

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

I've read your magazine for years and generally find it to contain decently written, germane articles on CWMD ideas, concepts, and developments relevant to the CWMD community of interest. However, a recent articles series postulating the Army officer corps is at risk due to a lack of educational foundations in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) caused me to take great umbrage because the article was written by a small group of STEM officers with the apparent purpose of promoting their own biases and interests.

Briefly, the gist of these articles is that STEM foundations are systemically under-represented in pre- and post- commissioning education and professional military education. STEM officers are more suited to understand the changing dynamics of the battlefield, superior integrators of new science and technology, better at dealing with ambiguity, cheaper and easier to convey complex technical data to, and most disturbing, faster and better at decision making than non-STEM officers. The articles also posit that the Army needs more STEM education, more STEM officers, and more STEM emphasis to remain viable in the face of a rapidly changing information-age environment. There should be quotas to increase the number of STEM officers commissioned. STEM officers should be rewarded with superior ratings based on their advanced STEM degrees vice their demonstrated duty performance.

The authors offer tangentially related research on STEM educated business leaders, inferring business CEOs and Army combat leaders are equivalent. These articles begged the following questions. 1) Are current STEM officers selected for promotion and command at lower rates than non-STEM officers? Is the Army short on billets and advancement opportunities for senior STEM officers? Are STEM related departments at West Point, like the Department of Chemistry, being downsized to enable expansion of non-STEM departments that offer more popular and applicable opportunities for contemporary undergraduate studies?

The Army has spent a great deal of time and energy promoting and advancing diversity. The Army needs all disciplines (business, humanities, social sciences, and some natural and applied science) to attain the diversity of thought and problem-solving skills necessary to meet and overcome the myriad of challenges associated with a constantly changing environment. I acknowledge that STEM related disciplines can contribute to but are not, as the articles imply, exclusive for success on the modern battlefield.

- Concerned CWMD Journal Reader

Has one of our articles resonated with you? We'd like to hear your thoughts to spur further discussion about the articles we print. Write to us by letter or email using the addresses on the inside cover of this journal.