

MARRYING SPARTA AND ATHENS: THE SOUTH AFRICAN MILITARY ACADEMY AND TASK-ORIENTATED JUNIOR OFFICER DEVELOPMENT IN PEACE AND WAR, 1950-2001

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1. INTRODUCTION

A unique skill underpinned by a systematic body of knowledge and theory, acquired through training and education over a long period is the basic characteristic of any profession. Before the advent of standing armies and professional officers' corps, military training focussed on weapon skills, tactical drills and physical fitness. Technological development and the concomitant increasing complexity of weapon systems, however, created a need for particular academic knowledge and skills on the part of military officers. This brought the introduction of institutions to impart such knowledge and skills and led to the establishment of military academies in Europe, particularly France, Prussia and England, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.²

The invention of gunpowder and the subsequent development of artillery and fortifications, combined with the employment of geometric techniques in siege warfare and developments in sea navigation, made some knowledge of mathematics essential for military officers. The first military academies in Europe, established during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, were consequently purely technical academies for the instruction of artillery and engineering officers. They were, however, followed closely by non-technical academies, such as the French *École Royale Militaire* (1751), aiming both at imparting the required knowledge of mathematics and developing the critical thought of prospective officers. Yet much emphasis was still placed on mathematics at these academies, as it was regarded more suitable than the liberal arts in the cultivation of critical thought for the kind of decisions military officers would have to take. And this is still perpetuated at

¹ Faculty of Military Science, University of Stellenbosch (South African Military Academy).

² SP Huntington, *The soldier and the state: The theory and politics of civil-military relations* (Cambridge, 1957), pp. 8, 20-5; RA Preston, "Perspectives in the history of military education and professionalism", HR Borowski, *The Harmon Memorial Lectures in military history, 1959-1987* (Washington, D.C., 1988), pp. 270-5.

some military academies, although it is an open question whether it holds true in modern times.³ The well-known military historian, RA Preston, quite correctly argues that although "mathematical studies can contribute some of the qualities of mind needed by the soldier, for instance the ability to make clear decisions based on accurate measurements and computation ... modern liberal arts and social studies scholarship has qualities that its eighteenth-century equivalent lacked but which relate to certain modern social needs and also provide mind training and method".⁴

Preston's argument is vindicated by the fact that Prussian officer development policy at the beginning of the nineteenth century required a broad general education from all officers before embarking upon a thorough professional (military) education. This approach was subsequently accepted in other countries and military academies consequently became entrusted with the dual task of training and educating candidate officers. Military training enhances military skills, leadership and loyalty, while academic tuition imparts scientific knowledge and stimulates independent, critical thought. Task-orientated junior officer development thus comprises both training and education that, complementing each other, prepare candidates for the multitude of challenges facing the military profession, not the least of which is the complex socio-political national and international milieu in which they are required to operate in both peace and war.⁵ Hence, according to JP Lovell, "the traditional emphasis at the (U.S.) service academies upon educating and training the 'whole man'" in the classical tradition of Sparta and Athens, with Sparta representing "the noble warrior: austerity, discipline, the comradeship of arms, devotion to the state, and, above all, a commitment to heroic deeds and a love of glory" and Athens representing the ideals of "culture and learning".⁶ Both Sandhurst and West Point indeed adapted their cadet courses deliberately after the Second World War to place more emphasis on a broad, liberal education,⁷ aimed at truly training and educating the "whole man" and orientating him in his local and global environment.

2. SCUTTLED IDEALS

The establishment of the South African Military Academy on 1 April 1950 "on similar ... lines to Sandhurst ... and West Point"⁸ was a deliberate effort by the then

³ Preston, pp. 273-4; Huntington, pp. 24-5.

⁴ Preston, p. 299, reference 24.

⁵ Preston, pp. 275, 277, 278; JP Lovell, *Neither Athens nor Sparta? The American Service Academies in transition* (Bloomington and London, 1979), p. 16.

⁶ Lovell, p. 16.

⁷ H Thomas, *The story of Sandhurst* (London, 1961), pp. 223-31; TJ Crackel, *The illustrated history of West Point* (New York, 1991), pp. 225, 239-43.

⁸ "Union to have Military Academy next year", *The Star*, 18 August 1949.

Minister of Defence, FC Erasmus, to meet the military-academic challenges of task-orientated officer development in the nuclear age and to place the Union Defence Force on par with standards abroad.⁹ S Forman wrote in 1950 that the United States Military Academy, West Point "is now an undergraduate school which aims to give a broad education to its cadets; it does not attempt to produce finished second lieutenants of any arm of the service ... the graduates, shortly after leaving West Point, receive specialized training to qualify them as second lieutenants in the various arms and services".¹⁰ Likewise, through concurrent military training and university education, Erasmus wanted to equip prospective junior officers for their profession and not to merely bestow a university degree upon them or to merely qualify them as second lieutenants. The academic and military curricula had to be integrated to form a harmonious, overarching whole conducive to optimal task-orientated military education. The academic curricula were therefore to be compiled "especially with a view to their usefulness to career officers"¹¹ and were to be taught at the Academy itself by civilian academics who, appointed as Permanent Force officers, would receive some military training "to ensure that the practical application of academic knowledge for military purposes will be put in the right perspective".¹²

From the outset practical considerations and financial constraints compromised Erasmus' ideals of task-orientated military-academic training and education severely. The annual intake of a mere 30 candidate officers logically ruled out the possibility of an independent military academy in South Africa. Hence, with the optimal integration of military-academic development in mind, the idea was to establish the Military Academy as an independent branch of the SA Military College, functioning academically almost autonomously as a "constituent college"¹³ of the University of South Africa. It was even hoped that once the Academy had found its feet, it could be emancipated from the University of South Africa and could issue its own degrees.¹⁴ The Department of Defence, however, was unable to obtain enough money to appoint the Academy's full complement of lecturers and its own

⁹ L. Jooste, *FC Erasmus as Minister van Verdediging, 1948-1959* (unpublished M.A.-dissertation, University of Pretoria, 1995), pp. 105, 108; South African National Defence Force Archives (hereafter: SANDFA), KG K43 L81, KG/GPT/1/2/1 Vol. 1, enclosure 24, summary of recommendations of Kriegler Committee, 27 January 1949, p. 7.

¹⁰ S Forman, *West Point: A history of the United States Military Academy* (New York, 1950), p. 219.

¹¹ SANDFA, CGS (WAR) 281, 56/36, enclosure 6, letter HGS56/36, Acting CGS – Minister of Defence, 22 March 1949 (author's translation).

¹² SANDFA, KG 281, K43, L81, KG/GPT/1/2/1/1 Vol. 1, enclosure 9, letter MC/T/12/1, Acting Cmt. SA Mil. Col. – Registrar University of Pretoria, 23 May 1950 (author's translation).

¹³ SANDFA, MV/EF 135, MV 130, enclosure 24a, unnumbered memorandum, CF Miles – Cadman – FC Erasmus, 22 November 1949.

¹⁴ SANDFA, KG K43 L81, KG/GPT/1/2/1 Vol. 1, enclosure 24, Summary of recommendations of Kriegler Committee, 27 January 1949, p. 7.

military instructors and administrative staff.¹⁵ Consequently, instead of an independent branch, the Military Academy was established merely as a subdivision of the General Branch of the Military College and was eventually under the Physical Training Branch.¹⁶ Without a lecturing staff of its own, the Academy was forced into a completely subservient relationship with the University of Pretoria,¹⁷ instead of enjoying de facto academic autonomy as a constituent college of the University of South Africa.

This state of affairs had very negative implications for task-orientated military-academic training. The University of Pretoria not only presented the bulk of the specially-designed three-year B.A.(Mil.) and B.Sc.(Mil.)-degree courses introduced for the army and air force cadets (the inland location of the Academy made the training of naval cadets impractical¹⁸), but this was also presented at its own campus in a civilian atmosphere. Initially only the military training of the cadets took place at the Academy itself and when a few military lecturers were eventually appointed in 1951, they were by and large restricted to teaching a few first-year subjects only.¹⁹

Imitating West Point, the emphasis at the Academy was on the Natural Sciences. Only 25% of the annual intake was allowed to follow the B.A.(Mil.)-course. This left the bulk of the cadets studying for the B.Sc.(Mil.)-degree. Furthermore, conforming to the aforementioned notion that Mathematics was best suited to develop the military mind, that subject, together with Physics and Chemistry, was compulsory even in the B.A.(Mil.)-degree. At the same time, however, a few core subjects directly relevant to the military profession, namely Military History, Military Law, Military Geography and Military Technology (*Militêre Wetenskap*, comprising metallurgy, ballistics, etc.²⁰) were also compulsory for both degrees. It was these contextualised subjects, grouped together as Military Science

¹⁵ SANDFA, KG K43, L81, KG/GPT/1/3/1/1 Vol. 1, enclosure 1, Chief of the General Staff – Minister of Defence, 7 November 1949.

¹⁶ SANDFA, SA Mil. Col. (Gp. 1) 87, MK/F/1/2, enclosure 7, MK/F/1/2, Comdt. SA Mil. Col – Army Chief of Staff and AG, 6 March 1954; SANDFA, SA Mil. Col. (Gp. 1) 164, MC/T/12/1, enclosure 60, MC/T/12/1, signed SA Engelbrecht, 10 August 1950; M van Niekerk – GE Visser, interview, 16 September 1992.

¹⁷ University of Pretoria Archives (hereafter: UP Archives), Minutes of the Board of the University of Pretoria 1950, Minutes of a meeting of representatives of the University of Pretoria and the Union Defence Force, 26 May 1950; SANDFA, SA Mil. Col. (Gp. 1) 88, MK/F/5/2, enclosure 15, S8166, Report by Subcommittee on relationship between the SA Military Academy and the University of Pretoria, n.d.

¹⁸ Jooste, p. 115.

¹⁹ UP Archives, Minutes of the Board of the University of Pretoria 1950, Minutes of a meeting of representatives of the University of Pretoria and the Union Defence Force, 26 May 1950; SANDFA, SA Mil. Col. (Gp. 1) 88, MK/F/5/2, enclosure 15, S8166, Report by Subcommittee on relationship between the SA Military Academy and the University of Pretoria, n.d.

²⁰ SANDFA, SA Mil. Col. (Gp. 1) 164, MC/T/12/1, enclosure 47, document MC/T/12/1, "Militêre Akademie: Voorgestelde leerplanne vir die vak Krygskunde", May 1950.

(*Krygskunde*), that were taught at the Academy itself by the lecturers appointed in 1951.²¹

From a purely functional perspective, the military training programme together with these "military" academic subjects indeed provided task-orientated education to prospective officers. With a view to a broad, liberal education the goal of task-orientated military-academic education was not completely realised. An important subject such as Political Science, for instance, was neither an elective for the B.Sc.(Mil.)-degree, nor even compulsory for the B.A.(Mil.)-degree.²² The inclusion of Military History as a compulsory subject in both the B.A.(Mil.)- and B.Sc.(Mil.)-curricula went some way in compensating for the absence of Political Science. The aim of Military History was namely to "consolidate all work done on the course and to provide a picture of warfare as a whole. That includes a study of the development of the art of warfare and the principles that guide it. A study is also made of international relations and world organisation and candidates are inspired with the ideal of serving and honouring their country through a study of national history, emphasising important issues of life."²³ Clearly Military History was taught with the objective of orientating candidates with regard to both their profession and their environment.

It soon became apparent that Academy students could not keep up with their military training and academic tuition simultaneously.²⁴ The students' workload, admittedly coupled with other contributing factors, such as an ineffective selection process, overloaded degree courses and a lack of dedication on the part of the students, resulted in a completely unacceptable dropout rate. (Of the original 30 candidates only six eventually completed their degree at the end of the three-year course.) The result was that the degree course was significantly restructured (by inter alia dropping subjects such as Mathematics from the B.A.(Mil.)-curriculum) and extended from three to four years in 1952. The extension of the degree course alleviated the pressure, but dissipated the cadet course and practically destroyed its task-orientated aim. The cadets now completed their first-year subjects over a two-year period at the military gymnasiums, the various military colleges and the Military

²¹ KG K43 L81, KG/GPT/1/2/1 Vol. 1, enclosure 24, Summary of recommendations of Kriegler Committee, 27 January 1949, p. 7; SANDFA, KG K43, L81, KG/GPT/1/3/1/1 Vol. 1, enclosure 1, CGS – Minister of Defence, 7 November 1949; SANDFA, CGS (WAR) 281, 56/36, enclosure 66, signal G309, Brig. De Waal – CGS (Cape Town), 20 March 1950.

²² SANDFA, AG(3) 222, AG(3)1906/9 Vol. 1, enclosure 8, document MC/T/12/6, "Militêre Akademie: Studiekursusse", 21 July 1950.

²³ SANDFA, SA Mil. Col. (Gp. 1) 87, MK/F/9/1, enclosure 16, letter MK/F/9/1, Cmdt. SA Mil. Col. - AL Kotzee, Bureau for Educational and Social Research, Department of Education, Art and Science, 4 December 1953 (author's translation).

²⁴ SANDFA, KG K43 L81, KG/GPT/1/3/1/1 Vol. 1, Minutes of a meeting of the Military Science instructors, 6 September 1951; SANDFA, KG K43 L81, CGS/GPT/1/3/1/1 Vol. 2, enclosure 9, memorandum "Militêre Akademie", 12 August 1953.

Academy. Thereafter, they enrolled for two years full-time study at the University of Pretoria, without undergoing concurrent military training.²⁵

The Permanent Force cadets thus, for all practical purposes, obtained almost purely civilian degrees. Although the subjects were selected with a view to the needs of the Union Defence Force, those taught at the University itself were not contextualised to the military. Furthermore, the scattering of their four-year course at several institutions made proper, continuous military training impossible. In fact, the two years full-time study at the University of Pretoria went a long way in nullifying previous military training. On the whole, task-orientated officer development through the Military Academy was less than satisfactory.

3. A NEW BEGINNING AT SALDANHA

Amidst the failure to realise the ideals of task-orientated officer development fully, there was also no clear policy with regard to the progressive development of the Military Academy. There was, in fact, a very real danger that the Academy would close down. Thanks to the direct intervention of Erasmus, the Military Academy was re-established at Saldanha as an independent, combined institution, educating and training officers for all three services.²⁶ At its new location the Academy functioned under the academic trusteeship of the University of Stellenbosch, from whom successful candidates received a B.Mil.-degree in the Natural or Human Sciences.²⁷ A third study direction, Commercial Sciences (later: Management Sciences), was added in January 1961 when the Academy became a faculty in its own right – the Faculty of Military Science of the University of Stellenbosch.²⁸

The Military Academy had been divorced from the SA Army College and the University of Pretoria on 1 February 1956,²⁹ after which its headquarters were

²⁵ SANDFA, AG(3) 222, AG(3) 1906/9 Vol. 1, enclosure 29, unpublished manuscript "Die Militêre Akademie", 23 August 1951; SANDFA, KG K43 L81, KG/GPT/1/3/1/1 Vol. 1, enclosure 57, HGS56/36, CGS – Minister of Defence, 12 October 1951; SANDFA, AG(3) 222, AG(3) 1906/9 Vol. 1, enclosure 35, DGL0720/2, Army Chief of Staff – Secretary for Defence, 10 January 1952.

²⁶ M van Niekerk – GE Visser, interview, 16 September 1992; SANDFA, KG K43 L81, CGS/GPT/1/3/1/1 Vol. 2, enclosure 9, CGS/GPT/1/2/5, CGS – AG, 6 August 1953; SANDFA, MV/EF 135, MV130 Vol. 1, enclosure 53, MV168 over MV130, Private Secretary Minister of Defence – CGS and Secretary for Defence, 31 August 1953.

²⁷ SANDFA, KG K39 L67, HGS/GM/5/3(1955), Minutes of General Staff meeting, 29 April 1955; SANDFA, AG(3) 223, AG(3)1906/9 Vol. 4, enclosure 21, abstract from Minutes of meeting of Staff and Section Heads, 4, 7 and 8 July 1955; University of Stellenbosch Archives (hereafter: US Archives), Minutes of the Board of the University of Stellenbosch, 9 December 1954, pp. 228-30 and 28 April 1956, pp. 55-6, 60.

²⁸ Military Academy Archives (hereafter: Mil. Acad. Archives), Agreement between the Department of Defence and the University of Stellenbosch, 31 January 1960; see also US Archives, Minutes of the Board of the University of Stellenbosch, 29 October 1960, pp. 158, 166, 174-5.

²⁹ SANDFA, Union Defence Force Order 82/56, 25 May 1956.

temporarily shifted to Stellenbosch, pending the erection of suitable facilities at Saldanha.³⁰ The move to Saldanha was effected in December 1957 and the Academy started to function at its new location at the beginning of 1958.³¹

The establishment of the Military Academy as an independent unit at Saldanha, placed the academic side of its officer development programme on a sounder footing. All academic subjects were presented at the Academy itself, by its own lecturers and were, as far as possible, contextualised to the military environment.³² Furthermore, the introduction of the Commercial Sciences as a third study direction (at the initiative of Erasmus³³) was a direct result of the need for task-orientated officer education. Initially, due to the limited annual intake (30 candidates), only combat officers were admitted to the Academy, but it was realised that "modern military logistical, technical and administrative demands ... require officers with high educational qualifications, in order to suitably equip them to deal with any of the day-to-day problems which they encounter in their different technical and administrative tasks".³⁴ Hence the annual intake of the Academy was enlarged to 45 in 1961 to accommodate six technical and administrative officers to study in the Commercial Sciences.³⁵

A negative aspect that slipped into the degree courses with the move to Stellenbosch/Saldanha, was that neither Military History nor any other socio-political subject was offered in the B.Mil. in the Natural Sciences. This was initially also the case with the B.Mil. in Commercial Sciences, but Political Science and Public Administration were later instituted as compulsory subjects in that direction.³⁶ The curricula for the B.Mil. in the Natural Sciences thus did not support the idea of a

³⁰ SANDFA, KG K39 L67, KG/GM5/3(1955), enclosure 4, Minutes of General Staff meeting, 30 March 1955, p. 11; SANDFA, AG(3) 223, AG(3)1906/9 Vol. 3, enclosure 53, AG(3)1906/9, Acting AG – Registrar US, 30 May 1955; SANDFA, AG(3) 223, AG(3)1906/9 Vol. 4, enclosure 3a, Minutes of discussions between representatives of the Department of Defence and the University of Stellenbosch, 17 June 1955.

³¹ SANDFA, AG(3) 226, AG(3)1906/9/1 Vol. 8, enclosure 64, A/ADM/7/1, OC Mil. Acad. – Army Chief of Staff, etc., 12 November 1957; PJG de Vos, "Die Militêre Akademie, 1956-1967", EM Müller, *et al.* (eds), *Military Academy 1950-1975: Silver Jubilee* (Saldanha, 1975), pp. 17, 21.

³² US Archives, Minutes of the Board of the University of Stellenbosch, 9 December 1954, pp. 228-30.

³³ SANDFA, MV/EF 135, MV130 Vol. 1, enclosure 99, letter MV130, Private Secretary – Comdt. Gen., 15 October 1959.

³⁴ SANDFA, KG K43 L81, KG/GPT/1/3/1, enclosure 26, letter AG950/1, AG – Deputy Comdt. Gen., 22 January 1960.

³⁵ SANDFA, AG(3) 225, AG(3)1906/9 Vol. 9, enclosure 41 letter AG213/14/113 over AG(3)1906/9, Acting AG – Army Chief of Staff, etc., 29 October 1960; SANDFA, AG(3) 225, AG(3)1906/9 Vol. 9, enclosure 69 letter DC46/9(S), Secretary for Defence – AG, 26 November 1960; SANDFA, KG K39 L67, KG/GM5/3(1961), unnumbered enclosure, minutes of General Staff meeting, 19 September 1961; SANDFA, Mil. Acad. (Gp. 2) 9, A/FIN/2/0 Vol. 1, enclosure 17, letter A/FIN/2/0, OC Mil. Acad. – AG, 1 June 1965.

³⁶ *Universiteit van Stellenbosch Jaarboek 1956 Deel 1*, pp. 163-4; *Universiteit van Stellenbosch Jaarboek 1959 Deel 1*, pp. 211-3; *Universiteit van Stellenbosch Jaarboek 1963*, pp. 527-30.

broad, liberal education and consequently failed to prepare prospective officers for the socio-political milieu in which they were to operate. This situation existed despite the fact that the Dean, Col. PJG de Vos, had specifically pointed out in 1956 that this was contrary to the practice abroad and had made a strong plea for the inclusion of, *inter alia*, Political Science in the curricula for the B.Mil. in the Natural Sciences.³⁷ It was thus only the B.Mil. in the Human and Commercial Sciences that held up the flag for a broad, liberal education. For the B.Mil. in the Human Sciences, at least, Military History was still a compulsory subject,³⁸ strengthening the idea of task-orientated education.

Yet another important element of task-orientated officer development that went astray with the move to Saldanha, was the absence of significant functional military training at the Military Academy since 1956. In this regard Defence Headquarters provided neither a fixed military training program nor issued clear guide-lines to the Officer Commanding and Dean of the Military Academy, Col. PJG de Vos. The military training program was left completely to De Vos's discretion and imagination. At his initiative, one day per week was set aside for military training, which eventually amounted to little more than drill, physical training and occasional shooting exercises, although some attention was given to service-specific training. Naturally, task-orientated military training was complicated by the different needs of the services. Training facilities at the Academy itself were lacking due to financial limitations, whereas service-specific training at neighbouring units created logistical and administrative problems.³⁹ Furthermore, there was just not enough time for purposeful military training during the academic semesters. Consequently functional military training was, almost entirely, conducted at the services' training institutions during recess periods, but even there training was often unsatisfactory due to practical problems such as scheduling courses to coincide with the recess periods.⁴⁰

4. AN EFFORT TO ENHANCE TASK-ORIENTATED TRAINING

The military never really accepted ownership of the Military Academy in its new form, chiefly as a result of their perception that it was an extension of a civilian university and the absence of purposeful functional military training exacerbated

³⁷ SANDFA, AG(3) 227, AG(3)1906/9 Vol. 7, enclosure 2, letter G/TRG/1/1, OC Mil. Acad. -- CGS, 26 October 1956.

³⁸ *Universiteit van Stellenbosch Jaarboek 1956 Deel 1*, pp. 163-4; *Universiteit van Stellenbosch Jaarboek 1959 Deel 1*, pp. 211-3; *Universiteit van Stellenbosch Jaarboek 1963*, pp. 527-30.

³⁹ SANDFA, MVB 164, *Verslag oor die Militêre Akademie Deel 1* (hereafter: Malan Report), 28 February 1969, pp. 14-5; Mil. Acad. Archives, Reports, *Memorandum oor die Militêre Akademie en die Offisersopleiding voorgelê aan die Ministeriële Kommissie op 25 September 1965*, pp. 18-20.

⁴⁰ Hartzenberg Report, p. 43.

this.⁴¹ In 1967, the Chief of the South African Defence Force, Gen. RC Hiemstra, stated that "there is a feeling that too much emphasis is placed on academic education, with the result that the Academy-product ... is yet not equal to his task as young officer, especially with regard to the practical demands of leadership and task performance at the lowest level".⁴² This perception sparked off two extensive investigations⁴³ into the role and function of the Military Academy in 1967 and 1968, which was to be followed by a dozen other similar investigations⁴⁴ over the next two decades. All of these investigations were aimed at redirecting the Academy towards the needs of the Defence Force and hence task-orientated officer development, which was always primarily associated with a greater emphasis on military training and hence losing sight of the important complementary role of academic study.

The 1967/68-investigations led to the introduction in 1970 of a new, more task-orientated training and education system that centralised the formative training of all Permanent Force officers at the Academy.⁴⁵ The formative course at the Academy lasted six months and the degree course was compressed into two years. On completion of the formative course, those candidates who met the academic requirements and so desired were admitted to the degree course. The rest continued their officers' training at the training institutions of their respective services.⁴⁶

The new training system at the Academy seemed, in more ways than one, to be a triumph for task-orientated military development. Not only did the students receive proper formative military training, but the academic curricula were also adapted to serve the ideal of a broad, liberal education. Military History and Political Science were regarded fundamental to officer development and hence became compulsory subjects for all Academy students, including those not opting for degree studies.⁴⁷

Coupled with this greater emphasis on task-orientated officer development, the training and education system at the Military Academy also represented a break-

⁴¹ MA de M Malan – GE Visser, interview, Pretoria, 24 November 1994.

⁴² Mil. Acad. Archives, Reports, HWA/599/2/12/3, *Verslag van Komitee van Ondersoek insake werwing, keuring, aanstelling en opleiding van staandemagoffisiere* (hereafter: Hartzenberg Report), 1 February 1968, p. 4 (author's translation).

⁴³ Hartzenberg (1967) and Malan (1968) Committees.

⁴⁴ See Mil. Acad. Archives, Reports.

⁴⁵ SANDFA, AG(Gp. 1, Classified) 12, HWA(C)403/67/72, enclosure 4, Acting Chief of Defence Force Administration – Commandant General, 13 October 1967; SANDFA, Personnel Records, 01218700PE, MA de M Malan; MA de M Malan – GE Visser, interview, Pretoria, 24 November 1994; PJG de Vos, *Die Militêre Akademie 1956-1967*, p. 23; PJG de Vos – GE Visser, interview, Stellenbosch, 2 July 1993.

⁴⁶ Malan Report, pp. 14-5, SANDFA, Mil. Acad. (Gp. 2) 2, G/TRG/6/2 Vol. 15, enclosure 4, HVS/207/5/1, Comdt. Gen. – OC Mil. Acad., 20 August 1969.

⁴⁷ Malan Report, p. 40.

Coupled with this greater emphasis on task-orientated officer development, the training and education system at the Military Academy also represented a break-away from a "peacetime" orientation of junior officer development and a move to a more "wartime" orientation. With no clear military threat after the Second World War, officer development at the Military Academy had followed, with some adaptations due to local circumstances, the lead of similar institutions abroad. The ever-stronger emerging internal conflict in South Africa and the escalating counter-insurgency war on its borders now brought a new focus to junior officer development. Portraying these conflicts against the background of the Cold War as the local manifestation of the world-wide communist onslaught, it was now argued that "combating terrorist actions and subversion represents one of the most important facets of modern warfare".⁴⁸ The training and education of young officers should consequently also enable them to withstand "the subtle subversive attack on the human mind".⁴⁹

Brig. JD Potgieter, then commanding officer of the Military Academy, stated in this regard: "Our enemies are being trained by formidable fighters who have already proved their abilities in Vietnam. To achieve success against such a foe, the Academy graduate must be both physically and spiritually tougher than they are, and his intellectual ability optimally developed."⁵⁰ The training philosophy (referred to as "ISOPLAN") formulated for the Academy to achieve this aim, was described as "a system of spartanism based largely on self-discipline" and strove to produce officers that were "fanatically task-orientated ... [and able] to win a war against any enemy".⁵¹ It explicitly stated that "we have to make our candidate officers realise that a war is going on of which approximately 90% is fought in civilian life ... the philosophy of our communist enemies ... their aims and ideals and the emptiness of their philosophy ... must be explained".⁵²

This task-orientated, "wartime" training philosophy was executed through rigorous military and physical training, complemented by ideological orientation through academic study and motivational talks and lectures.⁵³ On the academic side, the study of revolutionary and counterrevolutionary warfare was introduced into the

⁴⁸ Hartzenberg Report, p. 27 (author's translation).

⁴⁹ Hartzenberg Report, p. 27 (author's translation).

⁵⁰ SANDFA, Mil. Acad. (Gp. 3) 100, G/TRG/6/2 (ISOPLAN) Vol. 1, enclosure 1, minutes of commanding officer's conference, 9 November 1973 (author's translation).

⁵¹ SANDFA, Mil. Acad. (Gp. 3) 100, G/TRG/6/2 (ISOPLAN) Vol. 1, enclosure 1(a), "ISOPLAN: Militêre Akademie", n.d. [9 November 1973] (author's translation).

⁵² SANDFA, Mil. Acad. (Gp. 3) 100, G/TRG/6/2 (ISOPLAN) Vol. 1, enclosure 1(a), "ISOPLAN: Militêre Akademie", n.d. [9 November 1973] (author's translation).

⁵³ SANDFA, Mil. Acad. (Gp. 3) 78, G/TRG/6/2(G712) Vol. 1, enclosure 20, Training Objectives: Course G712, 13 April-2 October 1971; SANDFA, Mil. Acad. (Gp. 3) 100, G/TRG/6/2 (ISOPLAN) Vol. 1, enclosure 22, Objectives: Faculty of Military Science, n.d. [February 1974].

curricula of relevant disciplines, most notably that of Military History. The theme "Guerrilla warfare and revolution" made its first appearance in the Military History curricula on postgraduate level, when it was included in the Hons.B.Mil.-course in Military History by 1967.⁵⁴ When Military History became a compulsory subject for all first-year students in 1970, guerrilla warfare, including revolutionary guerrilla warfare (and theory) as practised in Russia, China and Cuba, was also introduced into the first-year curriculum.⁵⁵ By 1972 irregular warfare was included as a study theme in the third-year Military History curriculum.⁵⁶ This was most probably done as very few students (only two between 1968 and 1976⁵⁷) enrolled for the Hons.B.Mil. in Military History, making it unsuitable as the only vehicle to introduce an in-depth knowledge of revolutionary and counterrevolutionary warfare into the officers corps.

The new training system eventually beached on the rock of inter-service rivalry. The Air Force and the Navy never really bought into the idea of joint formative training, since they perceived their training needs as to differ too comprehensively from that of the Army.⁵⁸ In addition, the Army culture dominated the formative training at the Academy to such a degree that the Air Force and the Navy did not feel at home with it. Furthermore, the compression of the degree course into two years also proved to be a failure. It placed too much pressure on both the students and the lecturers, while the degree course was perceived to have been completely watered down and thus lost its credibility.⁵⁹ The result was that the formative training was returned to the services in 1976 and the degree course extended to the normal three-year period.⁶⁰

5. THE INFLUENCE OF THE "BUSH WAR" ON TASK-ORIENTATED TRAINING

The escalation from 1976 of the South African Defence Force's involvement in the so-called "Bush War" on the borders of South West Africa/Namibia marked the be-

⁵⁴ Universiteit van Stellenbosch Jaarboek 1967, p. 699.

⁵⁵ Mil. Acad. Archives, MA/F/1/2, Krygsgeskiedenis Vol. II (n.d.), pp. 292-316.

⁵⁶ Universiteit van Stellenbosch Jaarboek 1972, p. 832.

⁵⁷ Mil. Acad. Archives, list of Military Academy graduates.

⁵⁸ Mil. Acad. Archives, report by Lt. LJ du Toit, Directorate Psychological Services, Surgeon General, SA Defence Force, Die Sisteem van Kwalifiseringsopleiding in die SAW met besondere verwysing na die rol van die Militêre Akademie (hereafter: Psychological Services Report), March 1974, pp. 58, 76; SANDFA, Mil. Acad. (Gp. 3) 158, G/TRG/6/2/0 (Confidential) Vol. 4, enclosure 18, report on problem areas w.r.t. Phase 2 training, 26 June 1974.

⁵⁹ Psychological Services Report, pp. 58, 65-7, 86-94.

⁶⁰ SANDFA, MVB 184, MV53/2, enclosure 15, Minutes of Defence Staff Council meeting, 18 April 1975, p. 7; SANDFA, Mil. Acad. (Gp. 3) 77, G/TRG/6/2/0 Vol. 1, enclosure 5, G/TRG/6/2/0, OC Mil. Acad. - CSP, 13 May 1975; SANDFA, Mil. Acad. (Gp. 3) 146, G/SD/3/1/20 (Confidential) Vol. 1, enclosure 25, G/SD/2/1/20 over G/TRG/6/2/0, OC Mil. Acad. - CSP, 8 September 1975; Müller, *et al.*, eds, p. 76.

gining of a new, uncertain era in the history of task-orientated officer development at the Military Academy. To satisfy the resultant increasing demand for junior officers, it was decided that candidate officers should be "task qualified" within their respective service and undergo some in-service training, before receiving their commissions or becoming eligible for admission to the Military Academy. The degree course thus no longer formed part of the preparation of candidate officers for commissioning, but merely a voluntary option for those who desired to obtain a graduate qualification.⁶¹ The Minister for Defence, furthermore, approved the admission of commissioned officers to the Academy, instead of candidate officers only, as was previously the case.⁶² The result was that officers up to the rank of major, many of them already married and living out, were admitted to the Academy. The student body consequently became so diverse in terms of age, level of training, experience, rank and marital status, that sensible joint training on a task-orientated basis became quite impossible.⁶³ Military training consequently disappeared almost completely and the Academy became a de facto military university. This offering of a degree course to serving officers, instead of preparing candidate officers for commissioned appointment like a traditional military academy, raised serious questions concerning the continued existence of the Academy, and once again the danger of being closed down loomed large on the horizon.⁶⁴

Devoid of a role in systematic junior officer development and with its future existence in the balance, the Military Academy worked at making its academic offerings relevant to task-orientated officer development. Through a process of extensive consultation with the services the Academy brought its curricula and course contents once more into alignment with the needs of the Defence Force, even introducing new subjects, such as Business Psychology (Mil.) and Computer Information Systems (Mil.) in the 1980s to meet previously uncatered for needs.⁶⁵ This exercise succeeded and the Academy survived.

The termination of the Cold War and the consequent end of the Bush War changed the background against which junior officer development had been planned and executed since 1976 entirely. As a result of diminished operational requirements, it

⁶¹ Mil. Acad. Archives, *Verslag deur Komitee van ondersoek met betrekking tot Jongoffisiersopleiding te Militêre Akademie Saldanha* (hereafter: Van der Westhuizen Report), 31 January 1975, pp. 9-10, 31, 55.

⁶² SANDFA, Mil. Acad. (Gp. 3) 73, G/TRG/6/2 Vol. 23, enclosure 33, HSP/DPO/599/2/2/1, CSP – Chief of Staff, etc., 13 November 1975.

⁶³ Psychological Services Report, pp. 61-5. Mil. Acad. Archives, *Verslag van Projek WIMPOLE oor die Militêre Akademie* (hereafter: WIMPOLE Report), 13 October 1989, pp. 5, 13-5.

⁶⁴ See Mil. Acad. Archives, *Verslag deur Komitee van ondersoek na die doeltreffendheid van die Militêre Akademie te Saldanha* (hereafter: Biermann Report), 21 June 1976.

⁶⁵ SANDFA, Mil. Acad. (Gp. 4) 84, MA/501 Vol. 1, enclosure 1, memorandum 303 over 305, OC. Mil. Acad. – 21C/Dean, 8 September 1977; Mil. Acad. Archives, WIMPOLE Report, p. 20.

was possible to reincorporate the degree course into an overall officer's development programme. In the late eighties, Defence Headquarters decided consequently to again steer the Military Academy in the direction of a traditional military academy to enhance task-orientated junior officer development. The student body was thus markedly rejuvenated and more emphasis was placed on continued formative military training. At the same time plans were set into motion to increase the total number of students at the Academy from approximately 200 to 450 by 1999.⁶⁶

The diverging sentiments and training needs of the services made a reversal to a traditional military academy impossible. In the end, relevance to task-orientated officer development was once again found mainly through the offerings of the degree courses. The academic curricula and subject contents were once more thoroughly scrutinised and adapted to the needs of the services. This led inter alia, in 1991, to the renaming of the Commercial Sciences to Management Sciences, the conversion of Business Economics (Mil.) to Military Management, and the introduction of Military Technology and Military Strategy as new subjects.⁶⁷ The Military Academy, therefore, for all practical purposes retained its character as a military university and continued to make its main contribution towards task-orientated officer development on the academic level.

6. INTO THE NEW MILLENNIUM

Though proclaimed a "jewel in the crown of the South African National Defence Force"⁶⁸ in 1995 by the then Deputy Minister of Defence, Mr Ronnie Kasrils, the Academy subsequently faced a very real threat of being closed down. Once more the question of task-orientated officer development was raised, but this time the emphasis also fell more heavily on cost-effectiveness⁶⁹ than ever before. Against that background and within the framework of the transformation of both the SANDF and higher education in South Africa, the Military Academy sat down and analysed the future military-academic needs of the Defence Force, and formulated an academic offer that was both cost-effective and task-orientated.⁷⁰ It was realised that future officers would face multi-dimensional challenges going even further

⁶⁶ WIMPOLE Report, pp. 45-8; Mil. Acad., current files, MA/B/50/1/1 Vol. 2, enclosure 1, MA/B/50/1/1, OC Mil. Acad. – CSP, 9 April 1990; Mil. Acad., current files, MA/B/518/7/1 Vol. 1, enclosure 66, briefing on Military Academy to R. adm. R. Eberlein and Brig. JC van Deventer, 5 June 1990.

⁶⁷ Anon, "Werksaamhede van die Fakulteit Krygskunde", *Military Academy Annual 1991*, p. 27.

⁶⁸ R Kasrils, Opening address during conference on *The future of military education in a democratic South Africa*, Mil. Acad., Saldanha, June 1995.

⁶⁹ P van Z Loedolff: Message by Chief of Staff Personnel. *Military Academy Annual 1998*, p. 3.

⁷⁰ PC Potgieter: Boodskap deur die Bevelvoerder Militêre Akademie. *Military Academy Annual 1998*, p. 2; PC Potgieter, Boodskap deur die Bevelvoerder Militêre Akademie, *Militêre Akademie Annual 1999*, pp. 2-3; Mil. Acad. Archives, Mil. Acad. Annual History Report 2000, Annual report on the Faculty of Military Science:2000.

beyond the spheres of conventional warfare than was previously the case, especially through participation in operations other than war. As the Commandant of the Military Academy, General LS Mollo,⁷¹ pointed out recently, future officers will increasingly become involved in operations relating to internal law and order, illegal immigration, drug-trafficking, civil disasters, regional peace-support operations, and other non-combat tasks. In carrying out such operations, they will often have to deal directly with the civilian population, governmental authorities, NGO's, churches, local fighting factions, the media, police and other role-players in an uncertain and ambiguous environment, both internally and externally. They will often be confronted with situations where their actions might have serious national and international implications on the political level. And they must thus be equipped with knowledge and skills to interpret national and international interests, correctly analyse any given scenario and make the right decisions.

From a task-orientated perspective, it was clear that future officers would need an extremely broad, interdisciplinary education to face the complex contemporary challenges of their profession. The Military Academy accordingly tabled a proposal entailing a preparatory certificate programme, various certificate, diploma, degree and postgraduate programmes, all of which catered for these needs. Apart from meeting the requirements of task-orientated officer development, the proposal was also aimed at making the Academy the alma mater of most future Permanent Force officers, in order to satisfy the need for cost-effectiveness. To complement the academic offerings, the proposal also made provision for a limited but purposeful military training programme to maintain and develop functional military knowledge and skills.⁷²

The military authorities finally accepted that tertiary education was no longer an optional extra for officers, but a prerequisite. They also, at least for the moment, made peace with the idea that, given South Africa's unique circumstances, the Military Academy can serve the SANDF's needs best in the role of a military university rather than a traditional military academy. Defence Headquarters thus approved the proposed military-academic programmes and in 2001 launched the Military Academy on a course that will not only serve the needs of the SANDF, but potentially also that of Sub-Saharan Africa in pursuance of the African Renaissance and the Millennium Africa Programme.⁷³

⁷¹ LS Mollo, Exemplary leadership and teams: Unleashing future leadership potential for Defence. Opening address during conference on *War and Society in Africa*, Mil. Acad., Saldanha, 12 September 2001.

⁷² Mil. Acad. Archives, Mil. Acad. Annual History Report 2000, Annual report of the Faculty of Military Science:2000; Mil. Acad. Archives, Mil. Acad. Annual History Report 2000, Annual history report: Section Military Development [2000].

⁷³ Speeches by PC Potgieter and LS Mollo, during change of command parade, Mil. Acad., 23 January 2001.

The new task-orientated, outcomes-based certificate, diploma, degree and post-graduate programmes of the Military Academy offer six study directions tailor-made for the needs of the various branches and services of the SANDF. These study directions comprise programmes in *Technology*, *Technology and Management*, *Human and Organisational Development*, *Organisation and Resource Management*, *War, Environment and Technology* and *Security and African Studies*. These all serve important needs, but it is above all the programme in *Security and African Studies*, comprising Military History, Military Strategy, Political Science (Mil.), and Military Geography as majors, supported by modules in Military Psychology, Management of Cultural Diversity, International Law, International Humanitarian Law, Operational Law, Defence Economy and Language, Writing, Communication and Computer skills, that offers the broad, interdisciplinary education required to orientate the officer in, and sensitise him/her for, the complex socio-political environment in which he/she will be required to operate.⁷⁴ Broadly based in the social sciences, it is also extremely well-positioned to serve the needs of conflict-torn Sub-Saharan Africa to realise the ideals of the African Renaissance and the Millennium Africa Programme. -

7. CONCLUSION

The South African Military Academy has, since its inception in 1950, been haunted almost constantly by accusations of inadequate task-orientated military development through its training and education programmes. This triggered numerous comprehensive investigations into its role and function and has often threatened its existence. Defence Headquarters seemingly accepted that the unique circumstances in South Africa define the role of the South African Military Academy in task-orientated officer development in a way different to that of its overseas counterparts. Through its "final" transformation during the past year, the Academy has, for the moment at least, succeeded in positioning itself correctly for its dual, essentially peacetime, role of task-orientated officer development. Its new academic programmes make it extremely relevant to the current task perception of the SANDF, both with regard to domestic interests and its perceived role as the leading light in Sub-Saharan Africa and in achieving the goals of the African Renaissance and the Millennium Africa programme.

⁷⁴ Universiteit van Stellenbosch Jaarboek 2001 Deel 13, pp. 6-11.