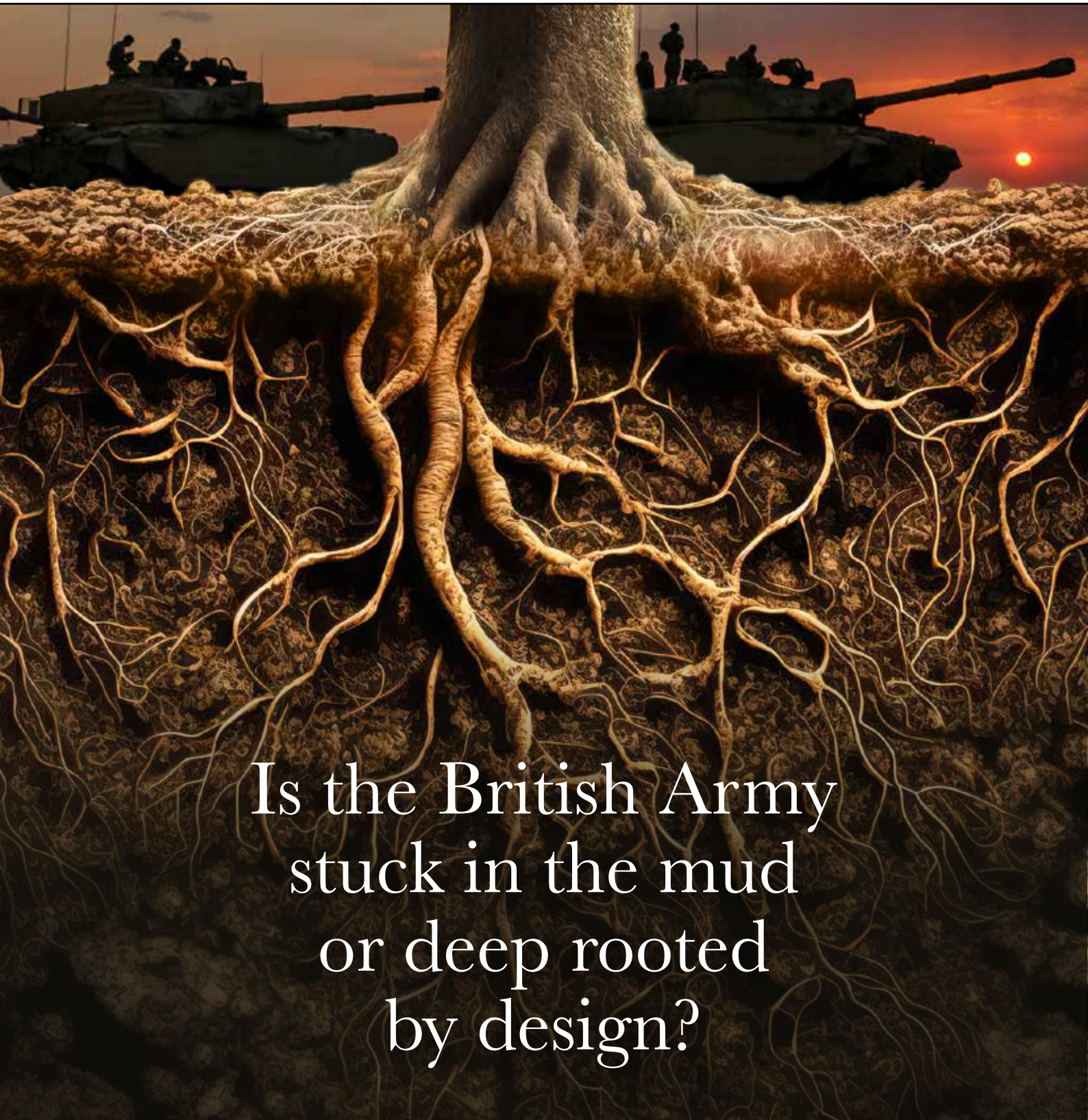


The occasional papers of the

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ARES & ATHENA²³

JULY 2023



Is the British Army
stuck in the mud
or deep rooted
by design?

²³ INSTITUTIONAL
FOUNDATION



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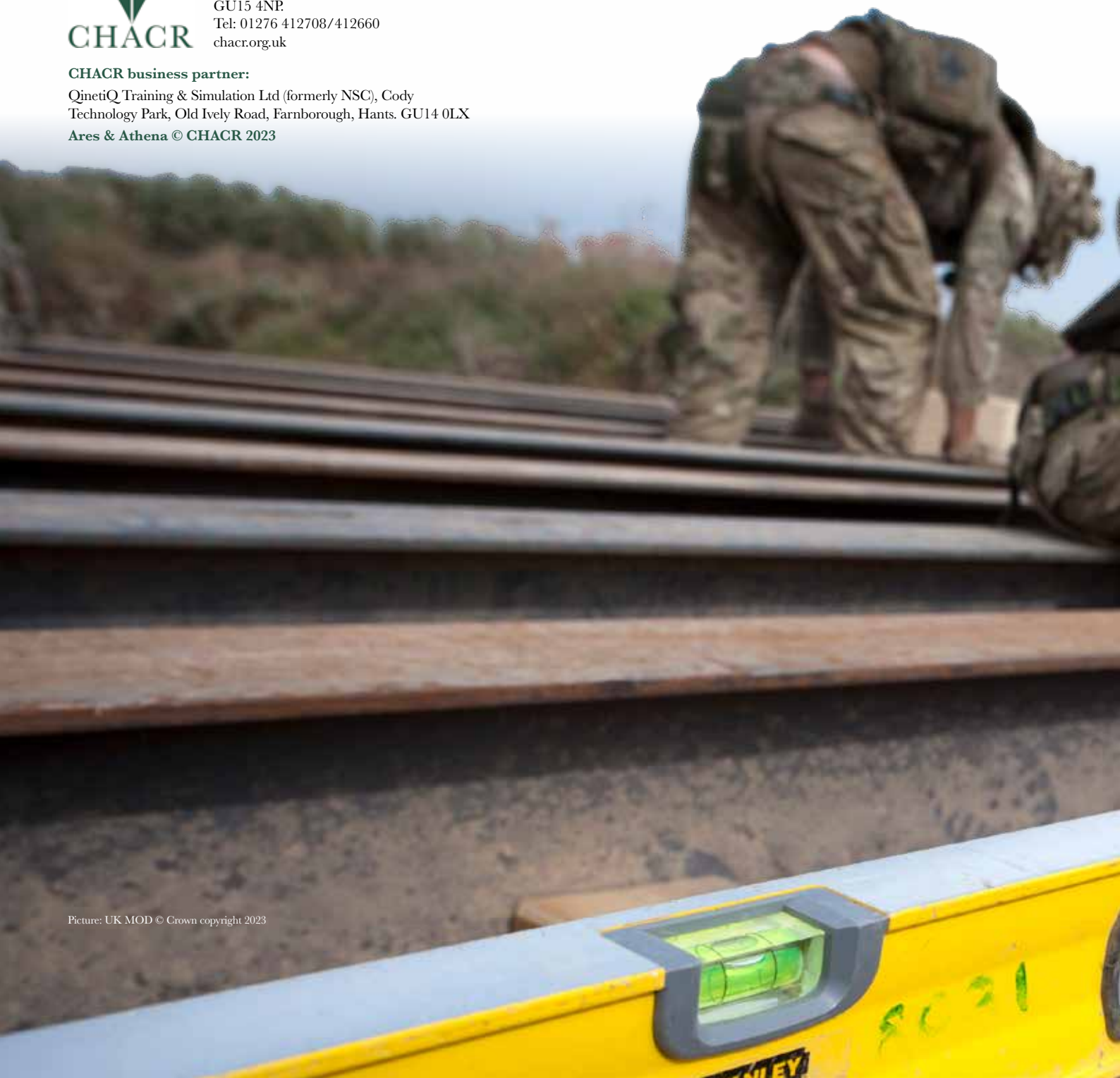
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LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS

Maj Gen Dr A R D Sharpe
Director, CHACR

For the first five years of the new Army Generalship Programme, General Sir Rupert Smith would open the course by sharing with the participants his own view of 'generalship'. He would explain to the newly-promoted two-stars that they now had two jobs – and that there was a clue in their newly-acquired rank and titles. The first job was their appointment – Assistant Chief of the General Staff, Divisional Commander, Chief of Staff of the Field Army, Director for Personnel, or whatever; this was the job for which they had been selected according to their specific skill-sets and for which they could expect to be supported by a specific-to-purpose staff. The second was their role in the Army – a 'general' role – which was to be, both collectively and individually, the guardians, curators, caretakers, custodians and



stewards of the institution. If the Army was to function efficiently, as an organisation, then their performance in their appointments needed to be up to the mark. If the Army was to endure, as a healthy, strong and lasting organ of the state, as an institution that was both valued and effective, then they also needed to be up to the mark in their roles as generals. The first was a job, the second a duty.

National governments, as they balance priorities and demands off against each other, can rarely afford to deliver to ministries of defence the level of funding that the politicians, civil servants, and service personnel in those ministries perceive as being necessary to fund, fully, the demands placed on defence. (So much is also true, of course, for the ministries of health, education, and so on.) Because this is so, the Services, and the governmental machinery that supports and surrounds them, have to make a constant balancing act between the immediate demands to be able to organise, equip and operate effectively and efficiently in their ongoing everyday roles to protect and defend the interests of the nation and its people, and their responsibilities to ensure that the Services retain their ability to endure and to be able to transform, rapidly and effectively, to

meet the threats and demands of that future. In this respect, judgements have to be made about what constitutes an army's organisational superstructure (that can be adjusted or pared at with relatively easily rectifiable effects) and its foundational substructure (the undermining of which would threaten the integrity of the entire edifice on a rather more lasting basis).

Instructional in this respect is the CHACR book *How Armies Grow*,¹ which explores a series of case studies that illustrate nations' tendencies to allow their armed forces to dwindle in times of perceived reduced threat and then seek to recover the capabilities needed when threats reappear. Those that are more successful are the armies (and navies and air forces for that matter) that understand the essential need to retain their institutional foundation during lean times – in all three components of fighting power: physical, conceptual and moral.

The physical foundations

In the physical sense armies must consider a wide range of foundational things. Many of these things may not be,

¹*How Armies Grow; Ed Matthias Strohn; Casemate 2019; ISBN 978-1-61200-601-7*



directly, within an army's power to control (although they can almost always influence). Has the nation retained a strong defence industrial base that allows an army to ask for the rapid (re)provision of equipment, ammunition or other combat supplies? Does the nation underpin its defence industry by supporting sales and export drives abroad such that the industry has capacity to deliver rapidly, at scale, when required, and an interest in spending money on cutting-edge research and development? Is the relationship between service personnel, civil servants and industry strong, trusting, empathetic and mutually understanding? Is the military acquisition process strong and agile, especially in times of crisis? Does the army maintain sufficient equipment (even if in small numbers) to maintain a level of operator and instructor expertise to put effective and well-trained personnel into newly acquired equipment if circumstances demand? In an air force, for example, it takes much longer to train a fast jet pilot, or even an unmanned drone pilot, to relative proficiency such that they may outfly and outfight an enemy than it does to acquire new fast jets or drones, when circumstances demand that this must be done rapidly – even with the most Kafkaesque of acquisition processes in place. Navies that reduce the number of vessels that they hold (regardless of the size and quality of those vessels), reduce their capacity amongst their personnel to practice seamanship and command at sea. So it is in armies. People's skills are a physical capability, just as much as cutting-edge equipment. Specifically, has an army maintained a bedrock of skill-sets upon which it can build in its perhaps more neglected 'niche' areas (for example: air defence; wet gap crossing; mine laying and mine clearance; chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear protection; tactical air lift; electronic intercept and jamming; drones; and, of course, logistic lift, to name but a few), let alone its core requirements of armour, artillery, aviation and combat infantry and the commensurate combat service support infrastructure to maintain all of the above in the field?

Thus part of the foundation of any army must be the retention not just of sufficient equipment capability and organisational structures, but also of sufficient trained, equipped and experienced personnel not just to conduct 'current operations', but to be able to act as the enduring core of whatever may be required by the nation in the future of its army. (And it must retain this solid foundation regardless of the state of the organisational superstructure above it, which necessary reality means will have been crafted to fit immediate resource to immediate demand, rather than with the lasting health of the service in mind.) It is the job of generals, and thus of the staff (civilian and military) who support the generals, to ensure, as General Smith would have it, that that physical component of the Army is both fit to prevail in current operational circumstances, and also ready, curated, stewarded and prepared to transform to deal with the demands of the future. This capacity forms the physical component of fighting power's element of an army's institutional foundation.

The conceptual foundations

Underpinning the physical component of fighting power there is, however, the deeper bedrock of an army's foundations: its conceptual component. World-beating physical capability will not beat the world if it is applied unwisely by unthinking military leaders. Whether Sun Tzu or Clausewitz, Fuller or Guderian, Jomini or Wellington, those who have taken their

time to study and opine upon the military art consistently remind us that success in war is about such things as: initiative holding; mental agility and robustness; cognitive comfort in chaos; and, thereby, the ability to ensure that an enemy is out-thought by one's commanders just as much as it is out-fought by one's soldiers.

A well-founded army will ensure that it trains and exercises its people not just in the immediate tactics, techniques and procedures of the current fight, but also in that full range of demands, both of types of warfare and of its scale, that it may be called upon to perform. Thus, divisional commanders (and their staff), for example, should be trained and ready not just to command divisions but also to step up to lead corps or even army groups. Majors should be as comfortable with the notion of commanding a fighting brigade as they may be with idea of being asked to be a member of the staff of one. If officers are not trained and prepared in this way then two knock-on effects pertain: first, they cannot hope to empathetically understand the circumstances of their 'two-up commanders' (a basic requirement for the practice of mission command); and, second, they are unlikely to be able to step up rapidly and effectively if an army reduced in capacity and capability is invited, urgently, to expand to meet the demands of new and developing threats. The inter-war German army is an excellent example of one army that understood this imperative, in the most restricted and straightened of times, in a way that enabled it to regenerate rapidly and effectively when required.

In this respect an army's deep bedrock can be found in how it trains its commanders and staff officers in the art of land warfare (certainly, within a joint, integrated and inter-agency context, but they must, first of all, be deeply proficient in their own role before they can hope to contribute usefully and fully to others'). It can be found in how an army values and rewards the mental and intellectual agility of its officers (and non-commissioned officers). It can be found in the professional curiosity of its officer corps. It can be found, as General Smith would have it, not just in how well they conduct the daily activity of their job, but how deeply they think around their profession. Armies that train with what they have got are well prepared; armies that wargame with what they have got and with what they have not got are the best prepared. Omar Bradley's famous maxim that "amateurs talk tactics and professionals talk logistics" should, in this context, be taken a step further – "amateurs talk tactics and professionals talk logistics – and understand why!" An army may well march on its stomach, but it thrives and prevails on how its leaders use their brains.

Importantly, the conceptual component cannot be 'surged' into a needy army; professional understanding cannot be 'surged'; professional intuition cannot be 'surged'. The foundational conceptual component, and an army's attitude towards it, has to be grown, tended and nurtured over a long period of time. For armies to be effective now they need to have spent many years before now preparing their minds and their mindsets.

The moral foundations

Within the context of the Institutional Foundation, the moral component of fighting power is not as straightforward as it might seem. For sure, armies need to spend time and effort



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Armies that train with what they have got are well prepared; armies that wargame with what they have got and with what they have not got are the best prepared

developing those peculiar and particular tricks of the military trade that are, to coin a tired cliché, used to encourage so-called ‘ordinary people to do extraordinary things’. As Napoleon observed: “the moral is to the physical as three is to one”, and the recent events in Ukraine have reminded us (if we ever needed reminding) that this aphorism is as true now as it has ever been. In every army, underpinning its physical and conceptual components, there is a code of behaviour, a regime of discipline (self and collective), a system of reward, recognition and encouragement, and a nurturing structure that gives soldiers layers of emotional and mental bolstering. An army’s moral foundation provides its morale and its fighting spirit. This is rarely generated by happenstance and, as often as not, is deep-seated in tradition and a sense of inherited responsibility to behave in a certain manner.

On this level, the moral component provides the conditioning that encourages soldiers in times of peace and drives them on in the face of fear, abhorrence or extreme adversity. This might come in the form of a regimental or formational system, of marks of elitism (like ‘wings’ or bearskin hats), of systems of reward and honour (like medals and citations), of institutional or national pride, of a nurtured sense of ‘family’ or belonging, of a deep-seated feeling of self- and team-worth, or, most likely, of a combination of some or all of the above. When armies find, more often than not by many years of trial and error, a system that appears to generate such esprit de corps, then they have managed to build a moral foundation that must not be sacrosanct, but, at the same time, that ought to be tampered with only under advice and in a measured and well-considered way.

In times of national peril or adversity history shows that substitutes can be used, to various effects, to replace this deep-seated moral foundation. Nations can use jingoism (“Your Country Needs You!”), an exaggerated demonification of the enemy, propaganda, outrage in the face of offence or attack, fear, or any mixture of these and other things to generate

moral fervour in an army and/or recruiting fervour in the population at large. But such things can be hard to generate and are often short-lived, except where self-evident existential threat exists and the alternative to grim-faced resistance is much less palatable. These supports to the moral component are, however, not part of an army’s Institutional Foundation, but are the by-products of circumstance which may bolster or undermine an army’s moral component at any given time. These are ‘superstructure’ moral components, not foundations.

On another level, however, the moral component has a profound effect on the enduring sustainability of an army. For generals to be able to conduct themselves effectively in Rupert Smith’s general role – the stewards and curators of their institution – they need help and support. Not only is fighting power sustained by its moral component, but so too is the very longevity and wellbeing of an army. An army that does not have the empathy, understanding and moral support of its political masters and the mechanisms of government will struggle to endure. An army that does not have the empathy, understanding and moral support of its sister-services and the Defence leadership structure will struggle to thrive. An army that does not have the empathy, understanding and moral support of its national population will struggle not only to prosper, but also to recruit. To all of these three elements a wise army will provide a steady flow of explanation and insight to ensure that each, in their own way, continues to contribute constructively to the foundations of the institution upon which, whether they understand it or not, they owe their ultimate ability to go about their daily lives untroubled by fear and threat. In as much as an army can have a soul, its deepest foundations can thus be found in its relationship with those that it serves in fulfilling Adam Smith’s first duty to a nation – the un-negotiable provision of security to its people.²

²*“The first duty of the Sovereign, that of protecting the society from violence and invasion of other independent societies...”; Adam Smith; Wealth of Nations; Book V, Chapter 1, Part 1, opening line.*

IS THE ARMY AN ORGANISATION OR INSTITUTION? IT IS BOTH. IT IS NEITHER. IT DEPENDS.

Professor Jonathan Trevor

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The Centre for Historical Analysis and Conflict Research (CHACR) recently hosted a lively debate at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. A mostly willing victim, your author was volunteered to propose the motion ‘Armies are, first and foremost, organisations, and do not need to be institutions in order to be successful’. If I recall correctly, the motion was lost by a mere 35/6. There are three possible explanations for such a humbling result.

First, your author may be a terrible debater, simply. Second, the opposition team may have been considerably better at making their argument. Third, the voting audience, including many serving senior officers, views the British Army as more than an organisation – at least in the way we might think about other organisations, such as companies – and wishes to preserve it as an institution as a whole or in part to ensure it can continue to defend the nation, as it has done for centuries.

All three explanations are perfectly plausible, of course. But the final explanation merits further consideration. Is the Army an organisation or an institution? What is the difference between the two, and why does it matter? And what are the implications for leadership, capability and performance?

What is the difference between an organisation and an institution?

The terms ‘organisation’ and ‘institution’ are often used interchangeably. This is unhelpful. There are important differences between the two, both conceptually and practically. An organisation is defined as a group of people acting together to achieve a common purpose. Companies, charities, and governmental departments, whether large or small, domestic or international, simple or complex, all conform to this definition.

The notion of an institution is harder to define. An institution can refer to an established organisation (a university or a company, for example), an accepted social practice or culture (the rule of law, for example), or a system of rules for social organisation (capitalism, for example).¹ Some commentators associate institutions with the pursuit of a particular cause, which is primarily of a public character, as opposed to the pursuit of profit.

Organisations and established institutions share common features. Both are socially constructed entities – they do not occur naturally, perhaps to state the obvious. They are subjective ideas that exist solely because people collectively accept them.² Put more simply; an army exists only because

people believe that it does. Both require others outside of themselves to value and believe in their existence if they are to be viable and sustainable.

Similarly, both are formal in nature. They require resources to function, structures to organise those resources appropriately, and coordination to ensure intentions lead to action. Both can possess symbols (think logos, costume), cultures (think values and behaviour – which can often seem eccentric to the uninitiated), traditions, rituals, and customs. All of these can be appreciable to those within and without but also taken for granted, which does not make them any less influential over behaviour.

But there are differences too. The most important is that, conceptually at least, organisations, such as companies, exist to fulfil their purpose and only their purpose. They are created to fulfil a specific purpose and maintained only for as long as that purpose is deemed desirable or necessary. There is a stated end (the common purpose) to which all other things, including their planning, people, culture, structure, and resources, are a means. As the sociologist Maximilian Weber might have put it, organisations are – or should always try to be – a rational means to a rational end. Nothing more, nothing less. An effective organisation is one in which ends and means align closely. To be high performing, organisations must be fit for purpose. All else is a distraction or inefficient activity.

Institutions, on the other hand, can be an end in themselves. Their *raison d’être* can be to exist, simply. They exist to exist, or their existence is not easily explained or explainable, and no further justification is needed. Or perhaps they exist because they always have, or have at least for a very long time, whether it serves a purpose or not. In other words, institutions can be and are maintained for non-rational reasons. In extreme cases, they do not have to make sense. Why do the clergy continue to wear clerical garb? Why do academics on formal occasions? Possibly it is for the same reason that soldiers wear dress uniforms.

Institutions, in the sense that they are being discussed here, do not need to be efficient in ways that organisations should be. They do not need to defend their existence or even explain it. It is not to say that institutions are inherently self-serving. Often, they are quite the opposite, many being of a public character, as previously noted. But being fit for purpose is not always high on the agenda. Why should it be?

Why does it matter?

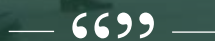
Drawing a meaningful distinction between an organisation and an institution is essential because both have benefits and drawbacks. Setting aside the issue of implementation, which is either done well or poorly, organisations are technically the most efficient form of organising work. In theory, the work organisation is highly focused, with clear priorities and precise allocation of resources to achieve its stated ends. Fitness is the order of the day, always. But a relentless focus on utility does not necessarily lend itself to longevity. For sure, there are long-lasting companies and beloved brands. But many companies do not survive shocks, whether in the form of competitive

¹Audi, R. (1995). *The Cambridge dictionary of philosophy*.

²Trevor, J. (2022). *Re: Align: A Leadership Blueprint for Overcoming Disruption and Improving Performance*. Bloomsbury Publishing



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The British Army is part of the nation's cultural tapestry, with an intertwined history and co-dependent legacies

threats, diminishing market opportunity, fickle customers, disruptive technologies or, still fresh in the memory, a global health crisis.

An organisation can and should fail if its purpose – its *raison d'être* – is not valued sufficiently by others outside of itself or the quality of the execution of its purpose is sufficiently poor to render it uncompetitive and prone to market de-selection. Moreover, organisations, especially companies, rarely reflect the wider values of society but those of their primary stakeholder, shareholders. This notion has been challenged recently, and the rise of the 'B-Corp' is one such example, i.e., businesses certified based on their environmental and social performance. There is a renewed focus on the purpose of business in society and a movement to promote a positive contribution beyond or even set apart from profit-making. But still, for now, and perhaps always, shareholders take primacy.

These factors may seem problematic for an army. An army cannot afford to ever go out of business, so to speak, or be unavailable even for a moment. Suspended service or withdrawing services due to a lack of profitability or incentive is not an option. Longevity, reliability, and versatility to counter known and new threats are paramount. And public consideration in the form of national defence is the cornerstone of the identity of an army. The British Army is part of the nation's cultural tapestry, with an intertwined history and co-dependent legacies.

On the other hand, the perennial risks for any institution are purposelessness and wastefulness. Established institutions can easily become overly self-referential, no matter how well-intentioned their people might be. They become the object of their own fascination, to be maintained at all costs. Over time they can become increasingly decoupled from

the interests of those outside of themselves. Folk within can become 'institutionalised', a situation in which taken-for-granted assumptions supplant individual self-awareness and the exercise of reason over ritual. Institutions (and organisations, too, to be fair) are prone to groupthink; their leaders collectively become progressively incapable of critical thinking, detached from external events or the impetus to change in step with the changing environment. Most critically, many institutions do not face the prospect of direct competition and the discipline it imposes.

But armies do face competition – the ultimate competition, not for market share but for competing (or even conflicting) national interests, values, security and preserving a desired way of life. These are existential matters, and the consequences are literally life and death. An army must be organisationally fit for the fight – fit for its purpose. Means and ends must align organisationally if it is to compete against adversaries and win. And it must have a clear and meaningful purpose that is not self-regarding. Otherwise, why the expense to the taxpayer? Or why structure the Army in the way that we do? Or why ask our best and bravest to be prepared to pay the ultimate sacrifice in its name? For what purpose? Why?

Which is the Army?

So, is the British Army an organisation or an institution? The not-so-simple answer is that it is neither. It is both. It depends. The landslide result and ensuing discussion at the 'Sandhurst debate', as I am choosing to call it, revealed important insights about how the Army thinks of itself. The first is discomfort with viewing the Army in purely utilitarian terms. The Army is not considered an organisation in the pure sense. At the same time, the Army exists for a stated purpose, and it is accountable to various stakeholders, including the public. It cannot exist purely for its own sake.

For these reasons and more, I would argue that the Army is simultaneously both an organisation and an institution. More helpfully, we can say perhaps that some elements of the Army are organisational by nature, and some are institutional. If true, this gives the Army a rare hybrid status, but it is not wholly unique.

Consider the comparable example of my employer, the University of Oxford (which applies equally to the ‘other’ place, another of the UK’s three collegiate-style universities, the other being Durham). Oxford is ancient (over 900 years and counting) and immensely rich in history, tradition, and ritual. The principal activities of the university are research and education, both of which take different forms across a wide range of subjects but are structured and implemented systematically to ensure consistently high standards. The formal university structure is one of levels – the university level (sometimes referred to as ‘Central’, which sounds Orwellian), the divisional level (such as the Division of Social Sciences), the department level (such as the Department of Philosophy, Medicine, Engineering, and even humble business schools) and sub-departmental in the form of specialist subject groups organised for co-ordinating teaching. All these elements are primarily organisational, performing a purpose

and competing against peers nationally and internationally in influential rankings.

Adjacent to the formal university structure is the collegiate structure, consisting of 38 colleges of various shapes, sizes, ages and wealth. Each college is a self-governing independent entity with its own identity, culture, statutes, ordinances, and democratic leadership in the form of a Governing Body of Fellows (for which read academics). All colleges house students in a conducive social and pastoral environment and provide small-group tuition to undergraduates to supplement their en masse departmental lectures. Whilst the formal and collegiate structures are part and parcel of Oxford, students arguably identify emotionally much more closely with their colleges than their departments. They compete in intercollegiate sports, not departmental. They wear college clothing, scarves and other assorted ‘merch’, not departmental equivalents. When meeting for the first time, the inevitable and immediate question for and from alumni is, “which college did you attend?”. The focus of their often-fierce loyalty is their college, to the extent that it can seem tribal.

The interesting question is, would one design a university similarly if doing so from scratch? Why have colleges at all?

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Would one design a university similarly if doing so from scratch? Why have colleges at all? Most universities do not. What purpose do they serve beyond historical interest or being the inspiration for Hogwarts? Why the inherently wasteful dual structure? Such questions are good ones and worthy of consideration frequently. But in practice, they are inconceivable because to remove colleges would be to change forever the institutional fabric, identity, and collegiality of the University, for which I suspect there is minimal appetite.



Most universities do not. What purpose do they serve beyond historical interest or being the inspiration for Hogwarts? Why the inherently wasteful dual structure? Such questions are good ones and worthy of consideration frequently. But in practice, they are inconceivable because to remove colleges would be to change forever the institutional fabric, identity, and collegiality of the University, for which I suspect there is minimal appetite.

Beyond merely an appeal to nostalgia, the collegiate system has a functional aspect, and it relates to unspecified capability. The University's hybrid organisational and institutional structure enables it to meet unforeseen (and perhaps unforeseeable) emergent threats and opportunities over the long term. It is incredibly resilient, having successfully weathered centuries of storms, from the Reformation to Covid. It enjoys fierce pride and loyalty both inside and outside. It is resource-rich, with abundant valuable human capital, and whilst not always optimised in the ways that a company might be (you can't often plan precisely for innovation, for instance), it can produce breakthrough insights and applications at pace when needed. One such example is the world-changing Oxford-Astra Zeneca Covid-19 vaccine pioneered in the hour of need by Professor Dame Sarah

Gilbert and her remarkable team on the ChAdOx1 nCoV-19 project at the Nuffield Department of Medicine.

Conclusion

In my simplistic understanding, I equate the Army's regimental structure with Oxford's collegiate structure. The Army, like Oxford, has elements which are organisational and institutional — formal (which is to say rational) and ceremonial (which is to say ritualistic). It is more potent as a result and more resilient over the long term, which would likely not be possible if managed in purely utilitarian ways. At the same time, the Army has a clearly identifiable organisational purpose: "To protect the United Kingdom by being ready to fight and win wars on land." It must be fit for that purpose and capable of evolving with the times, either incrementally or radically, as required. Achieving and maintaining a productive balance between the organisational and the institutional should be a priority for the Army's leadership.

As both, neither and variously an organisation and an institution — and ideally a hybrid of the best of both sets of qualities — the British Army is a vital, rare, and precious national asset. Long may it continue. God forbid that it cannot.



IRONSIDE

*Col Tom Robinson
Home Command*

In March 2023, Commander Home Command launched Project Ironside, a campaign to optimise the Army's foundation, including its governance and structures, to deliver greater effectiveness, productivity and alignment. This article seeks to explain what we mean by the Army's foundation, why reviewing it was vital, the philosophy and design principles that underpin the review, and then highlight some of the opportunities that we are planning to pursue.

The Army's foundation is the platform from which the Field Army is enabled and deploys. It is largely but not exclusively within Home Command, which delivers what is sometimes termed 'the firm-base', including recruiting, basic training, some role-specific training, real life support to our barracks and stations and career management through the Army Personnel Centre. It supports our families and communities, and through the Arms and Services preserves the heritage

of our Regimental system that builds a pride in belonging, comradeship and military service. Regional Command is probably unique in Defence for its presence across the UK, through which it provides the command-and-control spine for Homeland Resilience.

As successive Defence and Army Reviews have sought to release resources for investment into priority areas, they have rightly prioritised the 'front line' rather than the 'back office'. In that vein the *2021 Integrated Review* sought to reduce the Institutional Foundation by 19 per cent of its regular workforce in addition to a *Defence Spending Review* reduction of 12.5 per cent Civil Service workforce cost. Those savings have largely been delivered and, as the demands of the smaller field force on the foundation have also reduced, our outputs have broadly been maintained at a similar standard.

However, the end of this process has left us with two additional outcomes. We've reduced the force to levels that deliver 'business as usual' and little more and, as a result, we've eroded the capacity to deliver change and



improvement. Another round of incremental reductions would risk overloading the remaining workforce and increasing outflow across all workforce types, or leaving a foundation that increasingly cannot meet both society's and the Army's expectations.

We also need to recognise those elements of the Army that are institutional. It is easy to observe that having regular trained soldiers based in London delivering public duties isn't a particularly cost effective use of our workforce. But we need to recognise that the rituals of the Changing of the Guard, the King's Birthday Parade, and the State Opening of Parliament are all manifestations of the Army's role within our constitution. Equally, Royal Military Academy Sandhurst plays a key role in the cementing of our Army with the armies and the heads of states of some of our closest allies and is therefore expected to demonstrate the very highest of standards and perform functions beyond that of 'just' an officer training academy. The Corps Colonels own the intangible relationships between the serving soldier and the veteran which both generate the sense of belonging from attestation to grave. There are aspects of the foundation which need to be protected if we

are to maintain the long-term health of the institution.

By stating that there are aspects that need to be protected and highlighting some of the difficulties we face to deliver further savings, I am emphatically not arguing that the Army should not rebalance more of its resources into the Field Force. Instead we must seek to deliver the foundation with as little money and regular workforce as is necessary to produce the required standards. To do this, we need to recognise that more fundamental change is needed if we are to release the resources we require in the Field Force to deliver Future Soldier: Next Steps. With the exception of some rank de-enrichment, our structures and processes within the foundation are broadly unchanged since I joined over 20 years ago and would be recognisable to someone who joined 20 years prior to that. Are they fit for the next 20 years? Almost certainly not.

Our approach is therefore to recognise that whilst the outputs of the Army Foundation are non-discretionary and enduring (for instance, we are always going to need to train recruits) there is choice in how these outputs are delivered. And as all of these outputs are non-discretionary and will need to endure throughout any change, change initiatives will need to be



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driven by the leadership responsible for the output to manage risks during implementation. The same leadership and the staff within their operations are also those who understand the detail of how their functions work and will be best placed to identify the areas of duplication and friction and recommend the solutions we seek to identify. So, for these reasons I would argue a top-down approach is unlikely to work; instead the higher headquarters should be holding them to account for delivering change and enabling it through the allocation of pinch-point capabilities such as commercial expertise and money. Its role is to enable and accelerate these changes, rather than try to deliver them itself.

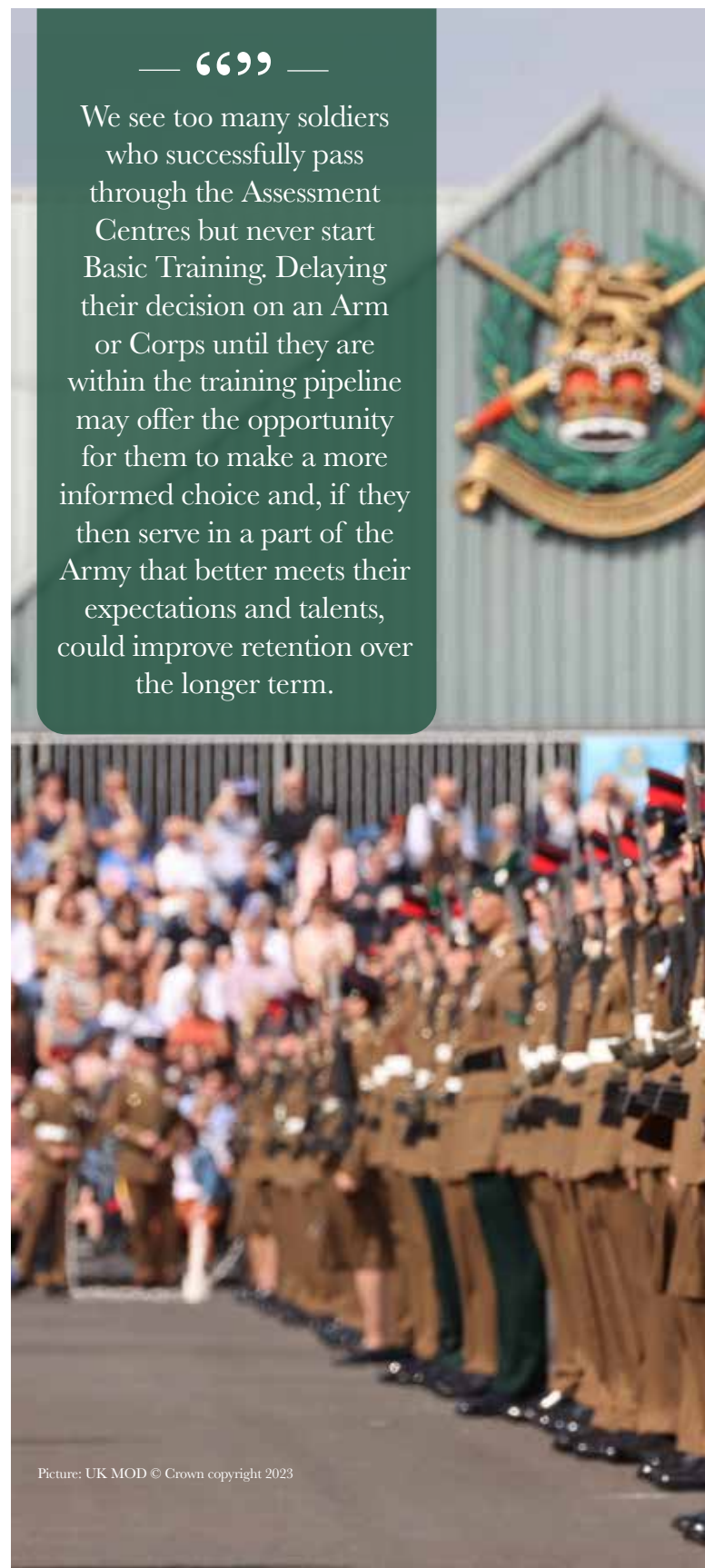
It is legitimate to question why, if bottom up change is genuinely the solution to optimise the Army's foundation, it has not changed and modernised already. Our initial diagnosis indicates that there is a lack of alignment of accountability, authority, responsibility and resources. This leaves the commander responsible for delivering the operation without the tools they need to improve it. For example, our white fleet contract was administered by Regional Command, the resources and the responsibility for it were spread across the Army. By aligning these under GOC Regional Command, accessing detailed usage data, and then reducing the fleet size, the Army will be able to save around £80 million over the next ten years with no impact on the user. Re-examining how we control access to military barracks and stations is also developing into a promising opportunity to deliver the same, if not better, performance for less cost. If we can get the right levers at the right level, we can deliver significant change and efficiency.

Releasing money and regular workforce are not the only goals of Ironside. We are also seeking to increase performance to better meet modern expectations. The Army Personnel Centre's career management portal is a good example of where information has been put into the hands of the user, rather than being released periodically by the service provider. It has also removed the requirement for multiple emails, paper-based records and enables a far more modern service. Adoption of Castle's skills-based boarding also offers the opportunity to use digitally-assisted boarding, better managing our people's expectations and getting the right person into the right job more often.

Looking at the overall construct of our initial training pipeline indicates that it is designed around the needs of the schools and may not meet the needs of the students. We offer basic training start dates to recruits based around when their trade training starts. For some courses that run only twice a year, this may not be until six months after a recruit applies to join. We are already trialling options to allow recruits to start basic training at a date that suits them, and then deliver modular training around the fixed technical training to ensure their time is used productively throughout. This should address some of the drop out rates in new recruits – we see too many soldiers who successfully pass through the Assessment Centres but never start Basic Training. Initial survey data indicates that up to 25 per cent of recruits want to join the Army in general, but are forced to choose a specific job role before starting training. Delaying their decision on an Arm or Corps until they are within the training pipeline may offer the opportunity for them to make a more informed choice and, if they then serve in a part of the Army that better meets their

expectations and talents, could improve retention over the longer term.

We will explore greater use of commercial partnerships to bring in expertise to our operations. Whilst there are areas of our organisation that no one will understand better than us, there are also areas where we have already established commercial partnerships to leverage the best of civilian business practice to improve delivery. The Holdfast contract for Royal Engineer training is one example, or Pearson supporting the delivery of apprenticeships. The Royal Navy's Project Selbourne offers an example of how these



Picture: UK MOD © Crown copyright 2023

initiatives could be broadened out still further. This contract is delivering all Royal Navy individual training, from basic training through to submarine engineers through a single 12 year-long contract working across 16 different sites. Training is delivered by a mixture of military and civilian staff, but within an end-to-end training service contract. This successful partnership offers a clear example of how we could deliver betterment, release regular personnel and, potentially, release funding to invest elsewhere.

Finally, to achieve these objectives, the Headquarters of Home Command will also need to change. It will need

to control and allocate the key resources for change, such as digitalisation and commercial expertise, and contain a programme office to ensure that we are progressing against a five-year campaign plan. Through this combination of short-term efficiency projects, realigning the form of Home Command to better match its functions and engaging appropriate expertise from commercial partners we can optimise the Army's foundation. Through Ironside it will better meet the modern expectations, use less military workforce and money, deliver even better performance and, most important of all, deliver a foundation fit for the more lethal, more agile Army of the 2030s.



ETRE ET DURER

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Non-resident*

‘Etre et Durer’, the famous motto of the 3rd Marine Parachute Infantry of the French Army (3e Régiment de Parachutistes d’Infanterie de Marine), translates literally as ‘exist and endure’ and has been adopted as the short-hand to describe the effect desired under a new structure from the French Army’s Personnel directorate – which will include its lead for training – and the 3* headquarters charged with equipment maintenance to produce institutional resilience.

It is perhaps no coincidence that the maxim has been adopted in a wider Army context given the Chef d’Etat-Major de l’armée de Terre, Général d’armée Pierre Schill, spent his formative years as a platoon commander with 3e Régiment serving in Chad, Somalia and the former Yugoslavia. But ‘Etre et Durer’ will also serve as a useful strapline that serves to remind policy-makers of the place of the French Army in national life, a term drawing heavily on the nation’s history.

‘Etre et Durer’ sits alongside ‘Protect’, a requirement of French territories; ‘Operate’, to be delivered by its Field Army; and ‘Innovate’, a demand to be met by its new 3* doctrine and future force development organisation. To French readers with a modicum of understanding of French military history, ‘Etre et Durer’ is a somewhat emotive label that gets at the heart of the reason for the nation having an army. France’s modern history has been one of survival, for which it needs sizeable and capable land forces. France was the first Western country in modern times to link military service with citizenship during the years of the post-revolutionary wars, a way of life that endured in different forms into the late 20th century and, to an extent, is still in existence today with Service National Universel. However, it is broadly accepted that this scheme is to achieve a quite different end of encouraging good citizenship rather than to ensure national survival (although universal military service was adopted in 1889 for more than simply military reasons and to create a sense of patriotism).

But history casts a long shadow in France. The trauma of the Franco-Prussian War was deep and long-lasting and forged the perspectives and outlook of General de Gaulle, whose legacy can be seen today in particular in the premium placed by France on its ability to act independently on the global stage. The sense of military service (particularly in the Army) being synonymous with national survival in France, this being to a great degree a product of national experience, endures in a way that is arguably quite distinct, although President George W Bush certainly succeeded in considerably shifting US public opinion in this direction in the wake of the attacks on American soil in September 2001. At its heart, this comes down to the purpose of an army on the continental European land mass. In contrast, the British Army, which historically has played second fiddle to its maritime component because of the country’s geography, has maintained an army with a more expeditionary outlook reliant on lighter, more agile

and deployable forces; forces that can be deployed for discretionary, rather than non-discretionary, ends. The British Army continues to be an important tool of Britain’s influence overseas, something that will endure according to the Integrated Review and its recent refresh. The result, however, is that the line between the UK’s land forces and national survival might be less clearly delineated.

The effect on French national decision-making of the French Army being synonymous with the nation’s survival is that to weaken the Army is to weaken France’s ‘Etre et Durer’. The use of the motto in the context of the French Army’s institutional resilience therefore serves as a reminder to policy makers and decision makers of the centrality of the French Army to national life and existence: institutional resilience is inseparable from national resilience. Cuts to the Army are therefore directly to the country’s peril. This has its foundations in the concept of the citizen-soldier that emerged during the post-revolutionary years, which made the Army synonymous with the nation. The Army was that of the nation and no longer that of the king, placing the Army intrinsically at the heart of French national life. The tumult of the French Revolution gave birth to almost every aspect of modern France, but there are few aspects as marked by the legacy of the Revolution as the modern French Army and its being synonymous with national survival.

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The French Army anchors its roots in a Christian culture that places sacrifice as the foremost value of humanity

This centrality of the role of the military in the existence of the nation (its ‘Etre et Durer’) is perhaps why President Macron could pledge in the 2017 election campaign to re-introduce a form of general national service: Service National Universel. This has developed into a nationwide voluntary scheme for 16- to 25-year-olds in which the Army plays a central role. While its voluntary nature means that it is somewhat watered down from the President’s initial ambition of it being mandatory and while the scheme has proved somewhat controversial, it is testimony to the values that the French Army is regarded as representing. In a similar way to how an inculcation of a national identity and the reinvigoration of martial virtues proved to be useful by-products of universal conscription following its introduction in 1889, French policy makers seek in many ways to achieve the same ends with the modern Service National Universel. Undoubtedly, it is a French solution as unique as the country’s history to the general perception in the West of there being a decline in the common traditional values that bind a nation. Importantly however, it again points to the central role of the Army in the country’s identity.

The patriotism and martial values of the French Army stand out against a backdrop of a perceived decline in the West of commonly held traditional values and culture. While the extent to which the Army’s values are at odds with those of modern French society has in itself been recognised as posing a recruiting and retention challenge, the values embodied within the Army have been leveraged by the President in pursuit of Service National Universel. But these values spread beyond the soldier and to the family of the soldier as well. In the daily life of French soldiers and their families, there is

**Le Rêve is a painting
by Édouard Detaille
created in 1888**



Image by PublicDomainPictures from Pixabay

a tendency towards an acceptance of quiet self-sacrifice for the good of the Army, and therefore France. To suggest to a British soldier that incurring a weekend's duty at short notice is for the good of the UK would invariably give rise to a wry smile, but amongst French soldiers, and particularly their officer corps, the perspective appears to be different. Perhaps of more consequence, families that might be considered large – of six or more children – are surprisingly common within the French Army (particularly amongst the officer corps). This is a trend that has its roots in the revolutionary era when the Army required mass. To achieve this, inducements, many of which endure to a degree to this day, were introduced to encourage large families that would furnish the Army with citizen-soldiers in the future.

Importantly the French Army also anchors its roots in a Christian culture that places sacrifice as the foremost value of humanity. The soldiers of Christianity bequeathed to those of the Empire, and then of the Republic, an idea that contemporary conflicts have exacerbated: those who were proud to die for God and for the king have been succeeded by those who place their honour in the ultimate sacrifice for their country.

The former had banners and flags as rallying signs, the latter have standards and bands, the materialisation of a heritage which, working in the minds of the people, transforms the individual into a group and death into a freely consented soldier's obligation. This collective and individual soul instils meaning into a profession where sacrifice is part of the contractual equation.

This is what military ceremonial reminds the French Army of, from bands to corps distinctions; and this is why the institutional

foundation of the French Army cannot be sacrificed on the altar of efficiency. The Legion's kepi, the blue uniform of the Chasseurs, the anchor of the Marine troops must be maintained in order to be magnified at the decisive moment.

Doing without them would be like losing one's soul for an Army that is the heir of a military history consubstantial with that of its country. By linking the man-at-arms to a warrior spirit that exceeds and obliges him, inspires him and opens up unsuspected horizons in the most daring manoeuvres surpasses any benefits of short-term efficiency. Encouraging a soldier to give the best of himself in difficult times is a challenge for any army.

This is not implicit and it is precisely here that the artefacts that transcend the uncertainty of destiny, unite man's fragility and his ultimate will and encourage his sense of sacrifice are imposed on the soldier and his leaders.

There are many tangibles involved in building an army but to strengthen its institutional foundation requires an appreciation and understanding of the countless intangibles of the moral component. In summary, 'Etre et Durer' gives a clear nod towards the central role of the French Army in national life. This makes it more than a motto that captures purely the institutional resilience of the French Army and instead serves as a shorthand for the central role of the French Army in national life, which is in turn a product of the revolutionary period and the threats to the nation that are a consequence of Metropolitan France's situation on the European landmass. It is for this reason that the use of the motto, in a climate of continuous justification for the Army's share of the defence budget, is a savvy reminder to policy-makers of why France needs an Army: for the survival of the nation.

THE GERMAN ARMY AND ITS INSTITUTIONAL FOUNDATIONS

*Professor Matthias Strohn,
Head of Historical Analysis, CHACR*

*“The Army is more than a few organigrams or modules.
It is a living organism which lives our values.”¹*
– Major General Christian Trull

Some years ago, I met the top commander of a major NATO country. When I was introduced to him he said: “German Army, I see. The Bundeswehr is not the Wehrmacht. It is no good.” A lot has been written recently about Germany and its military culture – or its non-existence, because the conflict in Ukraine forced Germany to “wake up in a different world”,

¹[youtube.com/watch?v=faAeyTYpHTw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=faAeyTYpHTw) (accessed 08/06/2023)

²See, for instance, Jacob Ross, ‘Taugen Staatsbürger in Uniform als Helden’, in *Loyal. Das Magazin für Sicherheitspolitik*, 7/8 2023, pp. 28-31.

as the foreign secretary Baerbock stated on 24 February 2022. After the Cold War, Germany got comfortable by being ‘surrounded by friends’ for the first time in its history, as the slogan ran. As a consequence, the defence budget was slashed from an average of approximately 3.5 per cent during the Cold War (with a peak of more than five per cent in the early 1960s) to far less than the two per cent that NATO calls for. This has created much criticism. To add insult to injury, in early 2021 the former German defence minister Christine Lambrecht hailed the delivery of 5,000 combat helmets to Ukraine as significant help for the invaded country. National and international experts have claimed that Germany lacks a military culture and the Germans have lost the understanding of using military violence as a means of policy.² And yet, Germany’s recent support to Ukraine, from humanitarian aid to weapons delivery, has been remarkable. According to the Kiel Institute for the World Economy, Germany currently ranks third globally for total commitments to Ukraine, and second in humanitarian and military support.³ How can



all this be explained and how can one make sense of this Janus-faced appearance of German politics and, within this, its military? What does all this mean for the institutional foundations of the German military? These are the questions that this short article seeks to answer. Books on this topic fill libraries and therefore it is only possible to highlight some of the main points and arguments. At present, there exists an unhealthy tendency in many quarters, academic and otherwise, to disregard history as a handrail to understand the modern world. And yet to history we must return if we wish to make sense of Germany and its army (and, indeed, all other nations acting in the international arena).⁴

For two centuries, the German, or to be precise, the Prussian Army had been regarded as the most important and successful institution in a state that needed a powerful army to act as a deterrent and a means of politics. The survival of Prussia as a state and its rise to one of the top players in the European pentarchy during the reign of Frederick the Great (1740-1786) was owed predominately to the country's army. Many of the traditions that identified the German Army until 1945 can be traced back to the 'old Fritz' as the king became known. And yet, in 1806 the Prussian army suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of Napoleon's armies, because the Prussians

had rested on their laurels and had become ossified in many aspects. As a consequence, the army was no match for the soldiers who followed the cry of *liberté, égalité* and *fraternité*. In the following years, the Prussian Army underwent drastic reforms. These reforms still resonate with the German Army today, although it is fair to say that the direct link is often not too obvious for those in uniform that are not history buffs. The most important aspect of these reforms was the linking of the people, the state and the army into one body. To the observant reader this might sound suspiciously like the Clausewitzian triangle, which has tortured generations of British Army officers at places such as the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. Clausewitz was part of the group of reformers that saw the need for change if the Prussian Army, and thus the state, was to rise again after the humiliation at the hands of the French. The most pertinent expression of the reforms was the introduction of general conscription, which

³ifw-kiel.de/topics/war-against-ukraine/ukraine-support-tracker/ (accessed 08/07/2023).

⁴For an in-depth discussion of the importance of history see, Matthias Strohn, ed., *The Long Shadow of World War Two. The Legacy of the War and its Impact on Political and Military Thinking Since 1945*, Oxford 2021. This book was produced as part of a CHACR book series.





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While in some countries swearing this oath [of allegiance] has the feel of a bureaucratic act, in Germany it is a highlight for every recruit

would remain the reality of the German militaries until 2011, when ‘out of area’ deployments and the general political situation in Europe seemed to suggest that a fully professional Bundeswehr would be a good idea. It is interesting to note that since the invasion of Ukraine the voices are getting louder in Germany which call for a return to conscription, but this debate is still in its infancy.

One of the key reformers after 1806 was Gerhard von Scharnhorst and it was no coincidence that the new German military, the Bundeswehr, was officially founded on 12 November 1955, Scharnhorst’s 200th birthday.⁵ The idea was to link the new military to the ideas of the Prussian reformers and to show a new spirit of the Bundeswehr: supposed to be gone was the mindless obedience, which allegedly had characterised the German military in the times of the world wars. The new Bundeswehr should consist of ‘citizens in uniform’, who would be full and equal members of both the military and civilian worlds.⁶ This meant, for instance, that for the first time in history German military personnel were

⁵On the founding of the Bundeswehr, see Agilof Kesselring and Thorsten Loch, *Aufstellung der Bundeswehr*, kas.de/de/web/geschichte-der-cdu/kalender/detail/-/content/aufstellung-der-bundeswehr (accessed 01/07/2023).

⁶For the Bundeswehr’s official definition of the concept, see ‘Das Konzept der Inneren Führung’, bmvg.de/de/themen/verteidigung/innere-fuehrung/das-konzept (accessed 29/05/2023).

⁷For the development of the oath within the German armed forces, see *Militärhistorisches Forschungsamt, ed., Symbole und Zeremoniell in den deutschen Streitkräften vom 18. bis zum 20. Jahrhundert*, Herford 1991, pp. 86-106.

⁸An oath taking ceremony is conducted in Berlin every 20 July. To get an impression of the importance that is attached to this ceremony, the reader could watch, for instance, the following video: youtube.com/watch?v=za5E3A9E0HM (accessed 10/06/2023).

given the active right to vote. A new ‘social contract’ was drawn up which should characterise the relationship between the Bundeswehr and society and also within the Bundeswehr itself. The so-called ‘Innere Führung’ (literally meaning inner leadership) stressed the need to educate military personnel as well as train them. Only a well-educated member of the Bundeswehr, who understood and accepted the new realities of democracy and its values would, so the argument runs, be an effective defender of the Federal Republic.

Naturally, the horrors of the Second World War and the atrocities committed in Germany’s name have left a scar on the nation, its people and also its military. Perhaps the clearest expression of this can be found in the oath of allegiance. While in some countries swearing this oath has the feel of a bureaucratic act, in Germany it is a highlight for every recruit. The reason is simple. The ceremony forges the bond between the individual in uniform and the state and the people. This is represented in the wording of the oath. “I swear to loyally serve the Federal Republic of Germany and to bravely defend the right and the freedom of the German people.” The words were chosen as a clear juxtaposition to the oath of the Third Reich, which demanded obedience unto death to Adolf Hitler.⁷ It should therefore not come as a surprise that the putsch of 20th July 1944 forms the second pillar of tradition in the Bundeswehr. On this day, individuals placed the right and the freedom of the people above their oath to an individual.⁸ The original fear that the Bundeswehr could develop into a ‘state within a state’, as its forbear organisation, the Reichswehr, had allegedly done, also meant that the constitution, or basic law (‘Grundgesetz’) ensured that the military has been tightly controlled by parliament. For the international reader the most important aspect is probably the



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When a German is told that the Bundeswehr is not the Wehrmacht, more likely than not he or she would reply ‘and thank god for that’

parliament’s prerogative to decide on all deployments of the Bundeswehr. In fact, in German the Bundeswehr has been called the military of parliament (‘Parlamentsarmee’). While the initial dark clouds of history have passed in this respect, this concept is now seen as a positive feature, one which ensures a close link between society and its military. It should be noted, however, that there also negative aspects of this. A very close link to the political elite has more than once resulted in the armed forces becoming a hotbed of political agendas and personal political ambition. Perhaps the best example of this was the then defence minister Ursula von der Leyen, who attested publicly in 2017 that “the Bundeswehr has an attitude problem and there are clearly leadership weaknesses at several levels”. This resulted in a loss of trust of the armed forces in their leadership – both political and military, because it was felt, rightly or wrongly, that the senior commanders did not do enough to defend their subordinates.

The third and final pillar of tradition is the history of the Bundeswehr since 1955. In recent years, a there has been special emphasis on the ‘out of area’ deployments, such as in the Balkans and in Afghanistan. Since the early 1990s, more than 500,000 military personnel have participated in deployments outside of Germany, both within NATO countries and further afield.⁹ These deployments were a fundamental game changer for a Bundeswehr that had been designed for a war in continental Europe. Following the concept of ‘Innere Führung’ the heated debates about these deployments in politics and society did not stop at the barrack gates. Was it morally right for the German military to deploy outside of its own borders considering that it had brought death and devastation to Europe in the Second World War? How would German society, which had also seen a

hecatomb of killed soldiers and civilians, react to this? How to adapt the culture of a military that mainly saw itself as a means of deterrence to that of a force in combat? These were difficult questions for the military and it took the experience of fighting and death, in particular in Afghanistan, to change the mindset in wide parts of the military. 59 members of the Bundeswehr died in Afghanistan, of which 37 were killed in action.¹⁰ Having said this, it should not remain unmentioned that, because of Germany’s history, large parts of German society feel uneasy about all things military, including the Bundeswehr. This also explains the initially hesitant support of Ukraine.

The organisation of the Bundeswehr and its structure has seen many changes over the years, similar to other countries’ armed forces. After unification in 1990, the German Army could field 14 divisions, by 2023, only three have remained. The Ukraine war has triggered a return to the preparation of conventional, large-scale operations at home and on NATO territory. Despite this, the institutional foundations outlined above have remained. The German approach to all things military is not an easy one, and this approach can only be understood if the military’s institutional and historical framework are taken into consideration. So, when a German is told that the Bundeswehr is not the Wehrmacht, more likely than not he or she would reply, ‘and thank god for that’, and it is the institutional framework, not organigrams and modules, which provides the foundation of the German Army’s fighting power.

⁹[bundeswehr.de/de/einsaetze-bundeswehr](https://www.bundeswehr.de/de/einsaetze-bundeswehr) (accessed 15/06/2023).

¹⁰[bundeswehr.de/de/ueber-die-bundeswehr/gedenken-tote-bundeswehr/todesfaelle-bundeswehr](https://www.bundeswehr.de/de/ueber-die-bundeswehr/gedenken-tote-bundeswehr/todesfaelle-bundeswehr) (accessed 06/07/2023).

DHARMA: THE MORAL FOUNDATION OF MILITARY ETHOS IN INDIA

*Squadron Leader Rana T.S. Chhina,
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*"It is not big armies that win battles; it is the good ones."
—Maurice de Saxe: Mes Reveries, iv, 1732*

Director CHACR posed a seemingly simple question, but one with a surprisingly complex answer. What, he asks, would be the enduring foundational aspects of the Army, including both those essential structures and those essential aspects of the moral component of fighting power, without which the Army would simply be an organisation without roots and without longevity?

Implicit in the question is the assumption that there are normative principles which are both global and trans-historical; and which transcend the constraints of time

and space. I will accordingly examine this question as it applies to modern professional standing armies that came into existence during the 17th century, in general, and its application to India, in particular. These modern armies were subject to legal and bureaucratic authority and control to a far greater extent than their predecessors, and gave rise to the professional soldier of today.

Fighting power

Received military wisdom in professional armies agrees that the three generally accepted components of fighting power are: conceptual, physical and moral. These factors govern the ability to fight, the means to fight, and the will to fight, respectively. Combined in the right proportion, they make for the 'good' army referred to by Marshal Saxe in the prefatory maxim to this essay. Armies around



the world similarly agree with the Napoleonic injunction that gives overwhelming weightage to the moral factor – “the moral is to the physical as three is to one”. Even the venerable Sun Tzu gives primacy to the Moral Law among the five constant factors that govern the art of war.¹ It may be mentioned here that the moral is subjective, and should not be confused with morality or just cause. History provides us with ample examples of good fighting machines that functioned under a very different moral code from that which is universally accepted today. Nor does the justness of the cause have a bearing on the fighting efficacy of an army; although an army employed in acts that go against its core values will degrade in efficiency.² This presents us with a conundrum which is addressed by Field Marshal Earl Wavell, whose vast experience as a captain of war led him to believe that soldiers fight well because they have a good leader rather than because they have a good cause.³

An examination of the foundational aspects of an army must perforce seek to identify what tangible or intangible elements provide it with the permanence, longevity and resilience needed to withstand both the pressures of combat, as well as the debilitating vicissitudes of a prolonged peace. Just as the study of war reveals that warfare itself is possessed of

an enduring nature as well as an ever changing character, so too are ‘good’ armies permeated with an unchanging ethos, governed by a moral code of conduct. This, in turn, is defined by social and political values; while the material and physical elements are subject to change, as the character of society or the organisation changes with time.

An army is at best a reflection of the society that it serves. The degree to which an army displays the will to fight in war depends on the extent to which the state invests in nurturing its military culture in peace, which in turn has a direct bearing on the fighting power of its army. Motivation, leadership and the management of resources and personnel combine to generate the crucial moral element of fighting power within an army.

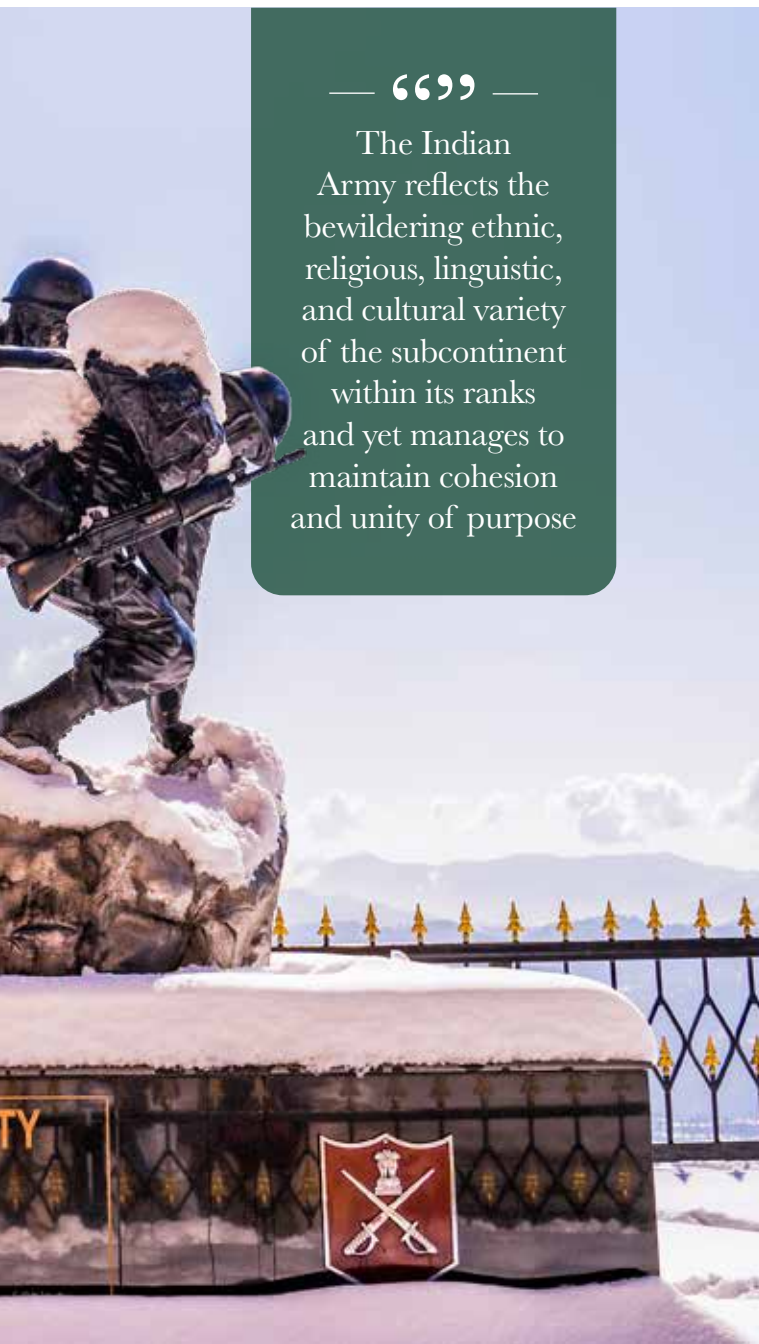
Dharma

The Indian Army is a unique institution, not just within the country, but also when compared to other armies of the world. It reflects the bewildering ethnic, religious, linguistic, and cultural variety of the subcontinent within its ranks and yet manages to maintain cohesion and unity of purpose. That it does so in the midst of an extraordinary diversity is largely due to two factors enshrined not in doctrine but ingrained in the country’s civilisational ethos. The first, Sarva Dharma Sambhava (all belief can co-exist) allows for the accommodation of diversity, growth of mutual respect, dignity, comradeship and community within the military ethos which sustains the country’s military culture. The moral principles that guide the actions of the army can be said to stem from its military ethos.

Some of these principles upon which the Indian military ethos is based emanate from indigenous traditions that have formed the basis of the soldier’s ethos in the country. Among these, the indefinable concept of Dharma perhaps best exemplifies the philosophical foundation of soldiering in India.⁴ It applies not just to the duty of a soldier towards his profession, but to the selfless performance of that duty as part of a higher covenant by which his actions will be judged in this life. It reinforces the importance of the soldier calling in the spirit of righteousness and a just cause. It also reinforces the requirement of following the rules and regulations prescribed for warfare, rare exceptions notwithstanding.⁵

The soldier’s Dharma provides the moral framework which guide his Karma or actions. Collectively, the moral foundations that the adherence to Dharma provide, are the

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¹James Clavell (ed), Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, New York: Delacorte Press, 1983.

²The very professional Pakistan Army deployed in erstwhile East Pakistan largely lost the will to fight in the Bangladesh Liberation War of Dec 1971, owing to the prolonged and unchecked use of brute force against their Bengali compatriots.

³See Field Marshal Earl Wavell, *Soldiers and Soldiering; or Epithets of War*, London: Jonathan Cape, 1953, pp. 121-122, for an amplification.

⁴The great epic Mahabharata expands upon the all-encompassing nature of the concept: “They call it Dharma since it is Dharma that upholds people. That which upholds the created universe, supports it and sustains it, without which the universe just falls apart, is Dharma. Dharma sustains and maintains the social, moral, political and economic order.” Col Vikas Gupta, ‘Doctrinal Thoughts – Perspectives from the Ancient Indian Texts’, in ‘Indian Cultural Study Forum, College of Defence Management: Strategic Thinking and Leadership Through the Prism of Ancient Indian Texts’, Mar 2022, p. 24.

⁵I am grateful to Col Vivek Chadha (Retd) for his inputs on the concept of Dharma as it relates to soldiering

Character as Aristotle taught, is a habit, the daily choice of right instead of wrong is a moral quality which grows to maturity in peace and is not suddenly developed on the outbreak of war

Picture: Mitul Gajera/unsplash



essential building blocks that create the edifice of the army as an institution rooted in the nation’s military ethos and culture.

Essential structure

However, all of this takes time. The crucial element in the development and maintenance of fighting power by a state is the institutionalisation of its military culture. The battle-winning quality of morale is not developed overnight. It’s foundations are painstakingly built up over years. In the Indian Army, the regimental system provides the crucible within which military culture (and sub-cultures) are effectively germinated, bred, nourished, and passed down from generation to generation in the form of a military ethos. Commitment to this ethos is necessary for the maintenance of morale. The regimental system forms the basis for the spiritual, intellectual and material nourishment of the soldier, passing down both tangible professional skills and intangible values while simultaneously building bonds of comradeship, and providing for their wider material needs. The regiment as an institution ensures that old battalions function like clockwork; well-oiled machines that are exceptional with good leaders, but can still continue to produce results when faced with the occasional bad egg. They infuse the army with the essential ingredients or values of duty, discipline, loyalty, integrity and courage.

In the Indian Army, the regimental system would count as an essential structure required for maintaining the moral component of fighting power.

Essential aspects

As societies and traditional values evolve, there is a greater institutional requirement to define and articulate the essential aspects of their military ethos and the values that underpin it. These contribute to high morale, and include leadership; customs and traditions; discipline; welfare; professional ethics; and creating and nurturing a military identity.

In India, the officers’ credo is enshrined in the Chetwode Motto at the Indian Military Academy: “The safety, honour and welfare of your country come first, always and every time.

The honour, welfare and comfort of the men you command come next. Your own ease, comfort and safety come last, always and every time.”

For the men they command, the reason why men fight is articulated in the old adage of “Naam, Namak, Nishaan”, roughly translated as name, or honour; salt, or fidelity; the Colours, or the Regiment.

Conclusion

A good army is the product of a military system imbued with a degree of continuity, embodied in the institutions which form its consistent core. The moral component of warfighting produces the essential quality of morale – the inward spiritual side of discipline⁶ – in battle. The ingredients of high morale are the ethos and values that shape the thinking of soldiers – the leaders and the led, great leadership, good training, and most important – the moral fibre of an army.

Lord Moran has said that the fate of a nation depends on how well men fight. War has a way to discover the true nature of men. But for a society to wait for war to know how its soldiers will fight, is to wait too late. He contends that fortitude in war has its roots in morality. A man of character in peace is a man of courage in war. Character as Aristotle taught, is a habit, the daily choice of right instead of wrong is a moral quality which grows to maturity in peace and is not suddenly developed on the outbreak of war. War does not transform – it merely exaggerates the good or evil in us.

In the Indian Army the regimental system forms the essential structure that breathes life into the army as an institution and provides it with its roots and longevity, while the factors that support this system, such as leadership, training, equipment administration, organisation and welfare are the essential aspects without which the primary, essential system could not function.⁷

⁶Wavell, *Soldiers and Soldiering*, p. 123.

⁷I am grateful to Maj Gen Ian Cardozo, AVSM, SM (Retd) for his kind suggestions and inputs.

PUTTING THE FOUNDATIONS TOGETHER

*Maj Gen Dr A R D Sharpe
Director, CHACR*

This issue of *Ares & Athena* has, at a timely moment for both the Army and for wider Defence, reminded us all that our Army certainly needs to be properly organised and fit for purpose, but that it also needs to be deep-rooted by design if it is to endure through the changes of context (threat, economy, technology, demography, geography and every other element of Clausewitz's changing character of war) without having to rebuild itself, from scratch, at pace, as every new demand on its services, or hazard to the nation, emerges.

The opening thoughts of this issue laid the foundations in two senses: they explained the need for a firm foundation in an army, and provided the groundwork for the contributions that followed. Prof Trevor's insight into the enduring differences of (and, indeed, complementarity of) an organisation and an institution helped give real clarity for the need for both, and of the relationship between them. And he also reminds us that the Army must, without compromise, be fit for purpose whenever it is called upon, despite the fact that we can only guess what challenges may be put before it – which requires an army to be organised to deal with the threats that we can see, now; while at the same time be founded to be strong enough, durable enough, but flexible enough, to deal with the threats that we can't see now. Col Tom Robinson then laid out the foundational agenda and organisational demands that currently face the British Army and how, with Project Ironside, the Army's Home Command is seeking to address that particular challenge.

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[An army] must, always, be built to endure (durer): robust and hardy with a foundation strong enough to withstand shocks, but, like an earthquake-proof building, with built-in flexibility to allow the superstructure to bend with the shockwaves

Taking us full circle back to the opening article, three articles from abroad have then zoomed in, each on one aspect of an army's foundations that were explored in that opening article. In reverse order, thus from India, Rana Chhina has offered us a telling insight into India's (and our own?) regimental system and the universally underpinning codes of conduct and values and standards that serve as an essential core to the moral component of fighting power. Matthias Strohn has provided us with a fascinating insight by exploring the relationship between a military and the state and the wider polity that it serves, in his review of the modern-day Bundeswehr: a modern European army with a full stake in its national foundations.

And finally, we must let the last word go to our old allies the French. The article on the subject of être et durer, it seems to us, sums up the entire discussion and, in those two words, France has explained to itself (that is to its Army, to French Defence in general, to its politicians and to its people) that, if it is to serve its function with meaning, a nation's army must both adapt and endure.

It must organise and institutionalise. To adapt to be fit for the challenges that it faces now, it must be (être): relevant, structured, organised, efficient and effective. To be able to adapt to meet every future challenge, without having to start again from scratch, it must, always, be built to endure (durer): robust and hardy

with a foundation strong enough to withstand shocks, but, like an earthquake-proof building, with built-in flexibility to allow the superstructure to bend with the shockwaves, and, subsequently, any reconstruction of that superstructure that is necessary to be conducted as rapidly as possible with the minimum of disruption – especially in dangerous times.





CHACR MISSION STATEMENT

To conduct and sponsor research and analysis into the enduring nature and changing character of conflict on land and to be an active hub for scholarship and debate within the Army in order to support the development and sustainment of the Army's conceptual component of fighting power.