REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Washington Headquarters Service, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188) Washington, DC 20503.
PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.

1. REPORT DATE *(DD-MM-YYYY)* 12-04-2013	2. REPORT TYPE Master of Military Studies Research Paper	3. DATES COVERED *(From - To)* September 2009 - April 2010

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE
The Art of Selection: Command Selection Failures, and a Better Way to Select Army Senior Leaders

5a. CONTRACT NUMBER
N/A

5b. GRANT NUMBER
N/A

5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER
N/A

6. AUTHOR(S)
Norris, Peter J., Major, USA

5d. PROJECT NUMBER
N/A

5e. TASK NUMBER
N/A

5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER
N/A

7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)
USMC Command and Staff College
Marine Corps University
2076 South Street
Quantico, VA 22134-5068

8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER
N/A

9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)
N/A

10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)
N/A

11. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER
N/A

12. DISTRIBUTION AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
Unlimited

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES
N/A

14. ABSTRACT

The army does not select the best qualified officers to command at the battalion and brigade level, principally, because it does not provide those who select commanders with all of the information necessary to make well-informed decisions, and it does not properly manage officers before, during, and after serving in command. The army utilizes a centralized selection process to identify officers that will serve as battalion and brigade commanders. Fundamental flaws in the inputs to the system results in the selection of officers that may not be the best suited for command. An analysis of officer personnel management, performance evaluation systems, and the selection board process, will reveal modifications to the system could be implemented to prevent the selection officers that are not best qualified for command.

15. SUBJECT TERMS
Command Selection, Officer Personnel Management, Officer Evaluations, Selection Boards, Army Officer, Promotion, Board, Human Resources Command

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UU	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 30	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON Marine Corps University / Command and Staff College
a. REPORT Unclass	b. ABSTRACT Unclass	c. THIS PAGE Unclass			19b. TELEPONE NUMBER *(Include area code)* (703) 784-3330 (Admin Office)

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 8-98)
Prescribed by ANSI-Std Z39-18

United States Marine Corps
Command and Staff College
Marine Corps University
2076 South Street
Marine Corps Combat Development Command
Quantico, Virginia 22134-5068

MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

TITLE:

**THE ART OF SELECTION:
COMMAND SELECTION FAILURES,
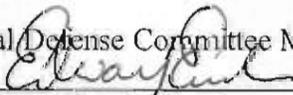AND A BETTER WAY TO SELECT ARMY SENIOR LEADERS**

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
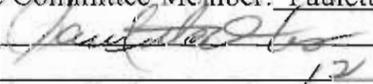MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

AUTHOR:

MAJOR PETER NORRIS

AY 12-13

Mentor and Oral Defense Committee Member: Edward J. Erickson, PhD
Approved: _____
Date: _____12 April 2013_____

Oral Defense Committee Member: Pauletta Otis, PhD
Approved: _____
Date: _____12 April 2013_____

Executive Summary

Title: The Art of Selection: Command Selection Failures, and a Better Way to Select Army Senior Leaders

Author: Major Peter Norris, United States Army

Thesis: The army does not select the best qualified officers to command at the battalion and brigade level, principally, because it does not provide those who select commanders with all of the information necessary to make well-informed decisions, and it does not properly manage officers before, during, and after serving in command.

Discussion: The army utilizes a centralized selection process to identify officers that will serve as battalion and brigade commanders. While the methodology utilized for selection does select many excellent commanders, fundamental flaws in the inputs to the system results in the selection of officers that may not be the best suited for command. This study will evaluate officer personnel management, performance evaluations that are utilized in the selection process, and the selection board process itself. Case studies of particular officers that were relieved of command will be used to highlight how they were selected, and how modifications to the system could have prevented their selection.

Conclusion: If the army leadership wishes to put the best-qualified officers in positions of command, it is imperative that all functions of the command selection process are analyzed, and improved where possible. As lieutenant colonel and colonel commanders fill the ranks of general officers, it is of concern to all associated with the army, from the newest private to the Secretary of the Army, that the right people are being selected for the right jobs.

DISCLAIMER

THE OPINIONS AND CONCLUSIONS EXPRESSED HEREIN ARE THOSE OF THE INDIVIDUAL STUDENT AUTHOR AND DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT THE VIEWS OF EITHER THE MARINE CORPS COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE OR ANY OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCY. REFERENCES TO THIS STUDY SHOULD INCLUDE THE FOREGOING STATEMENT.

QUOTATION FROM, ABSTRACTION FROM, OR REPRODUCTION OF ALL OR ANY PART OF THIS DOCUMENT IS PERMITTED PROVIDED PROPER ACKNOWLEDGEMENT IS MADE.

Table of Contents

Preface

The Department of the Army Secretariat for Selection Boards, Army Human Resources Command, executes all US Army centralized selection boards for promotion, command, and school; for all officers and enlisted soldiers, across the active and reserve component. Having served as a board recorder, and then as the executive officer of the DA Secretariat, I had the opportunity to learn the internal mechanics of the selection board system, part human-dynamic, and part machine. First-hand observations of where I thought the system could be redesigned led me to this study. Make no mistake, the army selects superb officers and non-commissioned officers under the Centralized Selection List system, but like every system within the army, there is always room for improvement. I ask senior leaders to step away from the paradigm that they know, the one that selected them for command; look beyond the legal and fiscal challenges of changing an administrative system, and envision the possibilities that change could bring.

I would like to thank Dr. Edward Erickson for his mentorship and guidance, both of which were informed by his wealth of knowledge as a retired US Army officer. To the many US Army human resource professionals that allowed me to access the information needed to conduct this study; Major General Richard Mustion, Major General Thomas Seamands, Colonel Stephen Sears, and Mr. George Piccirilli; I have witnessed your ability to shape the army, and I look forward to the future you are building. Lieutenant Colonel Frances Hardison, your mentorship has been invaluable throughout the years. To my father, Chaplain (Colonel) Gary Norris, for serving as my sounding board, and for keeping me grounded with his wise words, "…only three people are going to read your paper." Most importantly, I would like to thank my wife, Nancy. Her steadfast love and support has been my foundation for many years. Thank you for making me the husband, father, and soldier that I am today.

"There are no bad regiments; there are only bad colonels."[1]

- Napoleon Bonaparte

Introduction

The United States Army utilizes a centralized selection process to identify officers for battalion and brigade-level command. Selection for battalion command is the first highly competitive selection process that an officer will compete in; those officers selected for battalion command are then selected at a disproportionately higher rate for promotion to colonel, and then brigade command, compared to those officers not selected for battalion command.[2] Officers selected for brigade command are subsequently the only individuals who are highly competitive for promotion to flag officer, excluding rare circumstances and certain career fields.[3] Therefore, the conduct of command selection boards is of interest to all personnel in the army, and the army's civilian leadership, in that these boards directly shape the composition of our general officer population.

When commanders are relieved of command, due to either moral conduct or sub-standard performance, it is an indication that an individual that should not have been selected for command, but in fact, was. In the wake of multiple high-profile reliefs of senior commanders, questions arise about the command selection process. The army is not selecting the best qualified officers to command at the battalion and brigade level, principally, because it does not provide those who select commanders with all of the information necessary to make well-informed decisions, and it does not properly manage officers before, during, and after serving in command. This paper demonstrates how the current system for command selection continues to identify officers who ultimately require relief by senior commanders, as well as advancing methods to improve the process.

The Making of an Army Commander

Command is, "the authority that a commander in the armed forces lawfully exercises over subordinates by virtue of rank or assignment."[4] Army officers are given command of battalion and brigade-level units under a program titled the Centralized Selection List (CSL), which is within the purview of the Chief of Staff of the Army (CSA). Commanders are charged with leading their assigned units in accordance with Army Regulation (AR) 600-20, *Army Command Policy* (2012), which specifies the key elements of command: authority and responsibility.[5] A unit's commander shapes its character and effectiveness; therefore commanders are expected to perform beyond the simple exercise of authority in the fulfillment of their responsibilities. Finally, commanders are the face of army leadership to those inside and outside of the army; selecting the right people, with the right qualities, is of the greatest importance.[6]

In order to improve the selection of commanders, this study will begin with the legal and doctrinal definitions and requirements of army leadership. Section 3583, Title 10, United States Code, explicitly outlines what qualities a leader and commander must possess, and how they must conduct themselves.

> All commanding officers and others in authority in the Army are required—
> 1. To show in themselves a good example of virtue, honor, patriotism, and subordination.
> 2. To be vigilant in inspecting the conduct of all persons who are placed under their command.
> 3. To guard against and suppress all dissolute and immoral practices, and to correct, according to the laws and regulations of the Army, all persons who are guilty of them.
> 4. To take all necessary and proper measures, under the laws, regulations, and customs of the Army.
> 5. To promote and safeguard the morale, the physical well-being, and the general welfare of the officers and enlisted persons under their command or charge.[7]

Command selection board members must certify that all officers selected meet this Title 10 requirement, known as the Exemplary Conduct Clause. Army Doctrine Reference Publication

(ADRP) 6-22, *Army Leadership* (2012), further defines what qualities an army leader must possess, using the army leadership requirements model. The model identifies three leader attributes; character, presence, and intellect; and three leader competencies; leads, develops, and achieves.[8] These qualities are all taken into account when officers are evaluated on their performance and potential, using the Officer Evaluation Report (OER), which is governed by AR 623-3, *Evaluation Reporting System* (2012).

A centralized selection board, conducted by the Department of the Army Secretariat for Selection Boards, with oversight from the Military Personnel Management Directorate, Army G-1, selects officers for command, and to fill key billets. Key billets are duty positions that do not give an officer command authority, but are of such importance that they must be filled by high-quality officers, and should be centrally selected; examples are corps and division G-1, G-2, G-6, etc. For the purpose of this paper, all commands and key billets will be referred to as "commands." Officers compete for command based on their career field, each falling under one of three competitive categories: Maneuver, Fires, and Effects (MFE), Force Sustainment (FS), and Operations Support (OS). Board members review board files in accordance with the instructions given to them by the CSA. Officers who are selected for command are then slated by the appropriate human resource manager to command a specific unit; the Army Human Resource Command's (HRC) Command Management Branch then executes the management of the CSL.

Upon taking command, a commander may be relieved by the first general officer in the chain of command, "…due to misconduct, poor judgment, the subordinate's inability to complete assigned duties, or for other similar reasons…"[9] There are 517 colonel commands, and 1,174 lieutenant colonel commands that are managed under the CSL. Twenty-six of these commanders were relieved or removed in 2011 and 2012; of these twenty-six, twenty held commands in the

operations command category.[10] The operations command category encompasses battalion and brigade sized units that have the ability to deploy and conduct sustained combat operations. Traditionally, officers of the highest caliber will compete exclusively for positions in the operations category.[11] While the total number of commanders relieved or removed may seem insignificant, it is noteworthy that a majority of the relieved commanders were serving in an operations command, and it is important to keep in mind that the number of commanders relieved from command is not the only indication of a lack of quality in commanders.

As in all human endeavors, the quality of performance by commanders covers the spectrum, from excellent to poor. The 2011 Center for Army Leadership Annual Survey of Army Leadership (CASAL) discovered that around 75% of army leaders noted that their "commander meets their expectations of an army leader 'fairly well' or 'completely'". Less positively, 59% of leaders reporting to a lieutenant colonel commander, and 66% of leaders reporting to a colonel commander, desire to emulate the behavior of their commander.[12] Despite the seemingly high numbers, it is evident that a large number of commanders do not inspire their subordinates to emulate them, nor do they meet the expectations their subordinates hold for a leader; evidence that those selected may not be the best-qualified for command. The rate of selection for officers being considered for command on their first-look is historically high, as high as 50% for lieutenant colonel, and 75% for colonel, in some competitive categories.[13] Selection rates this high may require the board to select officers that will not meet performance expectations, or inspire emulation by their subordinates, as reported above. Therefore, the selection process must be designed to not only prevent the selection of commanders that might require relief, but it must prevent the selection of marginal performers as well.

The cases of Colonel James Johnson III and Brigadier General Jeffrey Sinclair will be

used to highlight how the system currently used for command selection identifies officers that do

not display the behaviors required of commanders, in accordance with law and policy. Both

officers were relieved from their positions based on misconduct. Colonel Johnson was the

commander of the 173rd Airborne Brigade, and was relieved of command in March of 2011; he

was subsequently convicted in a court-martial of fraud and bigamy, and reduced in rank to

lieutenant colonel.[14] Brigadier General Sinclair was relieved in May of 2012 from his position as

the Deputy Commanding General of the 82nd Airborne Division, and is currently facing court-

martial charges for sexual misconduct.[15] While these may seem like extreme cases, the nature of

their misconduct is similar to many relieved commanders, and the availability of open-source

information will facilitate the study.[16] An analysis of how they were selected will reveal

deficiencies in the process, and a way to select commanders to best meet the needs of the army.

Personnel Management

The first link in the chain of factors contributing to the selection of poor commanders is

personnel management. Since the passing of the Officer Personnel Act of 1947, and the

subsequent implementation of Technical Manual 20-605, *Career Management for Army Officers*

(1948), officers have been managed in a system marked by specified career timelines with an

"up-or-out" quality.[17] The Defense Officer Personnel Management Act (DOPMA) of 1980

replaced the Officer Personnel Act of 1947; currently, officers are involuntarily considered for

promotion based on timelines established by the services. Repeated non-selection for promotion

will potentially result in separation from the service.[18] To fulfill the requirements of DOPMA,

the army has instituted an Officer Personnel Management System (OPMS) that applies rigid

timelines for career progression.[19] While following these timelines is not a prerequisite for

promotion, officers must follow these timelines to remain competitive for promotion to the next

grade, or risk separation.[20]

The career path of most officers selected for battalion and brigade command includes service as a company commander while as a captain, and as a battalion operations officer or executive officer as a major; known as Key Developmental (KD) positions. These positions are identified as KD because they are instrumental in the development of an officer as a leader, they are necessary to gain proficiency in the skills required to be successful in a particular career field, and they prepare officers for higher levels of command. Time spent in a KD position also gives officers the opportunity to work with and be evaluated by senior leaders that are highly competitive for promotion to general officer, as well as the opportunity to receive mentorship that will shape their careers for many years to come. Army policy specifies the minimum time required in a KD position. Due to the forces of supply and demand, officers are often moved from their KD billet after meeting the minimum time required.[21] This management technique effectively prevents officers who may benefit from additional development at a certain level from receiving it. This practice of expedient rotation exists at all levels, from the major afforded only twenty-four months as an operations or executive officer, to the almost annual rotation of senior commanders in Afghanistan.

Just as officers are held to a KD timeline, the Secretary of the Army has directed that CSL command billets be limited in length, taking what was often a thirty-six month command timeline, and reducing it to eighteen to twenty-four months. The intent of this policy is to increase the broadening experiences of post-command officers, and to better prepare them for the joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational environment (JIIME).[22] The unforeseen or unstated second order effect of shrinking command tour lengths is that a larger quantity of officers will be afforded the opportunity to command. As more officers are selected for

command during the annual selection boards, lower-quality officers that would not have been offered command in previous years will receive a command. These officers, after having been considered and voted upon by a selection board, have positions on an Order of Merit List (OML), which are lower than those of their peers. Essentially, decreasing command tour length potentially decreases the average quality of battalion and brigade commanders, as officers with less competitive files are being selected to command.

Officer Evaluations

The Officer Evaluation Report (OER) has been caught in the middle of a conflict of ideas, where it must serve as an honest evaluation tool, by giving "full credit to the rated Soldier for his or her achievements and potential." At the same time, rating officials are called "to be honest and discriminating in their evaluations so Army leaders, HQDA selection boards, and career managers can make intelligent decisions."[23] The OER receives input from at least two individuals, the rater and the senior rater. The rater is required to highlight information from the rating period that covers the performance and conduct of the officer, the quality of that performance, and the potential of the officer. Likewise, the senior rater is required to assess the performance of the officer, but it is the senior rater's assessment of the officer's potential to serve in positions of greater responsibility that is of the most value to selection boards.[24] When an officer serves as a battalion-level operations officer or executive officer, the battalion commander rates them, and the brigade commander senior rates them. The performance of a major in a KD assignment is critical during his or her competition for battalion command, as it is likely to be the most recent branch-related job before competition for command. Additionally, the senior rater will specify in a major's OER his or her potential to serve as a battalion

commander; not specifying this potential is a clear indication to a board that the officer lacks the potential to command.

Unfortunately, the OER can only give selection boards a myopic view of an officer's performance and potential. An officer that serves in a KD position for twenty-four months might receive only two OERs; both of which could be from the same rater and senior rater.[25] These evaluations are heavily weighted in selection boards, as they are the most relevant, therefore, board members will be required to make decisions that greatly depend on the personal opinion of two or three lieutenant colonels and colonels. Not only is the assessment of an officer's potential for command made by a relatively small number of individuals, those serving as a rater and senior rater may not be observing the officer in a position that will properly inform such assessments.

The duties and responsibilities of a major in a KD position are very different than those of a commander. The commander is charged by army policy with very specific responsibilities that require a unique skill set. These skills are not necessarily on display by a major in a KD position, so a senior rater's assessment of command potential is essentially a best guess based on their experience as a senior army leader. While the senior rater's experience is of some value when developing and identifying potential, all brigade-level commanders have not necessarily participated in civilian or military education that formally trains officers on best or emerging practices in leader development, personnel assessment, or human resource management. These issues are reflected in the most recent CASAL survey, where only 50% of majors through colonels believe that institutional education prepares them to develop the leadership skills of subordinates, and only 53% of officers believe that personnel evaluations are accurate.[26] In a

strict sense, raters and senior raters may not be the best-qualified individuals to identify an officer's potential for command.

Brigadier General Sinclair, and Colonel Johnson no doubt had evaluations that articulated their potential to serve in positions of greater responsibility, or else they would not have been selected for battalion and brigade command. Law and policy required these commanders to possess virtue, honor, patriotism, to establish a positive leadership climate, and to professionally develop their soldiers. What was not clear to their previous raters and senior raters was that they, and many other relieved commanders, may have displayed negative behaviors that were visible to those outside of the rating chain, which demonstrated a lack of potential to command in accordance with law and policy. The evaluation system, offering only a narrow view of an officer, is simply not comprehensive enough to build a full picture of command potential.

The Selection Board

DA selection boards convene annually to select commanders; there is a separate board for lieutenant colonel, and colonel, as well as a separate board for each competitive category: Maneuver, Fires, and Effects (MFE), Operations Support (OS), and Force Sustainment (FS). The exact composition of a command selection board is governed by a policy updated annually by the Military Personnel Management Directorate. For example, the MFE lieutenant colonel command board will be made up of one general officer board president, and eleven colonels. All branches eligible to compete for MFE command will be represented by a board member; all board members will be a serving or former brigade-level commander.[27] A candidate's board file consists of the officer's record brief, or resume, all of their officer evaluation and academic reports since they were promoted to captain, listed sequentially with the most recent first, awards, and any disciplinary documents.[28] Guidance to the board is issued by the CSA, and

comes in the form of a Memorandum of Instruction (MOI). Board members combine this instruction with their years of experience as a senior army leader, review the files of all candidates, and cast a vote on each candidate in order to generate an Order of Merit List (OML). This OML is then combined with an officer's preference for type of command, and a final list is generated that contains the required number of officers for each type of command, as stated in the board MOI; the final product is sent to the Command Management Branch for slating. Slating guidance is issued annually by the CSA, and will prioritize factors such as experience, needs of the army, personal preference, etc. The policy that governs the execution of the command boards closely mirrors the law that governs the execution of promotion boards; any DOD inquiry into the army's command selection process would show that the process is above reproach when compared to the law that governs promotion boards. What such an inquiry would not show is the fundamental flaws in the process.

The deficiency in the command selection process can be subdivided into input, process, and board membership. The board file is arranged to show the most recent evaluations first. In a competition for battalion command, the file for a major with a career path that follows DA PAM 600-3 would likely consist of documents in the following order: one or more evaluations in a job held since their KD billet, evaluations from their KD billet, an academic evaluation from Intermediate Level Education, evaluations from a billet held as a senior captain, followed by evaluations from their company command, and finally, any jobs held as a captain before company command. The deficiency in input is the evaluation, as we have already shown, as it may not always clearly identify those with command potential. The deficiency in process is the order in which documents are placed in the digital file for the voters to review. A voter will have anywhere between two and four minutes to review a file, based on the number of files and days

allotted for the board.[29] Given that the KD jobs held as a major will specifically address an officer's command potential, and that those documents are relatively near the top of the list of documents, voters will focus in on those for consideration.[30] This backward-looking approach to selection would only be effective if officers were being selected for positions that are identical to the ones that they previously held. Many officers may serve well throughout their career as a staff officer, but may not possess the particular skills needed to successfully command at the battalion and brigade level. Board members are being asked to select officers for command, without fully appreciating their previous command experience and potential.

Company command evaluations are buried deep within the list of documents, locating them requires the voter to search for evaluations that sit between pre and post-command billets, a process that is both deliberate and time-consuming.[31] While senior raters of company commanders are not required to address an officer's potential to command a battalion, those documents certainly highlight the quality of performance an officer is capable of delivering while in command, and may shed light upon their potential to command at a higher level. Additionally, evaluations that contain derogatory information are listed sequentially by date with all other evaluations, and are not highlighted or flagged to alert the voter of their presence. An officer who has a relief for cause evaluation as a junior captain may continue to serve for many years, be selected for major and lieutenant colonel because the derogatory file is buried in the list of documents, then compete for and be selected for command, simply because the derogatory document is not likely to be seen by the board.

Finally, the last defect in the selection board process is the composition of board membership. Command selection boards are not composed of members that necessarily have the experience required to evaluate and vote on the files presented to them. For example, the MFE

brigade command selection board is composed of eleven general officers, representing all branches of officers that are eligible to compete for MFE brigade command. Maneuver brigade command, coded D02P in the CSL program, is the pinnacle of many an infantry, armor, engineer, or field artillery officer's career; as well as being a stepping stone for a majority of infantry and armor officers selected for general officer. Given the army's potential future structure of thirty-two brigade combat teams, each annual MFE colonel command selection board will select commanders for approximately sixteen brigades within the D02P category.[32] The files of officers at the top of the D02P OML are highly competitive; there you will find future Chiefs of Staff of the Army, combatant commanders, or a Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. If a Reserve Component officer is eligible to compete for any MFE command, then at least one board member must be from the reserve component. Additionally, if a Psychological Operations or Civil Affairs general officer is not available, then a Colonel may sit on the board. With this small number of board members, the weight of one vote is significant.[33] The army is potentially placing the selection of its thirty-two brigade combat teams in the hands of a board where a Reserve Component civil affairs colonel controls 9.1% of the weight of the vote, as all eleven voters have an equal vote. While this officer is certainly highly qualified in his or her field, and has experience at the civil affairs brigade command level, it is unreasonable to assume that they have the experience needed to identify an officer's potential for maneuver brigade command. This same argument could also be used to discount the value of other board members that are in career fields, such as chemical corps or air defense artillery, that lack the background or exposure to select commanders for a maneuver brigade. In the same light, the board members from the infantry, armor, and engineer career fields may not be well suited to cast such a weighty vote in the selection of commanders for a chemical battalion or civil affairs brigade.

The boards that selected Brigadier General Sinclair and Colonel Johnson for battalion and brigade command were certainly presented with competitive files, as they were selected for command at both levels. Those boards failed to prevent the selection of such officers, primarily due to the deficiencies with the inputs into the board process. Had a board of the proper composition been given a full view of the quality of the officers, and their true potential to command, it is possible that they would not have been selected.

The Fix

Personnel management, evaluations, and selection boards must be modified in order to select the best-qualified commanders to lead the army. The recommendations proposed below can be implemented in whole, or in part. Partial implementation is most feasible, as immediate benefits can be realized, and simultaneous change in all three areas would require complex coordination across multiple organizations within the army.

Modified Personnel Management

Of the three elements that require change, personnel management is perhaps the most difficult to affect. DOPMA is the reality of our times. It is unlikely that modifications desired by the Department of Defense, major or minor, are likely to gain momentum in Congress, while the country faces fiscal sequestration, the end of the war in Afghanistan, and an end-strength reduction. Changes to the Officer Professional Management System must be framed in a way that the army continues to produce officers of quality and experience, who are prepared to operate in the joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational environment; while at the same time, prepared to face the up-or-out requirements of DOPMA.

A relatively easy change to make would be to remove the limit on command tour lengths. The first order effect would be a decreased quantity of officers receiving command positions,

thereby raising the overall quality of officers that hold command. The antitheses of this argument, is that the reduced command tour length policy affords high potential officers the opportunity to work in a broadening assignment after battalion command, and before selection for promotion to colonel; as the army does not benefit by having senior colonels or new brigadier generals that only have operational experience. The only way to mitigate this risk would be by managing officers with great care at the lieutenant colonel level.

Within the first year of battalion command, an officer's rater and senior rater should be able to assess their performance, using very specific assessment tools, shedding light on the officer's potential to serve at higher levels of command. Some officers will clearly have indicators for potential to serve at higher levels of command, and may even show general officer potential. These officers should have a shorter command tour, which will allow them to serve in a specific broadening assignment after command. Officers that may have potential to serve as a colonel on a staff, but have limited potential to serve as a general officer, should have the option to serve a longer command tour, up to thirty-six months. Finally, those officers who show themselves to be marginal performers within the first year of command could be identified and administratively removed from command if necessary.

Current policy permits officers to command one battalion-level CSL unit, and one brigade-level CSL unit. Excluding a small number of special mission units, there is no opportunity to command again at the same rank.[34] Officers with previous tactical battalion command experience would potentially bring a great deal of expertise to a training command, thereby strengthening the army's institutional base. This modification to the CSL program would also increase the overall quality of commanders, by lowering the total number of different officers that are offered command. Officers selected for multiple CSL commands may not have

time to serve in a broadening assignment between battalion command and consideration for

selection to colonel; but they may not need a broadening assignment at that time, as they are not

on a track for selection for tactical brigade command or general officer. Many officers that would

currently be selected for command would not be selected under this program, due to their

position on the command board OML; these officers would be able to serve in multiple staff

billets, allowing them to build expertise in the JIIME environment. This modification provides

the army with both high-quality commanders, and officers experienced in higher-level staffs.

One final change that would benefit the personnel management system would be to

modify the organization of HRC's Officer Personnel Management Division (OPMD). Officers

are currently managed by career field, e.g., armor, military intelligence, logistics, etc. Each

career field has assignment officers that are members of that same career field; infantrymen

manage infantrymen, and so on. These assignment officers are not only held to the same rigid

timelines of the officers they manage, allowing them to stay only a short time at HRC, they are

also beholden to the leaders within their career field, as they will have to return to the operational

force at some point. Assignment officers are charged with the distribution of officers, placing the

right officers in the right jobs, matching skills and potential to meet the needs of the army.

Professionally trained and certified human resource managers would better serve the army in the

assignment officer capacity, over detailed officers from the managed career field. Adjutant

General Corps officers are best suited to meet this need, as manning the force is one of their core

competencies.[35] Management by Adjutant General Corps officers would facilitate an unbiased,

and proper distribution of officers, better preparing leaders to serve in command billets, or higher

level staffs.

Evaluation Tools

The Officer Evaluation Report is the only document of real substance that selection boards utilize to select commanders. The OER is currently undergoing substantial changes that will align it with the latest leadership doctrine. Proposed changes will dramatically increase the ability of a rater and senior rater to capture the essence of a rated officer, holding them to the standards of the army leadership requirements model, as set forth in ADRP 6-22. Three different evaluations will be used to assess officers: one for company grade officers, one for field grade officers (major and lieutenant colonel), and finally, one for colonels and brigadier generals. Current OERs have a senior rater "profile", where the senior rater can award up to 49% of the officers in each grade that they senior rate with an Above Center of Mass (ACOM) rating.[36] This rating is important to selection boards, as it provides another discriminator to ascertain the quality of a file. Proposed versions of the next OER contain a rater profile, where a rater can give a similar evaluation to an officer, with a 49% limitation on the top rating.[37] Aligning the evaluation with current leadership doctrine, and implementing multiple levels of assessment of an officer against their peers by the rater and senior rater, will serve to increase the value of the evaluation to selection boards; but will not make the OER the comprehensive picture of an officer that command selection boards require.

The OER offers a top-down view of an officer; it does not incorporate the observations of soldiers that are peers, subordinates, or senior officers in sister organizations, and the quality of an OER greatly depends on the communication skills of the authors. The army has recognized that officers require additional feedback on their performance, as made evident by the directive that all officers will complete a 360-degree assessment with every evaluation period; this assessment is know as the Army Multi-Source Assessment and Feedback (MSAF). The directive

also notes that the MSAF is not to be used as part of the formal evaluation of the officer; the rated officer is the only individual that can view MSAF results.[38] The results of a 360-degree evaluation would be incredibly valuable to a command selection board, as it would give board members additional information to build a complete picture of an officer, and their potential to command.

America's most successful companies utilize 360-degree evaluations in the selection of their leaders.[39] There are two types of 360-degree evaluations, administrative, and developmental; the MSAF is a developmental tool, as it is not utilized for making administrative decisions such as promotion and command selection. Using a 360-degree evaluation in selection boards carries with it several concerns. Selection bias is of concern, as officers under the current MSAF system select their own respondents. An administrative 360-degree evaluation utilized by a command board could be centrally managed, and the respondents would be selected based on their duty position in an organization, in order to prevent an officer from selecting respondents that would only rate them favorably. For example, the 360-degree evaluation for a battalion executive officer would have ratings from company commanders, company executive officers, executive officers from sister units and from brigade staff officers. The Center for Army Leadership (CAL) has dedicated a significant amount of scholarly work into the research and development of a 360-degree evaluation tool that can be utilized by selection boards.[40] Their research shows that utilizing a hybrid method for selecting respondents for an administrative 360-degree evaluation will enhance the credibility of the system; in this case, the rated officer is able to select respondents in addition to those selected by a centrally managed system. While many top-rated corporations have successfully used 360-degree evaluations, there are many legal obstacles to cross before implementation.[41] It is imperative that such a system be free of bias,

offer equal opportunity to all parties, and contain valid and reliable information. Much work remains on the administrative and legal details needed to implement a 360-degree evaluation for selection boards, but the benefit to selection boards is immeasurable.

High-potential officers are often given the opportunity to serve in the army's numerous "black-book" jobs; referred to as such as they are specially managed, and require a nomination to the position from a senior leader or assignment officer. Jobs in this category are high-visibility, where officers will serve on high-level staff, or in support of the army's most senior leaders. To be accepted into almost all of these positions, an officer must conduct an interview, either telephonically or in person; many of them also require the submission of a writing sample.[42] Curiously, being given the great responsibility of battalion and brigade command requires no interview at all. The board members making the decision only see a top-down observation from a relatively small number of raters and senior raters. Some type of interview process would allow those selecting commanders the opportunity to learn more about the candidate, in order to assess command potential, and to make more informed decisions. Given cost and scheduling limitations, centralized, in-person, interviews are not practical for the selection of commanders for the more than 1,600 CSL billets. As part of the interview process, many businesses utilize hypothetical case studies and simulations, also know as situational judgment tests, to look for leadership potential in candidates, versus looking at past success as a predictor for potential.[43] These assessment methodologies take many forms, and the army has many to choose from to fit the unique nature of command selection. One method that could be utilized is a computer-based model that requires candidates to provide a written response to various scenarios that challenge their thinking. The army has conducted studies on specific competencies that are required of commanders; such simulations could be tailored to look for these competencies.[44] For billets

with a smaller number of officers to select, such as operations brigade command, a telephonic

interview could be utilized for candidates that rank near the top of the OML, in order to discern

between the most highly qualified officers. Many other evaluation tools and data points currently

exist in the army's inventory that could be made available to selection boards to increase the

amount of information board members use to make decisions. Command climate surveys,

training center evaluations, and retention rates within their command, just to name a few.

Had 360-degree evaluations been utilized in the command selection boards for Brigadier

General Sinclair, and Colonel Johnson, information may have been made available to the board

that would have precluded their selection. Officers that served with both of these commanders

were interviewed in order to identify general behaviors that were evident in the officers before

being relieved. Colonel Johnson was noted as being self-serving, nepotistic, dishonest, and more

concerned about the image of readiness, instead of actual combat readiness. Brigadier General

Sinclair displayed behaviors such as arrogance, favoritism toward subordinates, hypocrisy, and

disrespect.[45] The CASAL survey shows that such negative behaviors are harmful to an

organization and its members.[46] In order to maintain the army's ability to successfully conduct

combat operations, it is imperative that the army implements a system to identify such negative

behaviors, and prevent officers that display them from being selected for command.

The Selection Board

Changes to the selection board process are perhaps the easiest to make, as command

boards are governed by policy, under the direct instruction of the CSA. The first changes to make

could be made immediately, by adjusting the manner in which files are presented. Evaluations

from previous commands, such as company or battalion, could be administratively "flagged" in

order to allow the voter to easily identify and review those files. In the same manner, adverse

evaluations could be flagged to bring them to the voter's attention. The additional evaluation and interview methods above could be incorporated into the board process, adding valuable information for the voters to consider when making decisions.[47]

Board membership could be modified in many ways to increase the quality of board outcomes. As was described in the scenario with the Reserve Component officer having an incredible influence in the selection of MFE tactical brigade commanders, the board could be broken up into multiple panels per competitive category. Within the MFE category, it would be possible for a panel that is a subset of the greater MFE board membership to separately convene to select tactical battalion or brigade commanders. These voters have greater visibility of the culture and operations of such units, and have first-hand experience in what it takes to command successfully at the battalion and brigade level. The United States Air Force utilizes a command selection model that has elements that the army might draw from.[48]

The US Air Force convenes a board to select a commander of a certain type, logistics for example. This board would be made up entirely of logistics officers that have intimate knowledge of the career field. While voting, voters are allowed to share first-hand personal knowledge about the candidates, bringing to light strengths and weaknesses that might not be captured in the officer's file. The output of the board is a selection list that contains twice as many names as there are command vacancies. Major commands can then conduct interviews from this list of eligible commanders, and will send their preferences to the Air Force Personnel Center. Human resource managers then conduct a de-confliction, and officers are slated against commands.[49] This model has numerous elements that could be considered by the army: panels that have a particular expertise, personal knowledge about candidates, and the ability to conduct interviews. It also shows that a sister-service has successfully navigated the legal aspects of

integrating alternative selection methods into command selection.

Finally, boards would have more time to make decisions if the population of officers competing in the board was reduced in size. Even if the army shifted to an "opt-in" system, where officers must request to be considered, many officers that are clearly not competitive would still request to be considered, potentially wasting the time of board members. A process of command sponsorship, where an officer must get the written approval from a senior-level commander to compete in the board, would eliminate many non-competitive files. Just as with a 360-degree evaluation, this command sponsorship program would have to be carefully managed in order to support equal opportunity.

Conclusion

The most recent CASAL survey shows that battalion and brigade commanders are rated higher than non-commanders in demonstrating leadership attributes and competencies, and that this may be evidence of a command selection system that is effective at selecting the appropriate leaders for command.[50] Having reviewed the process utilized by the army to select commanders, it is apparent that while it might be capable of selecting leaders that are often superior to their peers, the process is incapable of making well-informed and precise decisions to best meet the needs of the army. The combination of current personnel management laws and policies, evaluation system procedures, and the conduct of selection boards, results in the selection of many officers that are not necessarily the best qualified for command. Command is not an experience that is required for an officer to perform effectively on a higher-echelon staff, and only a small number of battalion and brigade commanders are going to be competitive for selection to general officer. The army would benefit from creating a personnel management and command selection system that tailors career paths to meet the needs of the army, maximizes the

potential of individuals, and increases the quality of commanders. The army's senior leadership

is consumed with matters of budget shortfalls, force drawdown and reorganization, integration of

women in combat roles, sexual harassment, suicide, and redeployment. It is battalion and brigade

commanders that will lead the army through these changes, it is these commanders that will put

into place the army's newest campaign plans and operating concepts, and it is these commanders

that prepare the army for the nation's next conflict. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that

the army selects the right commanders to lead the army into the future.

[1] Byron Farwell, *The Encyclopedia of Nineteenth-century Land Warfare: An Illustrated World View* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2001), 206.

[2] All officers selected for colonel command in the Maneuver, Fires, and Effects division, in the tactical brigade command category (D02P) by the fiscal year 2013 colonel command selection board served as tactical battalion commanders before selection for colonel command.

[3] All but one infantry/armor officer selected for promotion to brigadier general (BG) in the fiscal year 2012 BG Army Competitive Category promotion selection board held a tactical/operations brigade command.

[4] Department of Defense. *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*, JP 1 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2009), GL-5.

[5] U.S. Army, *Army Command Policy,* AR 600-20 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2012), 1.

[6] U.S. Army, *Army Leadership,* ADRP 6-22 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2012), 1-3.

[7] U.S. Code, *Requirement of Exemplary Conduct* (Vol. 10, 2012), sec. 3583.

[8] *Army Leadership*, 1-5.

[9] *Army Command Policy*, 16.

[10] Stephen Sears (Chief of the Command Management Branch for the Army Human Resources Command), in email correspondence with the author, February 2013. Removed and relieved are used interchangeably in this paper, considering that some commanders are removed from command and given a Relief for Cause evaluation, while others are removed and given a change of rater evaluation.

[11] Author's observations. It is a common practice for high-quality officers to compete in only the operations category the first time they are considered for command. These positions are seen by many to be more prestigious that other commands; tactical battalion command, versus a basic training battalion, etc.

[12] Center for Army Leadership, *2011 Center for Army Leadership Annual Survey of Army Leadership (CASAL): Main Findings* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, 2012), 17.

[13] Sears.

[14] Nancy Montgomery, "Former 173rd Commander Johnson Retires at Reduced Rank," *Stars and Stripes,* October 8, 2012.

[15] On 22 January 2013, Brigadier General Sinclair deferred entering a plea on his pending court martial. Proceedings will continue on March 26, 2013.

[16] Sears.

[17] George R. Iverson, "Officer Personnel Management: A Historical Perspective," (US Army War College Military Studies Program Paper, 1978), 18.

[18] Bernard Rostker et. al., *The Defense Officer Personnel Management Act of 1980: A Retrospective Assessment* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 1993), 12.

[19] U.S. Army, *Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Career Management*, DA PAM 600-3 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2010), 66.

[20] Author's observation. Completion of education and assignment milestones as specified in Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-3 is not selection criteria for selection for promotion or

command for Active Duty officers, however, officers that neglect to complete these milestones will be much less competitive for selection.

[21] Daniel Gross (former assignment officer, Aviation Branch, Army Human Resources Command), in discussion with the author, January 2013.

[22] Secretary of the Army, *Centralized Selection List – Tour Length Policy for Command and Key Billets,* Army Directive 2012-06 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2012), 2.

[23] U.S. Army, *Evaluation Reporting System,* AR 623-3 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2012), 26.

[24] *Evaluation Reporting System.* 15-16.

[25] *Evaluation Reporting System.* 55-60.

[26] Center for Army Leadership. 77, 88.

[27] Major General Thomas C. Seamands, Director, Military Personnel Management, to Army Human Resource Command, Selection Board Membership Matrices - Memorandum, 15 October 2012.

[28] U.S. Army, *Policies and Procedures for Active-Duty List Officer Selection Boards,* DA Memo 600-2 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2006), 3.

[29] Author's observation. The time allotted for a voter to review and cast a vote on a file is dependant upon the number of files to be reviewed, and the number of days assigned for the board. It is typical for board members to have as little as two to four minutes.

[30] Author's observations.

[31] Author's observations.

[32] Kate Brannen, "AUSA: U.S. Army Could Drop to 32 Brigades," *DefenseNews.com*, February 24, 2012, http://www.defensenews.com/article/20120224/DEFREG02/302240001/AUSA-U-S-Army-Could-Drop-32-Brigades.

[33] Author's observations.

[34] U.S. Army, *FY 14 Colonel Army Competitive Category (ACC) Centralized Selection List (CSL) – Command & Key Billet Boards*, MILPER Message 12-305, 25 September 2012.

[35] U.S. Army, *Human Resources Management*, AR 600-8 (DRAFT) (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2013), 7.

[36] *Evaluation Reporting System.* 32.

[37] George Piccirilli (Chief of Evaluations, Selections, Promotions Branch for the Army Human Resources Command), in discussion with the author, January 2013.

[38] Secretary of the Army, *Changes to the Army Evaluation Reporting System*, Army Directive 2011-16 (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 2012), 2.

[39] Jeffrey Cohn and Jay Moran, *Why Are We Bad at Picking Good Leaders? A Better Way to Evaluate Leadership Potential* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2011), 61.

[40] Melissa R. Wolfe (Research Psychologist , Center for Army Leadership, Leadership Research, Assessment, and Doctrine Division), in discussion with the author, March 2013.

[41] Wolfe.

[42] Author's experience.

[43] Cohn, 207.

[44] U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, *Identification of Brigade Command Competencies* (Arlington, VA: Army G-1, 2011), 11-14.

[45] Kirby Jones, Dustin Stewart (Officers that served under COL Johnson and BG Sinclair, respectively), in email correspondence with the author, February 2013.

[46] Center for Army Leadership, 28.

[47] The Army Human Resources Command utilizes a proprietary suite of software for the conduct of selection boards, it is relatively easy for HRC to implement changes in the software to meet the changing needs of selection boards.

[48] Joseph Marchino (Branch Chief, Special Duty Assignments Branch, Air Force Personnel Center), in discussion with the author, April 2012.

[49] Marchino, 2012.

[50] Center for Army Leadership, 15.

Bibliography

Center for Army Leadership, *2011 Center for Army Leadership Annual Survey of Army Leadership (CASAL): Main Findings*. Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, 2012.

Cohn, Jeffrey, and Jay Moran. *Why Are We Bad at Picking Good Leaders? A Better Way to Evaluate Leadership Potential.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2011.

Department of Defense. *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States.* The Joint Staff. JP 1. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2009.

Farwell, Byron. *The Encyclopedia of Nineteenth-century Land Warfare: An Illustrated World View*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2001.

Gabriel, Richard A., and Paul L. Savage. *Crisis in Command: Mismanagement in the Army.* New York: Hill and Wang, 1978.

Iverson, George R. "Officer Personnel Management: A Historical Perspective." US Army War College Military Studies Program Paper, 1978.

Rostker, Bernard, Harry Thie, James Lacy, Jennifer Kawata, and Susanna Purnell. *The Defense Officer Personnel Management Act of 1980: A Retrospective Assessment.* Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 1993.

Seamands, Thomas C., Director, Military Personnel Management. MG Thomas Seamands to Army Human Resource Command, Selection Board Membership Matrices - Memorandum, 15 October 2012.

Secretary of the Army. *Centralized Selection List – Tour Length Policy for Command and Key Billets*. Department of the Army. Army Directive 2012-06. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2012.

Secretary of the Army. *Changes to the Army Evaluation Reporting System*. Department of the Army. Army Directive 2011-16. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2012.

U.S. Army. *Army Command Policy.* Department of the Army. AR 600-20. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2012.

U.S. Army. *Army Leadership*. Department of the Army. ADRP 6-22. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2012.

U.S. Army. *Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Career Management*. Department of the Army. DA PAM 600-3. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2010.

U.S. Army. *Evaluation Reporting System*. Department of the Army. AR 623-3. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2012.

U.S. Army, *FY 14 Colonel Army Competitive Category (ACC) Centralized Selection List (CSL) – Command & Key Billet Boards*, MILPER Message 12-305, 25 September 2012.

U.S. Army, *Human Resources Management*. Department of the Army. AR 600-8 (DRAFT) Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2013.

U.S. Army. *Policies and Procedures for Active-Duty List Officer Selection Boards*. Department of the Army. DA Memo 600-2. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2006.

U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, *Identification of Brigade Command Competencies.* Arlington, VA, 2011.

U.S. Code, *Requirement of Exemplary Conduct*, vol. 10, sec. 3583, 2012.