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Voordrachten

Op maandag 9 oktober 1995 organiseerde de Vereniging ter Beoefening van de Krijgswetenschap een bijeenkomst op het Opleidingscentrum Officieren in Breda. De inleider was generaal-majoor P.W. Strik, Commandant 1 Divisie "7 december". Het thema van deze goed bezochte bijeenkomst, waaraan ook officieren van Midden- en Oosteuropese landen deelnamen, was:

"THE NEW ARMED FORCES FOR DASHING OFFICERS"

WHY ME

It should have rung a bell when – last november on the occasion of the presentation of the November letter by the Secretary of State for Defence, Gmelich Meijling, your chairman general Homan tapped me on the shoulder and said that he had read my article in "Parade" - the journal of the Royal Military Academy – and liked it. Actually, he was the first person who dared to confess that he had spent some time reading it.

It was a revised version of a speech, I was asked to present to the officer-cadets of the second academic year of the Royal Military Academy, just after they had finished the course on management theory. Unfortunately they had finished lunch too, so the class reminded me strongly of the years that I had spent there.

Anyway, after reading what I had said, I was not very impressed. To me it had been a very specific mission, for a select group of students and I had just tried to tailor it to the interests of my audience.

I have accepted general Homans invitation because I just cannot say no. Besides, I think it is a very important subject. And he is to blame for me speaking English, as a courtesy to our foreign guests. The thoughts that I ventilate here are my personal opinion.

The second point is that I tend to get carried away by my enthusiasm and subject and that I

use a prepared text only when necessary. I am afraid that - speaking in a different language - I need to temper my enthusiasm and do not get carried away, to prevent me from forgetting the essence of the story.

Other challenges are, that I am not speaking to young dashing officers only.

I must ensure that the older generation also understands the thoughts that I try to get across. So please do not mind my explanations being too simple.

And last, I hope you will not blame me that my experiences are more related to the army than to other parts of the armed forces. I cannot guarantee that the subject equally applies to the experiences within the other services. Please bear with me.

After this introduction I would like to go a little into the part of the new armed forces as part of society. Next I will elaborate on the subject of dashing young officers. I will discuss a couple of challenges with which we will have to cope: challenges of internationalization, jointness, the diversity of roles for our forces, the sensitivities of our civil society and the views on result oriented management. The following topic will be the risks that we are facing, the consequences that result from those risks in order to mitigate the situation, and - I do hope I still have some time left - to summarize it all.

Society

I have always felt admiration for people who could explain to me in what direction the world would develop and why. How could they see the difference between a real development and a phoney one. This was reinforced when I studied at the Army War College in Pennsylvania in 90-91. How the USA was changing both its economy and its culture, family lifestyles as an example. Upon my return I saw a lot of the same changes being introduced in the Netherlands. During my stay, the US army with its allies fought the Gulf War, and knew that it had to downsize after victory.

A man who could observe those and many other developments was Alvin Toffler. He had written books like "Future Shock", "The Third Wave", "Power Shift", and -in 1993- "War and anti-war": making sense of today's global chaos. Actually, what Toffler, a honoured guest at the White House and the Pentagon says, is, that in the stone age there was no organization worth of this name. That the first wave had set in with the agricultural society, like in our medieval times. Some nations still live in this wave. The se-

cond wave was brought to us by the industrial revolution, accompanied with mass production, mass transport, mass labour, mass recreation, but also mass wars with mass killing.

His thesis is that we are now entering a new wave: the information wave, that will influence our whole way of life. Away from standard solutions. More diverse products, to be produced on demand, with just in time logistics, specified to the clients needs. You don't need to go to a factory: you can stay at home doing your telecast-job.

For the military he foresees the end of mass conflicts, mass armies, mass killing and a place for surgical actions and special forces raids to paralyse the enemy. He sees information warfare getting into your opponents decision cycle and presenting him with situations in which he has no options left.

When you look into the Gulf War with its cruise missiles, joint and combined warfare, the role of non-governmental agencies, when you look into training opportunities in the NTC and Hohenfels with Miles equipment, you see that a lot of it is coming true. This was confirmed to me when I participated in the exercise Atlantic Resolve last year, the successor of the once famous Wintex-Cimex series.

In my opinion, you do not need to agree with Alvin Toffler, but you cannot permit yourself to ignore his theories. So there are means to help you to draw conclusions from things that are happening to and around you.

The new armed forces

I could give you figures on the amount of frigates and minesweepers we are going to have, the amount of airplanes and helicopters, and the strength of our brigade-size forces. I will not do so, because it does not say much about the new armed forces. What ambition do they have? How has this been influenced by the re-orientation of our foreign policy. The theory says that a nation's security policy is made up of political, diplomatic, economic, socio-cultural and military components that all should be linked, complementary and in synergy in order to reach the nation's goals. We should be able to conclude this from the Governments Accord for the current cabinet period. However that would be a very short term perspective: four years of a cabinet period.

More on defence policy can be found in the Defence White Paper of 93 that provides us with a vision on the post 1998 period. That paper is a step away from a threat-driven vision for the armed forces toward an interest and capabilities

driven force. Nevertheless, it is not a logical follow-up of the analysis: ends, ways and means, but more a paper towards cashing in the peace dividend and giving all armed services a spear point to keep opposition to the paper in check. Maybe it is the best we could get at that time politically. I am not in the position to judge this, but I prefer to see a more clear vision on the future. Just as a reference: the USA is working on force XXI. It has successfully tested a brigaded-sized force to oppose a stronger enemy and still being able to prevail. It will test a division next year and a corps in another two years, all created to improve situational awareness, effectiveness, operational tempo and synergy.

They even conduct exercises that do away with our traditional S1 to S6 division and deploy a deep battle cell, monitor close battle and execute rear battle.

I do not say that this is the solution. But even if it is not, it will generate enough by-products that will prove to be very useful.

I do trust that 'The Hague' is busy finding a coherent vision towards the challenges of the far away future, and of course I hope that land forces will remain to be an essential part of that solution.

The future

The new armed forces no doubt will have to show more jointness and a greater ability to cooperate internationally. Due to financial pressures we see that where operational factors are not affected : single service management, tri-service management, defense level management or privatization are being introduced.

Many options are open regarding the degree of integration of services. I have no specific background to discuss this topic but it is easy to see that different nations have different solutions to this question. My only remark in this respect will be that we are possibly at the end of what we want to do, but not necessary at the end of what can be done. The real topic should be whether further integration is more effective which, according to George Gershwin, ain't necessarily so, and whether it is going to save money remains to be seen.

But this is a different question from internationalization, which I consider to be self-explanatory: this just must be done. I will dwell on the how later.

Anyway, the nature of the hierarchy to which officers and NCOs in the armed forces belong will change. How? Let's have a look.

Dashing young officers

Again I must admit that - based on my experience - I am only partly qualified to discuss the army. I must be modest in my ambition on this subject.

The smaller armed forces will need a smaller amount of officers.

Many trends occur right here.

1. First we will offer more temporary contracts. For these officers the armed forces have to be a stepping stone for their future civil career. But as an organization, we may profit from them as well. They will be - after their professional contribution - the main ambassadors of the quality we produce. And we will continue to grow in quality with them in their reserve role.

2. Even lifelong jobs may be temporary. Up or out may have a negative ring to it, but this is not necessarily so. The US Army and the UK Army have a lot to teach us on how to handle those aspects.

3. The active officer component could also otherwise be reduced further in the far future. Is it necessary to grow our own brand of legal officers or psychologists? Or do we lease them from civilian society, like we do with directors for the various music bands for the armed services, medical specialists and linguists. Special training can be hired, and - to an extent - need not be shaped from within.

4. Not all faculties can be bought from elsewhere. That's where you come in as a dashing young officer. We need a brand of young officers that will become perfect young professionals by training and experience. After their initial period they will split up into two groups: one that remains to be soldier-oriented, and one that seems to become policy-oriented: they will solve management problems for which a military career in junior posts is essential for success.

5. When I see my young officers in the field, more often than not I am very pleased with the quality I see. They have their own opinion, feel free to express it, participate in discussion and feel free to think about alternative ways. They appear to be less biased by bad experiences. Although in the selection and training of young officers several pitfalls exist, it is my experience that we deliver more individual quality than we used to. And by reinforcing leadership and coaching we hope to lay down the foundation for more professionalism. For example from the dynamics between the platoon commander and

his senior NCO. This interaction is becoming more and more fruitful.

6. Based on that experience, our dashing young officers will be presented with a continuous stream of choices.

A. Do you stay within or - ultimately - leave the army? I have no negative feeling for anyone who uses the armed forces as a platform or individual training opportunity, on the contrary. It is us, the organization, that must be challenged to meet your demands.

B. Do I choose a continued career with the troops or will I enlarge my options. We must be fair to you all. It is becoming increasingly difficult to have a job within the units when you grow older. The pyramid has become extremely flat, and provides very limited opportunities when you get over the hill, i.e. are older than 40 years. This means that the competition gets harder.

C. A further choice will be to broaden your individual training. This will be very difficult while working with the troops because of the many and irregular hours, but nevertheless is very important. Being a trooper in itself - as I explained earlier - gives only limited opportunities for individual development and growth.

I think I can make these points clearer when I discuss the various challenges, you will meet in your years as a junior officer, and afterwards. They all move towards a shift in professionalism.

The challenges

The first challenge I have chosen is internationalism. Maybe this is not so much of a new insight for the navy and the air-force, and some of our army units like the special forces teams, but it will be expanding. A quarter of our professional army officers and NCOs have been involved in a peace support operation. I think that almost all young officers and NCOs will be deployed internationally during various assignments. Some will be relatively easy. Some will be extremely hard, because of the culture shock, experienced in some remote areas or the level of violence or because of the inherent frustration of mission impossible. But even the 'normal' preparation for missions will bring you all over the world due to the increasing international bonds and ties, may it be a new foreign training area or participation in a partnership for peace program.

All this will make your individual life increasingly unpredictable. This again will require a lot of your home base, your family. Not everybody is

able to cope with these uncertainties, and this increases the demands that will be made upon your soldiers.

I consider it a matter of fact that not everybody around you will understand what you are doing, as society will develop in its own various directions in times of peace. You will be outside the society a lot and you must sense the direction society is moving, in order not to estrange from the world your family lives in.

As a consequence of these international postings, you will be brought in difficult circumstances that may require from you a very high level of personality and training. You may be left to your own devices, in a strange culture, that will see you as our nation's or an organization's representative. They will judge you by the way you perform. Be it your negotiating skills, be it your linguistic abilities, be it the discipline of your soldiers. No training will ever be enough to prepare you for all those different situations. In many instances, you will be on your own.

A very good way to prepare you for this will be international exchange, even at very junior positions. You will see that the way you solve problems is quite different from the way they do it in the army you are exchanged to, and discover that there are more ways to do things. There are more and different solutions besides just good and bad.

The second challenge is: jointness. Jointness, the sense of unity between the services within our forces, is not a strong characteristic within our armed forces. The army and airforce cadets used to take a long time to see each other again professionally after finishing the RMA. The officers from the Navy were even more remote, except for the Royal Marines.

Developments are blocking these parallel roads, and force us to more integration, be it the staff courses, be it defense support organizations and - even more - recent experiences of joint teams being sent to e.g. Rwanda and the Island of St Martin in the Dutch Caribbean. Of course, the jointness will further develop with, for example, the cooperation between the air mobile brigade and the tactical helicopter group.

But all these developments seem to be more accidental than part of a devised scheme. If we really want to have jointness, than this must be addressed structurally, as a way of life, a mentality. Training, exchanges, duties in joint staffs should be the rule rather than the exception. It should be institutionalized like it is in the US army. I believe as for professionalism we can develop a quantum leap of progress in this field.

The diversity of roles

The armed forces will be small. On the other hand the roles that they have to perform are manifold. Consequently, the diversity of roles offered to the units will be great. It is not only the diversity within a job, but the wide variety of jobs that may have to be performed, that will matter. It will not be possible to teach all the tricks that come with a job or a task. You will be asked to develop those tricks and techniques yourself. So training must be aimed at the ability to structure your mission and your environment you will have to perform in, in order to enable you to survive.

The army at least does not have much experience in this field. This is made clear when compared to the variety of jobs offered to junior British officers, when they had their colonies, and afterwards as well. A friend of mine, I met when he was posted at BALTAP HQ in Denmark, made a career which brought him to the French Paracommando School in PAU as a liaison officer, brought him satellite tracking on Mauritius, and with the MFO in Sinai. Before, he had performed in an advisory position with the Arab Emirates. Nowadays, you could add links to multinational organizations and liaison to non-governmental institutions. There appears to be no limit.

Sensitivity for the civil society

The army used to have a strong interface with society at large through its implementation of the draft. Most of the male population over 25 years had memories of their own time as a soldier, and the more time had passed, the more benevolent the memories became. Furthermore, through the Reserve Officers Corps, we have captains of industry and politicians that once served their term. That link is going to evaporate and might in the end be comparable to the situation within the Navy and the Air Force. Their public image could not be based on an elaborate network of reserve personnel, they used different ways instead.

Nevertheless, in order to have a regular influx of soldiers, all the services will have to be concerned about the absorption of soldiers returning to civilian life. They need to get employed in order to be able to do their ambassadorial job of enhancing the public image of the services. In this way it will become known that the time within the services was a good preparation for re-entry and a successful career in civilian life, and thus ensures the influx of new soldiers.

On the other end, as society becomes more di-

verse and - in a way - harder, more and more will the productivity of the Ministry of Defense be compared to the productivity of their fellow departments. Politicians will have to decide on the amount of -financial- resources, to be provided for the military.

That segment will be judged by existing political judgements like: is external security of the country at least as important as internal security, i.e. police forces against crime? Are military resources as important as education, old age pension, medical facilities or housing for asylum seekers?

This means that it will be a matter of life or death to the military to be able to show its contribution to society. Not only through jobs done and missions executed. Because of the media coverage it must also be a job well done, and a mission executed in an exemplary fashion. If not, we will be criticised for suboptimalization, chances missed and risks taken too lightly.

Hence, we will have to live with a very critical public and we must be prepared to take our responsibilities and argue our decisions. This requires for a special antenna for what is needed and the way we provide our services. Good may not be good enough. We will have to strive for nothing else but perfection. The difficulty that will arise is that we may have to perform in times of crises or even circumstances of war, but will be judged against codes applied in a society living in peace.

We may feel this as unfair, and may be frustrated by it but I believe it's a matter of fact. Today's heroes may be tomorrow's villains.

We all, and you especially, need to develop the integrity to cope with a complex, volatile, ambiguous and uncertain world. Commanders at all levels will be lonely when they have to act and are held accountable for their decisions. Such is life.

Result-oriented management

The last challenge that I like to discuss with you - the list is by no means limited - is that of the application of management techniques. As society is being re-engineered, there is no way that the armed services can bury their heads in the sand and think that this shower will pass. We will not be asked to economize. We will be forced to do so.

The linchpin may be found in the statement: train as you fight. We will be fighting in difficult, responsible and lonely situations, in larger areas, with a higher operational tempo. With a con-

tinuous flow of information and with the media watching us at every step we take. How can you be responsible in times of war when you have not trained that way in peace-time? So running your shop in peace-time will be your responsibility as well. This will include a lot of organizational, economic, legal and management knowledge which is not necessarily the equipment of the operational commander. It will have to be established how these requirements interact and I will elaborate on that aspect later.

Risks

While discussing the challenges I have come across the risks as a matter of fact. I will select two risks that I believe are the most difficult to handle and therefore are the most dangerous.

The first one refers to the relation between the military, the political domain and the public, with the media as the mediator between those parties. Two recent articles drove me to this.

1. "The lessons from Yugoslavia, Somalia and Rwanda", from the former foreign minister Pieter Kooymans in the "Trouw" issue of September 5, 1995.
2. "The military are loosing their self respect", from the hand of Martin van Crefeld in the NRC of September 9, 1995.

Professor Kooymans states that the UN Charter was founded for interstate conflict resolution. However, the security council passes resolutions that refer to intra-state conflicts: ten out of twelve since January 1, 1992 - he states.

With internal conflicts it is more difficult to determine the aggressor, to assume neutrality, and to apply violence. The idea should be that there is a peace treaty that UN-troops with low levels of armament will observe to be applied. But what happens when there is no peace treaty and the politicians are under pressure from the public - with the assistance of the media - to take action to end the violation of human rights. Maybe the governments also fear the possible influx of refugees.

So they sound the bugle and - against the advice of the military - call for armed forces that will be challenged by all parties to keep a neutrality that their weaponry does not provide for. What does this mean for the military? Srebrenica and its aftermath is still under investigation, so I am not at liberty to discuss this in detail.

For me it is important that it looks like a military action is covered in the press as were it a soccer match, with cheap emotions to serve the reader. How do you cope with this? It is this aspect that

brought Martin van Crefeld to his observation that the military is forced to ultimate self-restraint, and by having to act in such a restrictive atmosphere, to self-hatred.

Like Toffler, van Crefeld predicts the end of big wars of armies against armies, and the growth of terrorist actions and raids of clandestine groups. His thesis is that the rules of engagement are so restrictive and against the employment of initiative that utter frustration is inevitable. His reference is the Israeli Army that got disgusted from the Intifadah and the media coverage to go with it, that condemned about every action any military man would take.

Let's consider this for a moment when it comes to consequences.

The second risk is about result-oriented management in peace-time. This subject has been liberally discussed in a recent issue of 'Carré'. One of the articles I remember was about warriors or worriers.

In itself the economic principle is part of warfare. Economy of force and effectiveness are just some examples. Synergy and just in time are not on the list but sound familiar. So far, we have worked with force ratios and know that concentration of overwhelming power helps to keep the loss ratio down. In itself, the low loss ratio is imperative in order to retain public and thus political support. This gives another dimension to proportionality. I would advocate general proportionality, but overwhelming power in the areas where I seek the decision. You could argue that it is not economic, but I believe it is, although - of course - possibly different from the usual notion of the term.

The danger is more in the differences between managers and commanders. If we are training to be managers in peacetime, how much time do we retain to be commanders in operational and tactical matters. And how are those mentalities going to interact. Right now I have to devote so much time to the development of management contracts and the like, that I have been asked to cut the time I had for training my brigade staffs. I consider this a great sin and it makes me worry about our ability to execute our core-business. In those General Defence Plan (GDP) days you had a couple of days to get into your initial positions and then had all the time to execute the incoming military missions. Now we would have to activate the force, to retrain and equip it, to deploy it to its operational areas and engage in pre-hostility security missions. If it would come to war I would have to seek the decision but would have to boggle my mind already at the

post hostility phase, the redeployment and the de-activation process. Hardly any time for war-fighting in itself. The management scenario would force me - on top of this process - to engage in budgets and new equipments. You might consider this weird. But we did ask 42 Battalion 'Limburgse Jagers' to provide its training plans for 1996 while preparing for deployment to Bosnia. And by the way: could you give me your administrative organization on SDWAO within a one month time frame, please?

Let's make it clear. I am not against the application of management techniques, being a military commander. But I am puzzled by the combination and interaction between being a manager and/or a commander.

It abhors me when I read in "NRC handelsblad" of September 16 under: "New entrepreneurs bring dynamics in Netherlands' economy", Wijnker of Stage Accompany, that sells top of the bill computerized sound systems around the world: "Eskimo in hard winters put grandmother and grandfather outside the door. They have no function anymore".

This total disrespect of civilization, and for the human factor is what appears to me as the distinctive division between managers and commanders. I will have to succeed exploiting the human factor: comradeship, loyalty, leadership, unselfishness. The military is a team based on personal relationships. I cannot do my job with officials, formation places and the like. And I am very very weary indeed on the sounds and murmurs, the coldness sometimes about the human factor. Lip service at best. You cannot run a unit that way. You cannot be a commander using human resources as expendable items. And I fear for any organization that does.

Consequences

You may remember that the first risk I dug out was about the political-military relationship in view of the public and the media. What does that bring us.

I think the consequences in this respect are twofold. May I remind you that I foresaw two types of officers: one that will end in the management spheres, the other one to stay with commanding the troops.

It is reasonable that the consequences are different. I very much believe that there should be close coordination and cooperation between the upper military and political level. Both sides should know or better: be educated on what is possible and what is not. This means of course

different things on the part of the management of the Ministry of Defence and its superior administrators, for the Prime Minister and members from the cabinet, for members of parliament, and for other players in the political field. Perhaps the place of the military is a little bit too much on the side of the playing field from history's point of view. If we want to change that we will have to work on it. What does this mean for your generation: for our young dashing officers.

You will be put in situations of extreme responsibility. With it will come extreme sensitivity. You will be expected to behave in a responsible way. This means that the consequences of what you do or do not do, should be weighed on the criterion of its influence on the senior international and national military leadership and our political head of our ministry. We have some recent experiences here.

This can not be done in a split second, when the moment occurs, or when you are under fire and question yourself, with the 'ROE' in your hand, should I do nothing, or should I shoot back as a warning, or should I shoot back in anger.

This must be taught through training, international exchange, Clingendael courses, lectures, you may even include sensitivity training or Emile Ratelbands neuro linguistic programming. And we will have to select on abilities in these areas. Do you make things happen, do you have impact, do you show balance, are you a personality. So there is something in it for you as well which - apart from being effective in the military profession - does help you in every way. This may be after your military career in a different profession, or this may be as a family member.

The key-players of my division staff, faced with the abundance of changes that are challenging us, went into a long weekend in the Ardennes on "How to cope with all those changes? How to manage these?"

The answer proved to be simple. If you want to change your job, you must change yourself. Now this may sound extremely disappointing to you, however the whole session created great enthusiasm within my team and we all feel much better about it. It is the result that counts, not the way you achieve it. The latter is a responsibility of the team players.

This is not the time to close off ways ahead or opportunities, because they appear to be soft or psycho mumbo-jumbo. We can use everything that will help us and hence have to do away with prejudices.

The second risk I referred to was whether the

application of management techniques will divert us from our real job, to command, to prepare and to train. Of course these threats will work differently on the various levels. The platoon commander will face other challenges than the brigade commander. On the junior level it will be easier to concentrate on the job of command and tactics than it will be on the higher level. Nevertheless, these junior levels will be challenged more than in the past. So - relatively - their job will be harder as well.

When I look back at my own responsibilities as a platoon commander of an infantry and a mechanized infantry platoon it appears to me that the job now is much harder, as I considered my job - with maintenance and the like - more difficult than it was to my predecessors. But I will confess that that is a peace-time observation. Under fire all those jobs would be very difficult for all involved.

Fortunately, the new generation is used to much more data and inputs. To many more techniques than we ever had and I have full confidence that proper selection, training and coaching on the job will assist coping with the current and future demands. However, we must be aware of what should be our level of capabilities and of what in reality our capabilities are and constantly evaluate and search for shortcomings, so that any deficiency can be addressed accordingly.

I trust that we will find a balance on a new required level. On the how for this: that could well be another presentation. I have decided to get a close look at leadership training within the British Army as I know they identified this specific item as a demand to be addressed with great energy.

Summary

I have described that society is changing. How true. I gave you the name of Toffler to assist you in devising where the world and the new armed forces are going. Your role as a dashing young officer will be more diverse than ever. You will have to choose on how to develop your career: be it within the armed forces with the troops or not, or outside the military. It depends on what your family expects from you too. As a young officer you will face more postings abroad, work more often with representatives of your sister services, in a greater diversity of roles and face greater demands from our civil society. And besides being a commander you must be able to manage your job with more professional organizational skills.

I believe that two major risks are involved: one is our relationship with the political leadership and hence with the public and the media. The other one is connected with result-oriented management. The consequences are demands for more military professionalism in this new politically sensitive environment, and the other, especially on the more senior level, the requirement to grasp enough of management techniques, like those applied within the commercial field.

Anyway: how demanding your profession and your future may look: do not forget to enjoy it. Do not forget that you work with people and that your personnel is the difference between being a manager or a commander: as Gabriel said in "Crisis in Command": "People cannot be managed to their death, they can be lead." Although this of course is not the aim, it defines the difference of having or not having your job done under dangerous circumstances. I wish our young dashing officers lots of luck.