Army Staff Doctrine Development toward Mission Command and the Decline in Staff Performance

A Monograph

by

COL David A. Meyer
US Army

School of Advanced Military Studies
US Army Command and General Staff College
Fort Leavenworth, KS

2018

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

1. REPORT DATE *(DD-MM-YYYY)*	**2. REPORT TYPE**	**3. DATES COVERED** *(From - To)*
16-04-2018	SAMS Monograph	July 2017-April 2018

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE

Army Staff Doctrine Development toward Mission Command and the Decline in Staff Performance

5a. CONTRACT NUMBER

5b. GRANT NUMBER

5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER

6. AUTHOR(S)

Colonel David Meyer, US Army

5d. PROJECT NUMBER

5e. TASK NUMBER

5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER

7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)
School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS)
201 Reynolds Avenue
Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2134

8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER

9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)
Command and General Staff College
731 McClellan Avenue
Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-1350

10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)
CGSC

11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)

12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
Approved for Public Release; Distribution Unlimited

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

14. ABSTRACT
Army training evaluations of military staffs indicate these staffs struggle to perform the tasks necessary to fully support the commander. Despite the existence of doctrinal manuals, field training, and Army schools, battalion, brigade and division level staffs fail to control operations and support the commander's ability to make decisions. The question, therefore, is why are these staffs unprepared to perform the functions necessary to control operations and support decision making? Simultaneously, business management theories have articulated a clear role for managers in the execution of routine organizational operations and their duties in support of organizational leaders. The business world embraces the idea of managers and leaders, as analogs for the staff and commander, having different roles and functions. Henry Mintzberg and John Kotter have described those roles and hold that the roles of the manager and leader are distinct, separate and complementary. In all, nearly 30 Army doctrinal manuals on operations, and command and control, dating from 1938 to 2017, were evaluated to determine the role of the staff relative to the commander and the specific guidance to the staff officer on his routine responsibilities. This review revealed the Army's changing views of the staff and an increasing focus on the commander. It appears that staffs struggle to perform their tasks because control doctrine has become excessively commander centric, fractured and spread between several manuals and has not changed to account for changes to command doctrine. Army staffs struggle to succeed because doctrine does not fully define the role or requirements of the staff and does not fully educate officers to execute their duties.

15. SUBJECT TERMS
Mission Command, Business Management Theory, Operations Doctrine, Control Doctrine, Staff Doctrine, Leadership vs Management

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			**17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT**	**18. NUMBER OF PAGES**	**19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON**
a. REPORT	**b. ABSTRACT**	**c. THIS PAGE**			COL David Meyer
Unclassified	Unclassified	Unclassified		40	**19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER** *(include area code)* 270-268-3317

Monograph Approval Page

Name of Candidate: COL David A. Meyer

Monograph Title: Army Staff Doctrine Development toward Mission Command and the Decline in Staff Performance

Approved by:

_____, Monograph Director
William J. Gregor, PhD

_____, Program Director
Barry M. Stentiford, PhD

_____, Director, School of Advanced Military Studies
James C. Markert, COL

Accepted this 24th day of May 2018 by:

_____, Director, Graduate Degree Programs
Robert F. Baumann, PhD

Abstract

Army Staff Doctrine Development toward Mission Command and the Decline in Staff Performance, by COL David A. Meyer, US Army, 40 pages

Army training evaluations of military staffs indicate these staffs struggle to perform the tasks necessary to fully support the commander. Despite the existence of doctrinal manuals, field training, and Army schools, battalion, brigade and division level staffs fail to control operations and support the commander's ability to make decisions. The question, therefore, is why are these staffs unprepared to perform the functions necessary to control operations and support decision making? Simultaneously, business management theories have articulated a clear role for managers in the execution of routine organizational operations and their duties in support of organizational leaders. The business world embraces the idea of managers and leaders, as analogs for the staff and commander, having different roles and functions. Henry Mintzberg and John Kotter have described those roles and hold that the roles of the manager and leader are distinct, separate and complementary. In all, nearly 30 Army doctrinal manuals on operations, and command and control, dating from 1938 to 2017, were evaluated to determine the role of the staff relative to the commander and the specific guidance to the staff officer on his routine responsibilities. This review revealed the Army's changing views of the staff and an increasing focus on the commander. It appears that staffs struggle to perform their tasks because control doctrine has become excessively commander centric, fractured and spread between several manuals and has not changed to account for changes to command doctrine. Army staffs struggle to succeed because doctrine does not fully define the role or requirements of the staff and does not fully educate officers to execute their duties. The army should consider addressing this shortcoming by incorporating contemporary business theories and models into Army staff doctrine.

Contents

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank his family and classmates, the faculty of ASLSP and the staff of the US Army School of Advanced Military Studies.

Acronyms

ADP	Army Doctrine Publications
ADRP	Army Doctrine Reference Publication
C2	Command and Control
CGSC	Command and General Staff College
CGSOC	Command and General Staff Officers Course
CGSS	Command and General Staff School
CoS	Chief of Staff
BC	Battle Command
FM	Field Manual
MC	Mission Command
XO	Executive Officer

Illustrations

Introduction

Command and decision making must be executed successfully for the Army to succeed. For over 100 years, Army doctrine has described the ways the Army expects leaders to act and officers to command. In the Army system the commander possesses authority and stands at the center of an administrative support system that enables decision making. A manual from 1997, FM101-5, *Staff Organization and Operations*, expressly stated the purpose of this support system. The staff consolidates, analyzes, synthesizes and communicates large amount of information, from many sources and within many areas of expertise, to allow the commander to understand the task, purpose and environment in which the mission must be accomplished. The manual further states that with the understanding developed for him by the staff, the commander can then visualize the desired endstate, describe a method to the staff and then lead the unit through execution. It is, therefore, clear that the Army intends for a staff to support a commander, while the commander leads the organization and makes decisions. It is equally clear that if a staff cannot support the commander by controlling operations or by providing the information required for decisions then that staff has failed. Since 1986, the Army has updated the doctrine for the control of operations three times. In each case the justification for the update has been nearly identical; the need to empower commanders to make decisions in an increasingly complex and decentralized battlefield. In each iteration, the commander has been described as being the focus of the process and supporting the commander has been articulated as the purpose for the staff. None of the manuals, however, discuss the actions of the staff and none of them address the system required to support the execution of the commander's vision or intent. This leaves the staff with a clear task and a clear intent but no guidance on the methods or processes required to accomplish the task.

Trainers in the Mission Command Training Program (MCTP) and at the Combat Training Centers (CTC) have observed that Battalion/Task Force, Brigade Combat Team (BCT) and Division level staffs struggle to support the commander. The Center for Army Lessons Learned

(CALL) noted in their FY 16 CTC trends report that nearly one third of the total observations requiring improvement (98 out of 302) fell under the Army task: Conduct the Operations Process. Conduct the Operations Process is the broad term under which staffs support the commander and control operations.[1] The Mission Command Training Program report for FY 16 noted fourteen different areas of concern within the Mission Command warfighting function. The staffs struggled to support the commander because they prepared poor staff estimates and neglected common operational inputs that limited the commander's ability to make decisions.[2] The Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) trends document for the third and fourth quarters of FY 17 plainly states "A root cause of this observation is a lack of BCT and battalion staff proficiency and confidence in applying the military decision making process (MDMP) in a deliberate or hasty rapid decision making and synchronization process (RDSP) fashion."[3] Despite the existence of several doctrinal manuals, home station and CTC training, and Army schools, battalion, BCT and division level staffs have failed to control operations and support the commander's ability to make decisions. Those facts indicate that something is lacking. Why are staffs unprepared to execute the functions necessary to control operations and support the commander's decision making processes?

Armies are not the only organizations in which leaders are supported by employees or a staff. Other fields can be examined to understand the staff requirements better. The education and business fields have similar relationships between leaders and staff personnel. Contemporary business leadership and management theories offer analogous models of the staff process. Those models address the difference between managers and leaders and the ways in which managers

[1] US Army Center for Army Lessons Learned, "Conduct the Military Decision Making Process," *CTC Trends Fiscal Year 2016*, no 17-28, (Oct 2017): 10.

[2] US Army Mission Command Training Program, "Mission Command Training in Unified Land Operations," *FY 16 Key Observations*, no 17-05, (Feb 2017): 6.

[3] US Army Center for Army Lessons Learned, "Command Trends," *JRTC Trends 3rd and 4th Quarter Fiscal Year 2017*, (Dec 2017): 15.

and leaders interact. Throughout the late 20th and early 21st century, large multi-national corporations have operated in environments every bit as complex as those faced by the military and have used contemporary methods and theories to guide day to day execution. Like military commanders, corporate leaders too must describe and implement a vision of the future. Military staffs perform a function similar to that of a corporate manager in conducting daily operations and planning for the future. Thus, controlling operations, whether military or commercial, is an inherently managerial function.

To answer the question, why do staffs struggle to support the commander, it was important to review business management theory regarding the role of managers in support of leaders. Business theory provided other managerial models for the staff to consider when executing their tasks to support the commander. Next, it was necessary to evaluate the evolution of command and control doctrine, current doctrine, and the current curriculum of the Command and General Staff College to determine the Army organizational expectations, staff and commander roles and responsibilities, and how the commander and his staff are prepared to execute operations. A review of the history of operational control doctrine shows the evolution of the expectations for both the commander and the staff. Finally, by comparing the military system with business systems it was possible to identify places in military command and control doctrine where business theory could clarify the staff's role and the staff's requirements, filling the shortfalls in doctrine with proven techniques currently in practice in the corporate world.

In all, nearly thirty doctrinal manuals, dating from 1938 to 2017, were evaluated to determine the role of the staff relative to the commander and specific guidance to the staff officer on his routine responsibilities. This review revealed the Army's changing views of the staff. In the 1940s the staff was little more than an extension of the commander. The 1950s and 60s saw the first development of command and control doctrine with a distinct, separate role for the staff, but in support of the commander. From the 1970s to the present that trend reversed itself with

each evolution of doctrine becoming ever more commander centric and no specific guidance on the duties of the staff.

As a result of the research it appears that staffs struggle to perform their tasks because control doctrine has become fractured and spread between several manuals and has not changed to account for changes to command doctrine. To a lesser extent, the role of the staff is unclear in doctrine, and new staff officers are not taught their specific role in Command and General Staff Course (CGSC). Simultaneously, business management theories have articulated a clear role for managers in the execution of the routine organizational operations and their duties in support of organizational leaders. The introduction of management theory into operational control and staff function doctrines would clarify the responsibilities and duties required to properly support the commander. To fully understand the scope of the staff's challenges the history of the Army's doctrine for the control of operations and the actions of the staff needed to be examined and compared to contemporary management theory. This examination will illuminate the Army's long challenge with clear definition of staff roles and responsibilities and provide some understanding of the cause of the current staff difficulties.

Business Management Theory

The processes and procedures required to successfully lead and manage in the world of business are an extremely popular topic. Large multi-national corporations are every bit as complex and diverse as any military organization and share many characteristics. As in military organizations, large corporations typically have a Chairman, or CEO, who serves in a role very similar to that of a commander, and personnel who conduct the routine business of the organization, as does the staff in the military. There are dozens of contemporary business management and leadership theories to compare to military doctrine. For brevity, two will suffice to create a framework with which to compare the expectations and duties of managers to the doctrinal requirements of a staff in support of a commander. Military staffs are analogous to

corporate managers because staff officers are normally divided into sections according to their military specialty which is equivalent to being responsible for a specific commodity.

Henry Mintzberg is one of the most prominent scholars on the role and function of managers and what constitutes management. Mintzberg states on the very first page of his 1973 work, *The Nature of Managerial Work*, managers' plan organize, coordinate and control.[4] This very closely resembles the role of the staff as laid out in the 1997 edition of FM101-5.

> All staff organizations and procedures exist to make the organization, analysis, and presentation of vast amounts of information manageable for the commander... Once a decision is made, the commander depends on his staff to communicate the decision to subordinates…[5]

Mintzberg further describes three categories and ten principal roles for every manager. While his definitions do not apply perfectly to the military staff officer, a short description of Mintzberg's definition of each role, and the functions of managers in general, provides a framework to compare to Army doctrine.

The first of Mintzberg's roles for managers is that of the figurehead. Figurehead is a largely symbolic role which allows the manager to take the place of the leader, or commander, at a public or social event where no decisions are expected. In this role, the manager can be the person employees can turn to when they need help or support. This role does not involve significant information processing or decision making. In the military, the CoS or a designated staff officer fulfills the figurehead role when he represents the commander. In that role the CoS has referred or implied authority, but does not have the ability to make a major change in direction without returning to the commander. In neither case is the figurehead role central to the duties of the manager or staff officer yet he is expected to perform this role by virtue of his position.

---

[4] Henry Mintzberg, *The Nature of Managerial Work* (New York, NY: Harper and Row, 1973), 1.

[5] US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 101-5, Staff Organization and Operations (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1997), 5.

Mintzberg's second role for the manager is that of the leader. The manager, as a leader, supervises the routine execution of operations looking for systems or employees who require additional supervision, guidance, encouragement or direction. The manager attempts to combine the needs of the individual with the goals and requirements of the organization and creates the balance between employees and management necessary to succeed. While leadership is an inherent part of the manager's duties, it should not be confused with the responsibilities and authority which reside with the decision makers. Here the military definition of leadership as an analogue for command must be disregarded. While the CoS or XO wields military authority over the staff, it is done as an extension of the commander. Similarly, where a staff officer is the leader of a staff section he is neither its commander nor the principal source of the direction, goals or requirements for the organization. In this role, the military manager must supervise that actions of their subordinates and ensure completion of tasks and conduct himself in a way so as to maintain moral authority to complement their coordinating authority. Mintzberg's leadership role emphasizes the supervisory nature of the manager's duties rather than setting the goals or vision for the organization.

Mintzberg believes every manager is also a liaison. This means that the manager must successfully interface with a variety of people both inside and outside the organization to keep things running smoothly. This role depends on effective communication, and it is one of the main things that determines the ultimate success or failure of a manager. Managers should be able to properly communicate with a range of people in such a way that the project remains on track. Mintzberg's use of the word liaison does not match the role played by the staff. A more appropriate military term would be to coordinate and communicate laterally. To execute Mintzberg's role of the liaison, the staff must maintain constant active dialogue with both peer and adjacent units as well as with both the higher and subordinate organizations. Effective lateral and vertical communication is necessary to ensure synchronization of actions and unity of efforts between units and with the higher headquarters.

In the monitoring role, managers constantly seek, receive and process information regarding the current status of operations within the organization. The manager is looking for changes, opportunities, problems both within and external to, the organization. The manager seeks this information from formal and informal sources alike and must sort the relevant from the irrelevant data before synthesizing a new understanding of the current situation and assessing the impact on the organization. Monitoring is the most critical role for the manager. The staff will receive large amounts of information and must have pre-established systems and processes to avoid being inundated. Monitoring involves tracking changes in the situation that affect the organization and progress within defined standards toward the vision articulated by the commander. The staff must be trained prior to execution of a task to understand its requirements so as to can monitor the situation. In this role the manager must understand the intent of the commander and look for critical information required for the commander to make a decision. The CoS or XO must ensure the staff completes tasks on time and to standard. He is on the alert for departures from the plan or changes to the timeline because that may affect the staff's ability to complete tasks assigned by the commander. While the terms monitor and supervisor seem similar, a monitor is different than a supervisor. A monitor collects information to use when recommending or implementing change, whereas a supervisor oversees a system or process but has neither a requirement nor the authority to make a change.

According to Mintzberg, managers will have access to more information than employees and they must distribute that information both internally and externally. Mintzberg defines this role as the disseminator. As the disseminator, the manager is more than just a distribution node, instead focusing, refining and clarifying for subordinates and doing so in a timely manner so that the information is of use for as long as possible. The manager frequently interacts with the leader, transmits updates and identifies new organizational requirements. On a military staff the CoS or XO fulfill this role. The CoS or XO provides updates, changes and requirements from the Commander to the staff and plays a vital role in the quick, clear and effective dissemination of

information. Finally, the CoS or XO receives requests for additional information and items that require a decision from the commander. In each case, the military management system must act quickly to ensure clear understanding throughout the organization.

While the disseminator focuses inward on the organization, Mintzberg's spokesman focuses mostly on events and people outside the organization. The manager is qualified to speak on behalf of the organization by virtue of their experience but does so without the decision making authority the leader possesses. The manager ensures that leaders within the organization and the public outside the organization have a clear understanding of the organization's goals and progress. This is critical to ensuring that both the workforce and its leaders maintain confidence in the organization. Again, the specific military definition of a spokesman must be disregarded in lieu of a deeper meaning of the term. The CoS or XO is not a public affairs officer and does not perform that role. Rather, the CoS or XO speaks for the organization as the single voice, short of the commander, to higher and adjacent units. The staff also fills the disseminator role in their interactions with higher and adjacent staffs and actively seeks opportunities to reinforce the command's messages. The military staff differs from corporate organizations in this role because military units communicate with peer organizations freely while corporate staffs do not routinely interact with competitors.

Mintzberg's next role deals with the manager as a decision maker, the entrepreneur. In this role, the manager initiates and designs changes within the organization. As the person least directly connected to any single process or function, the manager must rise above the minutiae of the operation to evaluate the organization as a whole and to determine areas in need of improvement. The staffs perform Mintzberg's role of entrepreneur in a very similar way. The entrepreneur is focused on internal evaluation. In this role, the whole staff must be evaluated, without regard for specific department or specialty, to determine if the commander's or leader's needs are being met, and the organization's mission accomplished. If not, organizational or procedural changes are required. The entrepreneur role is vital for both military and corporate

staffs because internal evaluation processes and controls are the only way the staff to verify that the organizations' goals are met.

In Mintzberg's system, the converse of the entrepreneur is the disturbance handler. The entrepreneur focuses on identifying and making needed changes within the organization. The disturbance handler acts when changes are forced by decisions or events outside the organization. In short, the disturbance handler is the manager handling a crisis. How managers handle disturbances is often a product of precedent or the actions of previous managers. In the military, disturbances occur constantly. Among the principal duties of the staff is the requirement to handle the routine disturbances that happen within units. The routine disturbances can be the assignment of a mission on short notice or change to an existing task, or receipt of a piece of intelligence that creates an unexpected opportunity to be exploited. The military manager constantly faces disturbances to be handled and reconciled with the larger plan. Only when the disturbance is sufficient to change the original plan or prevent the staff from implementing the commander's vision must the CoS or XO seek additional guidance or direction from the commander. The staff's ability to account for and handle disturbances is essential to supporting the commander and accomplishing the mission.

One of Mintzberg's most important managerial roles is resource allocator. Combined with monitoring, resource allocation is the principal task of the manager. These resources are not limited to physical items, such as manpower, money, equipment and time, but could be conceptual, like the decision to pursue a particular avenue of research or temporal, like the decision to take a meeting with a particular subordinate. Each can be allocated either up or down. In each decision, the manager must consider the direction of the organization and the impact on the workforce to ensure that sufficient resources exist to accomplish the task and further the vision of the leader. In an era of constantly constrained and decreasing resources, the allocator role is especially critical for the military manager. The staff must be constantly aware of the status of the unit's resources, and the level of risk that the shortages create for the commander.

They must also understand what constitutes a resource in the organization, which will depend on the nature of the task, the environment and even the composition of the friendly and adversary organizations. The resources managed by the staff will likely exist in all three traditional domains, the physical, cognitive and emotional. For example, the CoS or XO can use the presence or absence of the commander, or his time, as a resource. Additionally, the military manager must be certain to act within the intent and guidance of the commander when reallocating resources. Again, the staff must allocate and manage resources to ensure the success of the mission and notify the commander when resource shortfalls increase risk.

Lastly, Mintzberg identifies the manager as a negotiator. In this context, negotiating is not just limited to transactions between organizations or the implementation of a deal, but also the communications within an organization designed to create a shared vision or goal. Creating buy in to the overall goal and vision will likely mean negotiating with individuals or small groups. For the military manager, the negotiator role is much less transactional and much more about building consensus. In joint or multi-national operations, the negotiator's role is especially important because there is seldom a single overriding authority, especially within the staff. In such organizations, the military manager must create a shared vision within the staff and obtain the staff's commitment to accomplishing the mission. It is also important that the CoS or XO take the time necessary to solicit and consider as many viewpoints as possible before recommending a solution to the commander.

Mintzberg's ten roles describe the framework in which managers operate. Despite the similarity between business and military organizations, Army doctrine does not assign any management tasks to the staff, only the requirement to support the commander. Mintzberg's roles of the manager could be applied throughout a staff to clarify individual actions and requirements

for both the individual staff officer and the organization.

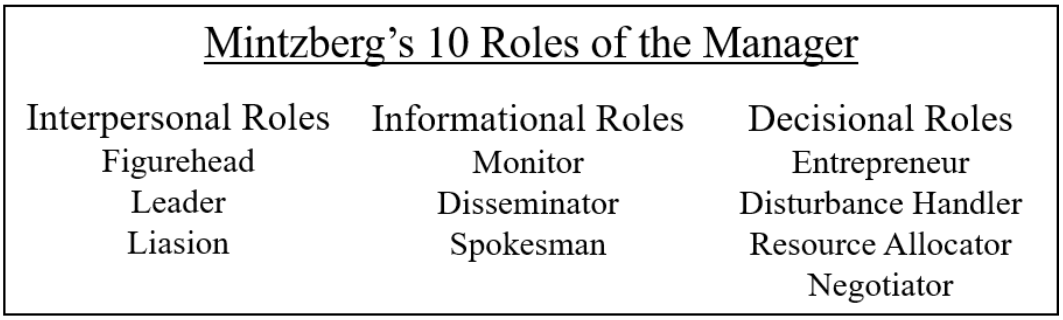

Figure 1. Mintzberg's 10 roles of the Manager. Henry Mintzberg, *The Nature of Managerial Work* (New York, NY: Harper and Row, 1973).

The Leader versus the Manager

A frequent topic in business books and articles is the need to distinguish between a leader and a manager. Put simply, the principal difference between a manager and a leader boils down to a difference in daily focus. Most business texts claim that management is about coping with complexity, largely in response to the emergence of large trans-national corporations throughout the twentieth century. Good management ensures order, consistency and adherence to established standards. Managers ensure the organization moves in the direction established by the leader by controlling processes and personnel, by solving unexpected deviations from the plan and by coping with complex variations of the plan[6] Managers produce consistent results in measurable areas to meet the expectations of key stakeholders such as stockholders and board members. Leadership, on the other hand, involves creating a vision, setting a direction and coping with change. This definition differs significantly from the Army definition of leadership. The Army asserts that leadership manifests itself in every action taken or not taken by an organization. The business definition takes the approach that the leader focuses on the abnormal or emergent requirement, leaving the routine operation of the organization to management.

[6] John P. Kotter, "What Leaders Really Do," *Harvard Business Review* 68, no. 3 (May-June 1990): 104-107

John Kotter, a prominent professor and writer in the field of business leadership, finds the separate roles of manager and leader complimentary. Whereas the leader sets the direction, vision, strategy and long term goals for the organization, the manager executes a system of planning, budgeting and resource allocation to achieve those priorities. In business, planning is seen principally as a management function designed to produce the documents, checklists and tools needed to operate the organization, not as a method to articulate a vision or drive change. The role of the military staff officer is essentially the same as in business. Commander provides the vision and direction for the unit and the staff establishes a system of plans, allocates resources, and implements. The manager organizes people for the task, the leader communicates the requirements and end state to the workforce.

Kotter states that during implementation the manager controls action and solves problems that arise while executing the previously developed plan. During execution, the manager monitors results and compares the results with the plan's expectation. He identifies deviations, shortfalls or unexpected results and then takes action or constructs plans to correct the errors. During execution, the leader transitions to motivating and inspiring the workforce. He focuses on keeping people moving in the right overall direction. The leader seeks to satisfy basic emotional needs for recognition and belonging to create a sense of shared purpose and commitment to the task and organization.[7] Kotter's vision clearly describes different roles for the manager and the leader and how the actions they take in their roles support achievement of the organization's goals.

[7] John P. Kotter, *A Force for Change* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1990), 4-5.

Kotter's Managers vs. Leaders	
Manager	Leader
Planning and budgeting	Establishing direction
Organizing and staffing	Aligning people
Controlling and problem solving	Motivating and inspiring

Figure 2. Summary of Kotter's roles of managers' vs leaders. John P. Kotter, *A Force for Change* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1990).

Contemporary business management theory describes several roles for the manager and the leader. While less detailed, Kotter's principles mesh with Mintzberg's in that both Mintzberg and Kotter have clear visions for the role of the manager and how it differs from that of the leader. Both Mintzberg and Kotter provide a staff planning and execution considerations in the staff's efforts to support a leader or commander. These considerations could be of great value to a Chief of Staff or Executive Officer by helping him determine how to focus the efforts of a staff to achieve the commanders end state. Contemporary military staffs require this kind of framework because the staff's managerial responsibilities have been poorly described in Army doctrine for at least 80 years.

Army Operations and Staff Doctrine History

Dating back as far as the Field Service Regulations of 1905, the Army has written doctrine for controlling operations and exercising command. [8] The names and designations of these manuals have changed over time but the manuals have usually been divided into two groups, manuals governing the conduct of operations and manuals governing the actions of the staff in support of the commander. The responsibilities and authorities of the commander must be clear to understand the roles of the staff. In the current version of the Army's capstone leadership manual, Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 6-22, *Leadership*, the Army defines leadership as "the

[8] Clinton J. Ancker, "The Evolution of Mission Command in U.S. Army Doctrine, 1905 to the Present," *Military Review* (March-April 2013): 43.

process of influencing people by providing purpose, direction, and motivation to accomplish the mission and improve the organization. As an element of combat power, leadership unifies the other elements of combat power (information, mission command, movement and maneuver, intelligence, fires, sustainment and protection)." [9] Within this construct, the commander's leadership is the action that unifies other elements. Mission command is the method used by the commander, the staff supports the commander. Mission Command is the element of combat power most influenced by the staff, especially in the planning of an operation. ADP 6-0, *Mission Command*, defines Mission Command as "the exercise of authority and direction by the commander using mission orders to enable disciplined initiative within the commander's intent to empower agile and adaptive leaders in the conduct of unified land operations."[10] There is no need for a role for the staff in this definition. Commanders are then expected to use this system to complete their missions by "balancing the art of command with the science of control."[11] The commander's role is clear. He influences people to use initiative within his commander's intent to accomplish tasks in the conduct of operations. However, the doctrine fails to articulate the role or actions of the staff in support of the commander using the science of control. ADP 6-0 defines control as "the regulation of forces and warfighting functions to accomplish the mission in accordance with the commander's intent." and the "systems and procedures used to improve the commander's understanding and support accomplishing missions."[12] This definition lacks clarity and provides no guidance for the staff because the word "regulation" has no doctrinal definition in ADRP 1-02, *Terms and Military Symbols* and is not sufficient to guide the actions of a staff in the execution of operations. The staff cannot use the process of control to support the commander

[9] US Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 6-22, Leadership (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 1-1.

[10] US Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 6-0, Mission Command (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 1.

[11] Ibid., 5.

[12] Ibid., 7,8.

without a clear definition of what is meant by the term control. This clearly demonstrates some of the challenges facing the staff in execution of operations and begins to show why staffs struggle to succeed. The lack of a clear role or tasks for the staff is not a new phenomenon and dates back to one of the first attempts to codify the duties of a staff officer.

The 1940 version of FM100-5, *Operations*, contains just four paragraphs on the responsibilities of the staff but refers the reader to the 1940 version of FM101-5, the Staff Officers' Field Manual, in dozens of places. On page 1 of FM101-5, the commander is designated the center of the process. The manual states, "The commander alone is responsible to his superior for all that his unit does or fails to do. He cannot shift this responsibility to his staff or to subordinate commanders."[13] On the next page, the role of the staff is established as "the officers who assist the commander in his exercise of command."[14] From the earliest versions of operational control doctrine, the staff is described as the commander's supporting element. Even the definition of what competencies a staff officer should possess revolves around the commander.

> The staff secures and furnishes such information as maybe required by the commander, prepares the details of his plan, translates his decision and plan into orders, and causes such orders to be transmitted to the troops. It brings to the commander's attention matters which require his action or about which he should be informed, makes a continuous study of the situation, and prepares tentative plans for possible future contingencies for the consideration of the commander. [15]

This definition of the role of the staff is significant because it shows that in 1940, there is no identity for the staff separate from that of the commander. The staff exists primarily as an extension of the commander with few responsibilities and authorities other than the commander's immediate needs. The information and duty requirements for a 1940s staff officer rest solely on the personal preferences of the commander, not the requirements of the unit, mission, or staff

---

[13] US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 101-5, Staff Officers Field Manual The Staff and Combat Orders (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1940), 1.

[14] Ibid., 2.

[15] Ibid.

section. The definition of the general functions of the staff closes with a clear summation of the expectations of a staff officer; "A staff officer should be an active, well-informed assistant to the commander and a helpful adviser to subordinate commanders." This seems to have more in common with an Army of the 19th century than the 20th where the staff existed to ensure the orders of the King were followed, not to allow independent operations or initiative.[16] While this vision for the staff reflected the state of technology and Army operations at the time, neither Mintzberg nor Kotter would approve of this model as it leaves no independent role for the staff to control or manage operations and no specific duties for the individual staff officer like Mintzberg's management roles.

The next version of FM100-5 was published in 1944 and was only incrementally different than the 1940 version except that the guidance for employment of the staff shrank to a single paragraph, reinforcing the idea that there is no independent role for the staff:

> The staff assists the commander to the extent that he may require, by providing, information, data, and advice; by preparing detailed plans and orders in accordance with his directions; and by exercising such supervision over the execution of his orders as he may prescribe.[17]

The 1944 and 1949 versions of FM 100-5 referred to the 1940 version of FM 101-5 for all matters pertaining to the staff and, thus, continued to limit the staff to supporting the commander. The next version of FM 101-5 was published in 1950.

The 1950 version of FM 101-5 was significantly different from the 1940 version. While the 1950 version maintained attention on the commander as the center of the process and described the staff as his assistants, the manual contained considerably more detail and was nearly twice as long as its predecessor, 270 vs 140 pages. The 1950 version of FM101-5 was the first manual to provide guidance on the role of the staff separate from its role as the assistant to

[16] Jim Dunnigan, "Frederick the Great and the Art of Battle Management during the Seven Years War, 1756-63," *Strategy and Tactics* (Mar/Apr 2004): 1.

[17] US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 100-5, Operations (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1944), 39.

the commander. Hence, it is the first manual that could be reasonably called modern. The 1950 version also contained very detailed descriptions of the staff organization and defined the duties of each primary staff section. The manual also added several sections on the necessity for planning and described the steps the staff uses in executing unit planning prior to missions. The 1950 version also recognized the difference between hasty and deliberate planning and described the staff's actions in both cases. As proof of the growing staff-centric nature of the manual, the five page section on the planning process only contains the word commander three times.

The 1950 version of FM101-5 also contains the first section regarding staff officers' qualifications and actions. This is important because the manual showed that the idea of a staff as an extension of the commander had developed into the staff as an organization with specific duties and responsibilities. Although the qualifications of a staff officer stated in the 1950 version of FM101-5 were general this manual, nevertheless, that permits a comparison with a contemporary description of the duties of the manager. FM101-5 states:

> All staff officers should have a thorough knowledge of organization, operations, administration, and staff techniques, and should be familiar with the commander's policies. They should be active, well-informed assistants to the commander, since they must act as his agents in harmonizing the plans, duties, and operations of all elements of the command.[18]

This is the first place where Mintzberg might recognize that the 1950 edition begins to envision a role for the staff similar to the roles of a manager he described in 1973.

The 1954 update to FM100-5 changed very little in terms of the operational doctrine of the Army and the role of the staff. The corresponding update to FM101-5, however, added nearly 100 pages of instructions on specific formats for the production of field orders and provided detailed examples. Unlike previous versions of the manual that opened with a statement about the authority of the commander, the 1954 version defined a staff-centric purpose for the manual.

[18] US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 101-5, Staff Officers Field Manual Staff Organization and Procedure (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1950), 2.

> This Staff Officers' Field Manual is a compilation of principles, procedures, and information to be used as a *guide* for commanders and their staffs. Included herein are guides for staff organization and functions, estimates, plans, orders, records, reports, and staff studies, with selected examples of each.[19]

This was a very important change in the manual's tone and purpose because the doctrine acknowledged the change in the role of the staff from an organization that exists solely to support the commander, to one that has its own requirements and processes. As further proof, the 1954 version expanded the planning section by a page and only referred to the commander three times. The section on the qualifications of the staff officer was, however, basically unchanged. The 1954 expansion of the role of the staff represented a significant change in the Army's vision of a staff officer's responsibilities and moved the manual closer towards the modern requirements for management. This modification of the role of the staff officer also begins to fit the Kotter model. In Kotter's model, a manager has distinct duties that support the larger vision and direction established by the leader or commander.

The 1960s saw considerable changes to both FM100-5 and FM101-5 with regard to the roles and functions of the staff. While the 1950s version of FM100-5 dedicated only a single paragraph to the roles of the staff, the 1962 version of FM100-5 devoted an entire page to defining the purpose of the staff, the functions of the staff and the relationship between the commander and the staff. This represented a significant improvement toward describing the Army's expectations for a staff officer and his specific requirements. The 1962 version also described the difference in the responsibilities between the staff and commander.

> The larger an organization, the greater the requirement for staff advisors to assist the commander in the accomplishment of his responsibilities. Details belong to the staff. The commander addresses his attention to the broad essentials critical to the problem at hand. He must rely on his staff for development of the detailed considerations required for his estimates, plans, and orders.[20]

---

[19] US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 101-5, Staff Officers Field Manual Staff Organization and Procedure (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1954), 4.

[20] US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 100-5, Operations (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1962), 2.

Through the 1940s the staff was little more than an execution arm of the commander's directives but in this version of FM100-5 there is a role and requirement for the staff that is separate and distinct from the commander.

The 1960 version of FM101-5 had evolved considerably from the 1954 version. Most significantly, the manual paid attention to the idea that staffs perform management functions. The very first section, that had been labelled Command Responsibilities in previous versions, was renamed Command and Management. This is important because it represents a fundamental change in the organizational expectations of a staff officer, the staff actions that support a commander, and the acceptance of the staff officer as a type of manager. Interestingly, the text on the basic requirements of the staff to support the commander and fundamentally unchanged from the 1950s versions. It is the addition of an entire page dedicated to the principles of management and the staff's role in executing those principles that makes the section stand out. This version of FM101-5 defined management as:

> [the staff is] . . . the means by which a commander insures the proper conduct of those continuing actions of planning, organizing, directing, coordinating, and controlling the use of personnel, money, materials, time, and facilities required for the accomplishment of administrative missions and tasks. The object of good management is the most effective use of resources.[21]

The 1960 version of FM101-5 continued to differentiate between the role of the commander and staff and to articulate specific roles for the staff in support of the commander. Acknowledging the increasingly technological nature of war and the increase in the amount of information available to the commander, the manual stated a discrete purpose for the staff relative to the commander. Of note, this section is the first instance of the manual suggesting that the commander required fewer products.

> Good staff organization assists a commander by decreasing the number of items requiring command decisions. Effective staff procedures speed up the processing of information

[21] US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 101-5, Staff Officers Field Manual Staff Organization and Procedure (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1960), 5.

> into material useful to the commander and improve the quality of the product presented to him. [22]

The staff's role in this system is clear. Perform the routine actions of the organization and reduce the number of decisions required from the commander. This will allow the commander to focus on the vision and direction for the unit. This formulation is extremely similar to Kotter's definitions of leaders and managers. FM 101-5, for the first time, provided a clear set of roles for the staff that could be translated into tasks or requirements.

The 1960 version also expanded the section on qualifications and expectations of a staff officer into an entire chapter, titled Staff Activities. There the manual laid out five common functions of a staff: Derivation, Providing Information, Making Estimates, Making Recommendations and Preparing Plans and Orders. The 1960 edition of FM101-5 also has a section detailing the process and products of the planning process that differs greatly from previous versions. The plans section introduces the first version of what would become the Army's Military Decision Making Process (MDMP) as a series of steps that result in an operations order. Many terms in current use, such as mission analysis, are first seen here. The 1968 versions of FM100-5 and FM101-5 are similar to their predecessors in terms of organization, length and scope. The 1968 version of FM101-5 has a definition of the specific role and function of the staff that is more detailed than its predecessors. The manual states:

> Objective of Staff Organization: A military staff is a single, cohesive unit organized to help the commander accomplish his mission. The staff is organized and operates to:
>
> a. Respond immediately to the needs of the commander and subordinate units.
> b. Keep informed of the situation.
> c. Reduce the time needed to control, integrate, and coordinate operations.
> d. Reduce chances for error.
> e. Relieve the commander of supervisory details in routine matters.

These five functions correspond to several of Mintzberg's roles. Mintzberg's monitor role corresponds with the manual's requirement to keep informed of the situation and reduce chances

[22] US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 101-5, Staff Officers Field Manual Staff Organization and Procedure (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1960), 6.

for error. The disturbance handler role is addressed in the requirement to respond immediately to the commanders needs. Reducing the time needed to control operations represents the process improvements of the entrepreneur. Finally, the responsibility to relieve the commander from routine details is an example of Mintzberg's resource allocator in that the staff has clearly defined responsibilities to manage their commodities on behalf of the commander and to report back as needed. The late 1960s versions of FMs FM100-5 and FM101-5 displayed the Army's clear intention to integrate management principles and models into the execution of military staff work.

The 1976 edition of FM100-5 departed significantly from its predecessors and ignored the separate organizational role of the staff. The 1972 edition of FM101-5 slightly modified the five core functions of the staff but stayed within the intent of the 1968 edition. It stated: "Five functions are common to all staff officers: providing information, making estimates, making recommendations, preparing plans and orders, and supervising the execution of plans and orders."[23] The text cited above supported the role of the staff officer as a commodity manager consistent with the concepts provided by Mintzberg and Kotter where the staff manages resources, information, and operations. The 1972 edition also added a section titled staff-to-staff contacts that listed the duties of staff officers and reaffirmed the need to frequently contact counterparts at higher, adjacent, and subordinate headquarters. Staff-to-staff contacts correspond directly with Mintzberg's description of the liaison. The 1970s editions of FM100-5 and FM101-5 did little to embellish the idea of the staff's role in support of a commander. The attention paid to staff management in the 1970s, however, was destined to be eclipsed. The 1980s editions of these two manual would bring significant changes to the way the Army envisioned fighting, and commensurately, how Army defined the role of the staff.

[23] US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 101-5, Staff Officers Field Manual Staff Organization and Procedure (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1972), 1-2.

The 1982 edition of FM100-5 was significant for many reasons. It introduced AirLand Battle as the Army's operational doctrine and started the drift away from recognizing the separate role of the staff in support of the commander. It also introduced the term Command and Control as the method for conducting operations and planning, and which encompassed the actions of the staff. In a conflation of The separate roles of the commander and staff found in previous editions of FM100-5 were conflated in the 1982 version. The 1982 version stated that Command and control is the exercise of command, the means of planning and directing campaigns and battles. Its essence lies in applying leadership, making decisions, issuing orders, and supervising operations.[24] The section went on to state that the only purpose of the command and control system is to implement the commander's will in pursuit of the unit's objective.[25] The text assigns responsibility to the commander alone and leaves the role of the staff unclear. Clearly, the 1982 version of FM 100-55 retreated from the contemporary delineation of separate duties for the management staff in support of the leader's vision and instead gave the staff a singular, vague, role - support to the commander.

The 1984 version of FM101-5 reinforced the vision for the role of the staff as an organization that only serves the needs of the commander. The manual made no specific reference to staff duties or requirements. "The staff assists the commander in decision making by acquiring, analyzing, and coordinating information, and, most importantly, presenting essential information to the commander with a recommendation so he will be able to make the best decision."[26] While this vision and intent for the staff could be linked to the monitor role defined Mintzberg, it leaves no room for any of the higher staff functions, such as Mintzbergs'

[24] US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 100-5, Operations (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1982), 7-3.

[25] US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 101-5, Staff Officers Field Manual Staff Organization and Procedure (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1982), 7-3.

[26] US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 101-5, Staff Organization and Operations (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1984), 1-4.

entrepreneur and disturbance handler. This definition could also be interpreted to mean that the staff only collects and presents information, and does not analyze or assess it. Such an interpretation would directly contradict Kotter's key tasks for the staff: planning, organizing and controlling operations. Without a clear set of roles and responsibilities, the staff has no guide for its action in daily unit operations and not free the commander from routine tasks.

In the 1986 version of FM100-5, the Army maintained Command and Control as a system that emphasized decentralized leadership and initiative at all levels. The doctrine of the active defense envisioned that subordinate commanders would fight on very fluid battlefield, isolated from their higher headquarters, operating without specific guidance, within the intent of their Commander, seizing opportunities as they were presented. The manual described the conditions under which operations would be conducted, "The fluid, compartmented nature of war will place a premium on sound leadership, competent and courageous soldiers, and cohesive, well trained units. The conditions of combat on the next battlefield will be unforgiving of errors and will demand great skill, imagination, and flexibility of leaders."[27] This commander centric description of the anticipated operating environment makes the role of the staff very unclear. While the purpose of the staff support system stated in the 1982 version, "to implement the commander's will in pursuit of the unit's objective"[28] remained unchanged, nothing addressed how the staff accomplishes this task. The command and control system requires solid staff work and strongly developed skills but the manual omits any discussion of how those skills combine to support the commander. Interestingly, the publication of the 1986 version of FM100-5 did not result in a new edition of FM101-5, which had been the practice. The 1984 version would last over a decade until it was replaced in conjunction with a subsequent revision to FM100-5. The 1991 ejection of Iraq from Kuwait was viewed by many as the ultimate validation of the 1986

[27] US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 100-5, Operations (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1986), 5.

[28] Ibid., 22.

version of FM100-5, the principles of AirLand Battle and the command and control doctrine. Others saw the wide-ranging fight against the Iraqi Army as a repudiation of the system and felt the system required review and possibly revision. This led to an evaluation of operations and command and control doctrine.

In late summer of 1992, following an extensive After Action Review (AAR) and experimentation process, TRADOC began to use the term Battle Command (BC) as a replacement for Command and Control (C2). Battle Command was defined as "the art of motivating and directing soldiers and their leaders into action to accomplish missions. Includes visualizing the current and future state [sic]."[29] The Battle Command concept was codified in the 1993 version of FM100-5. The change from C2 to BC was driven by the perception that warfare had become more complex and, thus, the system of control in operations had to be more decentralized and commander-centric to allow for changing conditions on the battlefield. GEN Frederick Franks was the TRADOC Commander during this change and described the need for a change:

> There was not much wrong with command and control (C2), other than that it came with many Cold War-associated thoughts. Like it or not, C2 brought to mind images of staff processes, command post (CP) arrangements, communication architecture, wiring diagrams and a relatively "set–piece," predictable battlefield. Skill in all those is necessary; however, we wanted to get beyond that and focus on command vice staff processes. We wanted to focus on the art of command and battle leadership[30]

Supporting Franks' claim that C2 had become too mechanical was the fact that by 1996 the original C2 concept had been expanded to include twice as many elements. Known in 1996 as C4I (Command, Control, Communications, Computers and Intelligence) the concept of command and control soon was expanded to C4 ISR (C4 plus Intelligence, Surveillance and

[29] Frederick M. Franks, "Battle Command: A Commanders Perspective," *Military Review* (May-June 1996): 4.

[30] Ibid., 5.

Reconnaissance).[31] Despite the emphasis in C2 on decentralized leadership and initiative by the commander, Army leadership felt that future battlefields would be even more uncertain. It is clear that the doctrine writers, guided by the vision of the TRADOC Commander, felt that C2 had not accomplished its original purpose and had become inflexible and too prescriptive. What is unclear is what role the doctrine writers envisioned for the staff in the shift from Command and Control to Battle Command. GEN Franks described the future requirements of a battlefield commander using terms like 'read' to emphasize the qualitative versus quantitative character of operations

> "Battle commanders were being required to "read" new battlefields, put together new tactical teams where they had to determine the right mix of units and "read" new enemies…On the modern battlefield, battle commanders are being required to arrange their command teams to move rapidly, so they can personally be out on today's different, unpredictable battlefield where they belong, with their soldiers, seeing it firsthand."[32]

Battle Command asserted that operations are more art than science and that command in battle is an essentially qualitative endeavor. This concept greatly increased the centrality of the commander and further relegated the staff to an ill-defined role in support of the commander's vision. In a 2017 visit to the US Army School of Advanced Military Studies, GEN Franks repeatedly emphasized that Battle Command was about the Art of Command[33] and made no mention of the systems and processes required to support the commander. He explicitly stated that the emphasis was on "art, not apparatus."[34] In a June 2013 article on Mission Command, retired Colonels Greg Fontenot and Kevin Benson asserted that GEN Franks did not intend to displace control from the doctrine or reduce the importance of staffs, but they focused on the individual in command from the outset. In a few pithy pages, they made the person of the

---

[31] Gregory Fontenot and Kevin C. M. Benson, "The Conundrum of Mission Command" *Army* (June 2013): 31.

[32] Frederick M. Franks, "Battle Command: A Commanders Perspective," *Military Review* (May-June 1996): 5.

[33] Frederick Franks, comments on visit to SAMS, Ft Leavenworth, 20 November, 2017

[34] Frederick Franks, comments on visit to SAMS, Ft Leavenworth, 20 November, 2017

commander the essential component of Battle Command.[35] Whatever Frank's intention, it is clear that the commander took on a singularly important role in Battle Command that had been present, but not central, to its predecessor, command and control. The commander centric nature of battle command can be found in the description of the commander's actions on the battlefield:

> Commanders command while the headquarters and staff coordinate and make necessary control adjustments consistent with the commander's intent…Commanders influence the outcome of battles, campaigns, and engagements by assigning missions; prioritizing and allocating resources; assessing and taking risks; deciding when and how to make adjustments; committing reserves; seeing, hearing, and understanding the needs of subordinates and seniors; and guiding and motivating the organization toward the desired end.[36]

In this section nearly all of the managerial roles described by Mintzberg and assigned to the staff in previous versions of doctrine became the province of the commander. The great shortcoming of Battle Command was that it articulated a need for commanders to act in a decentralized manner, but provided no definition or vision what duties the staff was perform as it supported the implementation of the commander's vision.

In 1997, after thirteen years and two revisions to FM100-5, a new edition of FM101-5 was finally published. The 1997 version supported Army operations as envisioned in FM100-5. It addressed many of the gaps in the staff officer requirements created by the Battle Command operational doctrine. In describing the roles of the staff, FM101-5 used a model very similar to Kotter in stating that the staff officer, "relieves the commander of routine and detailed work and raises to the commander those things that only the commander can act on."[37] However, the 1997 version was an odd mix of clear statements from previous versions and vague platitudes.

---

[35] Gregory Fontenot and Kevin C. M. Benson, "The Conundrum of Mission Command," *Army* (June 2013): 31.

[36] US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 100-5, Operations (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1993), 2-14.

[37] US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 101-5, Staff Organization and Operations (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1997), 3-1.

Compare the following from adjacent paragraphs on the same page. The first statement is taken directly from a previous edition and is clear.

> The staff must establish and maintain a high degree of coordination and cooperation, both internally and with staffs of higher, lower, and adjacent units. The staff supports the commander by providing better, more relevant, timely, and accurate information; making estimates and recommendations; preparing plans and orders; and monitoring execution.[38]

Contained on the same page is a vague assertion of the staff's role in supporting the commander without identifying requirements or processes.

> The staff's efforts must always focus on supporting the commander and on helping him support his subordinate units. Commanders can minimize risks by increasing certainty.[39]

This discontinuity is a result of the combination of the previous editions' focus on the responsibilities of the staff and the emerging focus on the commander as the center of the efforts of the staff. In places where new ideas had been introduced, there is no tie to any kind of contemporary management theory. Thus, the staff's role remained unclear. This edition of FM101-5 was the guide for staff actions in operations in Bosnia and Kosovo and remained the doctrine through the initial invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan.

In 2001, the Army released an updated version of FM100-5. In keeping with the Joint publication numbering system, the manual was renamed FM 3.0 but contained all of the same elements as its predecessors. Maintaining the Battle Command model, the commander was the center of the process and the staff supported the commander's vision. FM 3.0 introduced the elements of operational design as a part of commanders' visualization and the notion of an operations process that is an expression of the ways the different elements of Battle Command are executed continuously by both the commander and the staff. In it, all actions of planning,

[38] US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 101-5, Staff Organization and Operations (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1997), 4-1.

[39] Ibid.

preparation and execution occur continuously, within the commander's vision and while being constantly assessed. Figure 3 is the graphical depiction of the operations process.

Despite the inclusion of new ways of visualizing and describing the battlefield in FM 3.0 the staff remained little more than a tool for the commander, having no specific duties outside of

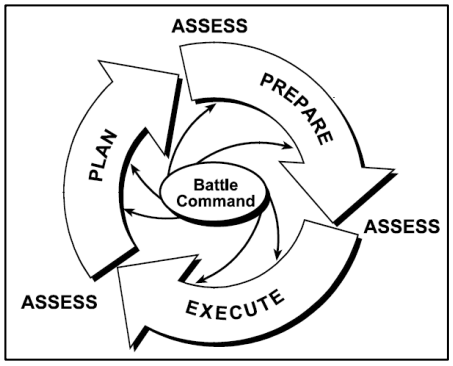

Figure 3. The Operations Process, 2001. US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3.0, Operations (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2001)

his personal requirements. The section on planning describes the relationship between the commander and the staff as "The commander's intent and planning guidance direct the activities of the staff and subordinate commanders. The staff assists the commander with the coordination and detailed analysis necessary to convert the planning guidance and commander's intent into a plan. The plan becomes a common reference point for operations."[40] This is noteworthy because the Operations Process requires constant development and assessment, yet the staff has no specific role in executing these functions. The commander is the only person who is actually assigned any tasks as part of the process and he must execute them all. The integration of Mintzberg's roles for the manager into the operations process would immediately clarify and define the requirements for the CoS or XO and the staff.

In 2003 the Army made a significant change to the doctrine and split FM101-5 into FMs 5.0, *Army Planning and Orders Production*, and 6.0, *Mission Command: Command and Control of Army Forces*. In doing so, the doctrine writers essentially put the roles and responsibilities of

[40] US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3.0, Operations (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2001), 6-2.

the staff in support of the commander in one manual and the methods and processes used by the staff to plan operations in another. Mr. Mike Flynn of the Ft Leavenworth Combined Arms Doctrine Directorate was the author of the 2005 edition of FM 5.0. He stated that there were several reasons for the split.

> The reason the 1997 edition of FM 101-5 was split into FM 5-0 and FM 6-0 was twofold. First, the Army did not have a manual dedicated to command and control. The 2003 edition of FM 6-0 became that manual. It included the fundamentals of C2 and mission command, along with the duties of the staff, the operations process, preparation and rehearsals, and liaison. Second, we wanted to match the Army doctrine numbering construct with the joint numbering construct. FM 5-0 took the planning aspects of FM 101-5 to make a manual dedicated to planning and orders production that matched the joint numbering series.[41]

This explanation is problematic for several reasons, both practical and conceptual. Splitting the act and process of planning from the other duties and expectations of the staff adds tremendous ambiguity to the daily expectations of an individual staff officer. Neither Kotter nor Mintzberg would approve of splitting the reference for the duties of the staff from the techniques used to fulfill those duties because both the role of staffs and managers are closely tied to their processes. The decision to split FM 101-5 into FMs 5.0 and 6.0 eliminated 65 years of history, during which a single reference existed regarding all the actions of a staff. It created a schism between responsibilities and procedures that is one of the principal reasons staffs struggle to fully support commanders today.

The 2003 edition of FM 6.0 also replaced the term Battle Command with the term Mission Command. Army leadership had determined that the change to Mission Command (MC) was necessary because the existing doctrine did not adequately address the increasing need for the commander to frequently frame and reframe an environment of ill-structured problems. [42] For the third time in less than twenty five years, the Army used the same requirement, an increasingly decentralized and complex battlefield, as a reason to modify the doctrine for the control of

[41] Mike Flynn, interview with author, Feb 13, 2018.

[42] Robert L. Caslen, "The Way the Army Fights Today," *Military Review* (March-April 2011): 85.

operations. Interestingly, FM 3.0 retained the term Battle Command until 2011. FM 6.0 2003 presents command and control as a very complicated system focused entirely on the commander with no specified role for the staff. Figure 4 shows the 2003 model.

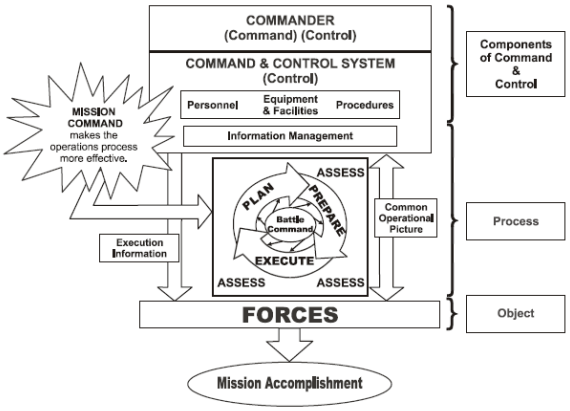

Figure 4: The Command and Control system, 2003. US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 6.0, Mission Command (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2003), 1-2.

The manual makes it clear that the commander executes the command function and implies, but never explicitly states, that control is provided by the staff. The definition of control is illustrative.

> Within command and control, *control* is the regulation of forces and battlefield operating systems to accomplish the mission in accordance with the commander's intent. It includes collecting, processing, displaying, storing, and disseminating relevant information for creating the common operational picture, and using information, primarily by the staff, during the operations process.[43]

Even in the section dedicated to the functions necessary to support the commander's execution of command, the staff is treated as an afterthought. The roles and responsibilities of the staff that were prominently featured in previous editions of FM101-5 are now presented in one of six appendices. When the only manual dedicated to the roles of the staff has five chapters dedicated to commanders or command functions and only one dedicated to the staff then the challenges facing staffs today become clear. Further, this organization relegates the staff to a supporting

[43] US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 6.0, Mission Command (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2003), 3-1.

function similar to the 1940 version of FM101-5 wherein the staff exists simply to meet the needs of the commander. This is in contrast to a more modern approach where the staff and commander have individual portfolios or responsibilities that work in concert to accomplish the mission as is laid out in Kotter. The 2008 update to FM 3.0 changed little in terms of the roles of the commander and staff. While it retained the term Battle Command, the roles of the commander and staff within the command and control system remained vague and very commander-centric.

Current Doctrine

In 2011, the Army implemented the Joint Doctrine 2015 program that divided two top level doctrinal manuals into an Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) and Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) and lower level FMs. The ADP was intended as a high level summary for senior leaders with additional details included in the ADRP. FMs were retained for specialty topics, like Urban Operations or specific logistics processes. This division had the effect of further fracturing staff doctrine. In the 2012 edition of ADRP 6-0, the doctrine makes a significant differentiation between the Art of Command executed by the commander and the Science of Control used by the staff to support the commander's visualization.

> supports the commander and subordinate commanders in understanding situations, decision making, and implementing decisions throughout the conduct of operations. The staff does this through the four staff tasks—
>
> - Conduct the operations process: plan, prepare, execute, and assess.
> - Conduct knowledge management and information management.
> - Synchronize information-related capabilities.
> - Conduct cyber electromagnetic activities.[44]

The first of these tasks 'conduct the operations process' exemplifies the problem regarding the role of the staff in support of the commander. The conduct of the operations process is listed as the first, and presumably most important task for the staff but the diagram below in

[44] US Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 6.0, Mission Command (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 3-5.

figure five does not even use the word staff, let alone depict the role of the staff in supporting the commander.

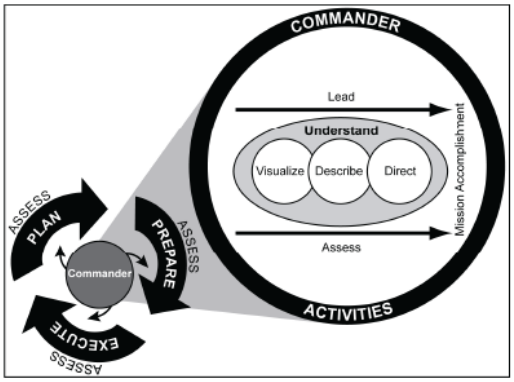

Figure 5. The Operations Process, 2012. US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 6.0, Mission Command (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 3-5.

Even the description of the operations process fails to articulate the duties of the staff. It states "Commanders drive the operations process, while remaining focused on the major aspects of operations. Staffs conduct the operations process; they assist commanders in the details of planning, preparing, executing, and assessing."[45] The subtle differences between driving the process and conducting the process are never made clear. By 2014, there were four different manuals with varying levels of detail regarding staff work. None of them contained specific tasks outside the requirement to support the commander.

In the ADP/ADRP scheme, the FM still exists to provide more detailed information or a reference. It is unknown whether the doctrine writers discovered or became aware of the lack of guidance for the staff in but in 2014, the Army released FM 6.0, Commander and Staff Organization and Operations. This title is remarkably similar to the last version of FM101-5, Staff Organizations and Operations, published in 1997. A comparison between the two manuals shows that they are nearly identical. While this could serve as a solution to some of the problems facing staffs, only a few officers and staffs are aware this field manual exists.

[45] US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 6.0, Mission Command (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 3-5.

Staff Officer Education at CGSC

In addition to doctrine, officer education must be briefly evaluated to determine the causes for staff ineffectiveness. The Army's Command and General Staff College (CGSC) has several schools and courses. The Command and General Staff Officers Course historically has prepared mid-career field grade officers to serve as general staff officers. The principal doctrinal block of instruction in the Army's Command and General Staff Officer Course (CGSOC) core curriculum is in the C400, Army Doctrine and Planning. During the 64 hours of instruction, eight hours are spent on FM 3.0 and ADP 6.0, four hours on the operations process in ADP 5.0, and 34 hours are spent on the Military Decision Making Process out of FM 6.0, for a total of 46 hours. This block of instruction has been shortened by six hours from previous years. While it is good that over half the C400 instructional period , 46 of 64 hours, is spent on FM 6.0, there are 329 total instructional hours in the CGSC core curriculum, meaning that only ten percent of student officer's time is spent on the responsibilities and actions of the staff in planning and only another four percent on other doctrine.[46] The dearth of instruction directly contributes to the lack of awareness and understanding demonstrated by officers serving on battalion, brigade and division level staffs.

The second half of the CGSC year is the Advanced Operations Course (AOC), which professionally develops graduates to serve as staff officers and commanders with the ability to build, lead formations, and integrate unified land operations.[47] Even in the course designed to prepare officers to serve on or lead a staff only 124 of 304 hours, or about 41%, are dedicated to planning and staff actions. Further, when staff procedures are taught, the student serves as a unit commander, as opposed to a staff officer. The course description from the Advanced Operations Course O300 demonstrates the commander-centric trend, even in staff training:

---

[46] US Army Command and General Staff College, *CGSC Circular 350-1* (Fort Leavenworth, KS, 2016), 7-3.

[47] Ibid., 7-11.

> This…block will prepare students, as leaders, to develop training and deployment plans and execute missions in extended campaigns and to anticipate change, create opportunities, and manage transitions. It will increase students' ability to understand, visualize, and describe the operational environment; frame complex problems; and direct staffs during planning, preparation, execution, and assessment of tactical plans to achieve a desired end state.

Throughout the CGSC curriculum, nearly every learning objective focuses on preparing an officer to command. The specific references to anticipating change and managing transitions mirror Kotter's observations concerning the duties of a leader, not those of a manager, which is backwards given the stated purpose of the instruction. Although the Command and General Staff Officer Course once provided the primary staff education for field grade Officers. However, with the shift toward Battle Command and then Mission Command the course no longer adequately covers Army staff doctrine and provides insufficient practice in staff procedures. Given the changes in Army command and control doctrine, the lack of attention to staff managerial requirements, and the absence of schooling in staff procedures, it is no wonder that training evaluations of battalion and brigade sized units have noted that the staffs cannot adequately fulfill their role.

Conclusion

Modern military staffs struggle to perform the tasks necessary to support the requirements of the commander. A study of the evolution of the Army doctrine for the control of operations reveals several trends and a possible explanation. Since 1940, the Army has modified staff doctrine at basically the same pace as operational doctrine. While operational doctrine has changed to account for battlefield conditions, staff doctrine has lagged behind in defining the requirements and actions necessary to control operations and support the commander. This has caused a desynchronization between the Army's expectations and requirements for commanders and its definition of the roles and responsibilities of the staff. Since the 1980s, the staff doctrine has also become increasingly commander-centric. While supporting the commander's intent and vision is the staff's purpose, the Commander centric nature of doctrine has led to a "Cult of

Command" where staff actions are relegated to an afterthought or vague notion.[48] Since 2003, the doctrine for control of operations and the roles of the staff have been split between no less than two, and currently five, different references. The split of FM 101-5 into FMs 5.0 and 6.0 degraded the quality of staff doctrine and confused the role of the commander with the requirements of the staff. The subsequent introduction of Army Doctrine 2015 and the ADP/ ADRP series of manuals have exacerbated this problem significantly.

Further complicating the challenges facing staffs, Majors receive little more than exposure, as opposed to in-depth education, to the doctrine for planning and controlling operations. Those students then only have a few opportunities to practice or exercise those skills and roles in school, prior to joining a unit. What training Majors receive is framed from the perspective of a commander instead of a staff officer. As a result, the officers principally responsible for supervising and executing staff functions at the battalion and brigade level cannot reconcile the fractured nature of the doctrine and their training with their requirements in execution.

Simultaneously, the business world embraces the idea of managers and leaders having different roles and functions. Two influential theorists and academics have described their versions of what those roles would entail but more value lies in the idea that the roles of the manager and leader are distinct, separate and complementary. The staff must represent the Commander to others without benefit of command authority. The staff constantly communicates the vision of the Commander both within the organization and to the higher level. The staff also maintains communications with peer organizations or departments to ensure synchronization with other organizational priorities and operations. The staff serves as the central clearinghouse for information and identifies opportunities for growth or the requirement for change within the organization. While the Commander sets the vision and goals for the organization, the staff

[48] Gregory Fontenot and Kevin C. M. Benson, "The Conundrum of Mission Command" *Army* (June 2013): 28.

creates the structure the organization will use to achieve that goal. The staff operates within the established structure to monitor progress and account for difficulties, both anticipated and unanticipated. The use of either Mintzberg or Kotter or any other well-informed set of observations could provide a clear framework for the role of the CoS/ XO and the staff.

Army staffs struggle to succeed because doctrine does not fully define the role or requirements of the staff and does not fully educate officers to execute their duties. To address this shortcoming, contemporary business theories and models should be included in doctrine.

Bibliography

Ancker, Clinton J. “The Evolution of Mission Command in U.S. Army Doctrine, 1905 to the Present.” *Military Review* (March-April 2013): 42-52.

Caslen, Robert L. “The Way the Army Fights Today.” *Military Review* (March-April 2011): 84-88.

Dunnigan, Jim. “Frederick the Great and the Art of Battle Management during the Seven Years War, 1756-63” *Strategy and Tactics* (Mar/ Apr 2004). Reproduced by permission of Decision Games in the format Copy via Copyright Clearance Center.

Fontenot, Gregory and Benson, Kevin C.M. “The Conundrum of Mission Command” *Army* (June 2013): 28-35.

Franks, Frederick M. “Battle Command: A Commanders Perspective*.” Military Review* (May-June 1996): 4-25.

Kotter, John P. 1990. "What Leaders Really Do." *Harvard Business Review* 68, no. 3: 103-111.

Kotter, John P. *A Force for Change* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1990).

Mintzberg, Henry. *The Nature of Managerial Work* (New York, NY: Harper and Row, 1973).

Mintzberg, Henry. *Managing* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers Row, 2009).

US Army Center for Army Lessons Learned, “Conduct the Military Decision Making process,” *CTC Trends Fiscal Year 2016*, no 17-28, (Oct 2017): 10.

US Army Center for Army Lessons Learned, “Command Trends,” *JRTC Trends 3rd and 4th Quarter Fiscal Year 2017*, (Dec 2017): 15.

US Army Command and General Staff College, *CGSC Circular 350-1* (Fort Leavenworth, KS, 2016): 7-3.

US Army Mission Command Training Program, “Mission Command Training in U nified Land Operations,” *FY 16 Key Observations*, no 17-05, (Feb 2017): 6.

US Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 3-0, Operations. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012.

US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3.0, Operations. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2008.

US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3.0, Operations. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2001.

US Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 5.0, The Operations Process. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012.

US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 5.0, The Operations Process. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2008.

US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 5.0, The Operations Process. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2006.

US Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 6.0, Mission Command. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012.

US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 6.0, Mission Command. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2008.

US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 6.0, Mission Command. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2006.

US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 6.0, Mission Command. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2003.

US Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 6-22, Mission Command. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012.

US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 100-5, Operations. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1993.

US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 100-5, Operations. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1986.

US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 100-5, Operations. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1982.

US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 100-5, Operations. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1976.

US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 100-5, Operations. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1968.

US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 100-5, Operations. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1962.

US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 100-5, Operations. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1954.

US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 100-5, Operations. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1944.

US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 100-5, Operations. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1941.

US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 101-5, Staff Organization and Operations. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1997.

US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 101-5, Staff Organization and Operations. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1984.

US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 101-5, Staff Officers Field Manual Staff Organization and Procedure. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1972.

US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 101-5, Staff Officers Field Manual Staff Organization and Procedure. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1968.

US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 101-5, Staff Officers Field Manual Staff Organization and Procedure. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1960.

US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 101-5, Staff Officers Field Manual Staff Organization and Procedure. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1954.

US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 101-5, Staff Officers Field Manual Staff Organization and Procedure. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1950.

US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 101-5, Staff Officers Field Manual The Staff and Combat Orders. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1940.