Fall Staff Ride 2010

Lori Hammer (MA12)

Early on a September morning, students and professors boarded a bus to Pennsylvania to begin their examination of the 1777 Philadelphia Campaign of the Revolutionary War. Quartermasters Kitty Harvey and Eric Schroeder picked the Philadelphia Campaign to study, because both of last year’s staff rides studied the Civil War and War of 1812.

“We thought it would be interesting to learn more about it. We mentioned it to the faculty, and they were very enthusiastic about it,” Harvey said.

Preparations for the staff ride started in May 2010, and by the time classes resumed in the fall, the research team (comprised of Steve Seabrook, Cara Jones, Rob Cowden, and Emilee Deutchman) had developed the 35 character roles.

“This year’s fall staff ride underscored the importance of strategic planning, and the problems one faces without having a coherent theory of victory,” said Seabrook.

The logistics team of Daniel Schneiderman, Miho Matsubaru, and Gunnery Sergeant Emily Mcleod worked furiously from the middle of August through September.

The first day included stops at the battlefield of the Battle of Brandywine, and the site of the Paoli Massacre. The second day, after a 6:30 AM wake up call, included stops at Pennsylvania’s Germantown, Valley Forge, (continued on page 2)

Is There a Crisis of Morale in Afghanistan?

Rebecca Zimmerman (MA06, PhD13)

Recently Dr. Cohen told me I needed to detach a little bit from the subject of Afghanistan. I’ve spent most of 2010 on a research trip to the country, my second major trip in three years. On this visit I spent half my time traveling the country to interview Afghan police, and the other half supporting a program of village-based security. I’ve been fortunate enough to spend a lot of time in Afghan district and police centers and speaking with everyone from privates to two-star generals on the NATO side. In true SAIS fashion, the bulk of my experiences have been with American Special Forces and Marine operational units, but I have also spent significant time with conventional U.S. Army units.

Since this is a Strat crowd, I will spare us discussion of the tragedy in progress that is Afghanistan and focus on something at once more personal and more scholarly. My experiences this year have raised profound questions about just where truth lies in the fog of war. The war is going poorly, yes, but in ways I fear could be more troubling than the current voices suggest. What I see up close appears to be a crisis in morale, a combination of loss of confidence in military and political leadership and of war fatigue. Then again, perhaps this is all normal. Operation Enduring Freedom is my only war. So how do I know whether I am seeing a crisis with serious ramifications, or whether this is simply soldiers exercising their God-given right to complain? How can I tell whether their commanders in Kabul are critically out of touch, or simply not sweating the small stuff?

My direct experiences tell me something is terrifyingly wrong. Pessimism about Afghanistan isn’t new. What worries me is the air of desperation I hear now, fighters’ lack of faith in their commanders’ ability to make things better, and paranoia that they will not be supported by those commands when their lives hang in the balance. I’ve lost track of the (continued on page 4)

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and dinner.

At each location, it was the students and the characters they portrayed that brought the history to life. Great costumes included Conor Halloran as General Cornwallis in a red coat with gold yarn epaulettes, and Dan Katz as Baron von Steuben in a stuffed jacket and wearing a paper version of the Star of the Order of Fidelity.

The line-up of characters also included some tough roles. Tom Rickers as Benedict Arnold had a difficult line of questioning as he tried to defend his character’s treason. One of the liveliest discussions on the trip was prompted by Marco Calderon’s defense of British General Charles Grey, who was responsible for the midnight bayoneting of 150 sleeping American soldiers. Calderon posed a controversial question: was the general’s attack an act of savage brutality or was it a fair, wartime tactic?

Three of this trip’s presentations were considered to be so outstanding that they won an award for best performance. Raven Bukowski won for her portrayal of the Marquis de Lafayette. Laura Shen won for her portrayal of the British Lt. Colonel Musgrave, and Calderon won for his portrayal of General Grey.

Professors Eliot Cohen, Thomas Keaney, John McLaughlin, and Thomas Mahnken acted as observers and asked questions. Did the average Continental Army soldier understand and relate to what he was fighting for? If General George Washington had died at Valley Forge, would the Americans have won the war? While challenging, these questions are really what the staff ride is all about – getting students to think about the past critically.

“I was impressed with the other students’ presentations. Military history can be dry but with the fun presentations it was anything but,” said Raven Bukowski.
SAIS Professors Participate in the QDR

Prof. Thomas Mahnken (MA89, PhD97)

Between April and July 2010, two members of the Strategic Studies faculty served on the Congressionally-mandated Quadrennial Defense Review Independent Panel. The 20-member panel, chaired by former Clinton administration Secretary of Defense Bill Perry and former Bush administration National Security Advisor Steve Hadley, included former senior officials from Democratic and Republican administrations as well as retired senior officers. Ambassador Eric Edelman served as a member of the panel, and Professor Tom Mahnken served as Staff Director of the panel’s Force Structure and Personnel sub-panel.

Rather than arguing that the United States should curtail its global role to fit a shrinking defense budget, the Independent Panel argued that the United States must do more when it comes to national defense if we are to continue to play the international role we have and pursue the interests that have animated American grand strategy since the end of World War II. These include the need to defend the American homeland; assure access to the sea, air, space, and cyberspace; preserve a favorable balance of power across Eurasia that prevents authoritarian domination of the regional and providing for the common good globally.

The report noted “a significant and growing gap between the ‘force structure’ of the military — its size and its inventory of equipment — and the missions it will be called on to perform in the future.” The panel’s members were particularly concerned that the force structure outlined in the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review “may not be sufficient to assure others that the United States can meet its treaty commitments in the face of China’s increased military capabilities.” The report called for an increase in U.S. force structure in the Pacific to counter Chinese military modernization, noting, “A robust US force structure, largely rooted in maritime strategy but including other necessary capabilities, will be essential.”

The Panel’s 20 members, who have served Democratic and Republican presidents alike, agreed that “The [U.S.] force structure needs to be increased in a number of areas, including the need to counter anti-access challenges; strengthen homeland defense, including cyber threats; and conduct post-conflict stabilization missions. It must also be modernized.” They called for an increase in the size of the U.S. Navy, the acquisition of a next-generation bomber, and new long-range (continued on page 6)

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Adjunct Professor Added to Strategic Studies Program

The program is proud to announce that we have been able to add Dr. Paula G. Thornhill as a faculty adjunct instructor to teach the course in American Defense Policy, beginning in the spring 2011 term. She brings with her a remarkable background, with superb credentials for teaching this course.

Dr. Thornhill’s day job is the Program Director of the Project AIR FORCE Strategy and Doctrine Program at the RAND Corporation, a position she took a year ago after retiring for the Air Force as a brigadier general.

As an Air Force officer, she taught at the Air Force Academy, served as Dean of the Faculty at the National War College, special assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Principal Director for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and Commandant of the Air Force Institute of Technology. She has a B.S. from the U.S. Air Force Academy, an M.A. in history from Stanford University, and a D.Phil. in history from Oxford University. We hope to have Dr. Thornhill not only teach this course, but also take part in other Strat Program activities.

She has fashioned the course to look particularly at the links between American foreign and defense policy; the key actors at the NSC, the military, Congress, the intelligence community, and independent commissions; and at issues such as contractors on the battlefield, civilian control of the military, and creating defense policy under demanding economic and international circumstances.

Above: Dr. Paula G. Thornhill, who will be teaching American Defense Policy.
Crisis of morale? (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

the number of nights I’ve sat up with
warfighters trying to explain that the
models for counterinsurgency dictated by
the leadership simply did not work in real
villages with real villains. I watch them
speak in carefully crafted half-truths be-
cause the real story is darker than what
leaders want to hear. At the same
time, soldiers are afraid that when
they really need help, it won’t ar-
rive because of the extreme risk averse-
sion shown by rear echelons. When a
friend in one of the worst parts of the
country says, “tell
me the truth, am I wasting my time?”
how can I answer him? And when two
days later he and his entire unit are al-
most killed, what do I do?

Active duty recruiting and retention num-
bers are all at or above their targets this
month, just as they’ve been every month
for years. Am I just imagining things?
As I adjust to being home the emotions of
deployment seem almost embarrassingly
alarmist. Small units bond through a
feeling of siege, often to include one im-
posed from above. In every army, in
every war, there is anger toward rear
echelons or, as the Germans dubbed
them, Ettapenschweine. Today’s forces
often call rear echelon soldiers fobbits
(because they never leave their Forward
Operating Bases), a far milder term than
REMF (Rear Echelon Mother-F***ers)
used in the Vietnam War. The disillu-
sioned old soldiers I’ve spoken with may
be subjecting their recollections to the
sort of gruff romanticism that is not un-
common to the military, or their compari-
sions may be to a simpler time. Younger sol-
diers may just be grappling with a timeless
truth: that sacrificing one’s life for the
military most often comes in the form of
spent youth, failed love and lost idealism.

So, is there a crisis of morale among
those serving in Afghanistan or in the
American military more broadly? Even if
morale is abnormally low, does that im-
 pact the conduct of the war? Are soldiers
right to feel hopeless, or do their com-
manders truly have a better perspective
on whether things are working? After
nine years of fighting in two major wars
and other, smaller engagements, it would
not be ridiculous to suggest that some-
thing unprecedented is happening here.

If so, this could profoundly affect both
the future of the Afghan war and of the
institutional military, and could pro-
foundly alter the lives of those returning
home from Afghanistan.

Faced with questions I cannot answer, I
seek context from my SAIS colleagues.
Tom McNaugher, a mentor of mine
whom many know as an adjunct profes-
sor, shared his experiences in Vietnam
and the special difficulties that come of
losing friends, not while pushing to vic-
tory, but in staving off defeat. Sidney
Kwiram (MA07) spent six hours in a
coffee shop with me, recounting her ex-
periences in Mozambique and Iraq and
the difficulty of bringing the experience
of war home to a world that one feels
cannot understand or care. And Steve
Grenier (MIPP06) remains my wise
counselor and the brain I wish I had on
all things Army. But I know that there
are other SAISers out there who have
asked themselves these questions. I in-
vite any alums out there with personal or
analytical perspectives on this issue to
share their insights with me
(srzimm@gmail.com) and perhaps with
each other. The problem of morale in
today’s military is a serious one, deserv-
ing of considered attention. Collectively,
I believe your thoughts can provide con-
text and direction, and perhaps the begin-
nings of the scholarly detachment Dr.
Cohen has ‘suggested’ I cultivate.

Alumni Dinner 2010

Orianna Scherr (MA07)

On October 21, alumni, students, faculty,
friends, and family gathered at the
Willard InterContinental Hotel for the
third iteration of what has firmly become
the annual SAIS Strategic Studies
Alumni Dinner.

Thanks to the continued efforts by Nadia
Schadlow (BA88, MA89, PhD05) and
Tali Wenger (MA08), the evening was a
success with alumni reinvesting in and
recommitting to the Strategic Studies
Program. Similar to a downtown version
of our former Friday afternoon happy
hours, only in business suits, the crowd
wasted no time swapping stories about
careers, adventures, deployments, and
Strat nostalgia.

During this opening remarks, Professor
Eliot Cohen announced plans to resume
the alumni summer staff ride program.
Dave Fuhrmann (MA 82), Alumni Coun-
cil Chair, thanked alumni and friends for
their continued personal and financial
support for the program. He was fol-
lowed by LtGen (USA, ret.) Dave Barno,
currently a Senior Advisor and Senior
Fellow at the Center for New American
Security. After a few Chuck Norris
jokes, LtGen Barno, drew from his and
his children’s experiences in the military
to offer insights into challenges and op-
portunities for maintaining the supremacy
of US forces. He engaged alumni and
students in a candid discussion following
his prepared remarks.
For the second straight year, the Phillip Merrill Center for Strategic Studies hosted the National Security Analysis and Intelligence Summer Seminar (NSAISS) at SAIS in Washington, D.C. The course, designed by Merrill Center Distinguished Practitioner-in-Residence John McLaughlin (B66', '66) and Merrill Center Executive Director Tom Keaney, brought together 40 undergraduate, graduate and Ph.D. students from all over the country for an intense two weeks of classroom instruction, simulations and site visits covering the intelligence profession and its institutions in the hopes of attracting talent to this career path.

Sponsored by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (DNI), NSAISS attendees were chosen by the DNI from among 500 to 700 students from schools nationwide. Selection criteria included GPA, foreign language capability, diversity of experience and background. Forty languages were represented among attendees including Arabic, Farsi, Hindi, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Russian, Urdu and the Romance languages. Sixty-one percent of the students selected were women.

Highlights of the seminar included visits with former directors of the CIA George J. Tenet and Michael Hayden, and John Brennan, assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism. Acclaimed journalists and authors Martha Raddatz of ABC and Steve Coll of the New Yorker spoke on the role of the media in illuminating national security issues and their relationship to the world of intelligence. Field trips included visits to the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, the National Counter Terrorism Center, the State Department Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Capitol Hill, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Central Intelligence Agency and the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency.

The seminar included presentations by other SAIS faculty members, including Director of the China Studies Program David M. Lampton, speaking on Sino-U.S. relations; Merrill Center visiting scholar and former Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Eric Edelman, lecturing on intelligence and policymaking. Lastly, Keaney and Merrill Center visiting scholar Thomas Mahnken (PhD 99) led a simulation of intelligence gathering around the 1941 attack at Pearl Harbor using declassified intelligence and open source material from before the attack. The two also led a battlefield analysis at the site of the Battle of Antietam of how intelligence affected that battle.

Already the seminar has brought tangible results in the form of attendees who have been hired by agencies within the intelligence community, some from the class who completed the course in July 2010.
Alumni News

Erin Schenck (MA07)
eschenck@gmail.com

I recently saw John Kenkel (MIPP07) and his wife, Marka Peterson, who stayed with me in early December. John and Marka brought their son, Noah Jehtro Johnson Kenkel, born on June 24. Following their visit, all three moved to the UK, where John has been assigned to AFRICOM at RAF Molesworth.

Also, I recently returned from a trip via Frankfurt, which allowed me to visit with Kristin Carlucci-Weed (MA07) and her husband Josh. I met their new daughter, Amelia Grace Weed, born in July 2010 in England, just prior to their move to Ramstein AFB, Germany. It was great to see Kristen, Josh and Amelia, and we spent a great day at the Frankfurt Christmas Market before I caught my flight back to DC.

Steve Ricardi (MA06) and his wife, Emma, are happy to announce the birth of their second child, Francesca Marie, on October 17, 2010. Both mother and baby are doing fine, and their oldest daughter, Madeleine, is adjusting well to the new addition.

Eric Jaffe (MA07) recently moved to Marlyebone High Street, London, UK, and is working at Gerson Lehrman Group as a Research Manager in their Energy and Industrials practice.

Alex Pascal (MA07) married Amy Born, his roommate while he attended SAIS, on October 17, 2010. He figured that if she could put up with him while he was at SAIS she could probably tolerate a lifetime with him as well. A sizeable SAIS classmates were in attendance, including several who came from far off lands: Mirentxu Arriveaga, Kristie Canegallo, Anthony Diaz (UAE), Eric Jaffe (UK), Mara Karlin, Brendan Kelly, Josh Marks, Erin Murphy, Henry Nuzum (UAE), Kate Phillips, Kevin Riley, Melita Sawyer and Prof. Eliot Cohen.

Mark Chadason (MIPP05) was named by ManTech International Corporation as a Senior VP for Special Programs and Risk Management. Mark retired from the CIA earlier this year after a distinguished career in which he served as Chief of Station in European and North African locations as well as the Deputy Chief in Iraq. In his new position, Mark advises ManTech’s Board of Directors and executive management on risk mitigation for reputation, operations and legal concerns as it continues to provide mission-critical support to customers worldwide.


QDR (cont.)

(Continued from page 6)

strike systems. They also acknowledged that although the Defense Department must do everything it can to achieve cost savings on acquisition and overhead, “substantial additional resources will be required to modernize the force. Although there is a cost to recapitalizing the military, there is also a price to be paid for not re-capitalizing, one that in the long run would be much greater.”

The report also tackled the sensitive issue of the Defense Department’s rising personnel costs, noting that “A failure to address the increasing costs of the all-volunteer force will likely result in a reduction in the force structure, a reduction in benefits or a compromised all-volunteer force.”

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