

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**OFFICER PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT IN THE ARMY:
PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE**

by

LTC David D. Haught
U.S. Army

COL Ruth B. Collins
Project Advisor

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U.S. Army War College
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

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ABSTRACT

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Techniques used to manage Army officers date back to the origins of our Army. This paper examines recent officer management--its evolution, efficacy of the current system, and implications of Transformation and the future on the current system. After a thorough literature review of publications and information pertaining to OPMS, it appears as though the system is generally functioning as designed and implementation is now approaching a steady state. Career Field Designation Boards are being conducted annually, promotion and selection boards are being conducted by career field, some concerns over the Officer Evaluation Report have been addressed, and time in branch qualification positions for majors and associated stability is at an all time high. We have begun building a base of operators and specialists who will serve the Army well over the coming decades. Empirical data from the Army Research Institute suggests that the system is maturing and that officer understanding and acceptance of OPMS is growing. There are four areas, however, that require continued monitoring by personnel officials and possible adjustment by senior leaders and policy makers. These four areas are joint officer management, AC/RC program, the Army's officer education system, and the Officer Evaluation Report. The paper concludes with a recommendation that the Army conduct a review of OPMS III to ascertain its viability for the future and that this review should begin now, in the early stages of Transformation. Any resulting changes to OPMS III would then be synchronous with the Army as it transforms. Areas to be considered in this review, logically named OPMS IV, should include codifying the type of officer required for the Objective Force, a review of the branches and functional areas that comprise the four career fields, the timing of designation, accession and education policies for the future officer, and officer management policies given the imminent change to unit rotation and assignment policies.

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OFFICER PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT IN THE ARMY: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

In sum, I want you to chart the course for building an officer corps that can effectively shape, train, and lead the Total Army into the 21st Century. OPMS XXI must be a “win-win” system for both the Army and the individual officer. It is one of my highest priority projects. Nothing is more important than developing the Army’s future leaders.

—General Dennis J. Reimer

THE EVOLUTION OF ARMY OFFICER PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

The Army’s Officer Personnel Management System (OPMS) has been under review and change for over 30 years. Our modern day (post World War II) officer management system began in 1971 following the publication of study on military professionalism conducted by the U.S. Army War College.

OPMS I

As a result of this study, Chief of Staff General William Westmoreland directed an examination of assignment policies, school and command selection procedures, and the promotion system. His guidance to the study group was to improve the professional climate of the officer corps, identify early and develop carefully those officers most qualified for command, allow for specialization in some technical areas without undue restriction on promotion and schooling opportunities, and provide a satisfactory career for that large body of officers who are neither commanders nor specialists.¹ The study group recommended a centralized promotion and command selection process, designated command tours, and established primary and secondary specialties for officers. The results of this first OPMS study were fully implemented in 1974.

Following the implementation of OPMS I, Chief of Staff General Bernard W. Rogers directed a study entitled A Review of the Education and Training of Officers. The purpose of this 1977 study was to determine officer education and training requirements based on the Army’s’ missions and individual career development needs from pre-commissioning through retirement.²

INTRODUCTION OF DOPMA

The next significant event affecting officer management occurred after several years of discussion and debate on the 1980 Defense Officer Personnel Management Act (DOPMA). The intent of Congress was to maintain a high-quality, numerically sufficient officer corps, provide

career opportunity that would attract and retain the numbers of high caliber officers needed, and provide reasonably consistent career opportunity among the services.³ DOPMA remains today as the Defense Department's overarching legislation to guide services in the management of the officers corps.

OPMS II

Following the passage of DOPMA, Chief of Staff General Edward C. Meyer directed a major review of personnel management policies to examine the impact of the DOPMA legislation on officer management in the Army. The 1983 Professional Development of Officers Study resulted in the second iteration of OPMS. Highlights of OPMS II included the establishment of single branch development, functional areas not related to any branch, multiple career tracks, and a revised officer classification system.⁴ The results of this study were approved in 1984 and implementation of OPMS II began in 1985.

In 1987, Chief of Staff General Carl E. Vuono directed a review of officer leader development to account for the changes in law, policy, and procedures that had occurred since the creation of OPMS II. As a result of the study, the Leader Development Action Plan (LDAP) was approved for implementation in 1989. Over 50 recommendations representing the latest revisions to the officer personnel system were incorporated into OPMS II.

Following the implementation of the LDAP, the Army underwent significant national security challenges with widespread effect on the officer personnel management system. The force structure and associated end strength reductions at the end of the Cold War dramatically reduced the number of officers in the inventory. The Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986 required the Services to improve interoperability and provided statutory requirements for joint duty assignments, promotions, joint tour credit, and joint military education. Public Law 99-145 was also passed in 1986 directing the acquisition experiences and education necessary for an officer to be the project manager of a major weapons system. This law later led to the creation of the Army Acquisition Corps. The Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvements Act (DAWIA) of 1990 placed additional requirements on Acquisition Corps officers and directed them to single track in their functional area. Then, in 1992 and 1993, Congress passed Titles VIII and XI respectively. These laws placed additional requirements on the Active Component in their support of the Reserve Components. Given these significant changes and the fact that it had been nearly 12 years since the 1983 review of OPMS, the environment was right for the next OPMS study.

In addition to the national security and legislative challenges in the mid 1980's to the early 1990's, the Army identified four basic problem areas with its officer management system. The aforementioned force structure and personnel reductions did not change a significant force structure and inventory misalignment. Second, assignment policies were creating great turbulence throughout the officer corps. Due to the inventory misalignment and a significant increase in the Army's operational tempo, many officers were limited to only 12 months in key leader/skill development positions, e.g. company level commanders, battalion operations and executive officers, logistical support officers, etc. The result was a loss in the development and experience of the warfighter. Third, leader development was not aligned with the Officer Evaluation Report (OER) and OPMS. Inflation in the rating system had created a perceived environment of zero defects. The routine (at that time) "top block" ratings were proving problematic to selection and promotion boards. Finally, OPMS II contained no provision for periodic review and consideration of the future.⁵

OPMS XXI

In 1996, Chief of Staff General Dennis J. Reimer directed that the Army review OPMS II to determine whether it adequately supported the needs of an officer corps then and into the next century. He asked Major General David H. Ohle and a team of senior field grade officers to undertake this year-long effort. The starting point for General Ohle's task force was a report generated by a Precursor Study Group (PSG), a small cell under Lieutenant General Theodore Stroup, that examined the current officer personnel system and all the changes since the last review of OPMS conducted in the 1980's. The PSG developed nearly 60 issues that revealed a system in tension struggling to handle many new requirements in the middle of a major restructure of the force. Highlights of the issues developed by the PSG included structure and inventory mis-match, assignment management, leader development, and major personnel concerns of the day and their potential implications for the future. The issues were organized into three general groupings: career management, structure and force distribution, and training and leader development.

Based on the results of the PSG, the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel recommended a comprehensive study to the Chief of Staff of the Army (CSA). The CSA concurred and issued a directive to establish a Task Force to review and revise the personnel management system to ensure its viability to meet future challenges. As outlined in the CSA directive to the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, specific charges to the Task Force were:⁶

- ? Provide an assessment of how the officer corps in a dynamic, more technologically advanced Army should be organized as a full spectrum force to meet national security needs both in the near term and well into the next century.
- ? Describe reasonable career expectations for the officer corps given force structure changes and resource considerations.
- ? Develop viable career paths that provide opportunity and choice while balancing branch, functional area, and branch immaterial assignments across all grades.
- ? Determine the proper relationship between military education, advanced civil schooling, self-development, and assignments, taking different career paths into consideration.
- ? Develop an integrated, disciplined system that anticipates and balances the competing demands of leader development requirements, authorizations, law, and policy.

Based on this guidance, the Task Force's major challenge was to create an evolutionary path for an Army officer corps that would exist 15 to 20 years in the future.

In its redesign of OPMS, the Task Force developed a strategic vision (goals) and characteristics of a new management system that would take officer management into the 21st century. The Strategic vision of the new OPMS was:⁷

Better for the Nation. Maintain readiness for today's warfighters, while building tomorrow's warfighting force. Adhere to sensible stewardship of resources and management of Army organizations.

Better for the Army. Remain uncompromising in supporting the tradition of values-based leadership while producing competent officers and highly trained, capable units.

Better for the Officer. Afford all officers challenging and fulfilling career options and reasonable opportunities for success. Provide them with the constructive, realistic feedback, through regular formal and informal counseling and mentoring, that they need to make informed career choices.

Elaborating on the strategic vision, General Ohle remarked:

Our goals are to create a system that is better for the nation, better for the Army, and better for the officer. The new system will balance the Army's diverse personnel requirements while providing Army XXI a tactically and technically competent officer corps. Rigidity is the main problem with the current system. It wore out because it had little flexibility to change. We think that we'll create this flexible system for the future so that you can adapt it year by year rather than wait 15 years to reconvene another study group.⁸

Within the context of the vision, the Task Force further developed 12 characteristics of a successful officer management and development system.⁹

Better for the Nation

- ? Demonstrates responsible stewardship of national resources
- ? Represents the diverse society it serves
- ? Returns quality citizens to the Nation

Better for the Army

- ? Establishes credible officer career opportunities
- ? Helps officers form realistic expectations of career outcomes

Better for the Officer

- ? Develops officers who personify enduring Army values
- ? Integrates the Leader Development System and OPMS
- ? Fosters sustained unit excellence
- ? Matches operating inventory to authorizations
- ? Promotes active component and reserve component interoperability
- ? Develops officers who perform effectively in a joint environment
- ? Develops motivated, competent, and experienced officers

The CSA subsequently approved the following criteria that were used in the design of the new OPMS.¹⁰

- ? *Enhance the Army's warfighting capability.* This criterion requires that majors spend more time in branch-qualifying assignments such as battalion executive or operations officers. Simultaneously, OPMS XXI must reduce turbulence for officers in units.
- ? *Provide all officers with a reasonable opportunity for success.* This criterion requires that officers in all career fields have a reasonable, but not necessarily equal, opportunity for promotion. In discussing the definition of success, General Ohle remarked:

Define success as really what each officer believes. Need to provide the officer corps the expectation or reasonable attainment of what success is. Success generally is considered to be in three areas: contributions, rank, and security. OPMS needs to provide every officer an opportunity to contribute to the Army. Many postulate that success equals rank. Contributions can be more important than rank. Security for officers and their families is also important.¹¹

- ? *Balance grades and skills at the field-grade level.* This criterion requires better alignment of authorizations and officer inventory. The objectives are to reduce upward grade substitution, increase levels of fill, and improve the experience levels of colonels serving in branch, functional area, and immaterial-coded positions.

Discussing the design of the new management system, General Ohle remarked, "General Reimer said that warfighting remains the preeminent skill of the Army, but he also emphasized, 'we need officers who understand how the Army works.' We're still going to maintain the warrior ethos for the Army, but we also have to have others who can understand and work in other jobs in the Army. He's given me the mission to broaden the definition of warfighting to include not only combat, but also stability and support operations; to be able to do the Bosnias and fight forest fires and provide hurricane relief."¹²

After an October 1996 brief to the CSA, the Task Force began designing options for a new officer management system. The following January, General Ohle briefed the CSA and the Board of Directors (a group of four-star generals) on four possible options. Then in April 1997, after another in-progress review, the CSA asked the Task Force to further develop two options. Both options implied few changes to company grade officer development, having them follow the same "path" until selected for major.

The first option contained three career fields to which officers could be assigned: Operations, Information Operations, and Institutional Support (formerly called Army Management). The second option added the Operational Support career field. The Chief of Staff subsequently approved the option with four career fields.

The Operations Career Field (OPCF) supports organizational units with officers qualified by training, education, and experience in Army operations. It is composed of the Army's 16 branches, as well as FA 39 (PSYOP/Civil Affairs) and FA 90 (Multifunctional Logisticians).

The Information Operations Career Field (IOCF) responds to the requirements of the 21st century information age. The IOCF brings together related disciplines with associated functional areas and creates several new ones. The officers within this career field, as with the other specialty career fields, Institutional Support and Operations Support, continue to be assigned across the Army in operational and institutional positions performing a wide variety of Information Operations (IO) missions and tasks. Functional areas in this career field are FA 30 (Information Operations), FA 34 (Strategic Intelligence), FA 40 (Space Operations), FA 46 (Public Affairs), FA 53 (Systems Automation Officer), and FA 57 (Simulations).

The Institutional Support Career Field (ISCF) focuses on the increasingly technical and complex nature of running the Army as an organization. The emphasis in this career field is management, planning, and programming of Army resources, both near-term and into the future years by projecting requirements and developing capabilities in the mid and long-term. The functional areas in this career field are FA 43 (Human Resource Management), FA 45 (Comptroller), FA 47 (U.S. Military Academy Permanent Associate Professor), FA 49

(Operations Research/Systems Analysis (ORSA), FA 50 (Strategy and Force Development), and FA 52 (Nuclear Research and Operations).

The Operations Support Career Field (OSCF) strengthens current readiness while building the future force through its liaison, procurement, programming, and development specialties. This career field contains the Army Acquisition Corps, which includes FA 51 (Research, Development and Acquisition), FA 53 (Systems Automation Acquisition), FA 97 (Contracting and Industrial Management), and FA 48 (Foreign Area Officer).

The Task Force developed these career fields within the Army Competitive Category (ACC) through grouping interrelated branches and functional areas into occupational categories. As designed, officers would compete for promotion only with other officers in the same career field. This would end the "dual tracking" promotion system in which an officer counted both within his or her branch and functional area for promotion. Each functional area within each career field has its own distinct development track.

Following a detailed study and analysis including input from the field, the Task Force provided several recommendations to the CSA:¹³

- ? Adopt a strategic approach to human resource system design and management.
- ? Implement a personnel management system based on career fields, with distinct groupings of branches and functional areas, to reflect the evolving needs of the Army today and into the future.
- ? Adopt a holistic approach by linking officer personnel management, character and leader development, and the Officer Evaluation Report (OER) into a total Officer Development System (ODS) XXI.
- ? Develop a mechanism to ensure alignment of authorizations and inventory.
- ? Establish new functional areas and eliminate others to address changing requirements.
- ? Assign all Army Competitive Category officers to a career field after they are selected for promotion to the rank of major.
- ? Conduct promotion boards so that officers compete for promotion to lieutenant colonel and colonel with other officers in their career field.
- ? Send all officers selected for promotion to major to resident intermediate-level military education and all officers selected for promotion to colonel to resident senior service college-level education.

On or about 9 July 1997, General Ohle provided the CSA with a final, formal decision briefing. The CSA chose the option that is now the basis for the management system with four career fields, officially named OPMS XXI, and most recently re-named as OPMS III.¹⁴

OPMS III PURPOSE AND INTENT

Given the goals and characteristics of an optimum OPMS, the Army approved and published its purpose and intent in the capstone officer management publication, Department of the Army Pamphlet (DA PAM) 600-3.¹⁵

The purpose of the OPMS is to enhance the effectiveness and professionalism of the officer corps. The OPMS encompasses all policies and procedures by which Army commissioned officers are procured, trained, educated, developed, assigned, evaluated, promoted and separated from active duty. OPMS XXI developed and implemented personnel management policies and procedures that assure a deployable, professional officer corps capable of meeting the challenges of the 21st Century outlined in Army Vision 2010 and Joint Vision 2010.

The intent of OPMS XXI is to enhance the warfighting capability of the Army; to provide all officers with a reasonable opportunity for success; and to fulfill Army requirements with an officer corps balanced with the right grades and skills.

EFFICACY OF TODAY'S OPMS

With the background and intent of OPMS understood, we now need to examine if the program is working as designed. Given the relative youth of OPMS III, little empirical data regarding the efficacy of OPMS exists in the public domain. There are, however, several sources that contain some anecdotal and empirical information that we can use as indicators to determine if OPMS III is working.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A former commander of the U.S. Army Armor Center and Fort Knox and now Commanding General of U.S. Army Europe, General B. B. Bell, favored the provisions of OPMS III. In the August 2001 (four years after OPMS III implementation) issue of Armor Magazine, General Bell gave high marks to OPMS III. In discussing implications of Army Transformation on the Armor Branch, General Bell opined that OPMS III provided outstanding future leadership opportunities and potential for personal and professional growth. Additionally, he stated that he believed that OPMS III would mitigate the spike in officer attrition that the Army was experiencing in the late 1990's.

The opportunities for growth, personal and professional and satisfaction, and warrior leadership will grow and expand in our branch. OPMS XXI provides officers alternate career choices and increases their chances for promotion in non-operations fields. It also dramatically increases battalion command opportunity for those officers who remain in their basic branches.¹⁶

Although General Bell was discussing OPMS implications on Armor Branch, one may infer that the benefits he addressed are applicable to all branches.

In a recent and extensive discussion on the perpetual debate on anti-intellectualism within the Army, Colonel (Retired) Lloyd J. Matthews posits that today's officer management system remains operator, or "muddy boots" focused. He concludes in a well-written two-part series that, despite a few past successes (e.g. Charles Bonesteel, Andrew Goodpaster, William DuPuy, Maxwell Thurman, John Galvin, and Gordon Sullivan), the officer management system (pre-OPMS III) falls short of recognizing the inherent value of considering officers with great intellect for strategic leadership positions. Of note, however, is that Colonel Matthews recognizes the potential and positive aspects of OPMS III. Although his endorsement of OPMS III is not complete, he does recognize it as a step in the right direction.

Some argue that Officer Personnel Management System XXI, still in the process of implementation, will eventually accomplish the goal of moderating the Army's pro-operator bias. It may very well level the playing field somewhat between operators and specialists in promotions up to O-6, but I see nothing in the new system that will weaken the operators' stranglehold on flag-level positions.¹⁷

In his 2002 book, The Path to Victory: America's Army and the Revolution in Human Affairs, Major Donald E. Vandergriff goes to great length criticizing the Army's personnel system. His thesis is that the key to Army Transformation is personnel reform. He argues that the key to creating an effective future force rests not with weapons and technology, but with reforming an outdated personnel system. He believes the current system breeds careerism and does not provide an environment that facilitates unit cohesion. Key reforms suggested by Vandergriff include:¹⁸

- ? Replace the individual replacement system with a unit based regimental system.
- ? Replace branches with combat arms, support, and logistics fields.
- ? Replace the "up or out" promotion system with an "up or stay" system.
- ? Reduce the size of the officer corps.
- ? Revise officer evaluations to include superior, peer, and subordinate ratings.
- ? Decentralize officer promotion, school, and assignment selections.
- ? Include examinations and feedback on field exercises in selection processes.
- ? Reorganize to flatten the command structure and streamline responsibilities.
- ? Change the school systems to instill a maneuver warfare culture in the Army.

Vandergriff's indictment of the personnel system is far-reaching and some portions of his criticism seem to be shared by the Secretary of the Army, as evidenced by the Secretary's conviction to pursue unit rotation and replacement policies.¹⁹ When examining Vandergriff's position on OPMS III, we find his views are not quite as harsh as those on other aspects of the Army's personnel management system. While slightly critical of OPMS III, Vandergriff does believe the change to OPMS III may address some of the shortcomings he raises.

The short-term benefits of OPMS XXI are yet to be seen, but the potential exists to put the officer corps on the right track. The larger benefit of OPMS XXI is the strengthening of critical staff specialties throughout the Army. Excellent officers not selected for command can pursue successful careers through repeated assignments in one of the four [career] fields.²⁰

Despite the controversial recommendations offered by Vandergriff, he does have the ear of many personnel officials and has met with senior military and civilian leaders in the Army.²¹ Implementation of any or all of his recommendations is yet to be decided. However, his position on OPMS III suggests that it was a good decision and has the potential to mitigate some of his concerns.

ARMY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

The Army Research Institute (ARI) conducts periodic research on officer career issues and intentions using the Survey on Officer Careers (SOC), a biennial survey that examines the values, attitudes, family situations, and career experiences of officers who are currently serving in Army Competitive Category (ACC) branches. SOC results are used to test models of work, career, family, and personal factors that influence officers' career decisions. Officers' attitudes regarding OPMS were included in five relatively recent SOCs conducted in 1998 and 2000. While still somewhat early in the transition to OPMS III, the surveys reveal some trends that we can use today to draw conclusions on the efficacy of OPMS III.

1998 Survey Results

The first SOC that included OPMS III was conducted in 1998 with results published in July 1999. In this SOC (also used as a baseline for a subsequent SOC on OPMS), assessments were collected on four populations: careerists, non-careerists, company grade officers, and field grade officers. These officers were asked their assessments of career success, career field designation boards, promotion opportunity, and key assignments. Data presented in the following charts represents the percentage of each category of officers that agree, are neutral, or disagree.²²

CAREER SUCCESS. CAREER SUCCESS WILL BE INFLUENCED MORE BY TYPE OF ASSIGNMENT THAN BY JOB PERFORMANCE UNDER OPMS III.

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Disagree</u>
Careerist	32	35	33
Non-Careerist	33	45	21
Company Grade	32	40	28
Field Grade	34	33	33

CAREER FIELD DESIGNATION BOARDS. THE CAREER FIELD DESIGNATION BOARDS WILL AWARD AN OFFICER THE CAREER FIELD HE OR SHE WANTS.

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Disagree</u>
Careerist	35	50	17
Non-Careerist	23	53	24
Company Grade	30	52	18
Field Grade	33	48	19

PROMOTION OPPORTUNITY. CHANCES FOR PROMOTION WILL BE BETTER UNDER OPMS III.

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Disagree</u>
Careerist	18	61	20
Non-Careerist	19	66	16
Company Grade	21	65	14
Field Grade	17	58	25

KEY ASSIGNMENTS. CHANCES FOR GETTING KEY ASSIGNMENTS ARE BETTER UNDER OPMS III.

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Disagree</u>
Careerist	16	66	18
Non-Careerist	15	69	16
Company Grade	17	70	14
Field Grade	14	63	23

Conclusions from the 1998 SOC. Since OPMS III was in its infancy at the time of the survey, between 60% and 70% of all company grade officers selected the neutral category in assessing whether promotions and key assignments will be better under the new OPMS. Slightly more than half of company grade officers selected the neutral category in rating the likelihood that they will receive the career field they want. There was no consensus on career

success with about one-third agreeing and one-third disagreeing that type of assignments will have more influence than job performance.

The survey revealed some differences among officers. Careerists were more likely than non-careerists and field grade officers were more likely than company grade officers to disagree with the statement that career success will be influenced more by type of assignments than by job performance. Careerists were more likely than non-careerists to believe that Career Field Designation Boards will award most officers the career field they want. Field grade officers were more likely than company grade officers to disagree that the opportunities for promotions and key assignments will be better under OPMS III.

2000 Survey Results

Using the 1998 SOC as a baseline, ARI conducted another survey in 2000 with results published in December 2001. In addition to the same four areas surveyed in 1998, ARI expanded the assessment to include branch qualification, field grade stability, and technical specialist enhancement of warfighting. The population for the 2000 survey was limited to company grade officers, field grade officers, and all officers.²³

CAREER SUCCESS. CAREER SUCCESS WILL BE INFLUENCED MORE BY TYPE OF ASSIGNMENT THAN BY JOB PERFORMANCE UNDER OPMS III.

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Disagree</u>
1998 All Officers	33	37	30
2000 All Officers	38	35	27

CAREER FIELD DESIGNATION. THE CAREER FIELD DESIGNATION BOARDS WILL AWARD AN OFFICER THE CAREER FIELD HE OR SHE WANTS.

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Disagree</u>
1998 All Officers	33	37	30
2000 All Officers	38	35	27
1998 Company Grade	31	DNC*	DNC
2000 Company Grade	41	DNC	DNC
1998 Field Grade	30	DNC	DNC
2000 Field Grade	50	DNC	DNC

PROMOTION OPPORTUNITY. CHANCES FOR PROMOTION WILL BE BETTER UNDER OPMS III.

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Disagree</u>
1998 All Officers	19	DNC	DNC
2000 All Officers	20	DNC	DNC
1998 Company Grade	21	DNC	DNC
2000 Company Grade	22	DNC	DNC
1998 Field Grade	17	DNC	DNC
2000 Field Grade	17	DNC	DNC

KEY ASSIGNMENTS. CHANCES FOR GETTING KEY ASSIGNMENTS ARE BETTER UNDER OPMS III.

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Disagree</u>
1998 All Officers	16	67	17
2000 All Officers	18	63	19

BRANCH QUALIFICATION. OFFICERS WILL BE ABLE TO SPEND MORE TIME IN FIELD GRADE BRANCH QUALIFYING POSITIONS.

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Disagree</u>
2000 All Officers	25	DNC	27
2000 Company Grade	23	DNC	22
2000 Field Grade	27	DNC	34

FIELD GRADE STABILITY. THE STABILITY OF FIELD GRADE OFFICERS WOULD BE INCREASED.

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Disagree</u>
2000 All Officers	20	DNC	33
2000 Company Grade	21	DNC	25
2000 Field Grade	18	DNC	44

TECHNICAL SPECIALISTS. DEVELOPING TECHNICAL SPECIALISTS WILL ENHANCE THE ARMY'S OVERALL WARFIGHTING CAPABILITY.

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Disagree</u>
2000 All Officers	58	DNC	14
2000 Company Grade	59	DNC	11
2000 Field Grade	56	DNC	18

*DNC-Data Not Collected

Conclusions from the 2000 SOC. An examination of responses in both the 1998 and 2000 SOC's reveals that most officers continued to maintain a neutral opinion of OPMS III. Differences in perceptions include: field grade officers are more likely than company grade officers to believe that Career Field Designation Boards will award most officers the career field they want; company grade officers are more likely than field grade officers to agree that they will have a better chance for a promotion than under the old system; and all officers agree that developing technical specialists will enhance the Army's overall warfighting capability.

There has been an increase in the percentage of all officers who agree that under OPMS III, success will be influenced more by type of assignments than job performance. There has been an increase in the percentage of all officers who believe Career Field Designation Boards will award officers the career field they want. More field grade than company grade officers agree. More field grade than company grade officers agree that officers will be able to spend more time in field grade branch-qualifying positions. One-fifth of all officers agree that the stability of field grade officers will be increased; more field grade than company grade officers disagree. About three-fifths of all officers agree that developing technical specialists will enhance the Army's warfighting capability.

Focus Group Results

In addition to the 1998 and 2000 SOC data presented above that dealt specifically with OPMS, the provisions of OPMS III were included in three other surveys conducted by ARI. Between October 1998 and April 1999, data were collected through focus group sessions with lieutenants, captains, and majors and interviews with lieutenant colonels at eight Army installations: Forts Sill, Eustis, Bliss, Drum, Benning, Bragg, Campbell, and Hood. A total of 71 focus group sessions and 66 interviews were conducted, representing the responses of over 500 ACC officers. The topics covered during the focus group sessions included OPMS XXI, the

new OER, leadership training and development, and career expectations and intentions.

Findings from these focus groups include.²⁴

ALL OFFICERS WITHIN THE FOCUS GROUP POPULATION

Career development is an important component of leader development. Although officers recognized that OPMS XXI was intended to create more avenues for successful careers, they were uneasy about the career field designation process and its career consequences. Officers said they need a better understanding of how OPMS XXI works, and when and how they should initiate their own career field designation planning. Battalion commanders can contribute to successful career development by learning OPMS well enough to advise subordinates effectively, ensuring that all officers, including lieutenants, receive rank-targeted OPMS XXI information and guidance, and providing targeted briefings that supplement printed materials.

COMPANY GRADE OFFICERS WITHIN THE FOCUS GROUP POPULATION

The company grade officers interviewed were less optimistic than their superiors about the impact of OPMS III on their careers. They questioned whether promotion opportunities will improve for them and whether the needs of the Army will prevail over their personal career field preference. Career field designation occurs too late in the officer's career to help retain quality lieutenants and captains. Specialization within career fields may jeopardize the interdependence necessary for combat readiness. Company grade officers also emphasized their need for access to career field and functional area information to facilitate career planning.

BATTALION COMMANDERS WITHIN THE FOCUS GROUP POPULATION

OPMS XXI had different implications for battalion commanders than for their subordinates. As Lieutenant Colonels, most battalion commanders were beyond the selection process for a new career field. They recognized, however, that it was incumbent upon them as supervisors to be knowledgeable about career field options so they could effectively advise subordinates.

At the time of the survey, battalion commanders did not believe they had sufficient knowledge about OPMS XXI to fulfill their roles as advisor and mentor. They knew that information about OPMS III was available on the Internet, as well as from printed materials and briefings. There are still aspects of OPMS III, however, they believed they did not know enough about to adequately counsel their subordinates. Battalion commanders felt they needed more information on career paths or pyramids for non-operational career fields, educational and experience requirements for each functional area, when officers need to begin to think about career field choice, the criteria for success in non-operational career fields, and whether or not the OER skills and attributes profile would become a discriminator for career field designation. In a recent address to students of the U.S. Army War College, which includes most of the

Army's former battalion and future brigade commanders, senior personnel officials addressed the need for future strategic leaders to ensure they understood provisions of OPMS III. This indicates that some of our senior leaders may not be as familiar with OPMS III as they should be.²⁵

Despite some uncertainty, the battalion commanders interviewed were very optimistic about Majors' chances of receiving the career field of their choice. They also thought that moving to specific career fields would increase officers' chances for promotion, especially for those officers whose interests and skills are non-operational.

ARMY TRAINING AND LEADER DEVELOPMENT PANEL

In June 2000, CSA General Shinseki directed the Commanding General, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (CG, TRADOC) convene an Army panel to review, assess, and provide recommendations for developing and training 21st-century leaders. The CG of U.S. Army Combined Arms Center was designated as the study director. General Shinseki chartered the Army Training and Leader Development Panel (ATLDP) to study training and leader development in light of Army Transformation and the new operational environment. The panel's focus was on leaders, soldiers, and units. The panel was asked to identify the characteristics and skills required for officer, noncommissioned officer (NCO), and warrant officer leaders of the transformed force. Contained in the panel's final report were findings in three areas that are applicable to OPMS: overall personnel management, the OER, and the officer education system (OES).

Overall Personnel Management and Leader Development

The panel found that the overall personnel management system is too focused on meeting "gates" rather than on quality leader development. The panel's head, Lieutenant General William M. Steele, remarked, "...the overall personnel management system appears to focus not on leader development in organizational assignments but rather on placing faces in spaces."²⁶ The official finding in the ATLDPs final report states,

Assignment requirements, instead of individual leader development needs, drive officer personnel management. DA Pam 600-3, Commissioned Officer Development and Career Management, focuses on career gates rather than the quality of developmental experiences. Assignment officers make assignments based on quotas to fill spaces rather than leader development. The Army assignments system is driven by requirements to fill spaces rather than quality leader development. Officers and field commanders have little say in the current process.²⁷

The panel found, for example, that many lieutenants were being rushed through developmental positions with limited opportunity to master their technical and tactical leadership skills. This finding is problematic when measured against the goals of OPMS III of enhancing warfighting and reducing upward substitution in the officer ranks.

Officer Evaluation Report

The OER was an area of great consternation within the officer ranks. The ATLDP found, “The OER is a source of mistrust and anxiety. The OER has two fundamental purposes: provide for leader development, and support personnel management. The OER is not yet meeting officer expectations as a leader development tool. The leader development aspects of the OER are seldom used, and senior raters seldom counsel subordinates.”²⁸ The panel further reported,

However, despite recent high promotion rates (98% to captain and 92% to major) and three years experience with the current OER, there is considerable anxiety in the force over the evaluation system. Field feedback indicates that officers are concerned about the impact of a center of mass rating on career progression. Officers believe the forced distribution system causes senior raters to pool officers and rate by position. They see the term ‘center of mass’ as negative and believe that a center of mass OER in a branch-qualifying position is career ending. Many junior officers simply do not trust the system or what their leaders are telling them about the OER.”²⁹

Commenting on the OER, General Steele stated, “In short, in its current form and application, the OER counters team-building; promotes competition among unit officers; and inhibits bonding, trust, cohesion and loyalty at the battalion and brigade levels.”³⁰

In response to the ATLDPs findings, the Army completed an OER study in 2002. The study concluded that the OER is accomplishing what it is designed to do, i.e. assess the performance and potential of officers and provide an effective tool that enables the Army to identify, assign, and select the best qualified officers for promotion, education, and command. Noteworthy from this study is the conclusion that the officer corps prefers the current evaluation report to other options and possible alternatives. Significant recommendations (subsequently approved by the CSA) based on the study’s conclusions include maintaining the no more than 49% above center of mass rating restriction on senior raters, emphasizing counseling and mentoring obligations, and conducting an annual assessment of the system.³¹

Officer Education System (OES)

The ATLDP found that the OES is in need of overhaul. According to General Steele, “Largely untouched since the collapse of the Soviet Union and progressively under-resourced

during Army downsizing, the OES is out of synch with Army needs today and the needs of the Objective Force tomorrow.”³² Intermediate level education (ILE) as envisioned by the crafters of OPMS III included the provision that all majors would receive resident Command and General Staff Officer Course (CGSOC) instruction. The panel recommended the Army eliminate the CGSOC board, as it is a discriminator with the current practice of selecting only 50% of a cohort year group to attend in resident status. “Current CGSOC selection policy makes education a discriminator, particularly for the 50% of officers who do not receive resident education to prepare them for their duties and responsibilities. OPMS XXI and full spectrum operations demand that all officers receive the benefit of an Intermediate Level Educational opportunity to develop their talent for their next ten years of service.”³³ The panel affirmed the goal of the OPMS task force and offered that ILE should provide all majors with a common core of operational instruction followed by branch and/or career field focused schooling. General Steele concluded by saying,

This ILE program will end our current practice of using educational opportunities as a discriminator for branch qualification, promotion, and command selection. The product the Army receives with ILE is a cohort of majors with a common knowledge of division, corps, and joint operations who better understand their career fields. ILE graduates will have the technical, tactical, and leadership skills required to be successful in their career fields, branches, and/or functional areas.”³⁴

To date, the Army has found it difficult to implement this initiative for a variety of reasons, including the fact that it requires a major cultural shift and has funding and other resource limitations.

In response to the OPMS Task Force recommendations and the ATLDP study, and to support Army Transformation, the Army is reviewing its OES programs. Pilot test programs are currently underway for basic officer instruction and changes to career course instruction (for captains) are under construct. The standard resident ILE remains under development; however implementation recently has been delayed until FY 05/06 pending further concept development and resource resolution.³⁵ The need for OES reform, particularly ILE, is clear. In discussing OPMS in a transforming Army, Lieutenant Colonel Robert E. Choppa (then Deputy Director, TRADOC OPMS XXI Office) remarked,

First, the Command and Staff College (CSC) Board should be eliminated. Prolonging the life of this relic undermines OPMS and functions merely to nod to traditional customs that have become detrimental to the officer corps’ well-being. Second, an intermediate-level education policy that allows as many officers as their branch or functional area can support to attend resident training at Fort Leavenworth should be approved and implemented.”³⁶

OTHER INDICATORS

Looking beyond information published in periodicals and data collected in surveys, there are other indicators of how OPMS III is performing. Although the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986 and Title XI provisions were passed prior to the OPMS XXI Task Force, consideration of these programs was not completely incorporated into OPMS III.

Joint Duty

OPMS III provides for the consideration of joint duty within the management system of Army officers. However, the consideration of joint duty was more conceptual than deliberate. The OPMS XXI Task Force recognized the importance of joint duty as follows:

First of all, joint service is directed by law, as is active component support to the Army National Guard and Army Reserve. Moreover, the reality of the fight—present and future—is that no service can go without its sister services and no active component without its Guard or Reserve. Army officers—active, Guard, and Reserve—are all part of the Total Army. Active component officers will be drawn from all four CFs, in support of Guard and Reserve units, making this integration even more relevant. Furthermore, the Army officer must be able to talk to sister service counterparts, as well as to civilian agencies, to leverage maximum power. “Joint” is not just a requirement—it is the way we fight. Accordingly, officer development must continue to recognize this need for “interoperability” across active/Guard/Reserve, joint, and interagency lines and explore new ways of enhancing this cooperation and integration.³⁷

In addition, OPMS must engender experience and expertise for the whole range of skills required now and in the future. The Army will need world-class operational specialists expert at warfighting, capable of operating across the full spectrum of military operations, and competent at integrating Total Army assets in joint and combined operations. Further, the Army will need world-class functional and systems specialists able to design, build, and integrate current and future Army systems within the DoD structure; procure, manage, and provide resources to build the future; and provide technical or functional expertise not developed in the operational Army.³⁸

The Task Force further recognized joint duty and included it as a specific characteristic of an officer management system that would enable the Army to accomplish its goal of a system that is better for the Army and “develops officers who perform effectively in a joint environment.”³⁹

Given the OPMS XXI Task Force’s discussion on operating in a joint environment, it is evident that joint duty and development should be an essential component of the Army’s officer management system. In 1986, Congress passed the Goldwater-Nichols Act, a major legislative initiative designed at improving the Department of Defense and Armed Forces’ performance when operating in a joint environment. However, upon examination of the Army’s track record

in fulfilling the statutory requirements of the Goldwater-Nichols Act, one must question if the execution of OPMS III is in fact fulfilling the goals it was designed to accomplish. Congress established promotion objectives as a metric to evaluate the Service's compliance with their intent. The specific provision regarding promotion objectives contained in Title X is as follows:

The Secretary of Defense shall ensure that the qualifications of officers assigned to joint duty assignments are such that - (1) officers who are serving on, or have served on, the Joint Staff are expected, as a group, to be promoted to the next higher grade at a rate not less than the rate for officers of the same armed force in the same grade and competitive category who are serving on, or have served on, the headquarters staff of their armed force; (2) officers who have the joint specialty are expected, as a group, to be promoted at a rate not less than the rate for officers of the same armed force in the same grade and competitive category who are serving on, or have served on, the headquarters staff of their armed force; and (3) officers who are serving in, or have served in, joint duty assignments (other than officers covered in paragraphs (1) and (2)) are expected, as a group, to be promoted to the next higher grade at a rate not less than the rate for all officers of the same armed force in the same grade and competitive category.⁴⁰

Through FY 2002, the Army generally met most promotion objectives except for those at the rank of Colonel. The Army has met this promotion objective in only two years since Congress enacted the law. While there has been much debate over this topic and the overall legislative requirements imposed on the Services, the fact remains that the Army has not come close to meeting all promotion objectives mandated by law.

The strategic implication of this trend is significant. First, it sends a message, likely a negative one, to the Department of Defense and the other services that the Army doesn't value joint duty. Second, given that future strategic leaders are required to be joint qualified before selection to the flag officer ranks, not adhering to the provisions of the Goldwater-Nichols Act potentially postures the Army to not identify, train, and develop officers to effectively function in a joint environment. During the early years of Goldwater-Nichols, a provision in the law permitted the services to select a flag officer for promotion without being joint qualified utilizing a "good of the service" waiver. There has been recent pressure from the Joint Staff and the Department of Defense to eliminate these types of waivers. Over the past six years, the number of good of the service waivers granted to the Army ranged from eight in FY 1997 to one in FY 2002, with none being granted in FY 1999. The recent downward trend appears positive. However, it is clear that the necessity to identify, train, and develop our future leaders to operate in a joint environment is even more important and the Army's reliance on the use of these waivers will likely be eliminated.

Additionally, beginning in FY 2008, appointments to flag level will require the officer to meet the requirements expected of a joint specialty officer. This means that most officers, in addition to completing a full tour of duty in a joint position, will also have to complete DOD's joint education program as well. Only 18 of 40 officers selected in FY 2001 would meet this requirement today.⁴¹ The emphasis placed by Congress on joint operations does not appear to be waning.

To address the issue of meeting promotion objectives and identifying our future strategic leaders, the Army's Personnel Command in 1998-1999 developed a Joint Integration Plan. The intent of the plan was to complete joint qualification for 95% of the Army's officers with demonstrated potential for service at the highest levels before those officers became eligible for the Brigadier General Board. Three years after this plan was implemented, only 53% of high potential officers were joint qualified when their records appeared before the Brigadier General promotion board.⁴² Clearly, continued emphasis on this program is needed and is vital to ensure we not only meet Congressional mandates, but most importantly, train our future strategic leaders for service in a joint environment.

Active Component - Reserve Component (AC/RC) Program

Equally important to joint duty is the fact that the Army will fight as one Army including both active and reserve components. Following the 1991 Gulf War, Congress recognized significant shortcomings in the posture of our reserve component forces. This led Congress to pass the Army National Guard Combat Readiness Reform Act of 1992 that was subsequently incorporated into the 1992 and 1993 National Defense Authorization Acts and Public Law 102-484. The requirements of this legislation remain today. One provision directly related to the management of the active force officer population is the law's requirement to assign 5,000 officers and enlisted personnel to reserve component units as advisors. There are no metrics such as promotion objectives (like joint) to gauge the program's success other than an annual requirement to report the number of officers assigned as advisors. Nonetheless, the importance of the program is evident if the Army is in fact to function as one force.

Upon examination of the Army's performance in meeting this law, we find the Army has been somewhat successful in meeting Congress's intent, but not completely. Analyzing the metric of filling all 5,000 positions, the Army has not met the objective when considering officer and enlisted populations separately. Although the Army has generally met the 5,000 position requirement, it has had to rely on substituting enlisted personnel for some of the officer positions. The Army's recent fill of AC/RC positions has run between 95-97% for officers. The

Army's Personnel Command (PERSCOM) cites a shortage of officers and competing operational requirements as reasons for not meeting 100% of the AC/RC requirements. In fact, PERSCOM has initiated a legislative proposal to amend Title XI reducing the number of AC/RC positions from 5,000 to 4,700 to accommodate the shortage of officers.⁴³

Although Congress has not directed the Army to meet promotion objectives in the AC/RC program, the Army is required to report the promotion rates of active component officers serving as advisors to the reserve component. The Army satisfies this requirement by including advisor promotion rates in the annual Army Posture Statement (APS). Given the requirement to report promotion rates, we can certainly conclude that Congress has an interest in providing advisors to the reserve component that are of equal caliber as the rest of the Army. However, upon examination of the Army's performance in this regard, we find the Army has not provided advisors to the reserve component with promotion rates comparable to that of the Army average. A review of the APS for fiscal years 1999-2002 reveals the following:⁴⁴

	<u>Selection Rate for AC/RC Advisors</u>	<u>Army Average</u>
<u>FY 1999</u>		
Major	70.4%	77.8%
Lieutenant Colonel	28.6%	68.7%
<u>FY 2000</u>		
Major	65.0%	79.5%
Lieutenant Colonel	44.4%	72.1%
<u>FY 2001</u>		
Major	71.0%	82.9%
Lieutenant Colonel	50.0%	75.7%
<u>FY 2002</u>		
Major	82.1%	89.8%
Lieutenant Colonel	43.5%	74.5%

Warfighting Capability

The professional and warfighting development of the officer corps was a major concern to the OPMS Task Force as evidenced by one of General Reimer's criteria for a new OPMS – “enhancing the Army's warfighting capability.” General Reimer desired a management system that would specifically address the amount of time officers were spending in key developmental positions and reduce the turbulence the officer corps was experiencing. At the time of the OPMS XXI Study, officers were spending only 12 months on average in critical developmental

positions. When reviewing the situation today, we find that time in branch qualification positions for majors and associated stability is at an all time high – in excess for 20 months for majors in all branches.⁴⁵

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

After a thorough literature review of publications and information pertaining to OPMS, it appears as though the system is generally functioning as designed and implementation is now approaching a steady state. Career Field Designation Boards are being conducted annually, promotion and selection boards are being conducted by career field, some concerns over the OER have been addressed, and time in branch qualification positions for majors and associated stability is at an all time high. We have begun building a base of operators and specialists who will serve the Army well over the coming decades. Empirical data from the Army Research Institute suggests that the system is maturing and that officer understanding and acceptance of OPMS is growing. Additionally, in remarks to students of the U.S. Army War College, Pre-Command Courses, and students at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, senior personnel officials report that OPMS III is on track. There are four areas, however, that require continued monitoring by personnel officials and possible adjustment by senior leaders and policy makers.

As indicated by the Army's failure to consistently meet the statutory requirements of the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986, it has not committed itself to not only the provisions of this law, but more importantly to meeting the intent of Congress of optimizing joint operations. The January 2003 decision to reconvene the Army Colonel promotion board for fiscal year 2002 because it did not meet joint promotion objectives validates this observation. Although the Army cited an apparent administrative error in failing to properly identify joint officers, the fact remains that the original board recessed knowing it had not met the promotion objectives. This is more of an issue with Army culture than it is with an officer management system. If the Army is committed to effectively operating in a joint environment across the full spectrum of conflict, then it must practice what it preaches and what it promulgates in its doctrine. There is a plan, the Joint Integration Plan, designed to address these shortcomings. The plan needs to be implemented like any other military operation, aimed at completing the mission – decisively.

The necessity for joint operations will not wane over the foreseeable future. In fact, reliance on them is a key component of the Army's strategy for the Objective Force.

The Army's Transformation strategy must be harmonized with similar efforts of other Services. Army Transformation is grounded in the operational framework of Joint doctrine and concepts and the concepts for future joint and combined

operations. A joint team that is decisive in any type of operation against any level threat, in any environment, requires an Army that is strategically and operationally responsive, rapidly deployable, mentally and physically agile, and able to transition rapidly across the spectrum of operations -- a versatile force capable of dominating any situation or adversary with minimal organizational adjustment and time.⁴⁶

The Army's commitment to the AC/RC program does not appear to be sufficient. Although the Army is meeting its requirement to provide advisors and report promotion statistics, the fact that it replaces officers with enlisted personnel and those officers that are assigned are being promoted at rates significantly below the Army average indicate this program may need more rigor. If we are to fight as truly one force, it is imperative we examine this program and do a better job of supporting our reserve components.

Concerns voiced by officers in the field and leaders alike regarding the outdated officer education system abound. Although the Army is developing plans to address these concerns, it is imperative that implementation slip no further to the right, particularly in regards to the standardized ILE initiative where all majors receive resident instruction and its intent to eliminate the "have and have nots." This and "Universal MEL1," the OPMS XXI Task Force's recommendation to send all colonels to resident senior service college, remain the only major OPMS III initiatives not satisfactorily implemented. It is not clear why the Army excluded senior service college from its OES Transformation Plan. When considering progression through each career field's life cycle, it is intuitive that the Army will need and benefit from all colonels in all career fields to receive education on strategic leadership, strategy formulation, national security, and other subjects presented at resident senior service colleges. In other words, the benefit derived from educating an ISCF colonel is as equally important to the Army as educating an OPCF colonel.

The 2002 review of the OER was a welcome initiative. Although many of the resulting changes are administrative, the conclusions of the study are promising. Significant progress was made in officers accepting the OER between the publication of the ATLDP study and the OER study completed in 2002. Findings from the 2002 study report, "As the OER matured, anxiety and uncertainty have diminished. The officer corps is still emotional over the OER, but the prevailing thought is that the current OER is about right."⁴⁷

FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

Given the conclusion that OPMS III is generally functioning as designed and is enjoying an improved understanding and acceptance across the officer corps, a logical question would be whether or not it will serve the Army just as well in future years, particularly in light of the

Army's efforts to transform. The Army continues to refine its objectives and plans for transformation. Consequently, there is little specific information on what type of officer will be needed in a transformed army. There are, however, some indications in the literature published to date.

OBJECTIVE FORCE

TRADOC Pamphlet 525-66, Force Operating Capabilities, delineates the capabilities required for the Army's Objective Force – what a portion of the Army will look like when it completes transformation. Regarding the requirements of Battle Command in the Objective Force, TRADOC PAM 525-66 states, 'Battle command at all echelons within the Objective Force requires improved horizontal integration of information, based upon multifunctional staff officers in non-traditional staff organizations.'⁴⁸ The pamphlet further describes the type of officer needed in the Objective Force:

The Army must aggressively recruit high quality individuals who can meet the training and operational demands required in information age warfare. Both officer and enlisted recruits must possess a strong aptitude for computer-based learning, and must be comfortable working with advanced computer-based technologies. All soldiers—not only leaders—must have the ability to make rapid decisions, while under stresses normally not realized by present day personnel. They must demonstrate an above average maturity level, as these individuals will have access to more firepower and lethality than did their predecessors in history. Objective Force leaders and soldiers must clearly demonstrate the ability to handle that responsibility.⁴⁹

In a recently published White Paper on the Objective Force, the Army describes personnel requirements for the Objective Force as follows:

Therefore, the enduring hallmark of the Objective Force will be its Soldiers. At the heart of the Objective Force are Soldiers and leaders -- Warriors -- who will go into harm's way to impose our Nation's will on any adversary. They must know and live Army values, be disciplined, be physically tough and mentally conditioned for combat, have perseverance, be competent in our doctrine, and possess the will to win - these are the precepts of physical and psychological force domination. Into their hands, we will put the world's finest warfighting technology. They must be expert at the use of emerging technologies and trained for the full range of operations. They will have the moral determination to kill our enemies as readily as they are willing to help alleviate the suffering of innocents.⁵⁰

Although somewhat lacking in specificity, one can infer from this White Paper that officers of the future will require many of the same characteristics, leadership skills, and training and leader development needs of today. The emphasis on understanding and employing technology and its advantages is clear both in the White Paper and the TRADOC pamphlet.

JOINT VISION 2020

Examining Joint Vision 2020 (JV 2020), the capstone strategic vision for the Armed Forces, also provides some insight into the future and the type of officers that the Army (and other Services for that matter) will need. JV 2020 calls for personnel of the highest quality and character who possess a multitude of skills; who are flexible, responsive, fully joint (intellectually, operationally, organizationally, doctrinally, and technically), committed to selfless service; who will confront a diversity of missions and technological demands that require adaptability, innovation, precise judgement, forward thinking, multi-cultural understanding; and who can create and take advantage of intellectual and technological advantage.⁵¹

VIABILITY FOR THE FUTURE

Given the aforementioned characteristics of JV 2020, the TRADOC Pamphlet, and Objective Force White Paper, we can now look at OPMS III in an attempt to ascertain its usefulness for the future.

The design of OPMS III's four career fields appears to support the Army's call for a multi-functional staff officer, an officer versed not only his basic branch, but in an area that may very well serve at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels of war. Information Operations comes to mind as a good example of this, where the officer understands the complexities of both warfighting and a very specialized field. The four-career field design also supports JV 2020's description of an officer with multiple skills. But, do we have the career fields right?

When OPMS III was created in 1996-1997, it was done under different military and civilian leadership with little indication that the Army would be changing (transforming) to the degree that it will now. An issue facing the Army today is the ability of the four-career field model to work for a transformed force. There are some indications that it may need adjustment. For example, the recent (transformation-related) force structure adjustments in the Adjutant General (AG) Branch, resulting in a reduction of tactical commands, may negate its placement in the Operations Career Field. Lieutenant Colonel John Finke makes a compelling argument for merging all human resource managers into one career field to provide better human resource support to the Army.⁵² His argument, coupled with the reductions in AG commands, would seem to support a re-examination of the composition of each career field. With the transformation emphasis on reachback and other ways to avoid the large command and control footprint in the battlespace, it is logical that other branches face similar needs to revise their career patterns. Similarly, Military Intelligence Corps and Signal Corps are examples of branches that split into multiple, but restrictive career fields. Over-specializing and fragmenting

a branch may have resulted in a loss of flexibility and restricted the Army's ability to balance requirements for generalists and specialists. Additionally, the recent activation of the Army's Installation Management Agency may necessitate officers specialized in installation management. With its mission to provide equitable, effective and efficient management of Army installations worldwide to support mission readiness and execution, enable the well-being of soldiers, civilians, and family members, improve infrastructure, and preserve the environment,⁵³ the Army may need officers who specialize in this field. Today's current practice of selecting installation managers from all career fields may no longer be appropriate based on the increasing complexity and challenges of those positions.

Further, military operations since the end of the Cold War have increasingly involved operations with non-governmental (NGO) and inter-agency (IA) organizations. Yet, we have no system that adequately prepares officers for working with these organizations. JV 2020 highlights that our personnel will be challenged by significant responsibilities at tactical levels in the organization and must be capable of making decisions with operational and strategic implications.⁵⁴ Clearly, having some officers specialized in NGO and IA operations would be an advantage.

Given the obvious need for more specialization, but also flexibility, in the officer ranks, consideration should be given to designating an officer's career field earlier than the tenth year of service. Implementation of OPMS III to date has shown that career field designation and the four career fields are valuable provisions of officer management, with promise of great value to the Army in future years. Given its success to date, why not explore designating an officer a few years earlier, shortly following company-level command for example? The payoff would be an officer who can serve the Army in his or her new career field for up to five more years (depending on company command completion and career field designation and education). The Army certainly would enjoy a higher return on its investment in training and educating world-class specialists still grounded in operational beginnings.

In addition to the need for officers who are more specialized, some, namely Vandergriff, advocate eliminating branches altogether and having only three specialty fields – combat, combat support, and logistical. While revolutionary, one must consider the context in which this recommendation was offered. Vandergriff felt this would contribute to unit cohesion and better effect on the battlefield. Perhaps, however, when considered in light of officer requirements of the future, it may not be the number of branches that is the issue but rather, how does the Army develop the right specialty of officers as its need for different capabilities develop now and into

the future? It does not appear that simply reducing to only three branches would resolve the specialization flexibility promulgated by the Army and JV 2020.

Providing the type of officer required for the future as described in TRADOC PAM 525-66, the Objective Force White Paper, and JV 2020 also has both accession and leader development implications, particularly in regards to flexibility, responsiveness, technological demands, adaptability, innovation, judgement, and forward thinking. To satisfy these requirements, the Army may have to review entrance requirements for officer candidates from all three sources of commissioning. Additionally, the OES may have to be revamped in order to train and develop this type of officer once he or she enters active duty and then to re-orient and re-train them throughout their career, to respond to changing needs of both the Army and the officer.

The Army's recent decision to explore unit-based rotation and replacement policies will likely have profound impacts on the manner in which the Army manages its officers. Officers may be assigned to the same unit, organization, or agency for several years instead of months. What are the implications of this initiative on the training and development of our officers? Only a simultaneous review of OPMS as it relates to this initiative and overall transformation can answer this question. It would be prudent to initiate a proactive review of OPMS in conjunction with the Army's design of its Transformation Campaign Plan and Objective Force.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommend the Army take the following actions to capitalize on progress made in officer management and posture the Army for an officer corps that will serve the Army as it progresses through transformation and well into the 21st century.

Review and modify, if necessary, the policies used to manage and assign officers in joint assignments. The present and future environments are "joint" and the Army must take action to improve its performance in this area. This review should not only address simply meeting promotion objectives, but must be a holistic review as it will require a change in how the Army values joint duty.

Review and modify, if necessary, the policies used to manage and assign officers to the AC/RC program. Our Nation will always have to rely on the reserve components to apply the military instrument of national power. Although the Army is in "technical" compliance with existing legislative directives, it must review this program and simply do a better job of supporting the reserves.

Continue initiatives to reform the OES. Most importantly, every effort should be made to prevent further delay of ILE implementation. Each year that passes further erodes trust and confidence that the Army will fulfill a major tenet of OPMS III and is one year less that the Army can reap the benefits of this important aspect of training and developing officers of the future. Additionally, re-evaluate the feasibility of senior service college for all colonels.

Continue monitoring and review of the OER to prevent an erosion of progress made to date.

To address the implications of Transformation on OPMS III, recommend the Army conduct a review of OPMS III to ascertain its viability for the future. It would be best to formally begin this now, in the early stages of Transformation, as the need for reconfiguration and flexibility in branches, functional areas, and career fields becomes evident. Any resulting changes to OPMS III would then be synchronous with the Army as it transforms. Areas to be considered in this review, logically named OPMS IV, should include codifying the type of officer required for the Objective Force, a review of the branches and functional areas that comprise the four career fields, the timing of designation, accession and education policies for the future officer, and officer management policies given the imminent change to unit rotation and assignment policies.

The Army's officer personnel management system is integral to the success or failure of its commissioned leaders and eventually to the survival of the Army. Accordingly, a continued evolution is a vital interest and must be placed as a priority for senior leaders regardless and in spite of operational demands that capture our attention on a continual basis.

Word Count = 11,183

ENDNOTES

¹ Donald Vandergriff, The Path to Victory: America's Army and the Revolution in Human Affairs (Novata, CA: Presidio, 2002), 107.

² Charles Webster, Officer Professional Management System XXI Knowledge Accountability: Improving Company Commanders, Thesis (Fort Leavenworth: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1999), 11.

³ Harry Thie et al., A Future Officer Career Management System (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 2001), 3.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Mary French, "OPMS XXI – An Integrated Strategy," Army 47 (February 1997): [database on-line]; available from ProQuest; accessed 1 November 2002.

⁶ U.S. Army Chief of Staff Dennis Reimer, "OPMS XXI Study Charter," memorandum for Director, Officer Personnel Management System XXI Task Force, Washington, D.C., 25 September 1996.

⁷ Officer Personnel Management System XXI Task Force, OPMS XXI Final Report (Washington, D.C.: Officer Personnel Management System Study, July 1997), x.

⁸ French.

⁹ Officer Personnel Management System XXI Task Force, x.

¹⁰ Ibid., xi.

¹¹ French.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Officer Personnel Management System XXI Task Force, iv.

¹⁴ Department of the Army, Career Field Designation Policies and Procedures, MILPER Message Number 03-032 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, 12 November 2002).

¹⁵ Department of the Army, Commissioned Officer Development and Career Management, DA Pamphlet 600-3 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, 1 October 1998), 3.

¹⁶ B. B. Bell, "What the Future Holds, and Who Will Stand and Fight," Armor (January-February 2001): 49.

¹⁷ Lloyd Matthews, "The Uniformed Intellectual and His Place in American Arms," Army (August 2002): 40.

¹⁸ U.S. Army Personnel Command Chief of Mobilization James Morningstar, "Study and Recommendations Regarding MAJ Vandergriff's Reform Proposals," memorandum for Commander, U.S. Army PERSCOM, Alexandria VA, 25 July 2001.

¹⁹ Thomas White, "Opening Ceremony Remarks at the 2002 AUSA Convention," 21 October 2002; available from <<http://www.army.mil/leaders/Secarmy/speeches/20021021.html>>; Internet; accessed 16 November 2002.

²⁰ Vandergriff, 182.

²¹ The ideas in this paragraph are based on remarks made by a speaker participating in the Commandant's Lecture Series and discussions with the speaker during a subsequent luncheon.

²² Army Research Institute, Survey Report: Officer's Attitudes About the Officer Personnel Management System (OPMS) XXI (Alexandria, VA: U.S. Army Research Institute, July 1999).

²³ Army Research Institute, Survey Report: Officer's Attitudes About the Officer Personnel Management System (OPMS) XXI (Alexandria, VA: U.S. Army Research Institute, December 2001).

²⁴ Army Research Institute, Survey Report: Officer Careers, Plans, and Emerging Issues: Focus Group Research (Alexandria, VA: U.S. Army Research Institute, November 1999).

²⁵ The ideas in this paragraph were validated by senior Army personnel officials participating in the Commandant's Lecture Series.

²⁶ William Steele, "Training and Developing Leaders in a Transforming Army," Military Review (September-October 2001): 3.

²⁷ U.S. Army, The Army Training and Leader Development Panel Officer Study Report to the Army; available from <<http://www.army.mil/features/ATLD/report.pdf>>; Internet; accessed 12 December 2002, OS-9.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Steele, 4.

³¹ U.S. Army, "Refinements to the Current Officer Evaluation Reporting (OER) System," information paper, Washington, D.C., December 2002.

³² Steele, 5.

³³ U.S. Army, The Army Training and Leader Development Panel Officer Study Report to the Army, OS-11.

³⁴ Steele, 6.

³⁵ David Austin, "OES Timeline Adjusted," briefing slides, G3, U.S. Army Staff, 6 December 2002.

³⁶ Robert Choppa, "OPMS in a Transforming Army," Military Review (September-October 2000): 96.

³⁷ Officer Personnel Management System XXI Task Force, xviii.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, ix.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, x.

⁴⁰ Joint Officer Management, U.S. Code, Sec. 662 (2002).

⁴¹ General Accounting Office, Joint Officer Development Has Improved, but a Strategic Approach is Needed (Washington, D.C.: U.S. General Accounting Office, December 2002), 22.

⁴² Michelle Burkhart, "Integrating Army Officers Into Joint Assignments," briefing slides, Joint Management Branch, U.S. Total Army Personnel Command, 4 September 2002.

⁴³ Conversation with AC/RC Program Manager, U.S. Total Army Personnel Command, and review of draft proposal.

⁴⁴ Erik Shinseki and Thomas White, The Army-At War and Transforming: A Statement on the Posture of the United States Army, Fiscal Year 2003, Posture Statement presented to the 108th Cong., 1st sess. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, 2003), A-1.

⁴⁵ Office of Military Personnel Management, Officer Division, G1, U.S. Army Staff.

⁴⁶ Erik Shinseki, "United States Army White Paper: Concepts for the Objective Force," available from <<http://www.army.mil/features/WhitePaper/ObjectiveForceWhitePaper.pdf>>; Internet; accessed 31 December 2002.

⁴⁷ U.S. Army, "Refinements to the Current Officer Evaluation Reporting (OER) System."

⁴⁸ Department of the Army, Force Operating Capabilities, TRADOC PAM 525-66 (Fort Monroe, VA: U.S. Department of the Army, draft), 17.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 112.

⁵⁰ Shinseki, "United States Army White Paper: Concepts for the Objective Force," v.

⁵¹ Henry Shelton, Joint Vision 2020 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2000).

⁵² John Finke, Military Human Resources Professionals for the Transforming Army, Strategy Research Project (Carlisle Barracks: U.S. Army War College, 10 April 2001).

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