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## SQUADRON COMMAND: THE FIRST 90 DAYS

by

Eric N. Hummer, Major, USAF

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Advisor: LTC Phil Chansler

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## *Preface*

This research paper is a collection of lessons, experience, and observations from my 27 years of combined reserve and active service. The most valuable material came from my last three assignments, the last of which was commander of the 62d Transportation Squadron, McChord AFB, Washington. I have an enormous amount of gratitude to a host of people whom I learned most my “lessons” from, but will limit it to three. First and foremost was the best squadron commander I ever worked for or learned from, LTC James D. Pauly. I also owe a great deal of gratitude to two of my former Logistics Group Commanders, Col. Gerald F. Flanagan and Col. Thomas P. Toole. I would also like to thank my Faculty Research Advisor, LTC Phil Chansler, for his expert guidance and patience steering me through this maze known as the research process.

*Abstract*

An Air Force squadron commander has a tremendous amount of influence over the lives of his/her subordinates. The learning curve of a new commander is steep and time critical. The squadron looks to the commander for leadership and the faster he/she can provide that leadership the more effective their tour will be. The new commander needs every advantage they can get. An understanding of their functions as a commander, the culture of the squadron, and the direction required to meet the expectations of the Air Force, squadron members and their own vision is one of the greatest advantages they can have. The first 90 days of a commander's tour can be used to build a momentum that means the difference between commanding a squadron that is just surviving or commanding a squadron thriving on progress and improvement. This 90 days can pass quickly and should be used to diagnose and assess the squadron's culture, implement immediate and short term changes, and set the squadron on a long term path of growth and progress for the squadron as a whole and each member individually. Diagnostic checklists are provided.



## Chapter 1

### Introduction

*There are no bad legions, only bad commanders.*

—Napoleon Bonaparte

The squadron commander, as an individual, is the single greatest influence on Air Force members. Squadron command is a unique form of leadership with a tremendous degree of legitimate power and inherent authority over the lives of squadron members. The potential lethality, however remote, of the Air Force profession necessitates this form of leadership. The degree of power and influence required to lead is left to the judgement of the commander. How much, and when, to exert that power and influence is key to the success of command. Too much or too little can have a negative impact with less than desirable results for all concerned. The commander must understand the relationship between themselves and their squadron and the effect their leadership has on the squadron. To tap the full potential of a squadron they must be able to assess, change, and strengthen the culture of a squadron. This requires a clear understanding of squadron culture.

Brig Gen (S) Raymond Johns<sup>\*</sup>, commander of the 62d Airlift Wing, McChord AFB, Washington, said on more than one occasion that the squadron is the mirror reflection of the commander. The action, or inaction, of the commander influences the culture of the squadron.

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<sup>\*</sup> Brig Gen (S) Johns was the author's Wing Commander at his last assignment.

The squadron commander is ultimately responsible for everything that happens, or doesn't happen in their squadron. In his book "Organizational Culture and Leadership", Edgar H. Schein<sup>1</sup> states that "leadership and culture are two sides of the same coin." Schein's definition of organizational or group culture is:

A pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.

The degree of change a commander ultimately accomplishes in a squadron is dependent on three key ingredients, the squadron's leadership, the squadron's culture, and time. For many commanding a squadron is a pinnacle in their careers. The Air Force and the squadron have high expectations of commanders. Failure to meet expectations will result in disappointment at best, mission failure, catastrophe, and disaster, at worst. Failing to meet mission requirements or expectations deprives both the Air Force and its people. The degree of success or failure ultimately depends on the commander's ability to influence change in their squadron. To understand the functions of command, squadron culture and timing to influence change are powerful tools that will enable their people to reach their full potential, both collectively and individually.

### **Assumptions**

Several assumptions must be made to adequately address the complexities of the relationship between the commander, the squadron and its culture:

1) The commander has the interests of the Air Force and squadron members above his/her own interests. The average tour length for a squadron commander is approximately two years. The most critical time for influencing the culture of a squadron is the first ninety days. New

commanders enter their tour with excitement, anticipation and several expectations. In addition to a commander's expectations of the squadron, the Air Force has expectations of the commander.

2) The term "mission" will encompass production, safety, and training regardless of the squadron. "Production" is the product(s) or service(s) provided regardless of what squadron is providing them. Adequate safety and training is inherent in successful mission accomplishment. Just "getting the job done" with inadequate safety and training will lead to far more serious consequences than failure to accomplish the mission.

3) The squadron is the optimal group to define as having a culture. The squadron's culture has four primary characteristics: the pattern and strength of widely shared assumptions, squadron accomplishments; the squadron's ability to adapt; and the squadron's group identity and involvement. While there is an Air Force culture, squadron cultures, organizationally, have the most distinct "patterns of shared assumptions"<sup>2</sup> with one commander and mission.

4) For the purposes of this paper, squadrons will be categorized into three levels of performance; above average, average, and below average. In the experience of the author, the "80/20 Rule" provides an accurate means to assess these levels of performance. The 80/20 rule states that "80 percent of the problems come from 20 percent of the all the causes."<sup>3</sup> The 80/20 rule is credited to Alfredo Pareto, an economist who worked on efficiency. The top 20 percent will be the baseline for above average, the middle 60 percent for average and the bottom 20 percent for below average. For example 20 percent of the people do 80 percent of the work, 80 percent of the problems are generated by 20 percent of the people and so on. This rule gives some idea of what the author considers "good and bad" for an accurate understanding of some of the concepts presented.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Edward H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers), 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>3</sup> Patrick L. Townsend and Joan E. Gebhardt, *Five-Star Leadership*, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.), 176.

## Chapter 2

### The Functions and Stages of Command

*Leading does not mean managing; the difference between the two is crucial. There are many institutions I know that are very well managed and very poorly led. They may excel in the ability to handle all the routine inputs each day, yet they may never ask whether the routine should be preserved at all.*

—Warren Bennis

Real success as a squadron commander entails merging three levels of expectations: the Air Force's, the squadron's, and the commander's. Failure to meet any one will end with less than optimal results. What does the Air Force expect from its commanders? The formal expectations of the Air Force are for commanders to direct and order subordinates to perform duties or accomplish actions to attain military objectives.<sup>1</sup> This requires the commander to maintain standards and discipline, and the morale and welfare of the members of their respective squadrons. These expectations are boundaries and guidelines for the commander and squadron to survive. The Air Force and its members expect commanders to ensure people have the opportunity to develop professionally.

What do squadron members expect from the commander? People join the Air Force for a variety of reasons. This author has concluded after hundreds of initial interviews with airman that most people join for skills, leadership experience, education, and travel. The Air Force provides a unique environment to achieve all at the same time. Two well-known motivation theorists provide insight into why the Air Forces draws so many people into its employ.

Herzberg's factors influencing job attitudes listed achievement as the top influence on job attitude.<sup>2</sup> Maslow describes a hierarchy of needs with self-actualization at the top. Maslow believed that human beings aspired to become self-actualizing, and human potential as a vastly underestimated and unexplained territory.<sup>3</sup> Herzberg and Maslow's work support the theory that matching all three levels of expectation aids not only the fulfillment of the Air Force mission and development of its people, but the inherent job satisfaction of the people.

What should the commander expect from the squadron? The commander should expect each member of the squadron to perform in a manner that contributes toward accomplishing the mission with the skill, professionalism, and motivation appropriate for their grade and skill level. The commander should expect supervisors to provide training, feedback, safe work environment, care of facilities, equipment, and resources. Every squadron should have a minimal level of acceptable production. The commander should expect information to be timely, accurate, and complete. Each individual should also understand what their responsibility is as it relates to the mission. There should be a reasonable degree of accountability, not allowing abuse or theft, but accepting the "cost of doing business" without damaging careers. The commander should expect every member of the squadron to be reasonably accessible.

### **Functions of Command**

To meet the previously mentioned levels of expectations, the commander must fully utilize all functions of command. For the purposes of this paper, three functions of command will be addressed; leading, managing, and administrating. These three functions are related to command much the same as exercise, eating and sleeping is to maintaining health. You can go without exercise, eating and sleeping for a while but eventually they have to be put back into balance or overall health declines. While there is a necessary balance of functions to maintain a healthy

command, the degree of one function emphasized over another depends on the squadron's overall performance relative to similar squadrons. This requires an assessment to determine the squadron's performance level.

There are three performance level categories squadrons generally fall into; above average, average, and below average. The top 20 percent of similar squadrons are above average, or "thriving", middle 60 percent are average or "surviving", and the bottom 20 percent are below average or "depriving." These performance levels can be associated with a dominant function of command; thriving with leading, surviving with managing, and depriving with administrating. For a squadron to thrive, a balanced combination of all three functions is required with emphasis on leading. Surviving is associated with only two functions, managing and administrating, with emphasis on managing. A depriving squadron is usually only associated with only one function, administrating.

The squadron may be falling flat on its face but there will be a minimal degree of administration occurring. Administration is the function of command best expressed by the term "documenting." Basically it is administering required programs and ensuring all necessary documentation is accomplished. The administration function establishes the "memory" or history of the squadron. The written products of the squadron are a reflection of the squadron; where it came from and what it considers important through documented policy, punishment, reward, etc. Administration has a smaller degree of latitude and discretion than either managing or leading. Like sleeping you can go for a short time without doing it but eventually it has to get done or problems become extremely obvious to everyone. For instance, a violation of Air Force zero tolerance policies is an example of an administration of a program that has to be dealt with immediately before severe mission degradation occurs. It also is the foundation for awards and

performance appraisals and prevents a constant “reinvention of the wheel” with regard to policies and written guidance.

Managing is a function of command that is conducted and accomplished within an existing culture. It maintains the existing culture’s mechanisms and dynamics through the allocation and management of all resources, to include time and information. The managing function ensures culture stability. In the absence of the commander, the next layer of squadron supervision or leadership will maintain the culture through management inside the boundaries and guidelines communicated by the commander. Managing consists of actions within the culture. Like proper nutrition, managing is a short-term function of a “healthy” command. While managing is not a function of command that builds culture, improper management, or non-progressive management can “starve” the squadron of resources through improper utilization and/or lack of innovation. Good leaders will prevent this “starvation”.

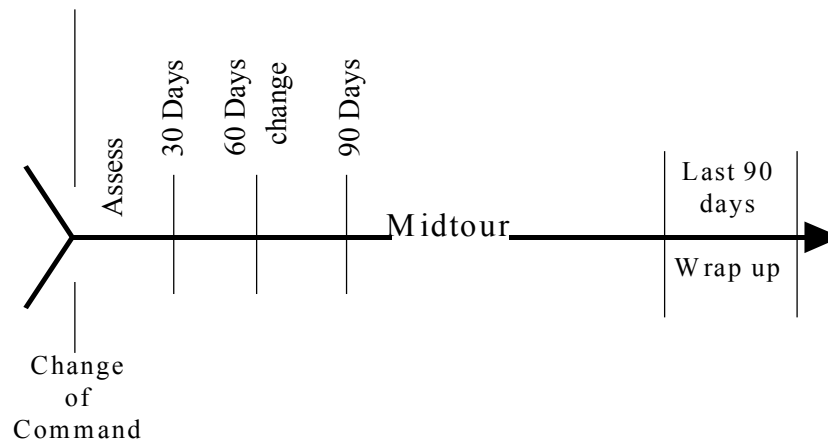
Leading is the function of command used to change or reinforce an appropriate culture. It is the change or appropriate reinforcement that allows the squadron to thrive. Leadership influence in a squadron should be a catalyst for change in beliefs, values, behaviors, and underlying assumptions of the squadron.<sup>4</sup> Leadership as Schein states is, “it is the ability to step outside the culture” and change it.<sup>5</sup> Careful selection of influence tactics and mechanisms based on a thoughtful assessment can result in a change that greatly enhances squadron effectiveness. Timing is another critical element since the function of leading is most influential in the earliest stage of command. The leading function of command never ceases since the actions and behavior of the commander, are the most effective and apparent of all influence tactics. The leading function is a powerful long-term function of command. It requires a vision of the future culture and how to change it. The leading function is most effective with a strong administrative



and management foundation. Only the best of commanders proper utilize all three. The most neglected function of command, much like exercise, is leading. Without the leading function, command will be weak. The squadron may survive without it, but never reach its full potential.

## Stages of Command

There are 3 stages of command, the first 90 days or the beginning of the tour, mid-tour, and the last 90 days of the tour. The average tour of a commander is assumed to be 24 months. Timmons<sup>6</sup> describes the first three months of command like a presidential “honeymoon” period. The commander is observed during this period as a “sign of things to come.” In this author’s experience, the commander is guaranteed to be tested during this period. The more the commander changes the culture, the greater the test. Pritchett and Pound<sup>7</sup> state that to produce a major culture change “you have to be willing to hit hard, go fast, and follow through, or you will be overcome by bureaucracy and resistance to change.” The last six months is analogous to the “lame duck” period: this is especially true of the last 90 days. This should be a period of tying up the loose ends and taking care of those who took care of you. Figure 1 below shows the stages of command.



## **Figure 1: Stages of Command**

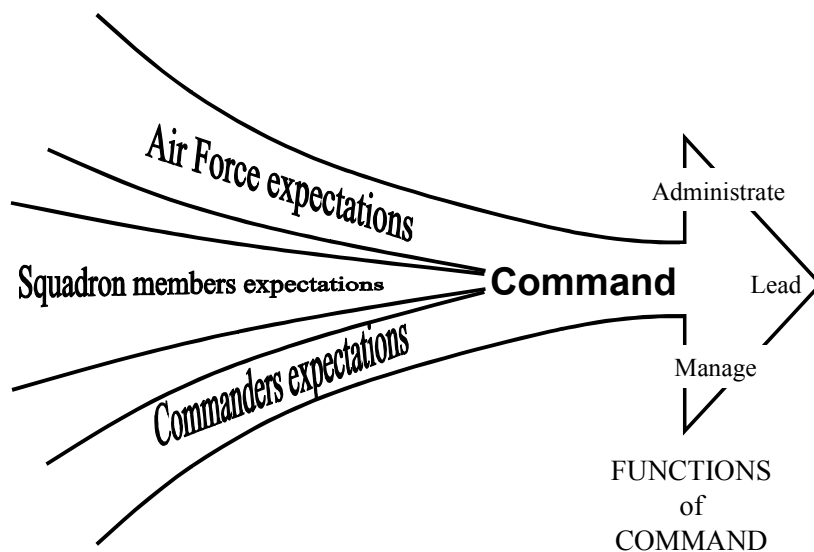
The balance of leading, managing, and administrating is critical to a successful squadron command, but the degree of effectiveness for each function varies as the squadron passes from one stage of command to the next. An imbalance of command functions or failure to utilize a function with its appropriate stage of command can often result in a squadron failing to reach the desired level of performance.

### **Relating the Stages and Functions of Command**

The commander is the steward of the squadron and accepts temporary ownership at the change-of-command. When this happens, the squadron anticipates and expects the new commander to make changes. The first point in the “Ten points of advice to commanders” in “Guidelines for Command” (AU-2) counsels the new commander to “be tough.”<sup>8</sup> Failing to set high standards early makes it more difficult as time goes on. At this early stage the new commander must lead, and leading requires some evaluation of the adequacy of the squadron’s culture. The leading function of command defines the culture. Without strong leadership at this stage the squadron and the commander can lose ground rapidly. A thorough understanding of culture can be a great benefit to the new commander in the early stage of command.

Schein describes three levels of culture. These include visible artifacts, espoused values and beliefs, and underlying assumptions. Artifacts are readily observable as symbols, both in the form of physical objects and human behaviors. The second level of culture includes values and beliefs that are less observable but can be obtained from how people explain and justify what they do. Finally the third level of culture are the organization’s underlying assumptions. According to Schein, underlying assumptions are the foundation of culture, and can be so widely shared that people are largely unaware of them. These can include assumptions, consensus,

ideologies, mindset, philosophy, and worldview. The squadron’s expectations also reside at this level. The commander’s ability to influence the squadron, either to meet their expectations, or change them, is dependent on the implementation of the functions of command. The commander must use all three functions of command, and meet the three levels of expectations to strengthen the culture, and ultimately, set the stage for the squadron to reach its true potential. Figure 2 below is an illustration of the functions of command merging all levels of expectations.



**Figure 2: Expectations and Functions of Command Relationship**

A clear understanding of expectations and the functions of command provide a strong foundation for assessing and diagnosing the squadron’s culture. Diagnosis of the squadron’s culture is arguably the most important task that confronts the new commander. Schein’s levels of culture<sup>9</sup> provides a good framework that can be used to diagnose the squadron’s culture.

The leading function of command has the greatest degree of effect overall, and is especially important in the earliest months of command before the commander becomes “embedded” in the squadron culture. By the mid-tour point of command the culture must be in an obvious stage of

change or it will appear the commander has accepted the status quo. In that case he/she accepts the “altitude” and begins “cruise” with the existing culture, “just going along for the ride.”

The last 90 days or end of tour should be focused on of tying up loose ends including the documentation of successes, and the rewarding of people who made any squadron successes possible. These actions are one part of the administrative function of command. The administrative function is most effective during the end of tour stage because of the “cultural” knowledge possessed by the commander and the squadron.

All three functions of command are all important to success. To maintain a “healthy” command and prevent a “crash landing,” some degree of all three functions are constantly required through the entire command. The key is to know the degree of effectiveness of each function and its relationship to the stage of command and the desired culture. This relates back to the degree of power and influence tactics used. Failure to target the optimum degree of a function during a stage will prevent the squadron from reaching full potential.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> AU-2, *Guidelines for Command*, (Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama: Air University Press, 1995), 1.

<sup>2</sup> Frederick Herzberg, *The Motivation to Work*, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc, 1959), 60

<sup>3</sup> Abraham Maslow, *Maslow on Management*, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1998), xx.

<sup>4</sup> Richard Curphy, *Leadership: Enhancing the Lessons of Experience*, (Boston: Irwin/McGraw, 1999) 139.

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

<sup>6</sup> Col Timothy T. Timmons, *Commanding an Air Force Squadron*, (Maxwell Air Force Base, Al, Air University Press, 1993), 10.

<sup>7</sup> Price Pritchett and Ron Pound, *High-Velocity Culture Change*, (Dallas, Texas: Pritchett Publishing Company, 1994), 5.

<sup>8</sup> AU-2, 8.

<sup>9</sup> Schein, 17.

## Chapter 3

### Identifying the Squadron Culture

*I've discovered that the difference between a good unit and a poor one is fundamentally leadership.*

—General Ronald R. Fogleman

Edgar Schein proposed a model to understand the content and dynamics of culture. This model is grounded in sociology and group dynamics and is based on the fundamental distinction between problems of (1) survival in and adaptation to an external environment and, (2) integration of its internal processes to ensure the capacity to continue to survive and adapt.<sup>1</sup> Survival is defined as the ability to meet external demands or expectations. Integration of internal processes is the ability to meet the demands or expectations of the culture internally while meeting the demands or expectations of the environment. The degree of a commander's success is determined by his/her ability to meet the internal expectations of the squadron, and the external expectations of the Air Force. The range of successes and failures can be directly attributed to the nature of the squadron's culture, and its leadership. The nature, or effects, of "strong" and "weak" cultures can be dramatic. Earlier, the introduction presented four primary characteristics of a squadron's culture: the pattern and strength of widely shared assumptions, squadron accomplishments, the squadron's ability to adapt, and the squadron's group identity and involvement. The overall strength of the squadron's culture is dependent on the strength of

each of the four primary characteristics. These characteristics provide a useful basis for culture diagnosis.

To achieve its full potential the squadron culture has to demonstrate a significant degree of each characteristic and meet the expectations of the Air Force, the squadron, and the commander. The commander is the nexus between culture and expectations. The commander who utilizes all three functions of command\* during the appropriate stage of command† to develop the strength and direction of the squadron culture will have a significantly higher probability for achieving a performance level far above the average squadron. To clarify the degree of cultural strength associated with a squadron, requires a cultural diagnosis taxonomy. This taxonomy consists of the three levels of performance categories: thriving, surviving, and depriving.

### **The Thriving Squadron**

The thriving squadron has a commander fully utilizing all three functions of command, appropriate to the stage of command and performance level of their squadron. A strong squadron culture will result with all three levels of expectations met. The strength of the culture will be evident at all three levels; artifacts, beliefs and values, and underlying assumptions. A thriving squadron demonstrates all of a strong culture's primary characteristics. This squadron will be in the top 20 percent in all aspects of mission accomplishment including production, safety, and training. It will be an organization that is responsive, innovative, and set the standard as a benchmark for best practices. Pride, loyalty, involvement and participation in wing, group, squadron, and community events and activities will be widespread.

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\* Functions of command are leading, managing and administrating.

† Stages of command are beginning-of-tour (first 90 days), mid-tour and end-of-tour (last 90 days).

Warren Bennis, summarizes research into the cultures of corporations and public organizations stating “strong corporate culture seems to be the driving force behind successful companies.”<sup>2</sup> Examples of strong organizational culture are the United States Marine Corps, IBM, Microsoft, and General Electric. Mission success or failure in certain organizations is dependent on the culture’s strength or weakness. Surgical teams, elite combat units, special weapons and tactics teams (SWAT), and bomb squads all require shared assumptions and a common understanding that leaves little chance for ambiguity, vagueness, or misinterpretation of expectations required to perform their respective tasks. This is no different for a successful Air Force squadron.

The vision of every commander should be to lead the squadron to achieve its full potential. This includes creating an environment for growth opportunities. In his book “A Man’s Search for Meaning,” Victor E. Frankl says the primary motivation in life is man’s search for meaning. He goes on to say “man is able to live and even die for the sake of his ideals and values!”<sup>3</sup> A culture gets stronger as the pattern of ideals and values of the organization, the leader, the group, and the individual become more widely shared.

Herzberg conducted interviews of 228 people for factors influencing their job attitudes. Achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility, and advancement were identified as the top five factors.<sup>4</sup> The thriving squadron has the culture and environment for growth and opportunity to succeed both collectively and individually. The thriving squadron produces a win-win-win situation exceeding the Air Force’s, the commander’s and the squadron member’s expectations.

### **The Surviving Squadron**

The surviving squadron falls into the middle 60 percent of similar squadrons. This squadron operates to survive. Commanders in a surviving squadron are utilizing two functions of

command, administrating and managing. They seem to neglect leading. The primary characteristics of such a squadron's culture may be less evident or have less direction toward meeting the commander's or squadron member's expectations. Any strong pattern of shared assumptions won't be widespread and usually held by a sub-culture with strong leadership such as a flight or shop within the squadron. Accomplishments are limited to simply meeting mission requirements. Goals and objectives are established by external expectations such as command standards or what ever it takes to prevent negative visibility. The surviving squadron does not adapt without being told to, demonstrates little or no innovation nor initiative, and relatively few, if any best practices. There is no overall squadron culture per se, only sub-cultures within the squadron. Squadron member involvement and participation is limited to mandatory events. Participation in anything other than mandatory events and activities are supported by less than 20 percent of the squadron, and the participants are usually the top performers. Professional and personal development is left up to the initiative of the individual.

The surviving squadron places more emphasis on artifacts for appearances sake, and less on beliefs, values, and assumptions. This results in excuses like "not enough time," "not enough people," "not enough supplies," and so on. Unfortunately for this type of squadron, these excuses lead to inaction and the extra work needed to be a thriving squadron is never completed, and probably not even attempted. The reputation this squadron gets is simply "they get the job done", but so what? Doesn't everybody? Resources are maintained well enough to continue to use at the moment but there is no real sense of ownership or stewardship. Professionalism is fair with proper customs and courtesies demonstrated on a less consistent basis, when compared to the thriving squadron. New members of the squadron do not assimilate quickly and may often feel alienated. This is a case where the few carry the many with the squadron never reaching



their full potential. The surviving squadron produces a “tie-tie-lose” situation by meeting Air Force and the commander’s expectations, but the expectations the members, for the most part, are neglected.

### **The Depriving Squadron**

The squadron commander who takes command of a depriving squadron faces the greatest challenges. The depriving squadron falls in the bottom 20 percent of similar squadrons. The depriving squadron may have had some administrative focus, but very little attention as far as the other two functions of command, leading and managing, are concerned. There may be outward appearances that the squadron is surviving, but no real distinct primary characteristics of a squadron culture. There is no real pattern of shared assumptions and if there is, there will probably be more than one pattern. More than one pattern of shared assumptions may produce conflict, and confusion with no leading or managing functions of command available for use to resolve these “mini-culture” conflicts. Accomplishments are minimal or concentrated in a sub-culture. Some element of the mission is sacrificed for the other, usually training or safety.

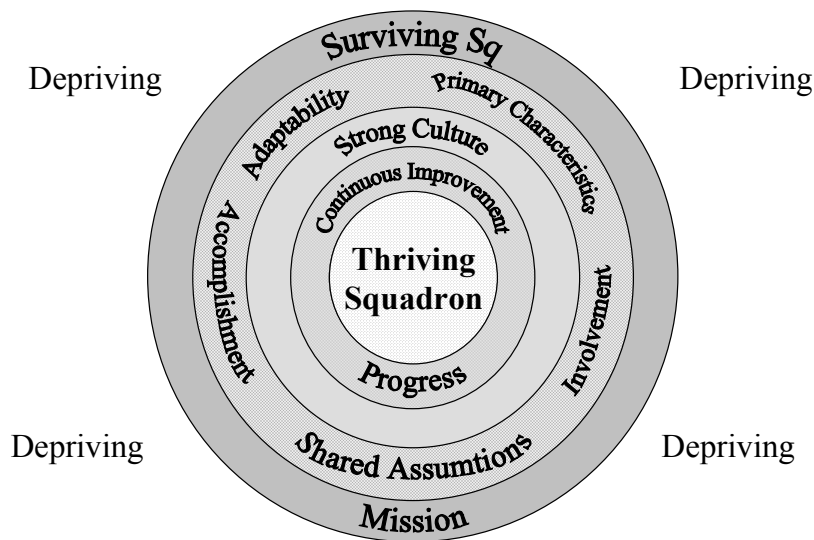
The depriving squadron is an accident waiting to happen, unless serious intervention is undertaken. This squadron relies on shortcuts, workarounds, unauthorized and unsupervised innovation, and undesirable “creativity” that can become standard practice if not carefully managed. The ability to adapt as a group is low and will remain so until a crisis or strong leadership is exercised to force it to change. The depriving squadron will be divided into factions or cliques with pockets of informal leadership all having different values beliefs and assumptions. Group identity and involvement is limited to these factions. In this case, 20 percent of the squadron is causing 80 percent of the problems and very little influence is exerted to change that fact. The commander operates one function of command, usually administrative,

by attending a few meetings and tending to an absolute minimum of paperwork. The culture is weak at all three levels. The squadron is a black hole for resources including people, time, and assets. This squadron does not meet any expectations and is a “lose-lose-lose” situation.

The classic example of a depriving squadron was the 325<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron at Fairchild AFB, Washington. The crash of Czar 52, during the air show at Fairchild Air Force Base on the 24<sup>th</sup> of June 1994 was the serious, and fatal, consequences for this depriving squadron. The failure of the squadron, group, and wing commanders to deal with a rogue pilot is a classic example of commanders failing to utilize the leadership and management functions of command. All appearances were good from an administrative perspective, but not reflective of the true environment or culture. If the commander (and others involved in this tragic situation) had been properly implementing all of the functions of command, the pilot would have been removed from flying status. The culture in this squadron consumed all levels of command and ended in the loss of three lives. A squadron commander utilizing every function of command may have had to sacrifice his career to have prevented this tragedy, however, this cost would have been much less than the cost of the final result.

The three categories of squadron performance levels mentioned above are extremely simplified representations of each category. Figure 3 below presents an analogy for targeting squadron performance levels. “Hitting the bulls-eye” or achieving the thriving squadron performance level should be the aim of the new squadron commander. Missing the target completely deprives the Air Force, the Commander, and ultimately, the squadron members of their expectations. Every squadron has its own unique characteristics and, as earlier stated, may be in transition from one category to the next. It is also possible that a squadron can be in one category with certain cultural characteristics and in another category with others, in addition, the

commander’s ability to change the culture may be restricted by senior leadership. The resistance of culture change may include senior civilians or senior NCOs willing to challenge the commander’s authority with union grievances, Inspector General complaints, civilian personnel, or legal action. This type of resistance can become overwhelming and time consuming, requiring every function of command to make the change. This is a challenge of command that can have major consequences for both the commander and the squadron. Many times it takes the advice of senior leadership, the legal office, civilian personnel, and a confidant in the squadron such as the senior Chief, civilian, or First Sergeant to make a difference and get the squadron on the right track.



**Figure 3: Targeting Squadron Culture**

**Notes**

<sup>1</sup> Schein p. 51

<sup>2</sup> Warren Bennis, “Leaders and Visions: Orchestrating the Corporate Culture,” *Corporate Culture and Change*, (Conference Board Report No. 888), p. 63.

## Notes

<sup>3</sup> Victor E. Frankl, *Man's Search For Meaning; An Introduction To Logotherapy*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1984), 105.

<sup>4</sup> Frederick Herzberg, *The Motivation to Work: The Factors*, (New Brunswick: John Wiley & Sons Inc., 1959), 60.

## Chapter 4

### Diagnosing the Squadron

*The test of a leader lies in the reaction and response of his followers. His worth as a leader is measured by the achievements of the led...the ultimate test of his effectiveness.*

—Gen Omar N. Bradley

In the previous chapter a squadron culture taxonomy was introduced. The taxonomy will now be used in the present chapter as a framework for assessing the squadron to determine if changes need to be made to improve the chance for a more successful squadron command.

The first 90 days is the most critical time of any squadron command, and can be the most effective stage for inducing change two reasons. First, as stated earlier, is that there is an expectation of change and a higher degree of acceptance for it. Second, assessing the culture and performance category\* of squadron can be best accomplished before the commander begins to accept the culture as part of his/her own and any deficiencies start blending into the scenery like they belong there. It is like inspecting your car or your house before accepting it or waiting months, or even years, to take any action on deficiencies. Correcting the deficiencies is easiest before familiarity with them becomes an issue of acceptance over repair. This makes diagnosing and assessment within the first 30 days the number one priority, and using the next 60 for implementing changes.

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\* Thriving, surviving and depriving.

To determine the type of squadron and culture within the first 30 days the commander should conduct interviews, tour the squadron formally and informally, assess meetings, review squadron administration, and observe the squadron's daily routines. A commander's ability to assess the squadron relies to some extent on their experience, skills, intuition or instinct, and expectations. Regardless of these factors a good general rule is that if "it doesn't look, sound, smell, or feel right, it probably isn't." If this is the case don't accept it until it is justified or changed. These actions constitute "getting to know the squadron."

## **Interviews**

Getting to know the squadron is the first, and probably most important, goal of every new commander. The first two items on a new commander's agenda should be one-on-one interviews with immediate subordinates and a squadron tour. The individual interviews should include secretary, key officers, all Chiefs, and the First Sergeant. Interviews with immediate subordinates should be done as soon as possible. These interviews are key to finding out expectations, problems, goals, and talents. This is also the best way to communicate the commanders expectations, one-on-one. The faster the interviews can be conducted the better, within the first week if possible. Checklist #1, The Interview, in Appendix A can be used as a guide for the interviews.

## **Squadron Tour**

In conjunction with the interviews, a squadron tour should be conducted within the first week. The commander can learn more about the squadron and its culture on the initial tour than any other single event. The tour is critical to assessment. The tour should include visits to every functional area and work center. To put the squadron at ease during the tour it may not be a

good idea to take notes or carry writing material. When the tour is over it is a good idea to go back to the office and write down any impressions made. This is important because first impressions are lasting impressions. Checklist #2, The Squadron Tour, is included in Appendix A. If the tour checklist is used, review it prior to, and after the tour, not during it! This is a tour not an inspection, and nobody needs the extra stress generated by a diligent note taker at a time like that.

The new commander should conduct an unscheduled, informal follow-up visit within the first month and see how things match up when the visit is unannounced. If possible visit each shop at the same time of day when the initial tour was conducted. Then go through the checklist again. What was the difference between visits? Why and are the reasons acceptable? If the area is drastically different with housekeeping and safety problems evident, or a lack of personnel, or supervision there may be cause for concern. A reasonable approach would be to discuss the concerns with the supervisor, express future expectations, and conduct another unannounced follow-up visit.

## **Squadron Meetings**

Another assessment tool is to evaluate the effectiveness of squadron meetings. Start out going to squadron's meetings according the schedule the squadron has in place. There may be a good reason for the schedule. Squadron meetings have a great deal to tell about the squadron culture and priorities. The commander should be aware of all squadron meetings and attend most of them. The purpose, frequency, attendance, time, and information passed up and down the chain of command tell a lot about what the squadron considers important. Were the appropriate attendees there, prepared, and on time? Did the meeting have a tone and atmosphere conducive to open communication with relevant information and open participation?

While meetings are the second most effective way to communicate if conducted properly (one-on-one interviews being the best), the commander should be aware that they use up the two most important resources in the squadron, people and time. Information that is poor, lacking, miscommunicated, or misinterpreted can cost more than time correcting the resulting problems. The commander should be extremely cognizant of actions, and conduct from both the attendees and themselves. Checklist #3, Squadron Meeting, is contained in Appendix A.

### **Administration Review**

Review of the squadron's administrative practices is another important tool that can be used to assess the squadron. An examination of administrative documentation in the form of inspection reports, performance evaluations (OPRs, EPRs, and civilian appraisals), unit and individual awards, and decorations contain a wealth of information and insight about the squadron's culture. This documentation will describe events, players, and focus of the squadron and its leadership over time. Poor quality or absent documentation also tells a lot about the squadron culture. A great "golden rule" with respect to documentation is: "if I can't touch it, it ain't so." Documentation, records and files are the artifacts that can help tell you if "it is so."

The new commander should review the squadron's policies and publish guidance within the first month. Updates should communicate the new commander's expectations and reinforce zero tolerance areas with their signature. Reviewing the last two years' inspections, audits, and staff assistance visits tell more about the good, the bad, and the ugly than the squadron may divulge initially. The commander should have the First Sergeant review and brief the recent and in-progress punishment and disciplinary actions. There should also be briefings on squadron programs to include weight control, government credit cards, control rosters, and Personal Information Files (PIF) for Unfavorable Information (UIF) just to name a few. Reading the most



recent squadron award packages, decorations, and performance reports gives a good view of a cross-section of the squadron. The new commander should also get a briefing on budget and how it is spent, becoming aware of what is on order and what is waiting to be repaired also provides good insight into the state of the squadron's "health." This is traditionally neglected early in command and can generate a lot of respect for the commander if this process is accelerated in the short term. All of the documentation and other written products will give a new commander a means to validate the observations made on the tour and in the interviews. Combined, all this information will give a great deal of insight on the squadron's culture. One last area of administration is to get a sense of whether suspenses are met and who the best writers are. Checklist #4, The Administrative Review, is contained in Appendix A.

### **Observations**

One of the most revealing aspects of a squadron's culture is observing daily routines for the first 30 days. After the first 30 days the squadron's routines are accepted as "approved by silent acceptance" by the commander. There are other questions a new commander should ask to further evaluate the squadron's operations. Are people available at the beginning of the duty day and do they spend a "reasonable" portion of the day performing their duties? Do they hold formations and conduct inspections on a frequent basis? How is information passed on from the work center supervisor? How is information passed up? Does everyone get an initial evaluation prior to starting duties and have a good understanding of their responsibilities local policies and expectations prior to starting work? Do work centers help each other when short handed?

Finally an extremely important part of culture building is how a squadron handles its new members. Do they have sponsors? The commander should meet with newcomers as early as possible and conduct the same interview checklist given previously, or if this is not possible do

to the size of the squadron, at the very least meet with them as a group. In any event, the new squadron commander should always conduct initial interviews with all officers and senior NCOs one-on-one. Trying to get around to all areas and conducting a couple of night and mid-shift visits can be very enlightening and become a good habit. The visits are two-way and as much for the troops as they are for you. This is a strong part of the leadership function of command. If this habit is not developed early the commander will lose a critical aspect of culture building. Checklist #5, Observation, is contained in Appendix A.

## Chapter 5

### Squadron Culture: Change It or Reinforce It?

*There is nothing more difficult to carry out, nor more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to handle, than to initiate a new order of things.*

-Machiavelli

After the first 30 days of command, interviewing, conducting a formal tour, follow-up informal visits, administrative review, and attending a majority of the squadrons meetings, a commander should have an idea of the nature of the squadron's culture. Once the commander determines if the squadron is thriving, surviving, or depriving, he/she should consider the time it will take to make the necessary changes. There are three time frames for changes: immediate, short-term (60-days) and long-term or continuous. The time frame for the change corresponds to the level of expectation and category of squadron. In a depriving squadron changes are generally compliance driven and immediate to meet Air Force expectations. In a surviving squadron the commander's expectations drive the change and usually short-term. In a thriving squadron changes are long term and continuous with the emphasis on progress and improvement with expectations at all levels met, to include the squadron members.

Each level of expectation and performance category of the squadron requires different methods of change. The degree of power and influence used to implement change is more effective when the mechanisms and dynamics of change are clearly understood. Change is a combination of appropriate command function(s), change agents and media, and degree of

squadron involvement. The main tools required are what Schein refers to as primary and secondary embedding mechanisms. These mechanisms are key to a leader transmitting culture.<sup>1</sup> Embedding mechanisms include, but are not limited to, what a leader pays attention to, the leader's actions and reactions to crisis, criteria used to allocate resources, mentoring, criteria for reward and punishment, and organization structure and design. The combination of dynamics and mechanisms target culture and over time result in improvement of the primary characteristics of culture.

### **Immediate**

A depriving squadron typically does not meet Air Force expectations and standards, and requires immediate action to change it. Failure to meet Air Force expectations often includes non-compliance violations associated with mission guidelines and criteria such as safety, resource accountability, training, environmental or the traditional zero tolerance policies concerning drugs, alcohol, and sexual or racial harassment. Change agents and expert advisers should be used to assist in assessing and accomplishing the initial turn-around. Some change agents and advisors include, but are not limited to, the Legal Office, Office of Special Investigation, Air Force Audit Agency, Military Equal Opportunity Office, and Civilian Personnel.

It is usually a good idea to conduct a squadron wide urinalysis and request a unit climate assessment (UCA) to be conducted by the Military Equal Opportunity Office.\* A UCA is usually conducted at least once during a commander's tour, and more often if there is a request to do so. Both the urinalysis and the UCA will identify problems that may not be easily observed or

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\* A UCA is a survey to assess the "health" of the squadron in terms of equal opportunity and fair treatment.

detected until an incident occurs. Conducting the urinalysis and UCA early sends a signal from a new commander, especially if a problem is uncovered and dealt with quickly, firmly, and fairly.

When considering appropriate punishment for disciplinary actions the Legal Office and First Sergeant are worth their weight in gold. Two considerations should be kept in mind when deciding on punishment. The first priority is maintaining good order and discipline within the squadron. The second priority is changing the behavior of the individual(s). Both are culture strengthening actions. If possible, remove severe problem cases from the squadron, and some severe cases may need to be removed from the Air Force. Maintaining good order and discipline should be consistent and fair regardless of position or status of anyone involved including military and civilian personnel. If these problems are dealt with quickly and firmly it can save problems down the road by strengthening the weak culture and communicating the commander's expectations. This deliberate action on behalf of the squadron commander can also send a strong message to the entire squadron resulting in improved discipline. The commander should remain vigilant the entire tour for non-compliance and zero tolerance violations.

The faster changes are made in a depriving culture the better. A momentum is required to overcome resistance. In their book, "High-Velocity Culture Change" the first guideline to change according to Pritchett and Pound is "don't let the existing culture dictate your approach; you will have trouble creating a new culture if you insist on doing it in ways that are consistent with the old one."<sup>2</sup> The commander must lead the depriving squadron, not the other way around. A commander should send a swift, loud, clear message dealing with non-compliance and zero tolerance violations to include firing and severe punishment is necessary.

## Short-term

A different approach can be taken when dealing with the surviving squadron. In a surviving squadron initial changes implemented are short-term. Short-term changes required should be implemented within 60 days of diagnoses. These changes should provide the framework for the long-term changes supporting the commander's vision of the culture, and expectations for the squadron's level of performance. These are the changes to policy, meetings, measurements, and resource allocation required to meet the expectations of both the Air Force and the commander.

Given the surviving squadron scenario, making use of change agents<sup>†</sup> can be a great benefit. Change agents can be found throughout the squadron. They can be trusted members of the leadership or motivated airmen in the shops. Regardless of where you find them, the new commander should use them to communicate the vision of the new culture. There are a number of useful media that can be used for change. They include personal communications, various measurements tied to performance, changes of artifacts and so on.

Metrics and measurements should be reconciled with expectations, command standards, and mission requirements to indicate negative and positive trends. Information is disseminated primarily through the change agents, change media, and most importantly the commander him/herself. Written feedback is another critical task that can be used to embed expectations. The feedback should be an initial performance feedback, on every immediate subordinate, accomplished in writing on the appropriate form or format for their rank and position near the 30-day point. Most of these actions fall under the management function of command.

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<sup>†</sup> Changes agents are any individuals that help facilitate a prescribed change.

## Long-term

Long-term changes to a surviving squadron's culture require a significantly different balance of the change measures. Long-term changes need to take place incrementally and in stages. The squadron as a whole should be involved in selecting areas for improvement and creating a structure and system to measure results. Change areas can be both mission and non-mission related. During these long-term change efforts, the priority should be soliciting and obtaining squadron's members involvement in the process and then self-improvement. This is basically a merging of all expectations into a system for improving that relies on leadership, involvement, and measuring results in support of the primary characteristics of a strong culture.

What a leader pays attention to should be structured for measured improvement. Pritchett and Pound advocate "keeping score, measure change and reward results."<sup>3</sup> Specific performance, based on mission requirements should drive the measurements, not measurements driving performance. This is possible if the culture is strong and all levels of leadership are engaged. "Keeping score" is a navigating force. It is unthinkable to play sports without keeping score. The same should be true if both squadron and individual are to achieve significant levels of growth. Individuals and groups need to set goals and measure performance towards reaching those goals. Indeed, research conducted by Herzberg states "unless recognition gives accurate feedback on performance, it takes on hygiene dynamics, is seen as interpersonal evaluation and is frequently a dissatisfier."<sup>4</sup> Herzberg's two key job satisfiers, achievement and recognition,<sup>5</sup> can become dramatically subjective, without some form "keeping score." Developing goals with measurable results is a method that makes everyone involved a change agent.

The thriving squadron usually requires only long-term changes. The difference between the long-term changes required for a thriving squadron and a squadron in a lower category of

performance is that the change is on going and always aimed at continuous improvement. “The pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solves problems” that Schein refers to in the formal definition of culture, becomes a continuous process of adaptation and improvement. There are as many approaches to accomplish change as there are commanders and squadrons. The overriding requirement for change in a squadron, however, is to merge all three levels of expectations and involve everyone.

A good example from the experiences of the author is in Appendix B. A change program was developed in the 628<sup>th</sup> Air Mobility Support Squadron in at Incirlik, AB, Turkey, in 1998. It received accolades from General Kross, CINCTRANSCOM. The program was developed after a number of incidents, including a serious C-5 towing accident. This program is an example of change intervention and a supporting structure for the long-term goal of developing culture and moving upward from the depriving to thriving squadron.

### **Notes**

<sup>1</sup> Schein, 230.

<sup>2</sup> Pritchett and Pound, 1.

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

<sup>4</sup> Herzberg, xv

<sup>5</sup> Herzberg, 61.



## Chapter 6

### Conclusions

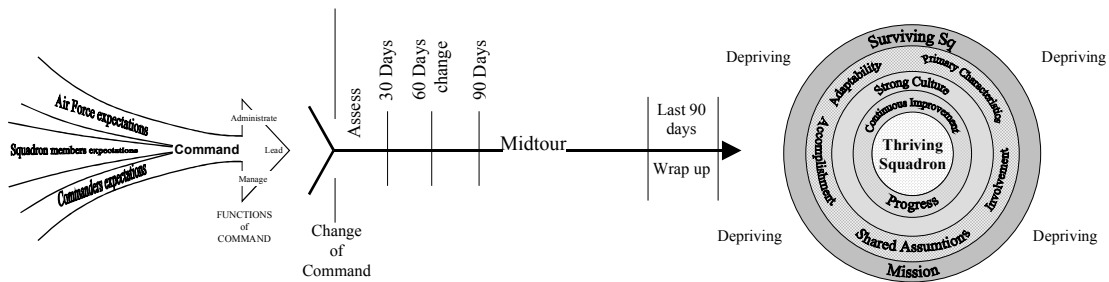
*Chance favors the prepared mind*

—Pastuer

Effective squadron command is not possible without exercising leadership. Unfortunately far too many commanders pass through their tours of squadron command without realizing the profound influence command can have in leading a squadron and its members to their full potential. When the commander does not exercise the function of leading, then a subordinate at some level will assume the role. When this happens the commander misses the opportunity of a lifetime. To really lead effectively, and with precision, it requires a balanced use of leading, managing, and administrating at the right time. If a commander fully utilizes all of his/her skills, talents, and tools both the squadron and the commander will significantly increase in proficiency throughout the tour.

The fact is that the commander is most qualified to command their squadron at the end of their tour. This aspect of a system that promotes and places people in positions based on potential rather than qualifications makes it extremely important to start out with every advantage possible. Most commanders look back over their tours with 20-20 hindsight and see things they could have done better or would have done differently. The 24-month journey for the commander and the squadron is not about perfection, it's about progress. If the commander

has the blue print of expectations and the tools of command, he/she can shape and set the tone for everyone to build a strong culture into their collective vision of the thriving squadron. Figure 4 below presents an integrated view of the functions of command merging expectations as they travel through the stages of command toward the ultimate target – the thriving squadron.



**Figure 4: Command & Performance Model**

Regardless of what culture exists in the squadron, the goal for the new commander should be to be able to look back and know people had the opportunity to grow both professionally and personally. Leading is all about molding organizational culture, and culture is all about people, and in that lies the secret of success, to care about people and understand the influence that commander has on them. Take care of the people and they will take care of you and the Air Force, and all expectations will be met at every level for the win-win-win!

## Appendix A

### Culture Identification and Squadron Diagnosis Checklists

#### Checklist #1: The Interview

- Personal history to include born, raised, family, etc., and any problems
- Experience
- Education
- Strengths and weaknesses
- Talents, hobbies and sports
- Expectations and goals
- “If you were king for a day what would you change?”
- You tell them about yourself in same manner they told you about themselves
- Use as an opportunity to tell your expectations
- Squadron Policy...zero tolerance (DUI, harassment, discrimination, drugs, etc.)
- Policy on family, education and training, sports and fitness
- Your personal leadership philosophy
- Your expectations of supervisors; set the example, be accessible and involved

### **Checklist #2: Squadron Tour**

- What was the Functional Area or work center?
- Was there a briefing and what did it cover?
- How well was it presented?
- Notable accomplishments and achievements
- Benchmarks or best practices
- Who conducted it?
- Who was in attendance?
- Was the work center supervisor there? If not why not?
- Was the entire work center there? If not why not?
- Professionalism and Appearance
- Enthusiasm and Pride
- Area housekeeping
- Condition of facilities, tools, equipment and vehicles
- Bulletin boards and posted information neat, current and pertinent
- Is there a Snack Bar? Who runs it? Is it well maintained?
- If not where do they take breaks and get snacks and refreshments
- Most notable thing that stood out
- First Glance; Thriving Surviving Depriving and why?

### **Checklist #3: The Squadron Meeting**

- What is the purpose of the meeting
- How often is it conducted
- How long does it take
- What is its frequency.....daily....weekly....monthly....quarterly
- Who attends
- Was it on time and were the people in attendance on time
- How does it match up with group and wing meetings...info congruent
- Is the communication open and two-way and what was the tone
- What information is passed, measurements, metrics etc
- Does the meeting support expectations at some level
- Is there opportunity to reinforce expectations, get feedback, recognize achievements
- Valuable, needs changes, or no value and why
- When visiting work centers is the information reaching the lower levels
- What meetings do you expect and how do these match up; should it be deleted or combined with another meeting or is it too comprehensive and need to be split or more frequent?

#### **Checklist #4: The Administrative Review**

- ❑ What type of written policy, guidance and operating instructions is there?
- ❑ Is it current and up to date?
- ❑ At first glance does it appear to be followed? If not why and is it needed?
- ❑ Policy should include all zero tolerance
- ❑ Unique squadron awards and recognition to for one time achievements squadron
- ❑ Review of the worst and most recent disciplinary action and PIFs for UIFs
- ❑ Superstars, what is their claim to fame with the past CC, outside and within squadron. Does their recognition support expectations and provide a role model
- ❑ Review and get briefing on facility and vehicle workorders, supplies, tools and equipment on order.
- ❑ How long have they been on order and are they still valid? How are they getting buy now?
- ❑ Review inspection reports and audits for the last year and look for strengths and weaknesses
  
- ❑ What is event is scheduled for the next 6 months and is the squadron prepared or planning for it. Inspections, audits, exercises, visits?

### **Checklist #5: Observation**

- Are work centers open and accessible during established duty hours?
- Do work centers operate with established duty hours?
- Does the squadron have established duty hours?
- Are work centers open and accessible to outside customers and inside customers?
- Do any areas shut down for training?
- Is there a requirement for additional duties outside the squadron and how is it filled?
- Do whole work centers shut down for lunch?
- Is there more than one shift or personnel on standby and do they rotate frequently?
- Who is the ranking individual on each shift?
- Is dayshift rank heavy with other shifts light?
- Squadron personnel available for duty on a daily basis?

## **Appendix B**

### **Team Mentorship Program**

The Team Mentorship program was conceived in September 1997 as a change intervention after a C-5 towing accident and a number of disciplinary actions for failure to comply with technical orders. The Logistics Flight in the 628 Air Mobility Support Squadron at Incirlik AB, Turkey consisted of 52 aircraft maintenance and supply personnel with eight AFSCs maintaining three primary weapon systems. It was a very small, diversified group of people with varying degrees of experience and dissimilar backgrounds in a short tour environment with the highest turnover rate in the command. Morale was low.

The typical small number of people participated in squadron events, fitness programs, and community service. There was an occasional outstanding individual who performed a variety of activities. The SNCOs and the flight responded when leadership focused on specific events, activities, or tasks. (This falls under the old adage that “what ever the boss looks at will improve, as long as he or she is looking at it.”) The flights senior leadership brainstormed for ways to turn the flight around. It was agreed that a system and structure should be developed with measurable results. The focus would be to increase involvement in key areas, energize flight leadership, SNCOs and officers, and mentor the junior NCOs and airman.



The flight was divided into four, 12-person teams with a MSgt assigned as a Team Leader and, later on, a Captain or Chief was added to each team as an adjunct. The flight was evaluated to determine areas for improvement. The following areas were selected: training, participation, fitness, and management. After the areas were selected a point system to evaluate results was developed. The following is an explanation of the selected areas and the point system developed to measure results:

1) Training: To improve the training situation, OJT training records would be inspected by the squadron training monitor. One point would be earned for each error free record. A maximum of two points would be earned each week with an eight point maximum for each team per month.

2) For participation, one point would be given for every squadron event that a team member attends, such as booster club meetings, Top IV meetings, and hail and farewells. One point would be given for every five hours of community service. Team members who don't accumulate five hours may add their time together to receive one point. For example, four team members could add their individual 1.25 hours together for a point.

3) Points for fitness would be based on AMC's Fit Eagle program. Members log their activity into the program and earn one point for every 160 points the Fit Eagle program gives them for their particular activities.

4) In an effort to "measure" management activities, innovation points could be obtained by submitting AFTO Form 22s,\* AF Form 1000s† or any idea implemented that benefits the flight or squadron. Form 22s and Form 1000s get one point for each one submitted and did not have to be approved. Ideas which were suggested to improve the flight or squadron would be awarded one

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\* AFTO Form 22 is a submission form to change a technical order.

† AF Form 1000 is the form used to submit suggestions to the Air Force Suggestion Program.

point after being approved by the team adjunct. Adjuncts rarely ever turn down an idea. They may, however, tell the individual some improvements they may want to accomplish before they try and implement their particular idea.

All team activities are documented and scored by the team leaders. Flight Team Mentorship meetings are held twice a month and rarely last more than 20 to 30 minutes. Team Adjuncts screen points prior to the meetings. The first meeting of the month is to monitor each team's progress and the last meeting is to finalize the total scores for the month. Teams justify their management innovation and participation points in writing. The Fit Eagle program monitors fitness points and the squadron training monitor maintains a file on training record inspections. Team meeting duration, forum, and frequency are totally left up to the teams.

The best estimates for the previous years results with no program is that all training records had errors, less than 30% of the flight logged on to Fit Eagle with only 10% achieving 160 points or better. Participation was about 650 hours to one or two organizations and only a small group of regular participants involved in squadron activities and events. In the year prior to implementing the program 2 AF Form 22s and 1 AF Form 1000 were submitted from the Logistics Flight. Every now and then a suggestion or idea would be implemented. Most were talked about and then forgotten.

The progress resulting from Team Mentorship program was exceptional. After seven months, there were 100% error free training records, 100% flight participation with the Fit Eagle program with over 30% of the flight scoring 160 points or higher, over 2000 hours of community service for the Adana Orphanage, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Base Chapel, Read-to-Children Program, Parent Teacher Association, the Red Cross, Toastmasters, and Tax Assistance. There was also dramatic increase in attendance at squadron events, activities, and fund-raisers. In the

management innovation area 31 AF Form 22s and AF Form 1000s were submitted, with 11 being approved as well as numerous suggestions and ideas implemented including the creation of in-processing checklists, continuity books, computer programs, equipment modifications, and vehicle refurbishment. There were even new flowerbeds at the dormitory, and a play ground at the base passenger terminal built by flight personnel.

The results speak for themselves. This program has promise for other squadrons needing culture change. While this program was structured for a flight it has been tailored and used at the squadron level with success. The entire flight improved in every facet to include direct mission indicators. The entire culture changed over time and there was a great increase in “patterns of shared assumptions” that took place during the interaction of each one of the teams leading to a stronger and more favorable culture.

On 31 May 1998, the 628<sup>th</sup> Air Mobility Support Squadron Logistics Flight presented a briefing to Gen Kross, CINC TRANSCOM on their Team Mentorship Program. He was impressed enough with the program that he requested a video to be made so that it could be shared with the entire Command. The video is attached to the electronic version of this paper in Appendix C. Upon release of this paper the electronic version of this paper be found on the internet at <http://research.au.af.mil>. The 628 AMSS Logistics Flight ended 1998 with the Air Mobility Command’s highest departure reliability rate, 1998 Ground Safety Award and took first place in the 21<sup>st</sup> Air Force Rodeo. Several members of the flight later won significant individual awards.

A tailored version of this program was implemented in the 62<sup>nd</sup> Transportation Squadron, McChord Air Force Base, Washington, in January 1999. This squadron was also in the depriving category at the time with a series of disciplinary actions for a variety of problems.

There had been no significant recognition in 6 years for the squadron or its members and mission indicators and metrics were below average. By the end of 1999, this squadron had the highest vehicle-in-commission rate in the Air Mobility Command, and sustained it for the entire year despite the lowest budget in the command. Recognition was received from the Secretary of the Air Force for providing outstanding transportation support to World Trade Organization delegates and members of Congress. This squadron went on to the Air Mobility Squadron's Best Vehicle Maintenance Unit for 1999. The 62d Transportation Squadron progressed from depriving to thriving after adopting the program.

## **Appendix C**

### **Team Mentorship Program Slideshow**

To view the Team Mentorship Program slideshow click on the following link:

[Amc Brief\narration.mp3](#)

[Amc Brief\Amc.pps](#)

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