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TALENT RETENTION OF THE AIR FORCE OFFICER CORPS  
A LEADER'S ROLE

by

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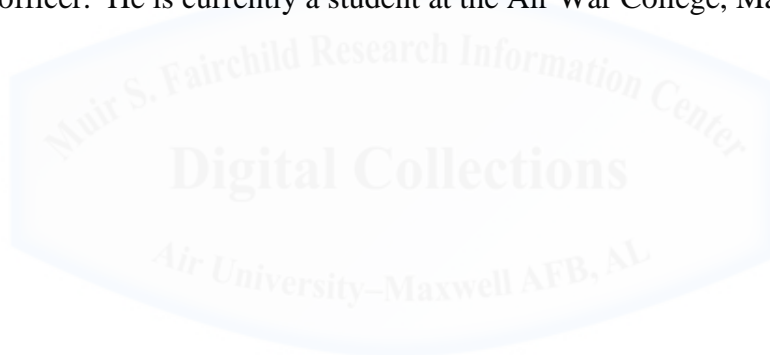
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## **Biography**

Lieutenant Colonel Pate earned his commission as a Second Lieutenant in the Air Force through the Reserve Officer Training Corps in 1997. A fully qualified Joint Specialty Officer (JSO), he has served at the squadron, group, Major Command, Combatant Command, Headquarters Air Force levels and most recently commanded the 455th Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron, Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan. He has commanded both overseas and deployed squadrons, served as an Air Force weapon system programming officer, a deployed Joint Special Operations Task Force J4 (Afghanistan), Desk Officer (Philippines) and Air Movements Officer (Afghanistan), Branch Chief, Executive Officer, Flight Commander, and an Aerial Port duty officer. He is currently a student at the Air War College, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama.



## **Abstract**

Air Force officials need to change personnel management practices to retain the most talented officers in the service. The term “most talented” is qualitative in nature and likely would be defined by Air Force leaders differently based on their individual career field dynamics. For the purpose of this paper, the definition is intentionally left open ended to allow commanders to assign value to the components of talent (skill, knowledge, and behavior) as best fits their organizations and career field dynamics.<sup>1</sup> To better retain top talent, the Air Force must acknowledge the difference in individual abilities and deliberately focus retention tools on those who possess the mix of talent required by the service. This can be accomplished by enabling individuals increased input to their career, raising both commitment and career satisfaction levels. Additionally, the Air Force should expand the ability of commanders to deliberately develop their most capable officers. Lastly, the service needs to focus promotion on capabilities of the individual rather than governed by length of service in the Air Force.

## **Introduction**

The Department of Defense is at a strategic crossroad. Following fourteen years of sustained conflict in Afghanistan and Iraq, the military is seeking to balance its commitments. In the short term, there is the responsibility to sustain low intensity conflict fighting against insurgent groups in Iraq and Afghanistan. The long term outlook includes preparation for the potential of high end conflicts as Russia and China demonstrate a resurgence of military development and seek to challenge America's military supremacy in the future.

Given these challenges, one would expect newly appointed Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter to lay out his priorities for the department's combat tempo and acquisition strategy to meet the requirements of simultaneous low end conflict application and high end preparation. Instead, the Secretary did something very different. In his inaugural address as Secretary of Defense, Secretary Carter discussed the importance of finding, recruiting, and retaining the most qualified personnel for the Department and gave the speech from his alma mater, Abingdon Senior High School in Philadelphia.<sup>2</sup>

It is fitting that Secretary Carter chose the young audience, members of the millennial generation, to hear his message as it is that very group which is the future of the armed forces. Secretary Carter understands that to be victorious in the conflict of the future, it will require military members who can out think and out innovate the enemy while adapting more quickly both in peacetime and in war. To achieve this goal, senior leaders must ensure that their service is retaining the most qualified and capable members from within their ranks. Unfortunately, it appears that based on retention data among three and four year scholarship officer candidates, many highly qualified personnel are leaving the military prior to serving a full career.

Air Force officials need to change personnel management practices to retain the most talented officers in the service. The term “most talented” is qualitative in nature and likely would be defined by Air Force leaders differently based on their individual career field dynamics. For the purpose of this paper, the definition is intentionally left open ended to allow commanders to assign value to the components of talent (skill, knowledge, and behavior) as best fits their organizations and career field dynamics.<sup>3</sup> A review of the characteristics present in millennials entering the service today suggests a requirement to place greater emphasis on the individual’s career aspirations if the Air Force seeks to retain top talent from within the force.

## **Perceptions on Military Service**

### **A Survey of the Personnel Management System**

Tim Kane conducted a survey of 250 active duty and separated military members who graduated West Point in the class of 1989, 1991, 1995, 2000, 2001, and 2004 to determine their perception of talent retention in the military. His results show 93 percent of survey respondents believe that half or more of the best officers leave the service before serving a full career.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, a mere 30 percent of respondents believe the military promotes the right officers to general and just 7 percent believe the military does a good job at retaining the best leaders.<sup>5</sup> There are certainly many reasons why members may decide to leave the service, including continuing education or seeking stability for family members, but the most common reason cited by survey respondents was frustration with the military personnel management system.

As mentioned, the survey conducted draws information from six graduating classes at West Point. Taking an average graduation class of 1,000 yields a total possible survey population of 6,000 members. Kane’s conclusions are drawn upon 250 respondents which provide a 95 percent confidence level given a six point interval. To make Kane’s survey results

more significant, the confidence interval would ideally be set at three requiring a survey response rate of just over 900 members. Despite the six point interval, the data is still significant as Kane's responses are at the ends of the 0-100 spectrum.

An example of this frustration can be seen when considering the Pentagon's use of retention bonuses. Designed to encourage members to stay in the service, retention bonuses are offered to those in critical or undermanned career fields regardless of individual talent or ratings on performance reports. Kane suggests that this practice rewards the risk-averse and leads to long-term mediocracy.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, 90 percent of Kane's survey respondents indicated they would have stayed in service had the military been more of a meritocracy promoting members based on individual ability and talent.<sup>7</sup> The conclusion to be drawn here is that it will require more than money to solve the talent retention problem.

It is also acknowledged that the survey was completed predominantly by members who served in the Army. Further, additional quantitative data discussed later in this paper was taken from previous research into talent retention in the Army and, as such, utilizes an Army population as the basis for analysis. While using this type of data to inform retention recommendations for the Air Force is not preferred, the lack of similar service data necessitates a correlation be made regarding its utility. This is a reasonable assumption given that this paper focuses on talent retention of the officer corps as requirements and expectations for leaders between the two services are similar.

### **Millennial Airmen**

It is important to establish a working definition and key characteristics of the millennial generation as a basis for discussion and analysis. While there are some differences of opinion regarding exactly which year groups make up the millennial generation, it is generally defined as

those born between 1981 and 2001.<sup>8</sup> The twenty year span undoubtedly results in some variations of attitude and beliefs but common attributes of the group include a desire to collaborate with co-workers, being part of something worthwhile, and recognition of each individual's ability to contribute.<sup>9</sup> Initial consideration of these attributes in comparison to requirements of military service in the Air Force draws a positive correlation with the first two but may be at odds with the last one.

Airmen work together on a daily basis with members of their unit and often across the installation to accomplish their assigned mission. The exchange of ideas and teamwork drives the organization and often results in the Airmen seeing their efforts culminate in the wing's success. While military service meets these two millennial attributes, it likely falls short in fully recognizing each individual's ability to contribute.

The hierarchical rank structure of the military often defines the level of contribution an Airman can make almost regardless of the individual's actual ability, potentially suppressing innovation and new ideas from younger members of the service. This is particularly true for officers as many of the leadership positions are restricted to not less than a specific rank.

A shift in occupational culture has altered the view of a millennial's position in the work place. Gone are the days where a worker feels a sense of lifetime service commitment to a singular company, commonly referred to as a "company man" mind set.<sup>10</sup> Instead, millennials frequently change not only jobs but also careers as they carry with them learned capabilities into new occupations where they can continue to meaningfully contribute to the success of an organization.<sup>11</sup> The result suggests a changing perspective on military service that is more closely aligned to millennials' goals and objectives rather than strictly service to the nation.



It should be noted that the Air Force has changed its perspective on loyalty to the military member as well. Fiscal constraints have caused the service to look much closer at overall manpower numbers resulting in multiple personnel programs designed to trim manpower and free up resources. While force shaping actions meet an immediate fiscal need, they also serve to undercut trust between the member and the Air Force. Based on the millennial's and the Air Force's changing views on loyalty and job security, it is critical that personnel management practices enable service leaders to retain the most talented members of the officer corps. The Air Force has enjoyed strong retention levels for the past decade that resulted in the service being over end strength leading into 2014.<sup>12</sup> The retention level was so strong that despite several incentive and early retirement programs, the service was forced to involuntarily separate 1,031 Officers and 5,099 Enlisted members during the 2014 fiscal year.<sup>13</sup>

Given the strong retention levels seen in the service, it appears that keeping personnel is less of a problem than perhaps retaining the most talented personnel. This sentiment was echoed by Lieutenant General Cox, then Deputy Chief of Staff Manpower, Personnel and Services, during his testimony to the Senate Armed Service Committee in 2014 stating that "it is ever more important to retain our highest performing Airmen."<sup>14</sup> This statement acknowledges that personnel management policies and actions do not have to be, and in fact should not be, a one size fits all system. The Air Force must be able to selectively focus retention efforts at the individual level and deliberately manage the highest performing personnel to retain the innovators and entrepreneurs of tomorrow. This then leads to the question, how do you define talent and who should the service focus on retaining?

## **Establishing a Definition of Talent**

Calarusso, Lyle, and Wardynski, define talent as “the intersection of three dimensions—skills, knowledge, and behaviors” which, when correctly employed, result in maximum performance of the individual.<sup>15</sup> Their research further details that each individual has varying levels of the three attributes that makes certain personnel more successful in particular tasks than others. To understand the three components of talent better, each characteristic is further defined individually.

To say that someone is skillful in a particular task or function is to say they have enhanced ability in performing that action. Skill is a natural ability based on intelligence and inherent understanding of how things work and function together.<sup>16</sup> People are born with different inherent skills. Take for example child prodigy Wolfgang Mozart who learned to play the piano at age four, began composing music at five, and wrote his first symphony at eight.<sup>17</sup> While this is an extreme example, it highlights that people are born with inherent strengths and capabilities.

Merriam-Webster defines knowledge as “information or skill that you get from experience or education.”<sup>18</sup> Knowledge is, therefore, an extension of skill that is developed over time and shaped by each individual’s background, exposure and development. In the context of Prussian military strategist Carl Von Clausewitz, knowledge is learning how to think and not simply what to think.<sup>19</sup> It is this ability to evaluate or interpret and predict that makes knowledge such an important component of talent. To understand this from a military perspective, knowledge allows a maintenance officer to draw upon his/her initial technical training and formal education to predict the source of a problem. Through experience, they will often be able to hypothesize the nature of a problem before detailed inspection is conducted simply by the

characteristics of how the engine is performing. As the officer is exposed to more and more scenarios, the member's knowledge will continue to grow and provide increased confidence and predictive ability in future occurrences.

The final component of talent is behavior and it can be described as the ethics, motivations, and teamwork characteristics that the individual possesses.<sup>20</sup> The Air Force places high importance on this third component which is resident in both the Air Force core values and the Airman's Creed. Integrity is the first core value of the service and establishes a baseline expectation for member actions. It requires Airmen to conduct themselves morally and to be honest. Talent is therefore more than just intellectual capability. It is the combination of all three components that sets the foundation for a great leader. Based on this understanding, the next question is who should the military focus on retaining?

Lance and Dorothy Berger term this group of individuals as "Superkeepers" which they define as the top three to five percent in the organization that warrant a high degree of professional development and training to allow for their continued progression towards eventual senior leadership positions.<sup>21</sup> Defining the group as a small minority allows for focused efforts and overcomes what is the natural criticism of this approach, namely that the Air Force is too big to manage at the individual level. To put it plainly, the Air Force must acknowledge the difference in individual abilities and deliberately focus retention tools on those who possess the mix of talent required by the service.

### **A Suggested Path to Talent Retention**

To change personnel management practices and better retain the most qualified individuals, Air Force officials must create a system that is sufficiently flexible to grow and develop the most talented officers in the service. This can be accomplished by enabling

individuals increased input to their career, raising both commitment and career satisfaction levels. Additionally, the Air Force should expand the ability of commanders to deliberately develop their most capable officers. Lastly, the service needs to focus promotion on capabilities of the individual rather than governed by time served.

### **Recommendation 1: Increased Member Career Input**

The first recommendation for talent retention concentrates on expanding the individual's input into their career, including actions that can be taken both as the new member is entering into the service as well as actions that should be taken throughout the duration of their career. The initial occupational placement of members is critically important to the long term success of the individual and the organization. It is important therefore to duly consider the career field request of top graduates entering the Air Force. Absent this action, "talent flight" can occur which increases turbulence inside a career field as force management actions, like increased promotions or cross training activities, must happen if the overall manning level reaches a critical level. The result is personnel managers being quantity focused rather than quality focused.<sup>22</sup>

Colarusso, et al, conducted a survey of retention rates by procurement source among Army officers. The results showed two significant points for consideration. First, the rate of separation for officers commissioned through both ROTC and the United States Military Academy (USMA) was significant following expiration of the initial service commitment time period. Both groups showed a 20 percent decline in retention among graduates at the four and five year point respectively. Additionally, the study detailed retention rates through the first eight years of military service with results that indicated only 50 percent of ROTC graduates and 40 percent of USMA graduates remained on active duty.<sup>23</sup>

When comparing the scholarship award level among ROTC graduates, an even greater percentage is seen with those receiving the highest level of scholarship leaving the service. The percentage of four year scholarship recipients that remained on active duty at the eight year point was just 35 percent compared to 45 percent for three year scholarship, 53 percent for two year, and 60 percent for those who did not receive a scholarship. When the preceding information is put into context of talent, the data shows a very strong linear correlation (-0.97) between separation rates and the most talented officers as defined by academic ability.<sup>24</sup> As previously mentioned, academic ability is not the only component of talent but it is an important predictor of success.

Additionally, the study detailed how officers of different procurement methods performed over a ten year period. The individual's first officer evaluation report while in the position of platoon leader, company executive officer, company commander, and battalion or brigade executive/operations officer shows a distinct differentiation. In each of these positions except one, graduates from the USMA received an "Above Center of Mass" report at a greater percentage than either ROTC scholarship or Officer Candidate School members.<sup>25</sup> Likewise, three and four year ROTC scholarship members received a higher percentage of "Above Center of Mass" reports than two year ROTC scholarship recipients.<sup>26</sup>

Colarusso et al, conclude that scholarship officers are more likely to possess the problem-solving talent required in increasingly difficult positions.<sup>27</sup> This is a result of both high-quality education and the screening process that is part of the scholarship application. Taken together, the process produces officers whose talents align closely with the requirements of complex jobs at both the company and field grade officer levels and are therefore the target audience for this first retention recommendation.

The study authors point out that they are not insinuating officers who receive a scholarship are more talented than non-scholarship officers or that non-scholarship officers are not capable of performing in the higher grades. However, they do believe the data indicates service academy and scholarship officers taken as a group possess the required skills to predict their success in critical leadership positions.<sup>28</sup>

Based on this study conclusion, the Air Force will do well by initially targeting retention actions towards top graduates of the service academy and three and four year ROTC scholarship recipients. It is important to note that individuals outside of this demographic who show exceptional capability are still deserving of deliberate development but are included under the second recommendation discussed later in this paper.

To focus retention on this group, the Air Force should align initial career selection with the officer's preferences. Providing the officer increased input into preliminary career assignment recognizes an important millennial characteristic; specifically, recognition of individual ability. Assuming most officers enter the service desiring a career that aligns with their talents, giving them greater input into career field selection will increase their job satisfaction and result in elevated productivity and retention.<sup>29</sup> The rate of separation for those with the greatest scholarship level seems to indicate they have a strong desire to pursue their career goals and will leave the service if required.

To mitigate this action, ROTC and service academy senior leaders serving in the commander role should identify exceptional graduates to personnel managers for deliberate career field assignment which should occur near regardless of the target accession rate for that year. This recommendation specifically looks to curb the separation rate of highly talented officers following completion of the initial service commitment. Rated career accessions are an

exception to this recommendation as demand is limited by total pilot requirement and the ability to maintain weapon system proficiency based on available flying hours. Additionally, the initial 10-year service commitment for rated officers places them in a different retention category than non-rated members.

By focusing on top graduates of multiyear scholarship and military service academies, the overall numbers are very small compared to total accessions for that year. Additionally, after having served the initial service commitment in the career field of their choice, members are more likely to remain in service as compared to those initially placed in a field where their ability to contribute was reduced based on a mismatch of talent. The process of the commissioning source senior leader identifying the officer and working with personnel managers on assignment matching could be done without the knowledge of the member. This would prevent any concern of the young officer feeling a sense of entitlement or that they deserve special treatment during their career which is in keeping with the Air Force core value of “service before self.”

Allowing for greater individual input to follow-on assignments which complement the member’s talents as well as deliberate development is the second prong to this recommendation category. Again, recognizing the millennial attribute of members wanting to work in a position where they feel most able to contribute to the organization, intentional placement of the most talented Airmen remains important for the duration of their careers. Members will continue to gain talent as they complete formal schools and are exposed to the work environment. As a result, deliberate assignment choices in which they are involved in and that increase their exposure and learning opportunities will serve to strengthen their commitment to military service and continue leadership progression.

By involving the member in the assignment process, the Air Force can balance or tilt the scale in favor of the service at a critical retention time period. Given the large drop in officer retention during the first eight years of service, thoughtful assignment actions are particularly important for talent retention of this group. Members at this point in their career are assessing their opportunity cost to help make the decision regarding whether they will stay in the military for another assignment or whether they will pursue opportunities outside the military. It is at this point that the Air Force is at the greatest disadvantage considering the members overall limited time investment in the military to date, lack of service obligation, and the least likelihood that medical or family support benefits will encourage the member to stay in the service.

The Air Force can enact this recommendation under existing authorities and would not require a change in law or notification to Congress. Each of the services has authority to determine the optimal mix of career specializations inside the overall service authorization and to manage those member's assignments to meet the Air Force mission. As a result, the recommendation to expand senior leader and member input into career designation and follow-on assignments could be implemented immediately and with very little cost.

## **Recommendation 2: Strengthen Commander's Role in Deliberate Development**

Second, the Air Force should increase the role of commanders to both identify and then deliberately develop high potential officers. Commanders hold a key position among leaders in that they are able to see their Airmen working on a daily basis. As such, commanders are uniquely qualified to identify the top performing officers from within an organization. This knowledge, however, is not always utilized as the following vignette illustrates.

As a squadron commander, the author of this paper identified an exceptional officer from within the organization and sought to ensure that deliberate development was applied during the



assignment process. The squadron commander called and personally met with the career field assignment team at the Air Force Personnel Center to discuss the member's next assignment. After having heard the initial recommendations, the staff showed little interest in discussing any additional details. Further, the staff acted as though they were the independent authority for deciding the member's next assignment—and that is the problem.

In contrast, the September 2015 version of the Air Force Future Operating Concept provides an expectation of how the process is intended to work. The document illustrates a scenario where a commander recognizes the analytical ability of one of his logistics officers. As a result, the commander recommends the officer for the Multi-Domain Command and Control career field where her training and capabilities culminate in the successful strike of an enemy outpost.<sup>30</sup> The scenario confirms the expectation of both the Secretary of the Air Force and the Air Force Chief of Staff for commanders to be involved and able to deliberately develop their most talented officers.

Commanders command while staffs support. Yet, somewhere along the way the Air Force has lost its focus and allowed staff functions to grow in authority and leadership at the expense of commanders. The idea that the assignment staff, none of which had been commanders themselves and had not met the member in question, would believe they had independent responsibility for the assignment process and would exclude direct involvement by the member's squadron commander should be intolerable. However, this situation occurs regularly. Commanders know who their best performers are and which ones show the greatest likelihood for continued success in increasingly senior positions. To retain the best performing and most talented officers, empower commanders.

The Air Force can enact this recommendation under existing authorities and would not require a change in law or notification to Congress. Essentially, this recommendation better utilizes inherent capabilities by enabling leaders to act in the best interest of the Air Force and ensuring those officers displaying the greatest aptitude for continued leadership progression are deliberately developed for future leadership positions. As a result, the recommendation to expand commander involvement could be implemented immediately with little to no cost.

### **Recommendation 3: Promote to Capabilities**

The final recommendation to better retain top talent in the Air Force is to restructure the promotion system. Currently, the system requires members to serve a predefined period of time before being afforded the opportunity for promotion consideration. This has created a system that is focused on longevity of service rather than promoting the most qualified individuals to fill more senior positions. The Air Force does have a “below the zone” promotion capability to accelerate officers to Lieutenant Colonel and Colonel but even this program is governed by length of service rather than strictly on leadership capability.

The initial response to such a recommendation may be to assume that younger members would not be capable or mature enough to effectively lead at the more senior level but history demonstrates this as untrue. For example, Galusha Pennypacker began his military service at the age of 16 when he joined the Pennsylvania Infantry to fight the Confederacy and eventually earned a captain’s commission. At 19 years, Maj Pennypacker fought at Cold Harbor only to be promoted a few months later to Colonel where he participated in the Siege of Petersburg. At 20, Pennypacker was promoted to brigadier general earning his place in history as the youngest general in United States.<sup>31</sup>

A more contemporary example is seen in the military career of James Gavin. Commissioned in 1929 from West Point, Gavin had reached the rank of Colonel by 1942 and led military action throughout Europe.<sup>32</sup> So impressive was his leadership and warrior ethos that, prior to the war in Europe coming to an end, Gavin reached the rank of lieutenant general and was in command of the 82nd Airborne Division.<sup>33</sup> In fact, Lieutenant General Gavin's younger age and health are likely contributors to his success as they allowed him to earn his airborne qualification and to participate in the landings in Sicily, Normandy, and Holland earning the nickname "Jumping General."<sup>34</sup>

Thus, the practice of promotion by year group should be done away with and replaced by a promotion system that finds and advances the most capable leaders, regardless of the length of their service, to serve in the next higher grade from within each occupational community. These two examples demonstrate that younger officers can be successful in senior positions when given the opportunity. Both officers were promoted to their individual capability which should be the standard for officer promotion today. Talent and application of leadership is an individual characteristic and cannot be assumed to follow a strict timeline as the current promotion system suggests. By allowing commanders to assess their officers and deliberately develop those who show the greatest potential for increased responsibility, the service has the opportunity to capitalize on younger talent.

To determine an officer's suitability, an analysis of the member's knowledge, skills, abilities, and maturity must be compared to the career field standards required for members of the higher grade. Conducting the analysis by career field allows for individualization and recognizes that each occupation requires a unique talent set. It also addresses risk of promoting an individual too early as each member will be assessed for their overall suitability.

Additionally, the new system should allow career field leaders to determine the optimal number of officers to serve in each particular grade. This allows flexibility to meet the evolving nature of military operations by quickly reshaping the force in times of conflict.

To implement this recommendation, portions of the Defense Officer Personnel Management Act would require modification. Specifically, language that currently limits the number of times an officer can be considered for promotion before they are separated must be revised to allow for members to remain at a given rank longer. Additionally, language that limits the total number of officers serving in field grade positions would need to be amended as Air Force leaders will determine the new rank requirements based on operational requirements.

## **Conclusion**

This paper began with an introduction of common characteristics found in the millennial generation and suggests that the Air Force strengthen the role of commanders to better retain the most talented Airmen from within this group. While keeping personnel practices current is important, the Air Force should not necessarily change its culture simply to align itself with a changing generational demographic. The recommendations presented in this paper, first and foremost, will better the service and continue to identify and develop leaders for the future. As an aside, they also align with millennial attributes which will help with service retention of top talent.

The recommendations presented in this paper were centered on the officer corps. This was primarily due to availability of previous research material and surveys for the group. While many of the same concepts and recommendations could be applied to talent retention of the enlisted corps, additional analysis would need to be conducted to determine specific retention drivers for this demographic. Additionally, an overall lack of quantitative data on reasons why

members separate from the service limits research efforts on talent retention. Moving forward, the Air Force should consider collecting detailed information from each departing member to allow for better data analytics and focused retention efforts.

In conclusion, the Air Force must rethink the way it manages the officer corps to retain the most talented members from across the service. Early identification by commanders of exceptional members progressing through commissioning programs provides a focus group to begin retention efforts. Additionally, strengthening the commander's role in deliberate development of those showing the greatest ability to lead in increasingly senior positions ensures the very best officers are continually challenged and placed in assignments that benefit both the member and the service. Finally, devising a promotion system that is based on individual ability rather than relying on the officer's time in the Air Force will enable the most talented officers to continue to contribute at a level commiserate with their capability. The Air Force has the ability to better retain top talent officers and it all starts with empowering leaders.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Michael J. Colarusso, David S. Lyle, and Casey Wardynski, *Talent: Implications for a US Army Officer Corps Strategy*, (Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, Carlisle Barracks PA, 2009), 5.

<sup>2</sup> David Barno and Nora Bensahel, "Can the U.S. Military Halt Its Brain Drain?" *The Atlantic*, 5 November 2015, <http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/11/us-military-tries-halt-brain-drain/413965/>

<sup>3</sup> Michael J. Colarusso, David S. Lyle, and Casey Wardynski, *Talent: Implications for a US Army Officer Corps Strategy*, (Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, Carlisle Barracks PA, 2009), 5.

<sup>4</sup> Kane, Tim. "Why our best officers are leaving." *The Atlantic* (2011). Pg 2.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>8</sup> Shaw, Hayden. *Sticking Points: How to get 4 Generations Working Together in the 12 Places They Come Apart*. Tyndale House Publishers, 2013, pg 92.

<sup>9</sup> Deborah Morton, "The Relationship Between Authentic Leadership and Employee Retention: Measuring the Perceived Level of Authentic Leadership and the Effect on Employee Retention" (Master's Thesis, Wright State University, 2012), 1-21.

<sup>10</sup> Michael J. Colarusso, David S. Lyle, and Casey Wardynski, *Towards a US Army Officer Corps Strategy for Success: A Proposed Human Capital Model Focused Upon Talent*. (Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, Carlisle Barracks PA, 2009), 8.

<sup>11</sup> Deborah Morton, "The Relationship Between Authentic Leadership and Employee Retention: Measuring the Perceived Level of Authentic Leadership and the Effect on Employee Retention" (Master's Thesis, Wright State University, 2012), 1-21.

<sup>12</sup> Samuel Cox, "Remarks by Lieutenant General Cox before the Senate Armed Services Committee" <http://www.armed-services.senate.gov/hearings/14-04-09-active-guard-reserve-and-civilian-personnel-programs> (accessed 10 Oct 2015) 10.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>15</sup> Michael J. Colarusso, David S. Lyle, and Casey Wardynski, *Talent: Implications for a US Army Officer Corps Strategy*, (Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, Carlisle Barracks PA, 2009), 5.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>17</sup> Nathan Birch, "8 Child Prodigies So Amazing They'll Ruin Your Day," *Cracked.com*, 19 May 2008, [http://www.cracked.com/article\\_16266\\_8-child-prodigies-so-amazing-theyll-ruin-your-day.html](http://www.cracked.com/article_16266_8-child-prodigies-so-amazing-theyll-ruin-your-day.html)

<sup>18</sup> Merriam-Webster Dictionary Online, “Knowledge”, accessed 10 October 2015, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/knowledge>

<sup>19</sup> LTC Goh Teck Seng, “Clausewitz and His Impact on Strategy,” *Journal of the Singapore Armed Forces*, Vol.25 No.1 (Jan – Mar 1999).

<sup>20</sup> Michael J. Colarusso, David S. Lyle, and Casey Wardynski, *Talent: Implications for a US Army Officer Corps Strategy*, (Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, Carlisle Barracks PA, 2009), 5.

<sup>21</sup> Michael J. Colarusso, David S. Lyle, and Casey Wardynski, *Talent: Implications for a US Army Officer Corps Strategy*, (Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, Carlisle Barracks PA, 2009), 5.

<sup>22</sup> Michael J. Colarusso, David S. Lyle, and Casey Wardynski, *Towards a US Army Officer Corps Strategy for Success: A Proposed Human Capital Model Focused Upon Talent*. (Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, Carlisle Barracks PA, 2009), 4.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>24</sup> The -.97 correlation value shows a near perfect negative relationship between the rate of separation and the length of a member’s scholarship. This strongly suggests that the greater the scholarship award amount the more likely the member will separate from the military. Conversely, the smaller the scholarship amount (or lack of a scholarship entirely) the more likely the member will remain in service.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>30</sup> “Air Force Future Operating Concept: A View of the Air Force in 2035” <http://www.af.mil/Portals/1/images/airpower/AFFOC.pdf> (accessed 10 Jan 2016)

<sup>31</sup> “Junior Generalissimos – Nine of History’s Youngest Military Commanders,” MilitaryHistoryNow.com, 15 August 2014, <http://militaryhistorynow.com/2014/08/15/junior-generalissimos-nine-of-historys-youngest-military-commanders/>

<sup>32</sup> Carlo D’Este, “Jim Gavin: The General Who Jumped First” HistoryNet.com, 2 June 2011, <http://www.historynet.com/jim-gavin-the-general-who-jumped-first.htm>

<sup>33</sup> “Junior Generalissimos – Nine of History’s Youngest Military Commanders,” MilitaryHistoryNow.com, 15 August 2014, <http://militaryhistorynow.com/2014/08/15/junior-generalissimos-nine-of-historys-youngest-military-commanders/>

<sup>34</sup> Ibid



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