

Senior Service College Fellowship Civilian Research Project

STRATEGIC BLACK OFFICER CAPITAL INVESTMENT: INCREASING COMPETITIVENESS FOR GENERAL OFFICER

BY

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USAWC CIVILIAN RESEARCH PROJECT

**STRATEGIC BLACK OFFICER CAPITAL INVESTMENT: INCREASING
COMPETITIVENESS FOR GENERAL OFFICER**

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ABSTRACT

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This analysis seeks to explain why the number of African American officers becoming general officers has stagnated around seven to eight percent. As the minority population of the U. S. increases, the senior leaders of the U.S. Army should be reflective of its population. A comprehensive human capital strategy encompassing diversity is essential to balancing key leader demographics. By increasing the African American talent pool at the point of accessions and managing an officer's career for 25 years, the Army can achieve greater numbers of top level minority officers. This research paper will examine successful programs focused on underrepresented populations which enabled the Army to recruit and subsequently access more talented, college-bound African Americans. My research will also assess which elements significantly influence minority candidate's decision to serve, where to serve (which Army branch), and how the Army can shape these decisions. The Army must strategically attract, educate and mentor blacks through a holistic human capital management program to: reach a swath of untapped African Americans, develop and manage talent, enhance strategic diversity and ultimately increase the number of senior black officers capable of serving as general officers (GOs).

STRATEGIC BLACK OFFICER CAPITAL INVESTMENT: INCREASING COMPETITIVENESS FOR GENERAL OFFICER

The Army is a subculture of identifiable traditions and possesses a strong national presence. Diversity is critical to the organizational effectiveness...

—Congressman Elijah Cummings¹

Increasing the Number of Black General Officers

The Army's human capital strategy must produce leaders who are reflective of its organizational demographics and include the multitude of cultures within the United States. Corporate America has successfully implemented diversity programs that increased African American management representation, achieved greater productivity and improved creditability among its employees.

Research suggests that leadership accountability, education, military accessions programs, and early mentorship set the conditions for future officer competitiveness. A comprehensive outreach program is essential to showing the United States' minority population that there are fair "opportunities" in the military for young, talented African Americans. Compulsory

Diversity of thought, experience, and background are needed in the complicated, strategic framework for the national defense strategy. Diversity at the top "signals independence, creative thought, opportunities for break-out strategies and an open-mindedness on the part of the company—traits that are increasingly important as external factors such as globalization and heightened competitiveness impact the marketplace.² Equally important to embracing the multiple ethnicities within our states, commonwealths and territories, is the ability to understand, engage and work within the strategic framework of cultures around the world. Leaders should reflect the Army and

the nation it serves; “it’s not just about counting heads; it’s about making heads count.”³ The Army must go beyond the simple numerical accounting (percentage) measurement of African American officers; it must assess where and in what capacity the senior officers are serving their country.

The historic roots of determining the appropriate percentage of Blacks serving in the Army was initially set at 10 percent since it reflected the Black population in 1940.⁴ Over the next 30 years, the black population will increase from 13 percent to at least 14 percent, and the Army’s goal for African American general officers should be reflective of this number.⁵ If this goal is appropriate, then it necessitates an increase of more than 14 percent in officer accessions to achieve national parity at the general officer level.

The United States armed services fully instituted military desegregation less than 60 years ago. During the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Army began the comprehensive equal opportunity and racial awareness policies and programs that minimized race-based injustices through education and training. These policies and programs endured because of external organizational pressure and leader commitments. Long term commitment is essential to increased African American senior leader competitiveness; it takes over 25 years to develop an Army general officer. A program to accomplish this remains a priority among the Army’s senior leaders with guidance and adequate resources to maintain transparent opportunities and cultivate talent.

This paper will review the historical perspective of African American soldiers, focusing on officers, serving in the United States Army and how equal treatment and opportunities evolved over time. What must the military do to influence behaviors and

shape positive perceptions of the Army officer corps? Accomplishing this task requires building awareness through outreach initiatives, reaching the underrepresented American populations, and improving educational preparations. The Army's interaction among minority organizations and community based centers are necessary to reinforce opportunities, leadership and education both before and after Army service.

Nevertheless, there are many challenges facing minority youths that confound the Army's ability to recruit and retain African American officers. There are a number of barriers to obtaining and developing college educated African Americans.

While there is a significant African American population that does not remain in high school, the Army can provide legitimate alternatives to reach the swath of untapped minority talent? There must be a holistic review of the accession's processes that supports the Army's ability to recruit and educate young African American officers. At the time of this research Congressman Elijah Cummings proposed convening the Military Diversity Leadership Commission to: "conduct a comprehensive evaluation and assessment of policies that provide opportunities for the promotion and advancement of minority members of the Armed Forces, including minority members who are senior officers."⁶

My research does not necessarily separate African American men and women officers. However, the most recent graduation trends support a discussion between the genders since African American women are completing their degrees at a higher rate than men.

There are a many studies, monographs and research papers describing the problem of the lack of diverse senior leadership presence in the Army and across the

Department of Defense. Many of those findings remain relevant today. They included: understanding the opportunities available with an Army at war and the opposition to it; failing to prepare or complete post secondary education; lack of knowledge of the benefits of a military supported education; selecting a branch within the Army that places an officer at a numerical advantage for promotion; and embracing mentorship early to guide an officer's decision making. Although the military has changed dramatically in 100 years, over the last 20 years African American officers serving in the Army have remained steady at 12 percent; therefore, the Army must increase the number of African Americans accessed each year in an effort to increase black representation at the senior officer level.⁷

“We must sustain the strength of character that is the heart of our armed forces. It is a strength that comes from the remarkable diversity of the citizens we protect. As always, first class training and elite leaders will be imperative. We must continue to emphasize and improve diversity of our military across ethnic and gender lines, especially of the officer corps”⁸

If the U.S. Army is to increase the representation of African Americans among the senior leadership, it must put procedures in place now because it's going to take a long time for those efforts to succeed. General William Ward, the first and only four-star African American Combatant Commander, was nominated by President George W. Bush to command the newly created U.S. Africa Command in 2007.⁹ His education, experience and training supported this selection. For a generation less familiar with General (Ret.) Colin Powell, General Ward can become a known beacon of opportunity for young African Americans through senior leader outreach programs

Once the Army has achieved appropriate diversity balance at the junior officer level then the mentoring and management efforts can consistently provide more viable African American candidates who will have a competitive “opportunity” at the senior

officer level. The Army's Human Resource Command has revised the officer human capital strategy to meet the emerging global requirements. It is important to recognize that senior Army leaders' commitment to diversity is viewed as an investment in human capital, and mission readiness. Since it takes more than 25 years to develop a general officer, results of any Army's development won't be seen until 2040. The Army's human capital investment strategy must increase senior black officer representation through a larger pool of talented African American junior officers.

Defining "Talent"

For the purposes of this paper "talent" is the amalgamation of characteristics that form a "high potential" individual defined by the Corporate Leadership Council as "someone with the ability, engagement and aspiration to rise to and succeed in more senior, critical positions."¹⁰ At accessions, the Order of Merit List (OML) model measures three attributes: Scholastic, Leadership and Physical.¹¹ This model assigns a point value to each category and subcategory to determine the numerical order of merit standing relative to other ROTC cadets.

Synthesizing these two models—Corporate Leadership Council's Model of Employee Potential and the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) Order of Merit List (OML) model—would outline elements of an ideal cadet. The refined model defines "talented" officer attributes exhibited as a cadet (Figure 1).¹²

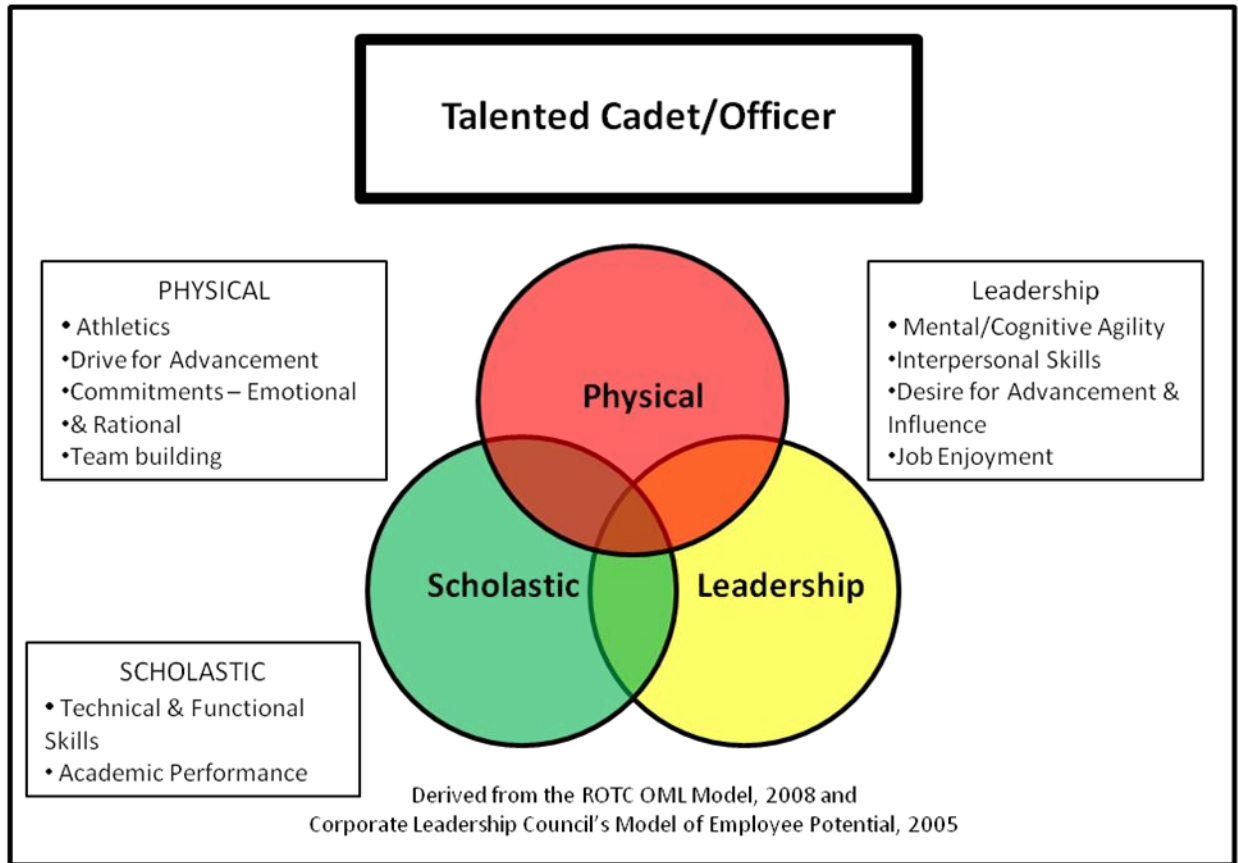


Figure 1. Talent Attributes

At the overlapping point among the three attributes is the high potential (most talented) cadet or newly commissioned officer. Through additional education, military training and experiences, this high potential officer is poised to serve as a general officer. Before articulating a progressive methodology focused on African American senior officer representation, it is prudent to review their service and the struggle for opportunity and equality.

Civil War to World War I

As the nation allowed black soldiers in the Army, the introduction of African American officers was relatively slow with the Louisiana militia containing most of the commissioned officers. About 100 African American officers served with Union forces during the Civil War, but external to the black militias, they were only surgeons and chaplains; blacks accounted for 14 percent of the Army population, but sustained 20 percent of the casualties.¹³ African Americans required military training and an environment promoting a sense of equality before standing along with their white counterparts.

“The war witnessed the advent of an era of new educational opportunity for blacks, and the army played a major part in providing education to its black enlistees. Thousands first learned to read and write in army schools conducted by Northern civilians, army officers and enlisted men, chaplains, and wives of officers.”¹⁴

The years following the civil war witnessed very few changes among the color of the officer corps. In 1802, United States Military Academy (USMA) West Point opened, but 74 years passed before the first black cadet, Lieutenant Henry Ossian Flipper graduated. The War Department forced the USMA to accept African American cadets since it wanted to create a small contingent of black staff-officer cadre.¹⁵ The only alternative to maintaining a viable, educated officer corps was through West Point; therefore, black cadets were given the same, quasi opportunities littered with obstacles at every turn. “Only twelve of the twenty-two passed the West Point examination, and only three managed to overcome four years of social ostracism and a host of other tribulations and discriminatory obstacles to graduate from the Academy.”¹⁶

Henry Flipper’s tenure as an officer was short-lived. After returning from a stint with the 10th Cavalry and subsequently while serving as the commissary officer at Fort

Sill, Oklahoma, he was found guilty during court martial proceeding for actions unbecoming a commissioned officer. It would take more than 100 years before Lieutenant Flipper's conviction was officially pardoned and he received the honors so richly earned. Although groundbreaking, West Point didn't graduate another black cadet until ten years later.¹⁷

The Army continued commissioning enlisted soldiers, but only if they could pass the required examination at a time when educational opportunities for blacks were limited. Few officers were transferred from the state militia to the regular army serving in the same capacity; usually at a lower rank. States assumed minimal risk by assigning African American officers to positions in segregated units. Some governors replaced the African American leadership when their state militias were called upon by the War Department, but the systemic racial divisions remained deep-seated in the South and carried over to combat operational formations. The War Department neither educated nor trained African American officers within the regular Army and by the end of the war, blacks continued to serve, but not lead.

The post civil war period and the advent of a new era changed the Army's position on African American military service. The emergence of the Buffalo Soldiers and two black regiments controlling frontiers against uncivilized Indians provided junior black officers leadership experience under fire. During the early stages of World War I, African American officers became relatively stagnant. The military establishment disapproved of senior African American officers. It was weary of the war facilitating success of a senior officer through their positive leadership in combat and earning a senior level promotion. Without the experience, the promotion would not occur.

Unfortunately, in May 1917, the only remaining African American USMA graduate, Colonel Charles Young, was retired by a medical board for high blood pressure just before reaching the rank of general officer.¹⁸ He, like other African American officers, endured and overcame discrimination and hardship despite accolades of honor and selfless service. As a true patriot, he answered the nation's second call as it brought him back to active duty for "five days before the Armistice was signed." Later, he served in Illinois and overseas in Liberia. Although Colonel Young merited promotion to general, the white-dominated system prevented him from reaching that level. Neither the country nor President Wilson was ready for a senior African American officer. It would take another 40 years and another world war before an African American eclipsed the rank of colonel.

In 1917, black leaders and organizations wanted black officers leading black soldiers. As World War I continued, the War Department increased the number of officer training camps to meet that demand, but black candidates' admittance was forestalled. There were strong stances for and against establishing separate officer training facilities for African Americans and their arguments were equally justified. Blacks could not receive equal treatment at the currently established camps and "Negro camps" would continue the furor of discriminatory separatism, but it was the only alternative.

"NAACP [National Advancement for Colored People] lobbied for these separate training facilities to bolster the number of trained and qualified Army officers. The War Department agreed, but from within its ranks, a challenge of finding two hundred college students was levied. By May 1917, the Central Committee of Negro College Men (organized at Howard University) had enrolled fifteen hundred members."¹⁹

The passion drawn from this movement ignited African Americans to serve as a commissioned officer. For the first time on October 14, 1917, the War Department had commissioned 639 black captains and lieutenants. However they had limited responsibilities and little or no chance for promotion.²⁰ During this period there were only three black infantry field grade officers: one colonel and two lieutenant colonels—Colonel Frank A. Ducan, Lieutenant Colonel Otis B. Duncan and Lieutenant Colonel Ollie B. Davis, respectively.²¹

For nearly 20 years after the World War I very little progress was made. It was nearly a half century later that USMA graduated another black cadet, Benjamin O. Davis Jr. His endurance and self fortitude propelled his 39 year career. Lieutenant Davis' graduation was an enormous success, however, by 1939, the War Department only had five black regular Army officers: three chaplains and as well as Davis Sr. and Jr.²² The next world war would precipitate a sizable African American officer expansion in segregated units developing a small pool of capable leaders.

World War II

There was little movement forward on desegregation and racial equality before the United States entered World War II even though many senior military leaders looked more favorably on improved race relations and the abilities of African American officers. The Army remained divided and African American officers served in segregated black units. The 366th Infantry Regiment was initially led by a white commander with all subordinate African American officers predominantly from Howard and Wilberforce ROTC programs. Of the 132 officers, 128 had completed college; some attained masters and doctorate level degrees.²³

The new order meant organized racism and segregation had become an integral part of the peacetime army. Within the black regiments, field grade officers met the duty prerequisites for top leadership positions but were not given the opportunity to serve. Only after continued outcries and external military lobbying, African Americans were given a command position earned many years before. After intervention from “civic groups, political groups, the Negro press and members of 366th,” COL Queen, the first black commander of the 366th Infantry Regiment, finally reached the pinnacle of his career in 1941.²⁴

The Army, along with the other military services, moved slowly to resource and increase the capacity of African American officers. Every potential opportunity was met with resistance. The black regiments were slowly dissolved or changed designation from cavalry and infantry to support related functions that left many junior African American with no enduring leadership opportunities. The roots of slavery and Jim Crow laws meant that the South transported bigotry and hatred to the Army. Several black organizations and leaders engaged President Roosevelt to permit blacks to serve in a greater capacity than ever before.

During World War I, blacks had shown their ability to serve honorably with good leadership among both white and black officers. As the peacetime draft unfolded, the black community seized this opportunity to move equally forward, if not in the South at least within the armed services. “An NAACP memo urged that Army officers be assigned without regard to race...and that black civilian assistants be assigned to the secretaries of the Navy and War.”²⁵ Without a senior, cabinet level member who

understood the cultural dimensions of segregation and inequality, a legitimate voice for the underrepresented Army population was absent.

Under President Roosevelt's command, the War Department defined the Army's policy as limiting the number of African American soldiers to proportionality to the number of black citizens; establishing combat and support units; and permitting eligible officers for candidate schools. Overall, the War Department didn't see fit to change the fundamental conditions of the past. Of the 776 general officers serving in the Army during World War II only one, Brigadier General Davis, was black.²⁶

As significant strides were achieved, whether through broad policies or individual extra-ordinary accomplishments, institutional racism stifled intelligent and highly successful officers. "The army's segregation policies, coupled with the Jim Crow laws vigorously enforced in communities surrounding army post in the South, ensured separate and unequal treatments for blacks."²⁷ The sentiment resonated for years as African Americans struggled for equality within the military. As the Army began slow integration policies, African Americans were alienated by white officers whose attitudes and practices reflected the larger civilian society. Army unit leadership forced isolation upon its African American officers by limiting their social interaction with white officers.

This situation exacerbated poor race relations and advanced misguided perceptions. Over thirty years later, Brigade General (Ret.) Remo Butler wrote "It's understandable that white officers have difficulty empathizing with the situation of a young black officer. Many white officers, perhaps most, have never participated in a social event where a majority of the participants were black."²⁸ Attitudes and perceptions are difficult to change, even over time, but key Army senior civilian leaders

can mandate policy changes from the top. The most senior member of the armed forces is the commander in chief, the president of the United States.

Korean War

President Truman's executive order 9981 (1948):

“It is hereby declared to be the policy of the President that there shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed services without regard to race, color, religion, or national origin. This policy shall be put into effect as rapidly as possible, having due regard to the time required to effectuate any necessary changes without impairing efficiency or morale.”²⁹

The United States, its Army and African American enlisted men and officers hailed a new era of equality. Three years after the executive order, Cadet Roscoe Robinson graduated from the United States Military Academy destined to become the Army's first African American four star general. President Truman's executive order confronted racism but not segregation; therefore the armed services, including the Army, slowly implemented profound changes. Black leaders throughout the country—national black organizations, communities and the prestigious newspapers and college students—called for African American representation and opportunity throughout the Army without support from the Army senior leaders.

The Korean War necessitated armed forces desegregation, but African American officers remained greatly underrepresented because of previous policies and attitudes. The country, especially the Southern Congressmen and Senators and the War Department, refused to fully embrace the notion of African American officers progressing through the ranks, even based purely on their merit. The President's executive order wasn't enough to sway the hearts and minds of the armed forces senior leadership, including the Army's senior military and civilian leaders. It would take at

least two more years before the Army achieved any, tangible desegregation inroads. Forced to operate within support-like functions with limited responsibilities, African Americans officers had not performed the prerequisites for advancement. These discriminatory practices fueled a systemic promotion process that would diminish African American promotion for a generation. Although African Americans wanted to serve in positions of greater responsibility and authority, including combat units, when they served on the front lines, the casualty rates were high further complicating future recruitment efforts within African American communities.

Despite the constant reminders of second class citizenry, a small group of officers defied the establishment by not accepting their plight and rose above the negative accounts of African American officers. By 1962, the Army had only six African American colonels, but promotion board members remained all white and failed to reflect the emerging officer population.³⁰ The confluence of Truman's executive order, a few African American USMA cadets, the Tuskegee Airmen and HBCU ROTC graduates set a stage for future African American officers and their ability to compete more equally than ever before. The elusive notion of "opportunity" is the catalyst that ignites the talented officer's career "success" energy from potential to kinetic when guided by a few senior mentors and confidants.

Vietnam

By the time U.S. forces began supporting the Vietnam Campaign, the Army had the highest percentage of African American officers. Junior officers experienced limited service and the senior officer numbers had not appreciably changed. "In 1962 there were 3150 black Army officers, or 3.2 percent of all Army officers; a decade later there were 4788 black officers, but this was out of an officer corps that numbered more than

150,000 men and women, meaning African Americans still made up less than 4 percent of the total.”³¹

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the escalation of the Vietnam War brought unprecedented “opportunities” to African American officers. “Of the 380 combat battalion commanders in Vietnam in 1967, only two were black.”³² By 1968, COL Frederick E. Davidson, later retired as a Major General, became the first African American brigade commander in Vietnam leading 199th Light Infantry Brigade.³³ Although the officer ranks were steadily growing, the lack of critical positions had subjugated African American officers to non-career enhancing assignments. Only a few, seemingly hand-picked officers were climbing the career ladder. Without key experiences, officers lacked the appropriate qualifications for senior Army leadership positions and any expansive “opportunities” were relatively closed.

African American mid-career officers were alienated on several fronts complicating their acceptance across the Army. African American enlisted soldiers had expressed limited respect, especially when the officers hadn’t openly expressed equal opportunity concerns. African American camaraderie through mid-career combat arms officers was particularly difficult. A few senior officers weren’t dutifully acknowledged by black organizations because they didn’t openly express discontent with the Army’s equality policies. “Throughout his tremendously successful career, Lieutenant General Davis was never viewed by fellow blacks as a ‘racial reformer’ to aid black officers and enlisted personnel. Davis had few black friends and was rarely honored by black organizations.”³⁴ In 1969, the Defense Department under mounting racial problems began incorporating institutional race relations programs and education. Additionally,

USMA admitted 45 African American cadets more than five times the number from the previous year.³⁵

This generation of emerging African American officers endured racism, overlooked promotions and the appropriate assignments. The rise of the Black Panther movement, the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. and the anti-Vietnam protests left African American officers in a sociological quagmire. "Compensating for 'dead-end' assignments and slow promotion rates, African American officers were often forced to become, in the words of one writer, 'super-soldiers.'"³⁶ Overcoming obstacles had been a mainstay for African Americans. Change came when military officials created opportunities and forced change from within the Army.

1970 to Present

As the Army entered a new decade in 1970, winds of change were stirring. The Army had ROTC programs on 14 HBCUs which produced a large number of officers for the Army. The 1972 Command and General Staff College (CGSC) graduating class was less than four percent African American officers.³⁷ Although a comparatively small percentage of African Americans annually attended the military college, this was important because these ambitious field grade officers bonded and forged lifelong relationships fueling their future careers.

In the aftermath of Vietnam, the Army had a contingent of highly successful African American officers who experienced unique opportunities and assignments. Historically Black Colleges and Universities were graduating a substantial number of talented African American officers who were motivated by patriotism as well as greater opportunities and a keen sense of parity in the Army as an institution. During the Vietnam War, many company and field grade level officers earned their promotions and

had their leadership potential adequately and properly assessed. The doors of “opportunity” began to open and several rising African American officers earned the privilege to command large Army organizations. With competency and acute understanding of the Army system, equal opportunity was becoming a reality.

As the armed services worked to remedy previous injustices, the Army began the task of properly weighting officers on their current merit over previous possibly prejudicial evaluations. As society grappled with affirmative action, the Army took bold action in an effort to truly level the playing field, which had been severely skewed against the minority officer. MG Davidson, the first African American brigade commander during Vietnam, later became the first African American division commander in 1972. At the field grade level, more opportunities led to increased number of potential candidates across the officer spectrum, even though a small number of African American officers served in the combat arms branch. Although many roadblocks remained, keen leadership kept open the doors to “opportunity.”

After the appointment of the first African American Secretary of the Army in 1977, Clifford Alexander Jr., he continually questioned the general officer board results that did not include African American officers. During his four year tenure, African American general officers quadrupled from eight to thirty.³⁸ LTG (Retired) Julius Becton became the first African American officer to reach the Army three-star level in 1978. From 1970 to 1980, the Army promoted 28 African Americans to general officer. In the preceding 30 years, the Army had promoted only two.

ROTC recruitment had stepped up at HBCUs but ROTC units closed at other colleges following Vietnam War protests.³⁹ After review, the Army reduced its

dependence on the Officer Candidate School (OCS) program, since its expansion provided officers for Vietnam, but not based on attending post secondary education; the Army wanted officers from colleges and universities.⁴⁰

Because of combat leadership experiences throughout the Korea and Vietnam wars, and new and unprecedented opportunities, the 1980s witnessed many firsts in the Army. These “first” were encouraged by Army senior leadership in combination with a growing cadre of highly qualified African American officers:

- 1980, Major General Vincent K. Brooks, first United States Military Academy, First Captain
- 1984, General (Ret.) Roscoe Robinson Jr., first four star general (West Point Class 51; platoon leader, Korea War; Battalion Commander, Vietnam)
- 1987, Major General (Ret.) Fred A. Gorden, first West Point Commandant of Cadets (West Point Class 62 , Battery Commander and Battalion S3, Vietnam)
- 1989, General (Ret.) Colin Powell, first Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (Senior Battalion Advisor, Assistant G3 Operations, Deputy G3 Operations, Vietnam)

General (Ret.) Powell and Major General (Ret.) Gorden believed affirmative action was important to their careers. In a recent article former Secretary of State and retired General Powell expressed that “every promotion was a blessing and a reward for my performance.”⁴¹ Equal performance should equate to “equitable” advancement.

By 1991, U.S. Forces Command, commanding all state side Army forces, had its first African American officer, developed as a junior officer in the fields of Vietnam as a platoon leader and company commander, General Larry Ellis permeated another glass

ceiling. Achieving the general officer rank was difficult but not insurmountable for a handful of African American officers. The Army required more black commissioned officers to achieve greater racial balance at the senior rank. Historically Black Colleges and Universities were producing a large contingent of African American officers.

In 1996, operating in 20 schools, the Army accounted for over two-thirds of the total African American HBCU enrollment in ROTC programs (3,057), with 220 African American graduates of HBCUs accounting for nearly 75 percent of black commissioned officers from all HBCUs. Army HBCUs accounted for about 46 percent of all Army African American officers commissioned through ROTC.⁴² Opportunities through ROTC, improved race relations, and senior leader involvement created an atmosphere where many talented officers reached their potential.

Leadership and Accountability

Leadership and accountability are defined by the Army's senior leader commitment and accountability to improving minority, African American, officer representation across the force. In the corporate domain, the chief executive officer is accountable to its board members; for the U.S. government, the Army is accountable to its civilian leaders.⁴³

Throughout history, as the Army leaders' mindset changed, society's ethical fabric transitioned too. Leadership is the quintessential element of moving the African American representation forward and demonstrating a lasting commitment to the nation as a whole and the organization—from a conceptual strategy to tangible results. As such, corporate leaders view diversity principles as their responsibility. The Defense Business Board listed leadership and accountability as the number one item in its executive summary and noted that "the CEO must incorporate this commitment into the

corporate strategy, culture and values. In addition to the CEO's leadership, responsibility for diversity in "best-practice" companies is seen as a line-management responsibility, not as a Human Resources (HR) staff program or initiative."⁴⁴

With oversight from the Army's senior civilian leadership, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, the ADO can refine and complete their Diversity Campaign Strategy that mitigates systemic equal opportunity impediments. The ADO needs the resources and coordination authority to influence manpower assessments. The ADO can reach across Army commands, both operational and institutional, in a coordinated fashion and synchronize resources and priorities for improved African American outreach initiatives.

As an individual's circumstances change, especially lowered job availability, communities are more open to engagement. The Army reached a milestone in 2009, by meeting every enlisted recruiting goal since the beginning the all volunteer force. It's widely known that recruiting goal attainments have an inverse correlation with the U.S. employment rate—as the unemployment rate climbed, Army recruiting goals were met.

Since the Army is competing with the other services and with every other company striving for talent, our systems must work in concert with the Army's human resources managers for assignment transparency and accountability. Just as our constitution provides for checks and balances, diversity programs must have a viable and enduring accountability component enabling senior officer assessments of parity and barriers. The diversity program must provide a means to measure and receive feedback directly from the field to the Army's leadership. The ADO has delineated the Diversity "Accountability and Commitment" goal in its top spot.

Goal 1: Accountability and Commitment

*Implement accountability measures to assure leadership commitment to diversity and inclusion practices at all levels of the Army.*⁴⁵

Attracting and retaining high quality, diverse talent requires leadership commitment, the establishment of priorities, realistic objectives, a comprehensive assessment mechanism, and supporting policies and practices. Army senior leaders must ensure diversity is viewed by all service members as a top priority and provide resources needed to accomplish goals. The Defense Business Board asked the Under Secretaries for Manpower and Reserve Affairs to draft diversity principles. The ADO is now reporting directly to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs (ASA M&RA).

Historically, senior civilian leaders have championed equal opportunity through their United States Code, Title 10 responsibilities governing personnel policy oversight requirements. Former Secretary of the Army, Honorable Clifford L. Alexander Jr., precipitated the advancement of African American general officers during his tenure. The Army remains at the forefront of showing diversity within the Department of Defense, but the U.S. Navy has demonstrated an strong commitment to minority marketing and outreach. The Army must review its marketing strategy and institution racism that disfavors African American officers.

African Americans began serving the nation before they were acknowledged as citizens. The genuine opportunity to mitigate past injustices and achieve success was advanced through the armed forces. The Army was on the cutting edge of societal and social-economic changes. Numerous senior leaders, including presidents, demonstrated leadership in the face of tremendous opposition from senior military

leaders from the Civil War through the Korean War. The Army led all services by adapting to change and it has continually outpaced the other services in demonstrating its support for minority initiatives. However, over the last few years, the U.S. Navy's minority outreach program has gained momentum through its senior leaders. They are poised to increase the number of naval officers and increase the number of competitive African American officers for admiral by 2035-2040, although their disparities in the number of African American flag officers are much wider.

The Army has maintained a steady rate of promotions over the last 10 years. Affirmative action and personal interventions at the most senior level paved the way for officers such as General (Ret.) Colin Powell and Major General (Ret.) Fred Gorden, but the ranks of our African American general officers have not significantly increased while potential opportunities abound. By Oct 09, blacks comprised just below eight percent of the total active duty general officers.⁴⁶

Without conscious intervention from the Army's senior leaders, including implementing ADO initiatives, the Army won't achieve increased African American general officers by 2040. The simplified measure of merely counting minority numbers is over, now the Army enters the era of "making heads count." Opportunity is visualized through the eyes of officers seeing exactly who is positioned above them and the significance of their leadership position.

Through outreach and community based programs, with oversight from the ADO, the Army can infuse leaders in underserved, underrepresented areas and increase the available talent. The Army has provided opportunity through education and leadership. A sturdy career foundation begins with a sound educational based.

Education – “Opportunity”

During a White House Policy briefing, the Education Secretary, Arne Duncan, described education as “civil rights movement” of the modern era. Through outreach events—national and community based, communications about the benefits of becoming an Army officer and improvements in college preparation and completion rates, the number of potential Army college cadets can grow.

As a part of the Army’s coordinated strategic outreach, community centers offer sustained engagement by integrating community awareness with the Army’s officer commissioning programs, college aptitude requirements, and tangible opportunities that come with military service. Community center and after school program investments provide a means for military mentors to engage underrepresented populations through these local initiatives. Parents, family members, youth mentors, community leaders and other influencers participate in these gatherings.

Research suggests that among lower income minority communities, decision making was conducted within a social context. Two independent surveys confirmed that the greatest top influences for those college bound students entering the post secondary education system were their immediate family members, parents or guardians (Figure 2).⁴⁷ Nearly 50 percent of the Alcorn State University

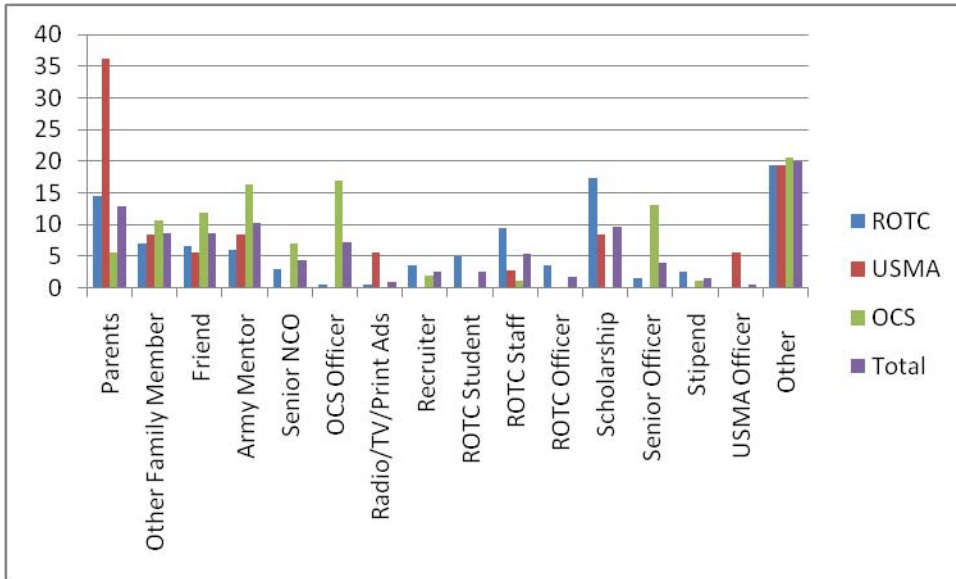


Figure 2. Army Survey 2009

ROTC cadets confirmed that their contiguous circle of friends, family members and confidants, were the most influential group.⁴⁸ Therefore, these influencers channel a perspective officer's decision to join and possibly the officer's future assignments including combat arms or combat support.

Throughout history, African American service members were forced to perform laborious skilled and unskilled tasks. The transferability of combat support and service support "skills" influences the officer's decision making. This assertion assumes that African Americans find greater satisfaction in the civilian workforce and "skills" developed in the Army are better utilized than leadership forge more acutely through combat arms branch.

Minority outreach programs are the key to increasing awareness among the African American communities and discussing the positive and negative elements of becoming an officer and the utility of leadership. Through USMA minority outreach

program, it was noted that the ongoing Iraq and Afghanistan Wars have negatively influenced a young person's willingness to serve in the Army.

In cooperation with science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) programs, Affinity groups and the community based programs are where the Army's leaders, mentors and promoters must interact with African American youth, parents and community leaders. Outreach programs discussed by USMA, U.S. Army Accessions Command and the ADO illustrated a marketed approach to the minority communities. However, recent reports have touted the U.S. Navy's aggressive minority outreach strategy which dramatically outpaced the Army. The Army should learn from their comprehensive and resourced diversity campaign plan.

Historically, African American service members were partly driven by opportunities provided by Army service—freedom, equal rights, equal opportunity and economic independence. The opportunity vision shared by all Americans is most elusive in communities of color. Ensuring equal opportunity means not only ending intentional discrimination, but also removing unequal barriers to opportunity. A military education, through ROTC or the USMA, can open many educational and employment opportunities. In a speech given to West Point Cadets by Chief Executive Officer for General Electric (GE), Mr. Jeffery Immelt acknowledged business leaders seek attributes learned and exhibited by cadets and commissioned officers serving in the military and 238 former West Point cadets work for GE.⁴⁹ United States Military Academy cadets embraced both the educational opportunities and service to their nation. They understand the value of a good education, coupled with military-based leadership training, favorably viewed by both the Army and corporate America. This

acute understanding translates to employment opportunities in and out of military service. The United States Military Academy education and military leadership training provide significant civilian employment “opportunities.” Its graduates represented nearly 17 percent of the accessions for 2009, and a general officer percentage above 35 percent.

In light of congressionally mandated Military Leadership Diversity Commission (MLDC), some members of congress were nominating a relative low number of youth, especially within large minority communities to USMA. “In fact the bottom 20 House members [achieving the lowest number of nominations] were all from districts where whites make up less than a majority.”⁵⁰ A USMA nomination packet contains many items, but it must include a congressional nomination, unless special circumstances exists. If more talented African American candidates do not meet all other prerequisites, including the representatives’ approval, and nominations are unused, then more community engagements by the Army are required to maximize these appointment “opportunities.”

Business managers and the Army have obviously capitalized on the institutional talent and leadership instilled by our military based education. Do communities of color embrace an Army officer’s opportunity potential? Whether it’s measured in the propensity to serve or level of awareness on college campuses, there is an enormous informational gap about the skills honed during an officer’s career. Assuming the Army promotes a level of awareness among college bound students, parents, community leaders, and high school counselors, will the current ROTC educational institutions meet the demands of the talent driven officer system?

Obtaining talented African American college-aged students has been difficult, though there may be some small signs of improvement. In 2009 USMA African American admissions increased to nine percent. However, they were greatly outpaced by the U.S. Navy whose holistic diversity plan yielded United State Navy Academy applications four times that of the USMA.⁵¹

The most significant challenge today is “getting the most qualified applicant to the Army.”⁵² There are impediments for an aspiring African American student seeking to complete a bachelor’s degree without addressing college and university populations. As reported by the Journal of Blacks in Higher Education (JME), African Americans struggle for educational parity and four of the most significant barriers are:

- Racial climate. If black students perceive either an unwelcomed or non-inclusive collegiate community, then completing their studies in such a campus environment is daunting.
- Preparation for college curriculum. Many of the minority communities have poor K-12 educational programs which fail to adequately prepare their young people for the rigors of higher education, which leads to poor college performance and consequently, higher drop-out rates.
- Traditions of Higher Education. The motivation and support to pursue higher education are absent from the family.
- College Funding. Two-thirds of all blacks who drop-out do so because of the lack of funding⁵³

Reviewing colleges and universities with a higher African American graduation rate might increase the pool of qualified ROTC cadets. From a business model

perspective, the Army is better served with the ROTC programs or directing graduates to the OCS where there are a higher percentage of African American graduates. There are several top-notch colleges and universities that have “eliminated the racial gaps in graduation rates” and the Army should investigate which diverse institutions have a high minority graduation rate and can support the ROTC by reviewing the JME’s assessments.⁵⁴

Based on the description of “talent” defined earlier in this paper—academics, physical and leadership—these elements identify a competent officer who can meet the demands of the 21st Century Army. An on-campus ROTC program affiliation at an institution with better than average African American graduation rates might lead to an increased pool of talented black cadets. An entire review of the ROTC programs and college environments has the potential to produce a shift in programs facilitating a larger African American student body.

Historically Black Universities and Colleges are not immune from the similar level of scrutiny. In 2006, the JME reported that at 24 HBCUs, two thirds or more of all entering African American students did not earn a diploma.⁵⁵ Alcorn State University graduation rate has improved and its ROTC program has experienced successes in 2009. Its cadets also confirmed their major influencers are comparable to those found in the Army wide study.⁵⁶

Primary and secondary educational institutions must produce more college-ready African Americans allowing greater potential participation in the Army’s commissioning programs. Based on a GAO finding in 2006 and Department of the Army Deputy Chief of Staff, G1 reports from 2009, the Army programs commissioned African American

officers at equal or above their college graduation rate of eight percent. An easier method of obtaining more African American cadets is to increase the number of African American college graduates, but first the nation must improve the high school completion rates. President Obama recently announced a partnership with nonprofit companies to improve the graduation rate among “African American community, in the Latino community, and in the larger American community.”⁵⁷

While it cannot solve the overall problems with K-12 education, the change can make an important contribution. As it led social change during the late 50s and early 60s, the Army must genuinely connect with the communities of color and grow a pool of African American graduates who are ready and willing to serve as an officer.

Accessions

If the Army proves successful in increasing awareness and reaching a large pool of college bound African Americans, then increasing the number of ROTC and USMA candidates is the next critical step. The Army has three primary commissioning sources—United States Military Academy (USMA), Reserve Officer Training Course (ROTC), and Officer Candidate School (OCS). Within the scope of my research, this paper addresses these three commissioning sources without discussing the direction commissioned officers. During 2009, the Army’s various commissioning programs produced 5,863 officers and African American officers comprised nearly 14 percent—an improvement from previous years. However, upon closer review, nearly 42 percent of the officers were commissioned through OCS. Officer Candidate School compensates for the Army’s shortfalls through increased accessions.⁵⁸

Are we out of balance with respect to potentially increasing the number of senior African American officers competitive for general officer because of the large OCS

population? Can we afford the current distribution? Increasing the overall number of African American officers is a positive step, but more ROTC and USMA graduates are important too.

As LTG Benjamin Freakley noted, Army accessions are out of balance. This problem began during the start of this decade as recruiting efforts lagged and the Army entered the war in Iraq. The drawdown that occurred during the later 1990s left a large void among captains and majors which has been compounded by recent captain level retention woes.

In 2006 the Government Account Office (GAO) reported officer retention challenges among West Point graduates and ROTC scholarship recipients.⁵⁹ Excluding 2004 and 2005, there has been a steady ascent within the last 20 years of Army OCS accessions; it eventually eclipsed the 1000 officer mark in 2002.⁶⁰ Black officer representation through OCS was 320, 382 and 513 for 2007, 2008, and 2009, respectively. Research suggests “that as a population, the performance data for scholarship officers is significant enough to predict their success in jobs the Army deems critical,” then a good predictor of future success is obtaining commissions through West Point or receive a (four year) ROTC scholarship.⁶¹ Hence some OCS commissioned officers do begin their careers at a statistical disadvantage for senior level promotions.

Additionally, the Officer of Undersecretary for Defense for Personnel and Readiness report of Minority and Women Officers in 1997 revealed that African Americans “have been underrepresented among officers commissioned through the Military Academies and Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) scholarship programs.

This is significant since Academy training or ROTC backgrounds (often with technical training provided by scholarships) have been important for advancement in the military.”⁶² More importantly, many OCS commissioned officers retire with less than 15 years of active federal commissioned service. Therefore, African American officer accessions bolstered through OCS in 2009 might be unavailable for general officer promotion boards by 2040—they will retire about ten years before reaching their promotion consideration window.

African American officers commissioned immediately following college graduation or with minimal prior service time would have an increased advantage. In March 2010, OCS graduates accounted for six percent of the entire Army general officer population and just three percent of the African American general officers. In October 2009, there was just one African American OCS general officer graduate—BG Belinda Pinckney’ she is currently serving as the Director of the Army Diversity Office.⁶³

Institutionally, the African American OCS officer accessions provided a growth pool of officers supporting the Army’s operating force midterm, filled a shortfall of captains and majors, but created—long term—a smaller group of senior African American officers. It is an important barrier which limits African American expansion among the Army senior leaders. Comparing the accession data from 2009 with the current African American general officers by commission source, it represents another indication of how “out of balance” the accessions process appears (Figure 3).

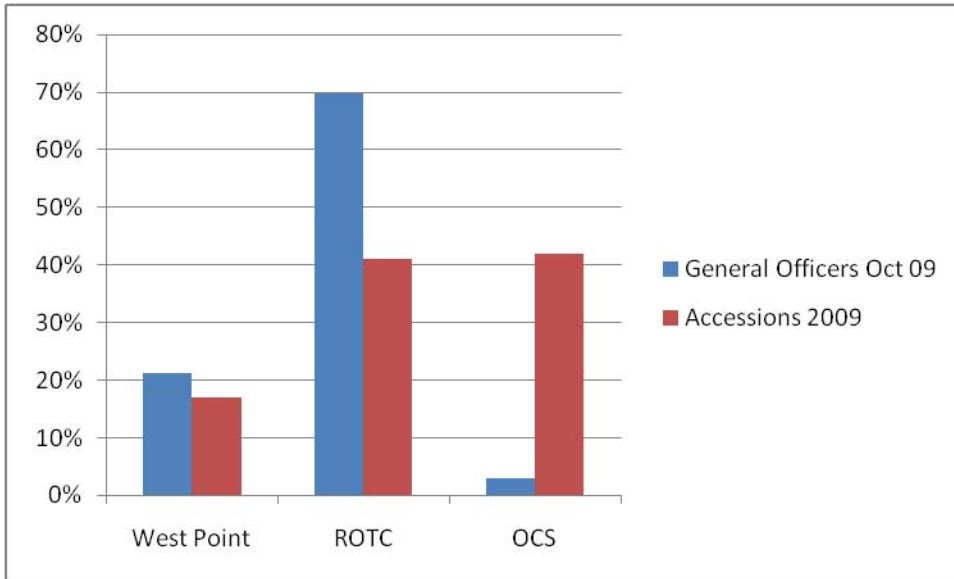


Figure 3. Black Officers—Commissioning Programs/Active Duty GOs 2009

Maintaining the number of African American OCS commissioned officers is okay since recently it has provided a greater percentage of African American officers; however, substantial improvements in the ROTC programs and the USMA are recommended. Once the proper balance among the commissioning programs is achieved, the Army must attain greater combat arms preferences and branch distribution among its African American officers.

Diversity—gender, race, academics and branch—is the way Lieutenant General Benjamin Freakley outlined his approach to “officer branching.” The branching process occurs independently within each commissioning source with their recruiting goals coordinated by the Army.

The Army is reviewing the distribution of cadet branch assignments from the USMA and the ROTC Programs. United States Military Academy has a “80/20 rule” for branching cadets. Eighty percent of the class will get branched combat arms, where the largest percentage of the general officers serve, and the remaining 20 percent are

branched Army support functions. Since the African American population represents less than 10 percent of a USMA class, their representation among the 80 percent combat arms officers is sparse. A smaller distribution of combat arms assignments at the USMA or a greater number of African American cadet enrollments would produce more black combat arms officers. If ROTC programs received more combat arms distributions taken from the USMA or if it remains the same, African American cadets must be encouraged to request and get selected for the combat arms at a higher percentage.

There is tremendous potential to increase African American representation in the combat arms branch and maintain an informed distribution across the commissioning sources while simultaneously reshaping OCS accessions. Nearly 80 percent of the most senior leaders, three and four star generals, are from the combat arms branch and African Americans represent just nine percent.⁶⁴

If talented African Americans are disproportionally selecting a support branch, then unknowingly they are placing themselves at a statistical disadvantage for advancement to general officer. During a February 2009 interview with Lieutenant General Benjamin Freakley, he was firmly committed to reviewing when and how branching decisions were made to meet the future needs of the Army.

The U.S. Army Cadet Command, subordinated command of U. S. Army Accessions Command, controls all the Army ROTC programs. As outlined earlier, the US Army Cadet Command Order of Merit List (OML) model determines the cadet's placement on the OML. The placement of the OML will determine the likelihood of

obtaining a selected branch. The Army publicizes “performance equals choice” for all officers.

In 2007, 63 percent of black and 55 percent of white ROTC cadets received their first branch selection and nearly 80 percent of all cadets received one of their top three choices. Additionally, white ROTC cadets selected combat arms at almost twice the rate as black cadets.⁶⁵ Unless African American cadets embrace the utility of the “leadership” through the combat arms and request it at a much higher percentage rate, the proportional imbalance will remain unchanged. A modest adjustment in the combat arms allocation or branching provides greater opportunity for increased African Americans representation among the senior officer leadership.

Another emerging issue is African American college graduation rate by gender, coupled with combat arms opportunity for women. African American women are graduating at 46 percent and men at 35 percent rates.⁶⁶ Since women are not permitted to serve in some of the combat arms branches, the situation poses another barrier to increasing the number of African American general officers, given the large combat arms general officer population.

Because of this existing historical voids and a compilation of many other factors mentioned throughout the research on this subject, the Army must place more emphasis on mentorship and community level interactions to increase awareness of the benefits of Army leadership training in black communities. African American cadets must exchange or accept the utility of combat arms, “leadership,” as viable substitute for combat support associated with a “skill.” Since this represents a break from historical patterns and attitudes of African American officers, combat arms branch diversity will

remain a challenge. African Americans opportunities are boundless, but continuous navigation through the officer career maze is less difficult with the proper mentorship.

Mentorship

In 2005 the Army began the online Mentorship Community which is accessible through the Army Knowledge Online (AKO) website. The Army G-1's link to the mentorship portal defines the mission as "Mentorship is the voluntary developmental relationship that exists between a person of greater experience and a person of lesser experience that is characterized by mutual trust and respect."⁶⁷ As a means to bridge the knowledge gap, mentoring was used for decades. The terms, protégé, heir apparent, management training program, or simply mentorship program, defines a relationship between the one with greater understanding, knowledge and wisdom—the mentor—and the individual receiving the information—the student.

The most successful corporations have refined and cultivated their mentorship processes to train and develop a talented array of highly educated, motivated leaders. Conceptually, the Army's efforts have many elements in common with the corporate model; however, there are two areas where they diverge: direct monetary compensation for productivity gains and acquiring senior talent from outside the company. There is no direct merit compensation for productivity besides promotion and the Army doesn't hire senior officers from outside of its institution. The Army promotes from within. Consequently, internal education, training and mentoring are critical elements driving an officers' capacity to serve at the next higher level. As educational and training opportunities became readily available and talented African American

officers achieved success, mentoring becomes important to gaining parity with their counterparts.

A diverse group of mentors provides the most holistic knowledge of the Army, but interaction with a leader who understands the student's culture and community has equally important benefit. The Army's senior leaders must appreciate the importance of the human cultural dimensions in order to effectively lead in this area.⁶⁸ It's imperative that we link students with mentors who bridge the cultural gap early to help evaluate and shape careers. An unnecessary culture-clash can unknowing set an African American officer on the wrong path.

Historically, institutional racism prevented promotions during the evolution of desegregation and equal rights. Transparency and access to prominent assignments in many respects are the Army's future leadership barometer. There are no golden keys to success, but nurturing a competent, competitive group of young African American officer takes time from both mid-level and senior level leaders.

Mentorship is an element promoting individual growth and retaining talented officers. Moreover, "knowledge gaps can develop into cultural hurdles that feed misconceptions and cloud communications between African American officers, their white peers, and supervisors."⁶⁹ After completing eighth grade through college attending predominately blacks schools in Mississippi, an African American combat arms officer described the isolation felt while attending officer basic course in the late 1990s.⁷⁰ Isolation still exists today. "The Army lacks a program that integrates coaching, mentoring, professional development, and assignment opportunities and ensures availability on an equitable basis."⁷¹ The linkage between minority mentors and

the total Army social network is essential. Navigating the assignment, performance and educational challenge requires foresight and understanding “because it’s a tougher, more competitive environment to get the kind of diversity that you want in the military.”⁷² All officers must embrace coaching and mentoring to accompany education and training.

Historically, if a group is not given “access” but demonstrates capacity, the sense of an equal system is not realized. Without mentorship, a high achieving officer may not be given a genuine “opportunity” to compete. Officers grow, develop, and become more effective if they have a leader who understands their potential value—adequately appreciates their competency and recognize their talent.

Anecdotally, young officers are seeking mentorship, but the Army has continually lagged in this area and African Americans officers are disproportionately affected. With the high overall promotion rate to major and lieutenant colonel, it’s very difficult to obtain the data to support this supposition. If there is no mentorship accountability, then how can we measure those left behind? Mentoring can have a positive impact on retaining quality officers and facilitating organizational transition.

Some mentoring benefits:⁷³

- Better recruitment
- Increased productivity through greater job satisfaction
- Knowledge , technical and behavioral improvements
- Career goal planning
- Wider network of influential contacts
- Increased confidence and self awareness

The ROCKS, Inc., a mentoring organization, has served the military community since it began in Washington, DC in 1974. It “was formed to provide professional and social interaction/development to strengthen the officer corps.”⁷⁴ A group of African American officers assigned to Washington DC area formed the ROCKS Inc. Many African American group relationships expanded because of the larger congregation of successful black field grade officers. The organization reached beyond providing a forum for simple interaction. The complexities and adaptability of today and the future leaders of the Army require talented leaders. The organization facilitates ideological exchanges and military social interactions.⁷⁵ Officers bridge their knowledge, and cultural and social gaps through mentors.

Clearly, choosing a mentor from this population after numerous social and professional gatherings is more conducive than searching over the Army’s mentorship website. Regardless, each engagement opportunity builds upon the African American officers knowing the utility of mentoring “opportunities.” The Army should promote mentorship early, before entering post secondary school and hold all leaders accountable for mentoring young officers. By illuminating the successes of African American officers, increasing opportunities beyond military service, and expanding mentoring, it will increase African American officer opportunities.

Conclusions/Recommendations

A strategic plan encompassing accountability, education, accessions, and mentorship, and through the Army Diversity Officer will sustain a pool of highly qualified African American senior leaders competitive for general officer. It begins with ownership and accountability at the senior levels of the armed forces. It took President Truman’s executive order 9981 and enforcement through the Secretary of Defense to

advance equal treatment and opportunity for soldiers serving in the armed forces. The Chairman, Joint Chief of Staff (CJCS), Admiral Mullen, has continuously advanced and remained an advocate for increased minority representation across the military spectrum. “We must continue to emphasize and improve the diversity of our military across ethnic and gender lines, especially for the officer corps.”⁷⁶ Our leaders provide the vision and advance the goals, enabled by finite resources—people and funds—to sustain the programs. The ADO must capture the successes and failures through coordination with the accessions components (commissioning programs), Department of the Army Deputy Chief of Staff G1 and guidance set forth by Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs.

The research does presuppose that improvements within the education system, at both the federal and state levels, are key ingredients to increasing the pool of high achieving African American who could enter Army college level commissioning programs. The Army is the only service that does not have its commissioning programs centrally controlled at the Army level, but perhaps it should transition to a centralized approach. Centralized management by the Department of the Army would set strategic goals for the Army and allocate resources to align with requirements—what is important, gets resourced. Now is the time for the Army to move beyond equal opportunity and reach unforced parity where the artificial barriers to success are understood and minimized through minority marketing and recruitment goals. Building and reinforcing a tremendous sense of opportunity through the Army’s officer corps, namely combat arms, may increase its cadre of competitive officers early in the growth process.

This historical continuum, coupled with real overall social inequalities, has led the African American communities to remain focused largely on service after the Army which has favored combat support (skilled) training. The general community influencers are guided by history, directly and indirectly, and a limited awareness of African America military leadership—what is an officer and how does leadership appeal to the businesses—and the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Studies have shown that black officers select the supporting arm of the Army at almost two times the rate of combat arms. Maintaining an all volunteer force without increased combat arms officer representation might lead to a greater, or at least sustained, void of competitive African American field grade officers. During the struggle of civil rights, the Army force many African American officers to serve in the supportive arm. Today, opportunities abound, but African American cadets must favorably embrace the combat arms branches.

Mentorship before, during and after college and engagement with parents, relatives, educators and community leaders will reshape military career perceptions among African American youth. A physical presence is required from all senior leaders at both STEM and Affinity group events. Levering historical relationships with the National Urban League, NAACP and community-based organization by forging anew, the present will bring additional hope and “opportunity” to many African American youngsters. A robust, coordinated outreach strategy will touch more of the underrepresented population. By capitalizing on past relationships and rekindling the passion, the ADO can advance equality initiatives.

The Army’s trailblazing integration reforms took years to come to fruition and acknowledged the contributions of talented of African American officers who admirably

served their country. African American officers struggled for social equality and advanced promotions. Corporate America has acknowledged that diversity both evens the playing field and adds benefit to the organization's bottom line, profits. Past military senior leaders have excelled as community and business executives based on their military and civilian education and training. Noting their accomplishments, the Army's program should publicize their citizen soldiers and post-military relationships. It should recruit for longevity, but discuss the benefits of shorter service obligation. The Army may not retain all of the talent, but the pool of experienced, trained African American officers will naturally increase. Over the next 25-30 years, the talent pool of African American officers could increase above the projected population percentage of 14 percent and move far above the current eight percent of 18-24 years old with a bachelor's degree. Equality is what defines America and promotes "opportunity." A greater number of African American youth will join the ranks of the Army naturally expanding the talent pool with more competitive officers. A larger talent pool will ensure greater "opportunities" for promotions, especially at the senior officer level, creating greater African American representation among Army general officers.

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