

## INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

### TRAINING FOR LEADERSHIP AND INNOVATION – A MILITARY PERSPECTIVE

It is a pleasure to be invited to talk to you today and indeed an honour to be presenting in the opening session of your National Conference. The theme that has been selected for the Conference, 'Learning and Leading in a Culture of Innovation', is one that has pervasive relevance and I congratulate the organisers on choosing so well. It has meaning for every profession, and especially for my own profession, the profession of arms. Learning is a life-long imperative, especially for leaders, and learning **about** leadership is one of our most important pursuits. This theme also focuses us on the concept of innovation, suggesting that innovation and change are now enduring features of our society, and that we need to embrace and foster innovation as a core part of our culture.

I would like to begin by dwelling for a few moments on the concepts of management and leadership from my own personal perspective and I acknowledge that others will have different definitions.

In my view, management and leadership are quite different functions that draw on very different aspects of our personalities.

**Management is about directing and controlling the activities of others to achieve common goals. Leadership is about inspiring others to direct and control their own activities, to continuously revise and extend the common goals, and to achieve as a team that which is beyond the reach of individuals.**

Many of us throughout our careers have been taught the habits of good managers. Management requires of us the ability to analyse situations, evaluate options, plan courses of action, manage time, measure performance, review progress – essentially a highly methodical process. Leadership draws much more on our instincts and our emotions. Leadership requires of us the ability to feel. Leadership requires of us the observable commitment to a set of values.

**Management comes from the head; leadership comes from the heart.**

Nevertheless, the skills that support the exercise of leadership can be taught and in my view, the very best leaders are those who are also good managers.

In the Australian Defence Force, the officers in the Army, Navy and Air Force are leaders and managers first, and their chosen specialist profession second. Many of these young men and women undergo tertiary training before they enter the military, signing up after they graduate from University. Some enlist as undergraduate officers while they are still students at a civilian University and receive sponsorship for their study. Others who are entering careers that do not require a tertiary qualification are directly commissioned and are trained in their specialist skills by the military.

Almost 900 young men and women each year are trained in their fundamental skills and undergo their tertiary education at the Australian Defence Force Academy or ADFA. Irrespective of the method of entry into the officer ranks, basic initial training in leadership and management is a fundamental step in developing a young officer.

The main focus of my presentation today is to give you an insight into the leadership and management training provided to cadets at the Academy, whose mission is to develop the best future leaders for the Australian Defence Force. This training is common for all the undergraduate cadets at the Academy, irrespective of the degree they are studying. Although I am no longer Commandant at the Academy, I am still proud to have been a part of this fine program for a short period of time.

To graduate from the Academy, cadets must not surprisingly complete their academic studies successfully. This success awards them a degree from the University of New South Wales in their chosen discipline. Degrees are offered in Arts, Business, Science, Technology or Engineering. For engineers, the disciplines offered are Aeronautical, Civil, Electrical or Mechanical Engineering.

To achieve Graduation Status from the Academy, cadets must also achieve satisfactory reporting on their personal qualities by their Divisional Staff, they must pass elements of training conducted by their parent Services, the Navy, Army or Air Force, during attachments to those Services throughout their years at the Academy, and they must have passed the Academy Military Education and Training Program, the AMET Program, conducted by the military staff during the first three years of their degree.

The AMET Program comprises a broad range of subject areas, three of which I consider to be highly relevant to the preparation of the cadets for their future leadership role. These are leadership and management, equity and diversity, and communication skills, both written and oral.

Other topics covered in AMET which I would not include within the scope of leadership training are drill and ceremonial, military law, defence studies, fieldcraft, weapons training, physical training, customs and traditions, and first aid.

The demands of these programs, additional to the normal university workload, are squeezed into the early mornings, into programmed periods throughout the working day, and into the academic breaks when most students relax and have a holiday. Not so for the Academy cadet. Their day starts at 6AM with rollcall and is followed by either instruction from the Divisional staff or drill out on the parade ground. Drill is a particularly popular activity in the sub-zero temperatures of Canberra's winter mornings. The cadets begin academic lectures at 8AM and most, although not all, are completed by 5PM. Throughout the week, they have approximately 6 AMET Periods interspersed with their academic lectures. For the 95% of cadets who participate in team sport, they rush from lectures to sports training at 5.30PM on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and then play competitively in local competitions, mostly on Saturdays but for some sports this can be on weeknights. The Academy fields over 90 teams in Canberra sporting competitions throughout the year. For many cadets who already have a heavily workload simply from their academic commitments, there are few moments of their week that are not spoken for.

It is through the AMET Program, using a combination of theoretical and practical training, that we develop the necessary knowledge, skills and attributes required by the three Services in their junior officers. Our philosophy is to encourage active participation by all cadets, enabling them to learn from their experienced in a safe and supportive environment, to think through some big issues before the day arrives when they must face them in the real world. We use a combination of reflection and coaching/mentoring to highlight lessons to be learnt and we encourage our cadets to thrive, not just survive, while at the Academy.

Let me now talk in a little more detail about the staged approach we take to leadership training. This is developed over three years, beginning with a focus on operating as a team member, progressing in year two to leading a small team, and finally in year three, to leading a small team in a military environment.

Part of this graduated program is a focus on character development to support the development of leadership skills. This character development program is conducted by the three military chaplains at the Academy and is also developed over three years. Cadets begin by gaining a better understanding of themselves in year one and answering the question 'Who am I?' In year two, they examine the subject of moral leadership and in year three, individual and ethical leadership.

I will now look in a little more detail at what the cadets cover in this training in each year. The theoretical subjects covered in year one comprise five topic areas. Firstly, followership covers taking direction and supporting the leader. The theory of teamwork looks at forming teams and making them perform, analyses the role of team members, as well as issues of team cohesion, team morale, standards of behaviour and team discipline. Learning to be a good team member means respecting and supporting all other team members, not just the team leader. Communications introduces both verbal and non-verbal elements, while problem solving examines several methods, including De Bono's Six Hats Theory for lateral thinking. Learning to be a good team member means contributing ideas and effort towards the overall goals of the team. New approaches are encouraged and innovation in a team is not the sole province of the leader. Finally, planning theory introduces the concepts of prioritising, resource assessment, evaluation of options, timelines and scheduling, and documentation of the plan. This theory is put to practice on the Academy's Leadership Reaction Course to consolidate the learning and in the Leadership Challenge 1 Exercise conducted on the Academy campus, the adjacent Duntroon campus, and the local Molonglo River. Cadets are led in small teams by staff members and participate in such activities as building a raft and crossing a river, appraising a workshop accident and initiating action to treat casualties, or traversing obstacles to retrieve a contaminating substance safely. Having participated in similar staff teambuilding activities, I can confirm that they are both mentally and physically demanding.

At the same time, the Chaplains are assisting the cadets to adapt to a communal living environment, examining issues of conflict management in such an environment, and developing the cadets' ability to better understand themselves through discussions on self esteem, success and peer group pressure. In the majority of cases, cadets arriving at the Academy are experiencing major changes in their young lives. They are living away from home and family for the first time, they are experiencing communal living for the first time, they have become University students and are no longer in the familiar supportive high school environment, they have moved to a new city often thousands of kilometres from home, and they have made the profound commitment of joining a military force to serve their country. This is quite a lot of change to deal with for a 17 or 18 year old. The Chaplains program is one of the key elements to assist cadets through their early days at the Academy.

In year two, theoretical instruction is provided on a number of ways to think about leadership. These are the qualities approach, the principles of leadership, the functional approach and the Hershey Blanchard style model. I will return to these approaches shortly and go into a little more detail. Other topics covered are decision making and

problem solving, team effectiveness, task planning, communicating orders and directing teams.

Looking now at the various theoretical approaches to thinking about leadership, the qualities approach derives from what are considered to be the 11 necessary qualities of leadership as defined in the Australian Army Manual of Land Warfare - Leadership Handbook:

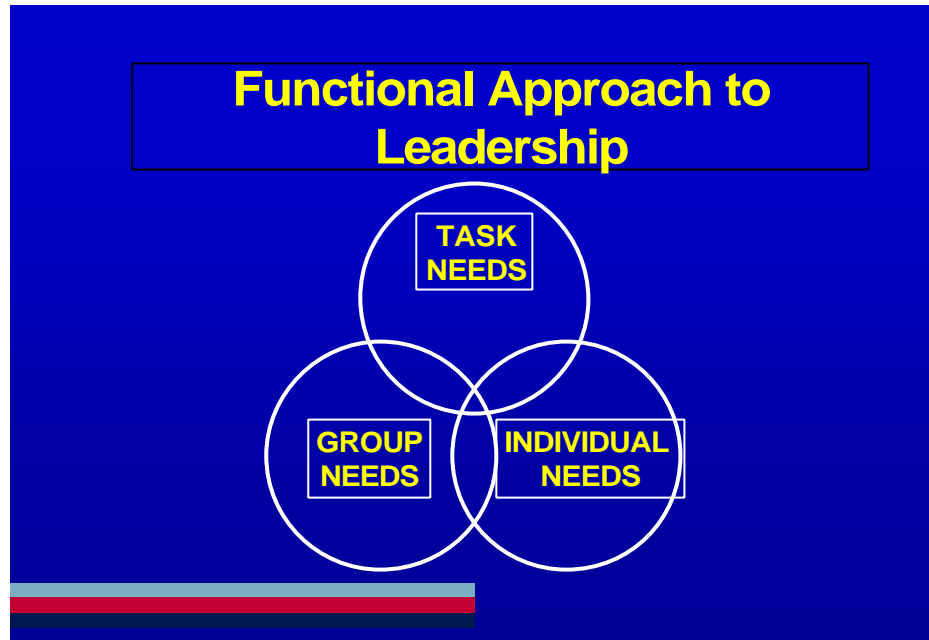
- Motivation
- Courage (Physical and Moral)
- Decisiveness
- Responsibility
- Initiative
- Integrity
- Judgement
- Knowledge
- Loyalty
- Selflessness
- Ability to communicate

This approach is easy to apply, merely by analysing, understanding and emulating another leader's style. However, there is debate over what comprises the most appropriate list of qualities and the process of having that debate is a healthy one. You will note that initiative is listed as a leadership attribute in this and most other lists.

The list of nine Principles of Leadership, also derives from the Australian Army Manual of Land Warfare - Leadership Handbook. They too are open to debate but are a good basis for learning. They comprise:

- Appreciating your own strengths and weaknesses, always trying to improve
- Seeking and accepting responsibility, being proactive
- Leading by example
- Ensuring the task is understood, supervised and accomplished, alleviating ambiguity or potential misunderstanding, ensuring that the Commander's intent is clear
- Knowing people, looking after them; recognising that ultimately they are the means to success or failure
- Developing the leadership potential of people, providing challenge
- Making sound and timely decisions
- Training people, employing them to their capabilities

- Keeping people informed, effective communication is paramount to success. If people are not kept in the loop, they will not be able to think for themselves when required to.

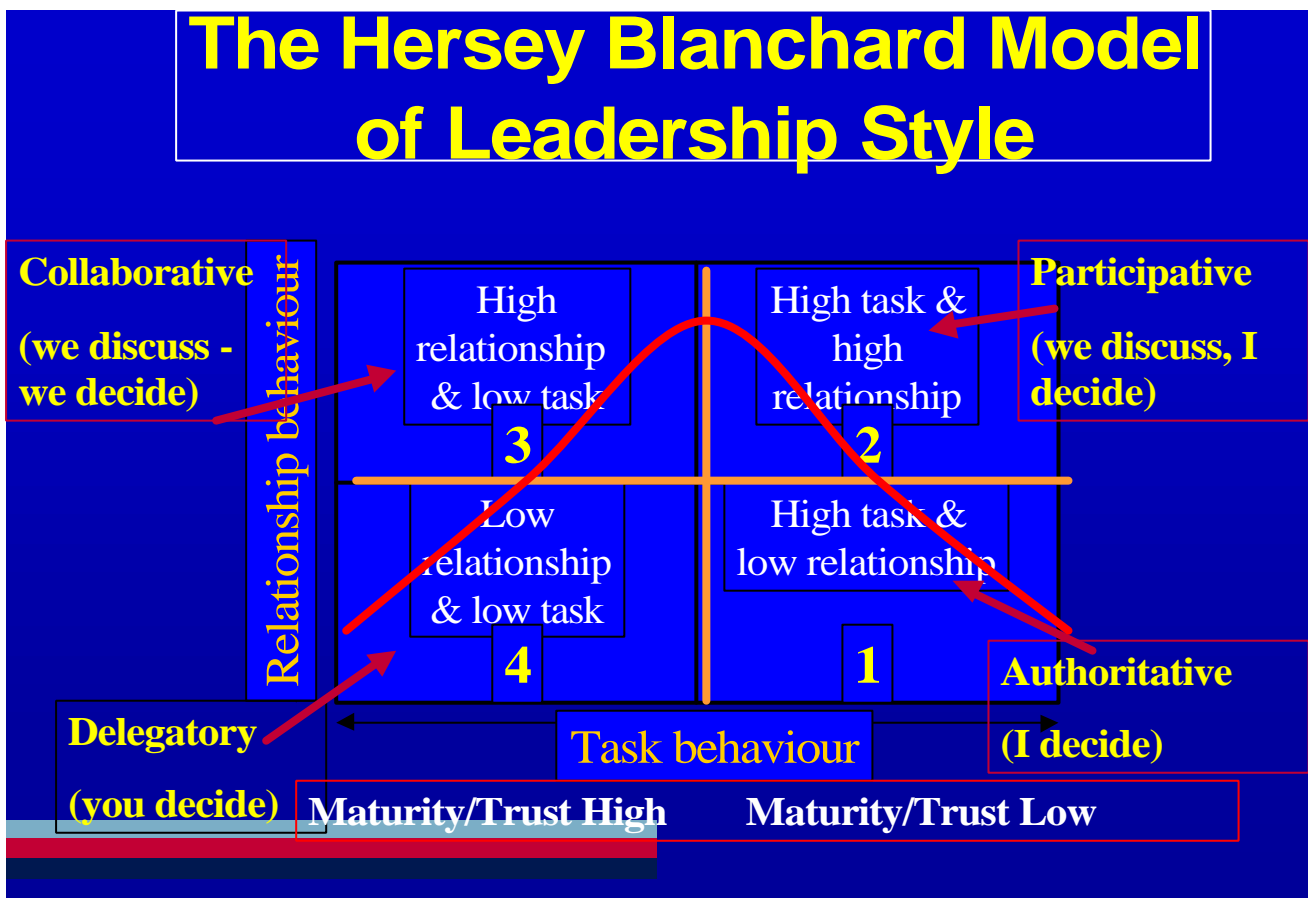


The third approach to leadership is based on a theory of group needs. Members of groups need to be satisfied with respect to task, group and individual needs. Each need exerts influence over the others and a leader must not focus on one need to the detriment of others, but rather shift focus between the different needs at appropriate times. The leader must analyse the situation to determine the needs that exist, their priority and how those needs should be satisfied. In doing this, the leader must identify the task, coordinate and control the team, directing the skills at hand to the task, and ensure that the various needs are satisfied.

The fourth approach to leadership is based on the well-known Hersey Blanchard Model of leadership style. The theory is based on the adoption of different styles by the leader taking into account the development level of the group. It takes into consideration the emphasis placed on task and relationship behaviours in different situations. Task behaviour (or directive behaviour) is the extent to which the leader engages in one-way communication to explain what the team are to do. Relationship behaviour (or supportive behaviour) is the extent to which the leader engages in two-way communication by providing support and facilitation. The mix of these behaviours will vary depending on the 'level of maturity' of the team and to some degree, the situation in which they find themselves. 'Maturity' can be regarded in this context as the general

level of education, training and experience of the group, as well as their motivation, willingness and ability to take responsibility. 'Maturity' should be judged only in relation to a specific task and will not necessary be the same for same group in different situations.

The Hersey Blanchard Leadership Styles fall in the general pattern shown in the diagram.



The style depicted in Quadrant 1 could be described as 'authoritative' and could be characterised by the expression 'I decide'. It would be used when a team has only a low level of knowledge and experience in the task at hand and the team needs and accepts close supervision. They want to be told what to do.

Quadrant 2 with a slightly more mature and experienced group adopts more of a coaching approach to decision-making, characterised by 'We discuss, I decide'. The leader encourages and accepts suggestions and alternate proposals from the team but ultimately takes the decision as the leader.

The leader of the more mature group in Quadrant 3 adopts the 'We'll discuss, we'll decide' approach which works best when all team members are able to contribute towards and share in the activities, taking collective ownership of the decision-making.

Finally, for a highly experienced and mature group, the leader may delegate the task to the group in its entirety, characterised by 'You decide, call me if you need help'. This approach relies on the team accepting the challenge and self-discipline of true delegation and being able to work autonomously. The leader retains ultimate authority and responsibility but acts only in a consultant role when sought out by the team. This approach requires enormous confidence and trust by the leader in the team and concurrently, the team must have the wisdom to judge when they should seek assistance.

We look at all these various approaches to leadership to provide different views and perspectives, different frameworks, to think about the values and behaviours of leaders. The different theories complement and reinforce each other while stimulating worthwhile discussion and debate.

Cadets put this theory into practice once again on the Leadership Reaction Course and in the planning and execution of Leadership Challenge 2. This is a field exercise requiring cadets to live in the bush and practice their fieldcraft as well as their planning, problem solving, communication and directing skills. A range of activities are undertaken in a comparatively benign environment. However, to aid realism, the scenarios are based on real experiences from our military history including World War II (the Kokoda Trail), the Korean War (rescue of a shot-down pilot), the Vietnam War (search of a Vietnamese village), and the Gulf War.

Throughout year two, the Chaplains are again contributing to the personal development of cadets by challenging them to think about and discuss issues of moral leadership and decision making, especially in situations of military conflict which may involve the taking of life. They conclude the year with a three day retreat, colloquially known as CHAPEX, where these discussions are conducted in a relaxed and open environment in the absence of other military staff. The cadets value this activity and many seek a 'fail – repeat' outcome!

At the conclusion of Year Two, a substantial amount of theory and simple practice of leadership has been completed.

Year Three brings all of this theory and practice into a military environment. Theory covers what we call 'command presence', understanding the behaviour of a commander which inspires people to do their best. It covers the theory of very practical skills such

as planning, controlling teams, managing personnel, and understanding relationships both up and down the chain in a formal hierarchy. It addresses some very difficult and complex issues such as morality from a legal military or international human rights perspective. It provides information on such topical issues as suicide awareness. It builds on and enhances earlier theory and gives it specific context.

Year Three also sees the final stage of the Chaplains program of Character Development which complements the leadership training. Topics of discussion cover deployment and world views, morality in the context of military rules of engagement, and situational ethics and leadership.

As before, consolidation of the theory is achieved through practical exercises on the Leadership Reaction Course as well as in the preparation and execution of Leadership Challenge 3.

This Leadership Exercise is probably the most significant undertaking by the military staff of the Academy. It consumes large resources and must be staged twice each year, in May and September, with the support and cooperation of the local landowners and shire officials of Wee Jasper, a small country town nestled in an idyllic valley in the Brindabella Ranges west of Canberra. As far as possible, the exercise is designed to assess leadership abilities in a demanding and realistic environment.

The setting for last year's exercise was in the remote island territory of Bondo in the South Pacific, some 800km east of Bateman's Bay. The topography of the island varies from gentle undulating hills to heavily forested steep ranges. The Goodradigbee River runs down to the east coast of the island and Bondo's capital, Wee Jasper, lies on its banks.

Bondo's cultural mix comprises descendants of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Century shipwreck survivors, mainland Australians, and two local island clans, the Melos and the Bondoans. The local government is dominated by Bondoans. There is a long history of feuds between the Melos and the Bondoans and this has recently erupted into increased violence and atrocities against Bondoans and Australians. The Melos have formed into militias and are now bearing modern automatic and semi-automatic weapons in public. The Bondo Island Government has requested Australian Military assistance to assist in quelling the violence. Because of Australia's heavy commitment of regular forces in many other parts of the world, the Chief of the Defence Force has ordered that a Task Force of about 2,000 Academy cadets, under the command of Major General Snave, is to be despatched to the Island. Inevitably, this situation has attracted

the attention of local and Australian press, who are taking a keen interest in the activities of the militia and the Task Force.

The Task Force operates in teams of 10 armed personnel who patrol on foot. The teams are deployed in the field for 5 days, camping out overnight and living on ration packs. They must abide by Rules of Engagement which have been set by the Chief of the Defence Force, consistent with the political guidance provided by the Australian Government. They encounter 10 different situations over 5 days, with each team member taking the leadership role for one of the half day activities. I will elaborate on a couple of the activities to give you the flavour of the exercise.

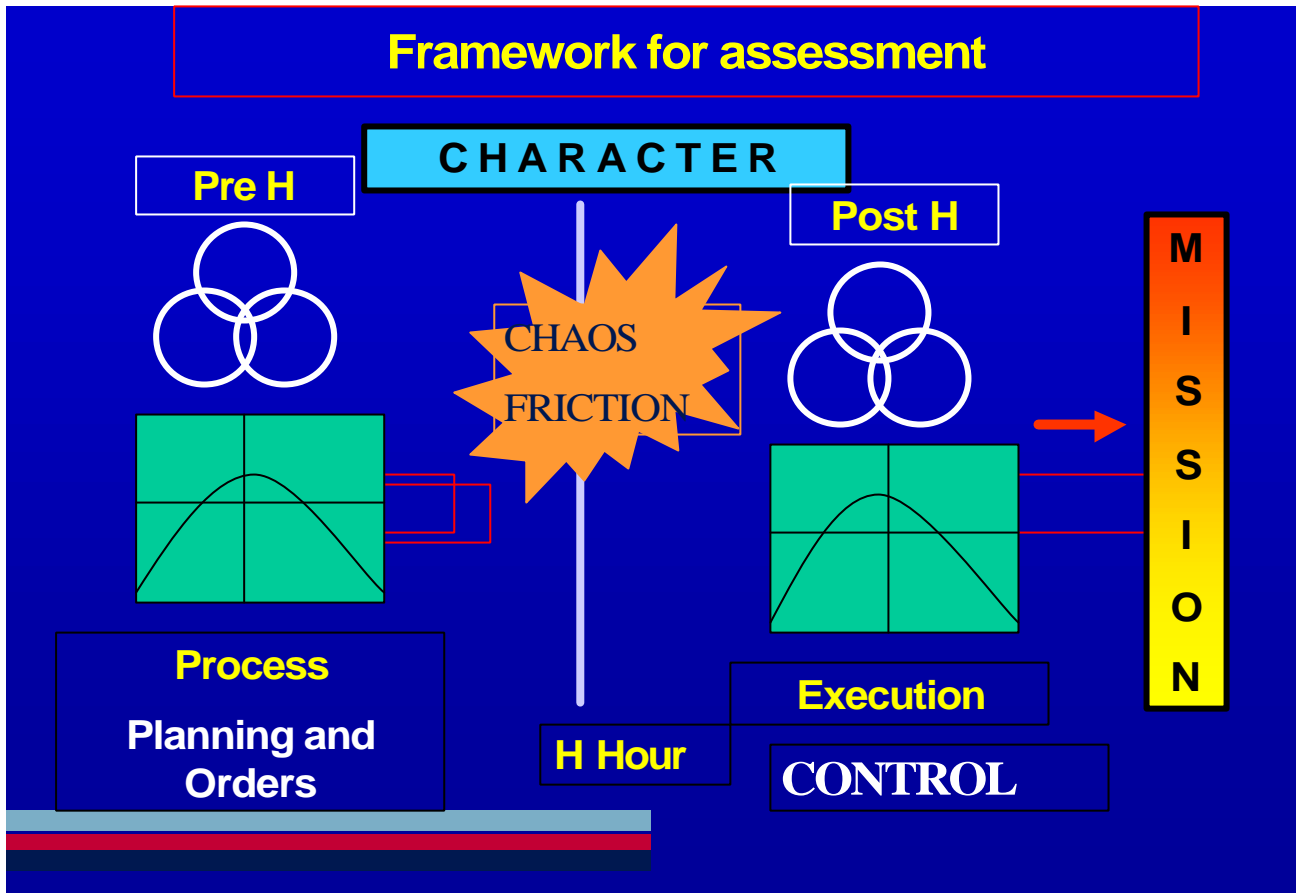
### **Detailed Search**

A team is sent into a village to investigate a confrontation between local villagers and the militia. As well as encountering and dealing with local unrest, the team find a wounded man who must be administered first aid and evacuated to a medical post. They are requested by the village leader to remove some contaminated waste which they must identify, decontaminate and remove, in full NBC suits.

### **Pontoon Bridge:**

In a second activity, a pontoon bridge must be constructed from equipment to be found locally when the esteemed Pope of Bondo needs to cross the swollen river. The Pope is highly revered and widely loved by local Bondoans as his presence brings good luck and prosperity. While constructing the pontoon bridge, a media team arrive wishing to interview the Pope, strictly against local custom, and Task Force members must prevent this without alienating the Press. Concurrently, local militia arrive and wish to use the pontoon bridge themselves. The Task Force must manage these volatile locals without creating danger for either the media or the Pope. Emergencies may arise, such as a local pregnant village woman threatening to give birth. The woman must be calmed and assisted throughout the childbirth. The team leader must manage this complex situation without allowing it to escalate. The media must be managed, the local militia contained, the bridge must be constructed and of course, due care must be taken of the esteemed Pope, a demanding exercise for a 20 year old.

The framework for assessment of each task is based on the various leadership models that have been taught in theory. The qualities and attributes of the leader are noted throughout the task, their consideration of task, group and individual needs, as well as their ability to adapt their leadership style to the group abilities and dynamics.



Debriefing is conducted as a team. The assessor, who does not interact with the team at all during the exercise, facilitates a debriefing session where the leader and the team critique themselves. The assessor adds to the discussion any aspects not identified by the team.

Each leader is assessed on the two stages of achieving their particular task: the planning and the execution. Their planning must not only ensure that they can successfully achieve the task but also it must address the needs of the group and the individuals within the group. Initiative and innovation as well as effectiveness and practicality is encouraged in planning. The mission must be unambiguously defined and understood by the whole team, resources and timelines must be defined, priorities established, options evaluated, goals established, contingencies examined and once the plan is fully formulated, clear orders issued and specific tasks and duties delegated to team members. Each team member must fully comprehend what we call 'the Commander's Intent' as well as the Rules of Engagement. They need to understand the 'why are we doing this' and the 'how are we doing it' as well as the 'what are we doing'. Without this

understanding, team members who become isolated from the leader will be unable to adapt to changes in circumstances or unforeseen events. They will not be able to use their initiative to still achieve the intent of the mission.

During the execution stage, the leader must ensure that standards are set and maintained, concurrent activity is managed and controlled, the team is provided with feedback on progress, situational awareness is monitored and the plan is adjusted if necessary, and importantly, the morale of the team is maintained. A key aspect of the assessment will always be whether the task was achieved or not. In the background, the assessors can dynamically control the execution phase of the exercise. If all is going along far too smoothly, they will inject disruption into the scenario.

The leader is assessed on their ability to act decisively and confidently and to adapt their leadership style to the most appropriate for the situation. Concurrently, each member of the team will be assessed on their ability to be an effective team member, to support the leader, cooperate with other team members, and contribute to the achievement of the overall goal.

Leaders are assessed against the ADFA attributes of adaptability, initiative, determination, integrity and professionalism.

In all, the Leadership Challenge 3 is a massive exercise, conducted for the third year cadets in two rotations of about 100 cadets each for two consecutive weeks in May. A further Challenge is conducted each September for those who could not participate in May. Running the exercise requires about 100 support staff. These are composed of permanent staff members and fourth year and mature aged students many of whom have undertaken the exercise themselves in previous years. They are required to supervise and assess the activities, as well as role play the indigenous local people, the militia, the press and not to forget the highly revered Pope.

Academy cadets complete their military training, including their leadership training, in the first three years of their degree course. If they go on to a fourth year of honours, or if they are completing engineering degrees, we give them their fourth off. They can concentrate almost exclusively on their academic studies and really have an easy time of it.

Our graduates move on into many fields of specialisation across the Australian Defence Force. Many will have a staff of anything up to 30 or 40 personnel straight away. They are required to be competent in their chosen specialisation as well as to manage personnel, many of whom are much older and have much greater life experience. They

are required to lead their teams in their day-to-day support roles in Australia, as well as in the many demanding overseas operational theatres in which Australia is involved: the Gulf, Israel, East Timor, Bali, Afghanistan and Iraq, to mention just a few. By all accounts, I am told by the Chiefs of the Navy, Army and Air Force that these young men and women perform extremely well and are doing Australia proud. I believe this reflect well on both the University of New South Wales and on the Academy staff.

But as we all know, whatever foundations skills we may have engendered in their profession and in leadership and management must be nurtured and built upon through further training, through experience, and through coaching and mentoring in the workplace.

Higher education opportunities are afforded to many individual members of the Australian Defence Force, under full-time or part-time sponsorship arrangements, at many Universities around Australia. The military services are increasingly placing great store on their officers possessing a balanced and liberal education at both undergraduate and post-graduate levels. Such education develops the ability to analyse, evaluate and think 'outside the box'.

The Academy campus of the University of New South Wales has a particular role to play in this regard, offering a range of post-graduate degrees through research as well as through coursework. Not surprisingly, much of the research and coursework is defence related. There are over 800 post-graduate students enrolled in these programs, the majority being serving military officers or Defence public servants.

As well as support for ongoing education, the Services also provide ongoing staff development training for officers throughout their careers to equip them for command as well as for other leadership roles at both middle and senior management levels. We demand much more of our young men and women than simply following orders. At each stage of development, in training and in the workplace, in operations and in support, innovation and adaptability are emphasised as necessary tools for all members of the armed forces. Along with teamwork and self-discipline, they enable today's young officers, sailors, soldiers, airmen and airwomen to cope with the increasingly fast pace and ambiguity of modern warfare, to deal with the vast quantities of available information, and to capitalise on new technologies in the battlespace. Probably more than in any other profession, there is clear recognition in the profession of arms that leadership and innovation are core skills at every level and in every endeavour.