Leader development top among Army priorities

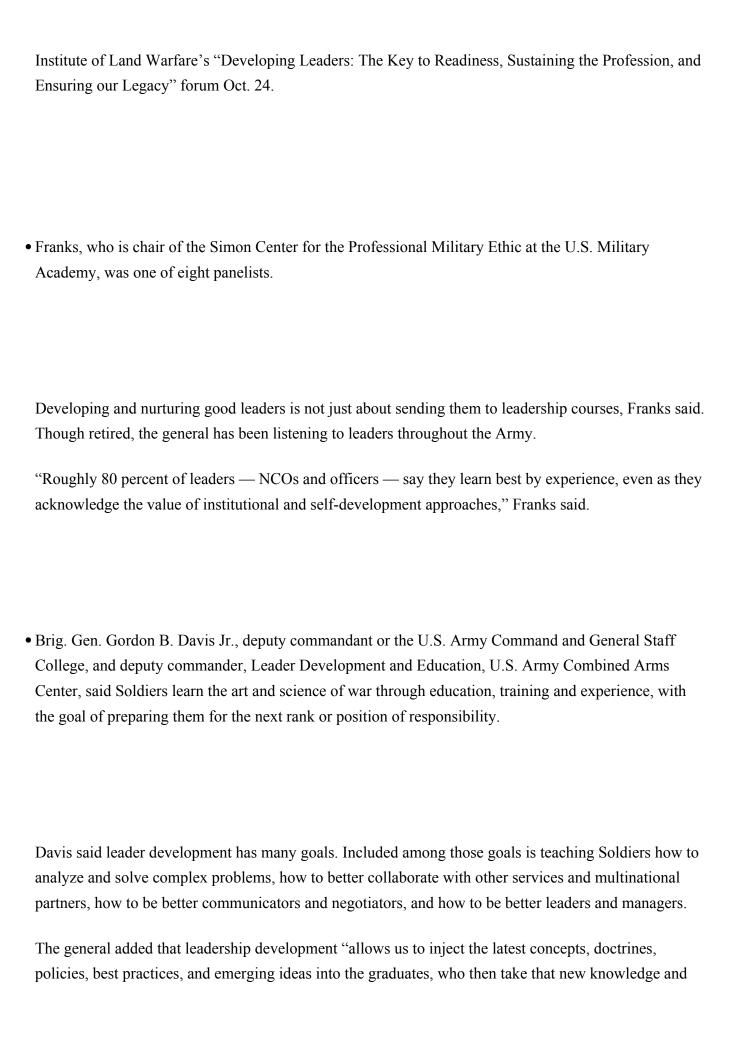
David Vergun, Army News Service

Leader development top among Army priorities

• Soldiers, having experienced the "crucible" of the last 11 years of an Army at war, where "discipline, initiative, freedom of action, adaptability and decentralization" have been the norm, are today "professionally advanced (in leadership) way beyond their years in any grade — noncommissioned officer and officer," said retired Army Gen. Frederick M. Franks Jr.

"The challenge facing us today as we transition is how does the Army keep that goodness (in its leaders) as we deploy less and make do with less resources," he said.

That question framed the discussion that followed, during the Association of the United States Army's



inject it back into the Army, thus allowing us to institutionalize and operationalize change." The Army invests heavily in military education, much more so than businesses and other government agencies, he said.

"Private-sector leaders I've spoken with are surprised (at) and envious (of) the Army's time and effort (spent) in developing leaders for future responsibilities," Davis said.

Leadership education and development outside the classroom is occurring all the time, according to Maj. Gen. Joseph Anderson, commander, 4th Infantry Division (mechanized).

He said such education takes place during physical fitness and battle skills training, in competitive team-building events, and in many other venues, which can take place even when troops are deployed.

He suggested too that Soldiers be rotated — given a variety of tasks and responsibilities — so they don't become stale.

Maj. Gen. Anthony A. Cucolo III said there are two essential elements to leader development while in an operating force environment.

The first of those, Cucolo said, is identifying the sphere of influence — deciding who will develop the leader and have the discussion with him or her.

Secondly, he said, is articulating an end state. That means knowing ahead of time, before the officer leaves a command, what the leader wants that officer to know about, know how to do, or understand.

"In other words, you start with the end state, then build the program," Cucolo said.

Cucolo, who is commandant of the U.S. Army War College, said that end state can't just be driven by a list of events. He said the plan has to include "personalized development sessions" that are discussed one-on-one, not just top-down driven.

All in all, the Army is doing a pretty good job at developing its leaders, said retired Col. Joseph N.G. LeBoeuf, professor of the practice of management, Fuqua School of Business and Coach K Center on Leadership and Ethics, Duke University.

Many who are in charge of leadership development at the best business schools and Fortune 500 companies are former Soldiers, he said.

One of the reasons Soldiers do so well, he suggested, is that they practice transformational leadership as

well as transactional. He defined transactional leadership as simply using people to accomplish tasks and transformational as getting stuff done in the right way — using tasks as leadership development opportunities.
• These opportunities could be anything from providing constructive feedback and rewards to self-assessment and reflection.
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