Chapter 1 _____

Introduction

AMERICANS ARE WELL AWARE of the example George Washington set for the relationship between the fledgling American state and its military. The image of Washington as victorious military commander grandly announcing his retirement and abruptly departing Annapolis by horse, thereby forgoing any Napoleonic aspirations to power, is indelibly inked in the American psyche.[1] The idea that the uniformed hero would ride away from the army he almost single-handedly maintained and led through the Revolution, *his* army, to return to his home on Mount Vernon, voluntarily relinquishing a very good chance of becoming America's first monarch, was a stunning precedent in American civil-military relations. In this, Washington emulated Cincinnatus and demonstrated how members of the armed forces in America should not attempt to directly translate military power into domestic political power.

Despite his refusal to assume power on the basis of his military position, Washington became America's first president—due in no small part to his military service. The prestige that Washington had gained through his sacrifice during the Revolution was a valuable asset for those trying to determine the course of the new nation. Planning for the Constitutional Convention, Henry Knox and James Madison worked diligently to secure his attendance to lend legitimacy to the idea of a major transformation of government.[2] Washington ultimately agreed and served as the president of the convention. This allowed him to remain above the debate and made him a natural choice for the newly created position of president. Washington thereby set the first example of how military service could still be a valuable asset for elected public office without violating the premise of civilian supremacy.

Since the time of Washington's successful transition from military commander to president, more than a few men (and, increasingly, women) with military experience have attempted to translate their service into political power. And a greater number without a background of military service have tried to draw upon the support of members of the military

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[1] This was the second of his notable exits, the first being his departure from his fellow officers at Fraunces Tavern in New York in November 1783. Ellis, *His Excellency*, 146.

[2] Ibid., 173–78.

as a political asset. In recent years, these efforts have become more acute. As the stature of the military rises, so does its appeal as a political force. However, this basic relationship represents a paradox.

The reputation of the military has steadily increased since the late 1970s.[3] Today a higher percentage of people state that they have "a great deal of confidence" in the military than they do in medicine, religion, the press, or Congress.[4] Much of this gain in prestige has come from the army's performance on the battlefield, as in the aftermath of the first Gulf War, and the rally effect of the attacks on the United States in 2001. But aside from these spikes in confidence during and after armed conflict, there has been a steady increase, which many attribute to the growing professionalism of the American military since the advent of the all-volunteer force.[5] There are many dimensions to military professionalism, but one key aspect has been the apolitical nature of military service.

Military service is fundamentally about protecting the state—not just a fraction of the state. Military sacrifice is implicitly for the greater good and has never been conceptualized as sacrifice for a specific political agenda. This dynamic of representing collective interests over specific interests is among the reasons that people often have more confidence in the presidency than they do in Congress. If we take the example further, we note that the judiciary generally ranks higher than both the presidency and Congress due to its perceived position "above the fray" of most political squabbles, and the military typically ranks above all three branches of government.[6] A significant portion of the military's prestige comes from its reputation as one of the most apolitical American institutions.

And thus the paradox of prestige. The more members of the military build a reputation for apolitical service to the country the greater a political prize the military becomes. As the military gains in prestige, the political backing of members of the military, either implicit or explicit, becomes an advantage in electoral politics. In the view of political operatives, the military is therefore a valuable "prestige vote" whose capture translates into much more than the actual votes of members of the military.[7]

[3] For trends over time, see Torres-Reyna and Shapiro, "Trends." A Gallup poll from June 4, 2006, reported confidence rates for the military, the Supreme Court, the presidency, and Congress at 73%, 40%, 33%, and 19%, respectively.

[4] For a brief overview of trends over time by the General Social Survey, see Schott, "Op-Art."

[5] Nielson, "Civil Military Relations of the US." Also King and Karabell, *Generation of Trust*.

[6] This is clearly a simplification of the dynamics around public opinion and the Supreme Court. More nuanced views can be found in Cummings and Shapiro's "Studying the Effect of Elite Leadership." Also Mondak and Smithey's "Dynamics of Public Support."

[7] Frum, speech to cadets at West Point.

The 2004 election highlighted how central military service and the political preferences of the military can be to political campaigns. Against the backdrop of wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the military service of both presidential candidates was a major component of each campaign. Both candidates aggressively sought to win the votes of military personnel and their family members. Each candidate invited retired generals to speak on his behalf during the campaign and at the nominating conventions.[8] At times it seemed as if a virtual arms race had been initiated as both parties sought retired members of the armed forces to sit onstage behind their candidate.

A decisive moment in this struggle involved retired General Tommy Franks. Fresh out of uniform as the combatant commander for the geographic region covering Afghanistan and Iraq, Franks stepped onto the stage of the Republican National Convention and endorsed George W. Bush for president. This was notable because his endorsement appeared explicitly designed to highlight the apolitical nature of military service and, by extension, the "purity" of Franks's endorsement of Bush. Franks began his speech by noting, "I'm not a Republican. I'm not a Democrat. But I believe in democracy. I believe in America. After almost four decades as a Soldier I've been Independent. But, here I stand tonight, endorsing George W. Bush." He then spent the remainder of his speech talking about war, ending with a reference to George W. Bush not as president but as "Commander-in-Chief."[9] In doing so, Franks translated the reputation of the military for apolitical service into a strong endorsement of the Republican candidate for president.

This dramatic endorsement from a newly retired general and the steady drumbeat of debates over the meaning of military service and attitudes of service members spurred survey researchers to take notice. Unfortunately, there was a dearth of information about the general public's attitudes toward military issues and an almost complete absence of surveys of military personnel. Survey questions about military service largely vanished with the end of the draft in 1973, and comprehensive data on the social and political attitudes of active-duty members of the military were virtually nonexistent.[10] As late as 2000, many surveys omitted military installa-

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[8] General (Ret.) Wesley Clark spoke in support of John Kerry, and General (Ret.) Tommy Franks spoke in support of George W. Bush. General Clark was also joined on stage at the DNC Nominating Convention by nine retired generals and admirals.

[9] Franks, "Text of Gen. Tommy Franks."

[10] One indicator of how little the academic world paid attention to the military during this period is that military sociology consistently ranked last among sociological specialties after 1965. This dynamic was replicated across academia and included history and political science. Rustad, "Review of the Political Education of Soldiers." Coffman, "Course of Military History." Walt, "Renaissance of Security Studies."

tions from their sampling procedures.[11] In 2004 survey researchers scrambled to fill the gap.

The most notable of these efforts were made by the Annenberg Public Policy Center and the Military Times Media Group.[12] Using their extensive database of respondents contacted for the 2004 National Annenberg Election Survey (NAES), the Annenberg Center conducted a special survey of 656 households with an active-duty service member.[13] The Military Times newspapers capitalized on a series of surveys begun in 2003 which utilized their subscriber rolls to identify and survey members of the military. For the 2004 election they were able to survey 1,498 of their subscribers who were also active service members.[14]

These polls from the Annenberg Center and Military Times Company reported significant support for the incumbent Bush and high rates of Republican Party affiliation among members of the military. Of the 372 respondents in the Annenberg Center survey who were members of the military, 47% identified themselves as Republicans and 15% identified themselves as Democrats. The Military Times Company reported that 60% of their respondents described themselves as Republican and only 13% identified themselves as Democrats. Seventy percent of their respondents approved of the job being done by President Bush. These findings were well publicized but did not cause a significant stir, as they appeared to confirm the findings of a study conducted in 1998 and 1999 by the Triangle Institute for Security Studies (TISS).[15]

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[11] This was probably due to the difficulty of gaining access to military installations. Given this military base exclusion, the members of the military whom surveyors typically were able to reach were the older and higher-ranking service members, who are more likely to live off of military reservations. There were not, however, any efforts to target the military or summarize the views of military personnel as a unique subgroup.

[12] The Military Times Media Group publishes a weekly newspaper for each of the four services. These four papers are the *Army Times, Navy Times, Air Force Times*, and *Marine Corps Times*. Hodierne, "Military Times Poll."

[13] The final sample consisted of 372 members of the military and 284 people who were immediate family members of a service member. The average age of service-member respondents was thirty-nine, and almost 50% reported having ten or more years of military service, indicating that the typical survey respondent was much older than the average member of the military. It also appears that at least 129 of the 372 members of the military surveyed were no longer on active duty as of October 2004, although the data on this are incomplete. See the Military Cross-Section Study in Romer et al., *Capturing Campaign Dynamics*.

[14] Subscribers to these types of professional publications can naturally be assumed to have a greater interest in the military as a career than other service members. Respondents to the Military Times surveys in 2004 were disproportionately officers and were older than the average member of the military. More discussion of the Military Times surveys can be found in chapter 9 and appendix C.

[15] For more details on the Triangle Institute for Security Studies' Survey of the Military in the Post Cold War Era, see Feaver and Kohn, *Soldiers and Civilians*.

The TISS project was an attempt to assess whether an attitudinal "gap" existed between the military and civilian populations. The authors of the TISS study were interested in the attitudes of military elites and limited their analysis to midlevel and senior-level officers who were currently attending professional military schooling. The surveys did not include junior officers or the enlisted ranks. However, the study was the most comprehensive analysis of the attitudes of senior military leaders to date, with 723 active-duty service members included in their surveys. The findings of the TISS study appeared to confirm widespread anecdotal evidence that the military had become overwhelmingly Republican, with 64% of officers in the survey choosing to identify with that party. Only 8% identified themselves as Democrats.[16] Although the TISS study is very useful as a starting point for quantifying the gap between the military and society, the project's focus on senior military leaders meant that the TISS survey sample represented only about 6% of the army.[17]

While each of these studies made valuable contributions to our understanding of the social and political attitudes of the military, many questions remain. This book seeks to fill the gap in our understanding of the active military population by examining one branch of service, the army, in detail. Focusing on one branch of service allows for the first in-depth look at the attitudes of enlisted personnel as well as a careful analysis of various subgroups within the service, such as junior officers, women, and racial and ethnic minorities. This analysis is made possible by the first and only random-sample survey of the army that addresses the social and political attitudes of active service members.

Citizenship and Service: A 2004 Survey of Army Personnel

The Citizenship and Service Survey (hereafter C&S Survey) was designed to collect data on each respondent's (1) general attitudes toward the army, including morale, career intentions, and opinions about army leadership; (2) reasons for joining the army; (3) personal attitudes toward social issues and political issues, including foreign policy; and (4) experiences of discrimination and opinions concerning gender and racial and ethnic relations in the army and civilian society.[18] Wherever useful and possible, the

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[16] Ricks, "Widening Gap." For TISS data, see Holsti, "Of Chasms and Convergences," 28.

[17] As of February 2004, majors and above made up approximately 29,000 of the army's 487,000 personnel.

[18] The primary purpose of the survey was an analysis of Hispanic integration in the army. However, the study included questions on attitudes toward foreign policy, social issues, political ideology, and participation. For an analysis of attitudes across races and the state of Hispanic integration, see Dempsey and Shapiro, "The Army's Hispanic Future."

survey replicated questions in existing American national surveys to allow for comparisons with the civilian population.[19]

In addition to gathering this baseline information on attitudes, the survey included extensive demographic information. Survey questions concerning respondents' demographic characteristics focused on data that the army had not normally collected. These included questions on language proficiency, the military service of family members, and the immigration status of the soldiers' parents and grandparents.

Every soldier and officer on active duty whose name was in the army's personnel database as of February 2004 was eligible for inclusion in the survey, with the exception of personnel deployed in combat zones; those in units deploying to and from Iraq and Afghanistan during the months of April and May 2004; and soldiers and officers in a few select ranks.[20] Due to the high turnover and sustained deployment of forces into Iraq and Afghanistan, the exclusion of soldiers currently in a combat zone did not prevent combat veterans from being included. A large number of respondents (375, or 32% of the sample) were veterans of either Operation Iraqi Freedom (2003–4) or Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan (2001–4); and 143 indicated that they had been involved in direct ground combat in the previous two years.

The survey excluded sergeants major and generals due to the small population size of these ranks and the high visibility of generals.[21] The survey also excluded the lowest two enlisted ranks, private E1 (PV1) and private E2 (PV2), because of the very high mobility of these soldiers. Soldiers entering the army generally serve in these ranks for less than a year, spending the majority of their time in basic and advanced individual training before arriving at their first regular unit. The soldiers and officers in the four rank categories just cited make up approximately 10% of the army on active duty, which left 90% of the army population, by rank, eligible to be included in the survey.

The design of the survey sample focused on the dimensions of race and rank and included oversamples of certain groups based on projected return rates. Specifically, the sample included additional white, black, and

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[19] These national surveys include the National Elections Study, the NORC General Social Survey, the Latino National Political Survey, the Chicago Council on Global Affairs Survey (formerly Chicago Council on Foreign Relations), the National Annenberg Election Study, and the Triangle Institute for Security Studies survey.

[20] Potential respondents were randomly drawn from a February 2004 database. Mailing addresses for those soldiers came from a separate December 2003 database, which reportedly contained more accurate contact information.

[21] In analyses that might report on survey respondents from small populations, it may be difficult to protect fully the anonymity of such respondents as required by rules regarding the use of human subjects, to which the C&S Survey conformed.

Hispanic officers as well as additional black and Hispanic enlisted soldiers in an attempt to get close to two hundred respondents in each category.[22] In the end, responses from the basic sample plus the oversample, taken together, yielded a final sample size for analysis of 1,188, including responses from 563 enlisted men and women, 90 warrant officers, and 535 officers.[23] The composition of the final sample, broken down by rank, gender, and race and ethnicity, is shown in table 1.1.

The survey was conducted primarily via mail questionnaires between April 3 and July 24, 2004. Each respondent received an introductory letter that was followed, in sequence, by the primary survey mailing, a reminder postcard, and then a second survey mailing.[24] The last contact was a fifth letter offering respondents the option of completing the survey online. The response rate for the survey was 45% among those soldiers and officers whose mail was not returned as undeliverable.[25] All reported data in this book are weighted to reflect the army population on the dimensions of race, rank, and gender, except where noted.[26]

In sum, the C&S Survey provides a baseline and comprehensive view of social and political attitudes across one branch of military service, the army. This baseline allows for the examination and testing of previous findings based on anecdotal or incomplete evidence. By closely examining the possible determinants of these attitudes and the role of the military in shaping political views it also allows for a clearer picture to emerge of how members of the military form their political views.

The 2004 West Point Preelection Survey

Although the bulk of the analysis in this book focuses on the attitudes of members of the active-duty army, these findings are augmented in chapter 8 with the results of a survey of West Point cadets conducted on the eve of the 2004 election. Data from this survey provide another angle from which we can explore the reason for any differences between soldiers and officers. By examining future officers in precommissioning training, the survey also provides a window into the way the army may or may not socialize its future leaders.

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[22] The six primary groups we wanted to compare were white officers, white enlisted soldiers, black officers, black enlisted soldiers, Hispanic officers, and Hispanic enlisted soldiers.

[23] See chapter 3 for a detailed explanation of the army's rank structure.

[24] Dillman, *Mail and Internet Surveys*.

[25] See appendix A for a full discussion of the survey methodology and how the response rate was calculated.

[26] See appendix A for more details on the survey design.

TABLE 1.1
Sample Breakdown by Race/Ethnicity, Rank, and Gender

	Rank			
Race	Enlisted	Warrant Officers	Officer	Total
White	197	14	209	420
Hispanic	192	32	173	397
Black	130	37	126	293
Other	44	7	27	78
Total	563	90	535	1,188
Male	*432*	*81*	*407*	*920*
Female	*131*	*9*	*128*	*268*

Source: C&S Survey.

The cadet survey was designed using the C&S survey as a guide and covered many of the same topics. The survey also included questions that might inform the way the political and social attitudes of future officers develop. These included questions on the military service of family members, the political affiliations of family members, and the socioeconomic status of cadets' families. The survey also explored the extent to which cadets feel pressure to identify with either of the two major political parties.

The survey was administered through a secure Web site from Saturday, October 30, until 5 p.m. on Tuesday, November 2 (Election Day). Responses to the survey yielded a final sample size for analysis of 885, including responses from 738 men and 129 women. The survey response rate was 54 percent. The survey methodology is discussed in more detail in chapter 8.

This study uses the results of both the cadet survey and the C&S Survey in an attempt to answer the following specific research questions:

1. To what degree is the army different from the American public in terms of political participation and political and social attitudes?
2. What role do demographic differences play in explaining any attitudinal differences?
3. How do soldiers and officers differ in their social and political views, and why?
4. What role does self-selection play in explaining the attitudes of those who join an all-volunteer army?
5. Are civilian perceptions of military attitudes accurate? Is the military rightly perceived as a conservative and predominantly Republican institution?

6. What are the implications of the answers to these questions for civil-military relations?

This study sits at the intersection of several disciplines. It relies primarily on an analysis of opinion data but draws heavily from literature on civil-military relations. The bulk of it focuses on the opinions of members of the army but often analyzes how perceptions of these attitudes influence elite-level interaction and the broader relationship between the military and American society. Likewise, the study of civil-military relations does not fit neatly into any academic discipline but has most often been pursued by historians, political scientists, and sociologists. In attempting to answer these questions, I draw on the previous efforts of scholars in these fields.

This book proceeds with a brief discussion of the history of political attitudes and participation among members of the army, followed by a survey of current civil-military relations literature and its application to this study. Following this summary, in chapter 3 I provide the reader with an overview of the army circa 2004 and an explanation of those elements of army life that are discussed later in the book. The heart of the analysis is in chapters 4 through 8. In chapter 4 I outline the views of members of the army on select social and political issues. In chapter 5 I address the ideological self-identification of members of the army and specifically the conventional wisdom that the army is an inherently conservative institution. Chapter 6 takes this analysis further by looking at the party affiliation of members of the army. In chapter 7 I look at how all of this translates into political activity by active-duty members of the army. In all four of these chapters I examine subgroup differences within the army (mostly between soldiers and officers) and compare the attitudes and activities of members of the army with the civilian population. This analysis of the active-duty army is followed in chapter 8 by an examination of how the army may or may not socialize future officers in precommissioning training.

This book concludes with a discussion of the implication of these findings for the future of American civil-military relations. This discussion also includes an analysis of how the outlook of members of the army may have changed over the last four years.