differences. I shall also point out anything which I might feel a serious fault within either of the two programs and explain my feelings as to why it should be considered such.

An excellent place to begin is usually considered the beginning. Therefore, let us now consider the various entrance requirements of both education and ROTC. Obviously to those of us in college, it requires a certain amount of knowledge and the accompanying ability to use it wisely in order to gain admittance to most colleges and universities. However, this is not always the case. Ball State, for example, being a State-supported school is bound by law to admit any State of Indiana resident capable of meeting the financial requirements into the University. This may be classified as admission with warning, but the school still must accept them, save in the event of certain cases of criminal activity, mental deficiency, and other relatively rare cases. Consequently, you have an unusually large number of students who fail to scholastically survive the freshman year. This is not especially conducive to an overall high academic atmosphere, but the question of a State institutions responsibility to serve the taxpayers comes into focus, and ultimately, wins out.

Now let us consider the requirements for acceptance into ROTC at Ball State. First, and of considerable importance, is that you must be a male student enrolled in the University with a projected date of graduation not more than two years following the summer in which you attend summer camp. This is usually a binding stipulation. Also, you must take an entrance examination, pass a physical examination, and appear before a screening

and review board. Of major significance is the fact that all applicants to ROTC programs, especially the two-year Professional Officers Course, are already established as academically capable at the college level. Thus, the requirements for entry into ROTC are somewhat higher than those for the initial entry into college.

Ball State offers a mandatory course of study for all students which is known as the general studies program. The purpose of this program is to provide all students with what is considered a well rounded background in several major subjects. Though the intent of this program is founded on the basically good idea that an educated person should be well-rounded; the program, as such, appears to be largely out of line. Unless he intends to major or minor in one or more of the subjects included in the general studies program, he should not be required to take this time, grade, and money consuming sequence. The students' coverage of largely the same material in high school outweighs the value of all the students within a particular college, such as Ball State, being exposed to the same material.

The ROTC equivalent to the Ball State general studies program is the six-week summer training camp which is required of all applicants prior to officially being accepted into the two-year Professional Officers Course. The curriculum involved in this six-week experience includes three weeks of concentrated academic instruction which is intended to cover the high points of the first two years of the four year program. Also included in this six weeks is leadership training, drill, physical education, tours of base facilities, and career orientation. As in the case of the general studies program, I felt much of this time, especially in the academic portion, to

be poorly structured with regard to the total value of the experience. Though I personally cared little for many of our activities during the six weeks; as I reflect back upon them, they were invaluable in molding my character, reliability, resourcefulness, and in general, maturing me. If for no other reason than this, I would rate the ROTC summer encampment higher than the Ball State University general studies program as regards the value of each as a total experience.

The next point of comparison is selective retention. Ball State employs a system of selective retention whereby those students of a certain class designation (Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, etc.) who do not maintain a previously established cumulative grade point average are dropped from the roles of the University. The points of critical importance are most numerous during the freshman year, and it is here that the greatest percentage of failures occurs. This system shows considerable value in "weeding out" those students who are either mentally or emotionally unable to adjust to college life. If a student is forced to withdraw due to failure to meet or surpass the retention standards, then he is allowed to appeal to the Board of Admissions following the passage of one year and request readmission - should he so desire.

ROTC at Ball State also possesses a system of selective retention, though it varies somewhat in nature from that of Ball State. First of all, anyone in the ROTC program is primarily responsible for maintaining a satisfactory standing within the University. In light of a cadet being a student above all else; this is as it should be. Secondly, a cadet is liable to expulsion from the ROTC program, forfeiture of opportunity for commissioning,

and possible induction into the Air Force as an Airman Basic, should he fail to satisfy the established criteria for academics, physical fitness, or mental attitude. In general practice, this type of program is suitable for the ROTC situation. However, many flaws have been known to arise from it. Physical "discrepancies" often are overlooked in the application examination and are discovered later following some students' extended participation in the program. This flaw should be corrected to prevent the possible forfeiture of much time and energy on the part of these individuals for naught.

Our nation, as was mentioned in the introduction, is passing through a period of considerable social dissent, albeit much of this is conducted by relatively small minorities. Nevertheless, this wave of protest, especially against the military, has taken its toll of the ROTC programs. Ripples of this opposition have even been felt at Ball State, generally considered a standout among conservative institutions. The ROTC program at Ball State is suffering from a serious threat in the form of a downward spiral of recruiting. In a sense, the recruiting techniques employed by ROTC resemble those used to recruit athletes to a certain school. The competition is stiff, taking the form of an unpopular Asian conflict, fear and resentment of the military as a result of the draft, and the possibilities of a more secure and affluent future in other endeavors. ROTC has much to offer in actuality. It can provide a means of fulfilling your obligation to the United States while retaining some choice as to how and where you will fulfill it. That's better than the draft. Also, you receive a stipend of fifty dollars per month while enrolled in the final two years

of the ROTC program. A minor on the college level is also awarded for completion of the sequence at Ball State. Unfortunately, the fruits of the program are soured by the dissent of a few.

A result of this downward trend of enrollment in ROTC programs at Ball State and across the nation, has been the unfortunate lowering of the standards for admission. As in a spectator sport such as baseball, if the team is doing poorly, the price of the tickets is lowered. Sadly enough, the same is true of the ROTC program. With the military, Selective Service, and nation as a whole in a state of flux, the brighter students are remaining aloof in most cases to observe what will develop. Consequently, those interested in joining the ROTC program are too often those who are not bright enough, strong enough, or ambitious enough to compete successfully with the rest of their counterparts. They fear the draft, so seek out a means to avoid such a possibility. The door to ROTC is open further now than ever before, yet less of value is walking through it. In fact, only five were recruited at all for next year's academic class of Juniors. It leads one to wonder, if not the best, then maybe better none at all.

Having discussed admissions, background studies, and selective retention; let me now discuss structure and value of courses. In order to graduate from Ball State with certification for secondary teaching, it is necessary to take courses in not only one's prescribed major and minor fields of study, but also in education. Basically, this is an excellent idea. In practice, however, it falls far short of its intended goal of preparing a student to be a teacher upon his graduation from college. This curriculum is comprised of courses in general education, educational psychology, foundations

and fundamentals of education, and secondary education experiences. The primary emphasis of these courses is theory. Theory is fine, except I have found from my student teaching experiences that it seldom works. The reason for this failure is that it is structured around an ideal, computerized type of student. The problems and challenges which confronted me in student teaching were vastly different from those discussed in any of my education classes. I had to rely on resourcefulness rather than experience to cope with the situations against which I was pitted. Perhaps the word "experience" is the key to the problem. Participation in Burriss could be an excellent program. However, it is hindered by too little participation on the part of the participants. This is understandable in light of the Burriss' situation. Too many teachers could easily destroy the foundation for learning in a class which had been established by their predecessors. A further problem with the structure of the education courses at Ball State is those who teach them. Too often the professor or instructor of one of these courses has either never had experience teaching the age groups his course is concerned with; or he has been absent from actual teaching on that level so long that what he has to say may no longer be relevant - especially in the light of today's changing youth. More observation and practical experience needs to be incorporated, and less theory and technical terminology. As I stated before, theory is fine; but as the old adage goes: "Experience is the best teacher."

ROTC courses are often termed by the more radical elements of our society as being "genocidal studies". Perhaps few, if any, of these people have taken the time to actually study the syllabus and curriculum of the

of the ROTC program. Termed Aerospace Studies, ROTC actually covers a rather broad spectrum of topics. First course of the Junior level is concerned entirely with the history of aviation and aviators. The second course also is concerned with aviation, but more specifically with the founding, growth, and structure of the U.S. Air Force. The final course on the Junior level is more scientifically oriented, with emphasis on rocketry, astronomy, trajectories, and the United States' space effort - past, present, and projected. These courses are somewhat similar in nature to the University's general studies program. Courses on the Senior level become more specialized as regards the cadet's future service in the Air Force. The three-block course of instruction deals with human relations, administrative and managerial techniques and functions, staff officer duties and responsibilities, ethics, case studies, cost effectiveness, mission accomplishment, and pre-commissioning briefings. Interspaced throughout the two-year course are also physical fitness and drill exercises, required participation in Corps Training, field trips, and numerous other participation-type functions. As an accredited minor field of study from Ball State, Aerospace Studies is virtually worthless as regards its value for landing a job in teaching, as it is a departmental minor. As regards its value to me otherwise, it is perhaps immeasurable. ROTC is a demanding course of study. It will take all you want to put into it and still ask for more. However, its rewards are many, varied, and often surprising. A large percentage of the value to be gleaned from ROTC is to be found not in the material as such, but more in the way that material is presented. The vast majority of the daily lessons in ROTC classes are of the seminar type, with cadets being

responsible either individually or in pairs for daily coverage of assigned lessons. Several features of value are to be found in such an arrangement. First of all, the cadet responsible for the lesson is given the opportunity to improvise what method he desires to use in presenting it. This produces not only resourcefulness in the individual; but also a sense of responsibility. Another valuable asset gained from such a technique is the leadership training involved in such an undertaking. This is something which seriously hinders beginning teachers in their first encounters with students. Leadership training such as is gained through class presentations in ROTC is a superior method of building the person's confidence, instilling poise, and enabling him to think and act upon his feet. Other than the few brief encounters with classroom teaching in Participation, most students at Ball State receive no such training and opportunities until they are assigned as student teachers. By then, however, it is often too late, and a learning experience may become more of a nightmare. I am extremely thankful for my experiences in the ROTC classroom situations. In all honesty I can say that they were of a greater, more practical aid to me than all of my education courses on the teaching curriculum. It was truly amazing to me that this should be so; especially in the light of all the derogatory comments popular today about the military and ROTC. I believe this excellently illustrates the point I attempted to make before; theory is fine, but it is useless unless the practical knowledge of how to apply it is also there.

Concerning grades, both organizations, Ball State and the 230TH Detachment of Air Force ROTC use the same criteria for establishing grades -

the four point scale. Grades are computed for each at the close of an academic quarter. The University grade is a compilation of all the courses, including ROTC, which a student has taken at Ball State for that particular quarter. ROTC grades are determined by combining the student's class or academic grade at 80% with his Corps Training or activities grade at 20%. Whereas there is a pass-fail system for the University, ROTC, being a minor field of study, is not included on it.

Now let us compare the immediate future of a Ball State graduate going into teaching on the secondary level, and a Ball State graduate receiving his commission in the Air Force through the AFROTC program. Obligations are important in any vocation, so I'll undertake a comparison of them first of all. In education, most teachers in Indiana teach five days or spend approximately forty hours per week in the school environment. A beginning teacher must also make plans to secure his Masters degree within five years following his assumption of teaching duties. A teacher is obligated to teach an average of nine months per year with a three month lay-over during the summer months; unless he will be teaching a summer school course. Teachers are also obligated to chaperone various school functions, and are often requested to coach some team or supervise some organization in return for some minor payment. Most beginning teachers also have yet to fulfill their obligation to their country as regards military service.

A student who receives his commission through the Air Force ROTC program, such as at Ball State, will incur a four or five year tour of active duty with the U.S. Air Force, depending on whether he is a pilot prospect; in which case he will incur the latter. In the Air Force, he

would begin his military experience with the rank of 2nd Lieutenant. At the conclusion of his tour of active duty, he would become a member of the Reserves if he chooses a civilian life, and will not be burdened with the thought of suddenly being drafted into the military at some unexpected moment. A 2nd Lieutenant's financial rewards are also much greater than those of a drafted beginning teacher.

In the realm of finances, the similarities between first year teachers and 2nd Lieutenants is amazing. A first year teacher at the school where I recently completed my student teaching could expect to receive approximately 6,500 dollars for a contracted nine months of teaching. An unmarried, non-flying 2nd Lieutenant could in turn expect to receive approximately the same amount in pay and allowances over a twelve month period with thirty days paid vacation. The Lieutenant would also be eligible for the reduced prices at the Commissary and Base Exchange outlets, and special credit rates through Credit Union membership. He is assured of a job with regular promotions for at least four years; and in most cases, may receive excellent, free, medical and dental care. The travel opportunities of the Lieutenant outweigh those of most beginning teachers due to the special space-available military travel arrangements. All-in-all, the Lieutenant will outdo most beginning teachers as far as security of job, finances, and opportunities.

In the preceding pages I have moved from the general to the specific regarding the interrelationship of the military and education. I have given several examples on which I base my belief that there is a "military-educational complex". I have ranged my examples from the nationwide scope

of this union to specific examples of Ball State University's participation in it. From this, my point of departure has been toward a comparison of my experiences and observations both within the teaching curriculum of Ball State and the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps also at Ball State. I have endeavored to point out what I feel to be certain major flaws or weaknesses within each structure, and what led me to arrive at that opinion. Even more specific, I have provided a comparison between the obligations, finances, and opportunities of first-year teachers and Air Force 2nd Lieutenants. I have arrived at the decision that a 2nd Lieutenant has much more in his favor than is often thought.

The problem with a great many people today is their willingness to criticize and inability to suggest anything better. However, I am not in the least bit hesitant about making such suggestions. Initially I would suggest that everyone take the time to familiarize themselves with the joint means by which the military and education operate. In order to criticize anything, a working knowledge of its background should be considered essential. Those who condemn ROTC programs across the nation should attend one or more of the ROTC classes before calling them "genocidal studies". No sane person in the world wishes for war; peace is something every normal person seeks. War, however, is a realistic, if unfortunate, part of the culture of our planet. To ignore its existence and threat, and pretend it will go away by itself could easily lead to fatal results. Currently a large number of intelligent students seek to avoid service in the Armed Forces. This is unfortunate, for if our world ever hopes to end the brutality of war; the brighter people are the ones who must lead us. What better

way to work for a truly safe and lasting peace, than have the armies of the world staffed with intelligent, thoughtful, reasonable, and peace-loving people. College students who scream for peace should stop and ponder over this possibility, for this is somewhere they could truly contribute. Further, I would suggest that uniforms not be required for wear on campus by ROTC cadets. This wear of the uniform is unnecessary, for these cadets are first and primarily, students. Students have no reason for wearing the uniform if they are not on active duty within the Armed Forces. I would also suggest opening the ROTC classes to more students on a non-committal basis. I feel the increased exposure would be beneficial to both the program and those students involved. Yet another suggestion which I would present is that ROTC programs seriously consider which is ultimately more important - the length of a student's hair, or the quality of his thoughts.

With special emphasis on education now, I would strongly suggest a thorough reappraisal of the value and pertinence of education courses offered at Ball State University for the secondary level of teaching. I feel perhaps less theory and more practical application would benefit the students immensely. Another recommendation would be to have only the best professors who have had experience on the high school or junior high levels teaching these education courses. After all, what is taught here should find its way back to the classroom. Thus, the need for quality in these courses. I would also suggest more forethought be placed in the value of the general studies program for many students. In a great many cases, I would say it merely wastes their time and money.

I hope that by reading this paper you can appreciate my sentiments

that the military and education are not so far apart as many would have us believe. In fact, they're very similar in many ways, and cooperate toward the betterment of the United States in many ways which are unfortunately often overlooked. The future of our country relies on a universal understanding of the necessary relationship of these two major aspects of our society. Education and the military - strange bedfellows? No indeed!