

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

THE IMPACT OF FITNESS ON SENIOR LEADERSHIP

by

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The views expressed in this academic research paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, or any of its agencies.

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ABSTRACT

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Upon graduation from the U.S. Army War College, senior leaders step into a world of uncertainty, complexity and greater challenge. They'll require every advantage and leverage they have learned and attained. Of clear importance is the maintenance of health and fitness. This may be a daunting undertaking, however, due to the pressures and multiplicity of responsibilities of senior leaders combined with the ever-increasing obesity problem in the United States.

Currently, almost half of American adults are considered overweight. This trend may be affecting U.S. Army troops and if so, what does this say about the fitness levels and attitudes of senior leaders? There exists the perception amongst the officer corps that there is a number (perhaps significant) of senior Army leaders who are not fit. Is this just a perception, or is there truth to these conjectures? Finally, if there are a significant number of unfit senior leaders, how does this impact strategic leadership?

This Strategy Research Project will assess the impact of fitness on senior leaders by looking at the general fitness levels of the U.S. Army student population at the U.S. Army War College: the newest strategic leaders. Specifically, the paper will examine AWC student perceptions about fitness specifically, its importance and relevance for leadership, whether or not a fitness problem exists in the student population at the U.S. Army War College and provide recommendations for the future.

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PREFACE

I'd like to thank the staff at the Army Physical Fitness Research Institute, Carlisle Barracks, for assisting me in this endeavor, particularly, LTC Mark Vaitkus, my Project Advisor, MAJ Ruth Crampton, major supporter and Ms. Pamela Gathers, expert Database Manager; they're a great crew.

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THE IMPACT OF FITNESS ON SENIOR LEADERSHIP

INTRODUCTION

“US troops are losing the battle of the bulge.” So states a recent headline in the British newspaper The Times. The article goes on to relate that as American soldiers prepare for a possible war with Iraq, over 50% of them are overweight.¹ A recent study presented at the November 2002 meeting of the American Obesity Association confirmed these statements. Professor Richard Atkinson from the University of Wisconsin reported that according to the National Institutes of Health standards, more than half of all service personnel are overweight and the trend is increasing.² It is difficult to conceive of the words “soldier” and “overweight” in the same sentence, but perhaps The Times has made evident a reality of our times.

Currently, more than 50% of American adults are considered overweight and nearly 40% of these individuals are considered obese.³ It has been said that the military mirrors society.⁴ Although it continually espouses physical and personal fitness, perhaps the U.S. Army is also becoming a reflection of American culture in the area of physical or personal fitness.⁵ If it is true that the troops are overweight, what does this say about the fitness levels and attitudes of senior leaders? There exists a perception amongst the officer corps that there are a number (perhaps significant) of senior Army leaders who are not fit. Is this just a perception, or is there truth to these conjectures? Finally, if there are a significant number of unfit senior leaders, how does this impact strategic leadership?

This Strategy Research Project will assess the impact of fitness on senior leaders by looking at the general fitness levels of the U.S. Army student population at the U.S. Army War College: the newest strategic leaders. Specifically, the paper will examine AWC student perceptions about fitness, its importance and relevance for leadership, whether or not a fitness problem exists in the student population at the U.S. Army War College, and provide recommendations for the future.

DEFINITIONS

SENIOR/STRATEGIC LEADER

A “Senior/Strategic Leader” is defined as a U.S. Army student in the U.S. Army War College (AWC) Class of Academic Year 2003 (AY 03).

PERSONAL FITNESS

“Personal fitness” is defined as a level at which an Army officer can pass the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) with no difficulty; be within the Army Height/Weight (Ht/Wt) and/or Body Fat Composition (tape test) standards; have an acceptable Body Mass Index (BMI) and abdominal girth measurement and strive to maintain a fitness program of aerobic and anaerobic activity at least 5 days per week for at least 20 minutes per day. (This definition differs from that of the U.S. Army standard in that the Army does not use the Body Mass Index (BMI) or abdominal girth measurements.)

U.S. ARMY MANDATES

The U.S. Army defines fitness in several regulations. Army Regulation (AR) 350-41, Training in Units, describes the physical fitness policy broadly:

“Physical fitness provides a foundation for combat readiness and must be an integral part of every soldier’s life. Unit readiness begins with the physical fitness of soldiers and the noncommissioned officers and officers who lead them.”⁶

It further defines the Army requirements for physical fitness, which include successful completion of the semi-annual APFT, meeting the Army Ht/Wt standards and maintaining a physical fitness regime at least 3-5 times a week (with emphasis on cardio-respiratory activity, muscle endurance, muscle strength and flexibility).⁷ U.S. Army Field Manual (FM) 600-9, The Army Weight Control Program, was established to insure that all personnel are able to meet the physical demands of their duties under combat conditions and that they present a trim military appearance at all times.⁸ Further objectives of the program are to assist in establishing and maintaining discipline, operational readiness, optimal physical fitness and health, among others.

Taking this requirement a step further, the Army not only demands physical fitness of its individual soldiers; it also demands that leadership take an active role. Effective leadership is crucial to the physical fitness of subordinates. U.S. Army FM, 21-20, Physical Fitness Training, specifically states that:

“Leaders, especially senior leaders, must understand and practice the army doctrine of physical fitness. They must be visible and active participants in physical training programs.”⁹

It is clear that physical fitness is an integral part of the U. S. Army training and doctrine and is required of every soldier and leader regardless of branch or specialty.

FITNESS AS A CRITICAL IMPERATIVE FOR STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

Personal fitness is imperative for senior leaders. It not only plays a role in the personal health of the leader, but it also plays a part in strategic leadership by impacting subordinates and the mission. At the strategic level, leadership is characterized as volatile, uncertain, chaotic and ambiguous.¹⁰ For leaders to operate successfully in this environment, it is essential to not only be fit, but also serve as “visible and active participants” of fitness programs. Strategic leaders must not only be able to handle both the physical and mental stress of this environment, but also demonstrate fitness in action and appearance. To operate successfully and skillfully at this challenging and at times, chaotic level, and to portray the proper image of a fit soldier-leader are crucial. Therefore, three distinct implications should be considered for senior leaders regarding the impact their fitness level plays in strategic leadership: the effect on functional performance, example-setting and mentorship/coaching.

FUNCTIONAL PERFORMANCE

Functional performance is multi-dimensional. The most crucial elements of functional performance are: mental-emotional agility or the ability to be an effective decision-maker while remaining composed during stressful periods; and physical agility, or the ability to maintain stamina and endurance while leading successfully.

Mental-Emotional Agility

To be mentally agile, a leader must be able to weed out unnecessary data, prioritize important information and be able to come to conclusions with these data. Mental agility allows the leader to be a solid decision-maker. A big determinant of decisive and correct decision-making is keeping the body fit so that the mind can do its job.

At the strategic level, leaders are bombarded with information. During peacetime, work-related information is constant and includes, but is not limited to: daily briefings and meetings; daily paper mail, hourly electronic mail, both internal and external to the organization; verbal messages; telephonic messages; worldwide news, local news, and more. While on deployment, the senior leader not only handles similar information, but has the added, life or death concerns of the wartime/peace operations mission and hostile environment with which to contend. Likewise, personal or home-life information is similarly expressed. In all, an overwhelming amount of data enters the senior leader’s senses in one day. One must be able to sift through tremendous amounts of information and select, prioritize and act on the significant pieces.

Once the unnecessary information is deleted, the senior leader must then establish order. The key to managing strategic leader communication is prioritization.¹¹ The skilled strategic leader must be adept at taking the significant pieces and placing them in order of what should be accomplished first, how fast and for how long.

Finally, after prioritizing the data, the leader is then better able to analyze the data and ascertain needs, think of recommendations, and finally, make decisions. All of this mind-mapping takes a great deal of energy. Keeping fit provides the brain with needed blood flow and stress release to keep sharp and alert.¹²

Simultaneously, emotional stability is required of the leader to be able to lead successfully when chaos reigns. It's being able to make the right decision at the right time for the right reasons. It's the ability to keep things together when things appear to be falling apart all around.

Several studies have shown that exercise helps preserve the brain's chemistry and ability to function in a variety of situations.¹³ Regular exercise increases blood flow to the brain and thus allows more oxygen into brain cells. This allows for better information processing.¹⁴ Simultaneously, exercise has been found to slow down the loss of dopamine, a neurotransmitter that helps prevent some of the negative effects of old age including decreased reaction time. These studies targeted older people and found that the benefits of exercise are particularly effective in this older population.¹⁵ Furthermore, other studies have proven that if one takes a passive approach to life, brainpower diminishes.¹⁶ Overall, being physically fit contributes to the leader's mental and emotional well-being.¹⁷

Physical Agility/Endurance

Physical agility allows the leader to perform the tedious, day-to-day, physical demands of the profession, which include: long hours of work; austere environments; physical prowess and stamina; numerous short suspenses; and increased operational tempo, to name several.¹⁸ As one progresses in rank in the Army, more is expected of the officer. Promotions are based on potential for increasing levels of responsibility rather than past performance.¹⁹ Logically, with increased responsibility, one usually must work longer and more productive hours. The length of a senior leader work-day often exceeds 12 hours or more.²⁰ Soldiers are deployed to all areas of the globe, many times living under austere conditions. The senior leaders in these environments endure the same physical stressors as their subordinates to include susceptibility to infectious diseases, wide ranges of temperatures/climates and unknown security threats. While most senior leaders will not need to hike 100 miles with a heavy pack, in Afghanistan some senior leaders were in the midst of battle in treacherous terrain under extremely volatile

conditions.²¹ Furthermore, recent research from the battles in Afghanistan suggests that the demand for dismounted troops in future warfare is likely to rise.²² This suggests that asymmetric threats and warfare may place increased physical demands on senior leaders. Therefore, being physically fit will give the leader a definite edge with physical agility, providing him/her the endurance to continue to lead in challenging and unpredictable environments.

As an added note, it is imperative that senior leaders be ready at all times for any situation. As was witnessed in previous U.S. Embassy bombings and the September 11th, 2001 attacks, senior leaders were there amongst the terrorists' targets.²³ To be able to lead under such critical conditions requires great stamina and endurance.

Taking all of this into account, the senior leader must then step up to the strategic level by enduring these challenges and hardships, in a positive and motivating manner to be able to influence peers and subordinates. The strategic leader must be able to endure stress while ensuring the goals and mission are accomplished and while motivating and leading his/her subordinates. This ability will serve him/her well as an example-setter.

EXAMPLE-SETTING

Being a role-model and setting the example are traditional military traits. When one sees a senior leader, he/she expects that this person maintains all the important standards the military espouses, has worked hard and has been highly successful in his/her endeavors. One further expects this leader to portray the image of an experienced soldier, to look like he/she can lead in military operations and that they continually value honesty and discipline. A senior leader is expected to exemplify the military spirit which is that of a warrior; to be capable of leading by example in situations requiring courage, physical and mental toughness and exertion.²⁴ When senior leaders exemplify role-modeling, they influence subordinates immeasurably. By setting the example, a leader becomes a great teacher, morale-builder and garnishes valuable respect. Several historians have noted the impact of example-setting of leaders to their followers. John Keegan in The Face of Battle noted:

"The presence of the King would also have provided what present-day soldiers call a 'moral factor' of great importance."²⁵

While Field Marshall Viscount Slim in Defeat Into Victory stated:

"...morale...is that intangible force which will move a whole group of men to give their last ounce to achieve something..."²⁶

To set the highest example of a leader of soldiers, one must have the outer appearance of such and the inner qualities of integrity and discipline to match.

Appearance

Appearance is an important element in example-setting for two basic reasons: people genuinely care about how they look and followers care about what their leaders look like.

Foremost, appearance affects overall self-confidence and self-esteem. When we look good, we feel better about ourselves. We are more outgoing, more expressive, our dispositions are more positive and we pass on this attitude to our subordinates.²⁷ Leaders require these traits to be good example-setters. Exercise plays a significant role in appearance. It physically impacts our overall appearance and body composition, which directly influences self-esteem, self-worth and level of confidence.²⁸ Exercise builds and tones muscles which after a time, positively affects our appearance.

Secondarily, appearance affects perceptions others have of us. The U.S. Army recognizes this fundamental and has several regulations requiring a soldier to “present a trim military appearance at all times.”²⁹ A common human tendency is to make quick judgments based solely on appearance. When coupled with the tendency in the Army culture for the need to maintain a fit appearance, perceptions do matter, particularly negative ones. When a leader appears unfit, namely wearing an overly tight-fitting uniform or having evident “beer-bellies” or “love handles”, one can make the assessment, correctly or not, that the leader is unfit. Until that leader has proven otherwise, he/she will be considered unfit by others. (Of note, although a large percentage of people who appear unfit are indeed unfit, there are admittedly a small percentage of those who are actually fit.³⁰)

Past historical examples are replete with this belief. Over two hundred years ago, General George Washington, the foremost strategic leader of his time, beheld a striking appearance which affected his troops and leaders alike. Following is a description from one of his fellow officers:

“Straight as an Indian, measuring 6 feet, 2 inches in his stockings, and weighing 175 pounds...his frame is padded with well-developed muscles, indicating great strength. He is wide-shouldered but has not a deep or round chest; is neat waisted, but is broad across the hips...His movements and gestures are graceful, his walk majestic, and he is a splendid horseman...Had he been born in the forests, ...he would have been the fiercest man among the savage tribes.”

Contrast that description with the outward appearance of a 20th century leader, Lieutenant General Jack V. Mackmull (R), former 18th Airborne Corps Commander and one of the original founders of the Army Aviation Branch, who was approximately the same height as George Washington but appeared to weigh considerably more and looked obese.³¹ General Mackmull had a distinguished Army career; however, his written legacy is sparse and his published photo is scarce. Granted, he was not the father of our country; however, he did lead one of the greatest Corps in the U.S. Army and left a credible Army Aviation legacy. Although the reason his life and contributions are not better captured in military historical literature is unknown, his appearance may have had an impact.

Integrity/Discipline

Integrity is one of the most critical of the seven Army Values. Doing what's right both legally and morally, and being honest in all endeavors are phrases that describe integrity.³² Integrity is vital for maintaining and enforcing fitness standards. When a leader appears unfit, the perception is that this leader is unfit and the follow-on question is: "How can this person maintain the Army Ht/Wt and APFT standards?" The senior leader's integrity may then be questioned: "Did he/she take the APFT?"; "Did someone 'fudge' their height or weight?"; "How can that be?" The appearance of unfitness certainly raises questions of breached integrity. LTG (R) Walter F. Ulmer, a renowned student of leadership and leadership in large organizations, states that integrity breaches within organizations arise from several sources. One specifically is that leaders do not set the example. They do not "walk the talk."³³ Their behavior allows subordinates the leeway to cut corners as well.

Another perception that arises when one views an unfit leader is that the leader has lost his/her self-discipline. Overweight people are assumed to lack discipline as evidenced by either overeating or not maintaining a fitness program. One of the premier Army attributes is that of discipline. "Discipline is a moral, mental and physical state of doing the right thing...disciplined people take the right action even if they don't like it."³⁴ The perception of a lack of self-discipline is often attributed to those who appear unfit.

PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Professional relationships in the Army are numerous, varied and range from junior NCO to senior NCO; student to instructor; junior officer to senior officer; and platoon leader to battalion commander, among numerous others. The most common attribute of professional relationships is a leader and a follower interacting, with the junior person usually striving to model after the

senior. Two important types of military professional relationships are mentoring and coaching.³⁵ Both are significant for senior leaders in developing their junior people.

Mentorship

Mentorship is the pinnacle relationship between a subordinate and a senior leader. The Army encourages and supports the development of mentoring relationships. "Mentoring begins with the leader setting the right example... it displays for the subordinates a mature example of values, attributes and skills in action."³⁶ Mentoring is the highest form of role-modeling. As a senior leader, one should indeed be encouraging leader development in subordinates and the most effective means is by example-setting. It was once said by a Brigadier General to a Lieutenant that it is "my duty to conduct myself so that every officer in this unit wants to be like me and ultimately, to be in my position."³⁷ Senior officers are bound to uphold the basic Army Values. When they serve as mentors, their behavior, practices and day-to day activities serve as a framework for the mentees. "Effective mentors cannot shirk their role-modeling obligations with the old cop-out of "Do as I say, not as I do."³⁸ Although a true mentoring relationship may never occur between leaders and subordinates, it is important to always foster the stepping stone of coaching.

Coaching

Coaching involves assessing, assisting, teaching and supporting. It is an effective and important means of subordinate leader development.³⁹ Critical to effective coaching is a leader knowing the standards and abiding by the standards. Furthermore, coaching subordinates involves teaching and exemplifying the seven Army Core Values to junior officers and non-commissioned officers. Jeopardizing core values will have adverse effects on the senior leader's reputation both internal and external to his/her organization.⁴⁰ Examples of military leaders who emphasized military core values are many. Noted historian S. L. A. Marshall documented the following:

"In so far as his ability to mold the character of troops is concerned, the qualifying test of an officer is the judgment placed upon his soldierly abilities by those who serve under him. If they do not deem him fit to command, he cannot train them to obey. Thus when slackness is tolerated in officership, it is a direct invitation to disobedience, and as disobedience multiplies, all discipline disappears."⁴¹

Another important aspect of coaching is providing feedback. Subordinates will respond better to feedback when it is immediate, constructive and given by one that the subordinate respects. Respecting one's senior usually emanates from watching the actions and reactions of that leader and admiring positive traits. Therefore, effective coaching requires the modeling of effective leadership. S. L. A. Marshall notes again:

"I can suggest nothing better than to make a habit of full physical participation...It was Major General Percy W. Clarkson's method of making personal reconnaissance a moving force in the operations of the 33^d Infantry Division in World War II...it was his habit, when his regiments moved out on night problems, to appear quietly at the scene, fill a blank file in one of the rifle squads and remain with the squad until the problem was concluded."⁴²

The importance of fitness cannot be overvalued. As discussed, it is a critical element of strategic leadership. Physical/personal fitness is important for numerous reasons, but within the strategic leadership arena, physical/personal fitness is vital for functional performance, example-setting and professional relationships. Since this element is so fundamental, it is important to assess whether or not current senior leaders measure up. Do they appreciate this imperative and if so, are they models?

PHYSIOLOGICAL FITNESS LEVELS OF U.S. ARMY WAR COLLEGE (AWC) STUDENTS (AY 03).

To determine the fitness levels of a selected sample of current Army senior leaders, the following data are presented: APFT scores and Ht/Wt measurements [collected and now maintained by the Human Resources Division (HRD) of Carlisle Barracks (the Administrative office for the AWC students)], and data from the Army Physical Fitness Research Institute (APFRI), U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks.

ARMY PHYSICAL FITNESS TEST (APFT)

In October, 2002, all 215 U.S. AWC (AY 03) students who were Army officers were required to take the semi-annual APFT. This test evaluates the fitness level of each soldier and is comprised of 3 events: the push-up (maximum number one can perform in 2 minutes), the sit-up (maximum number one can perform in 2 minutes) and a 2-mile run.⁴³ A passing score equals 180 points with at least 60 points in each event. Of the 215 students required to take the test, 199 completed the test (16 were on a temporary profile for either injury or recovery). Each student passed the test with a class average of 267. 34 students (17%) maximized the test with

scores of 300 (indicating a high level of physical fitness readiness). 21 students (10%) scored less than 225 points (indicating a lower level of physical fitness readiness).

ARMY HEIGHT/WEIGHT STANDARD

All U.S. Army students met the Army Ht/Wt (table and/or tape test) standards during the month of October 2002 (concurrently obtained with the completion of the APFT).

ARMY PHYSICAL FITNESS RESEARCH INSTITUTE (APFRI) DATA

At the start of the Army War College academic year, all students are invited to receive a comprehensive health assessment by the Army Physical Fitness Research Institute. Based on a research protocol approved by the U.S. Army Office of the Surgeon General and associated with Walter Reed Army Medical Center, a number of physical and health-related tests are performed: students' height, weight, body fat composition (tape test), blood pressure, and blood work data are obtained and lastly, they are given a physical stress test (treadmill) under the supervision of a U.S. Army cardiologist. This testing reveals the fitness levels of students, among other health variables. Over the past decade, APFRI has examined trends and compared data derived from Height/Weight, Body Mass Index (BMI), and Abdominal Girth measurements. Some of these data have resulted in interesting findings.⁴⁴

Compared to American society at large, APFRI has found that the physiological fitness levels of Army senior leaders are clearly outstanding. However, American society is not the gold standard to which the U.S. Army should be compared. America is clearly becoming an obese society.⁴⁵ When one takes a closer look at the APFRI data, one sees some alarming trends. Of note, rising trends in body mass have been seen in male students. Female students have not shown similar trends.

Height/Weight/Body Fat Composition (Tape Test)

The first basic measurements that APFRI gathers are the height, weight and body fat composition (tape test) of each student. Over the past 10 years, these data have been relatively the same, although some upward trends have been noted in some areas. APFRI does not officially compare these measurements against the Army standards. However, an evaluation of the data over time reveals that the U.S. Army War College student measurements have generally met the Army Ht/Wt standards.⁴⁶

Of note, in this year's class, there was a small number of students who did not meet the Army Ht/Wt/Body Composition (Tape Test) standard when they underwent the APFRI

assessment. 5 students (2%: 3 male/2 female) had body fat composition measurements over the maximum allowable standard. By October 2002, however, they all met the Army standard.

Body Mass Index (BMI)

According to the National Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Body Mass Index is the relationship (ratio) of weight-to-height. It is a mathematical formula in which a person's body weight in kilograms is divided by the square of his/her height in meters. The BMI is more highly correlated with body fat than any other indicator of height and weight.⁴⁷ CDC states that individuals with a BMI of 25-29.9 are considered overweight, while individuals with a BMI of 30 or more are considered obese.⁴⁸ APFRI uses thresholds of risk established by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute: measurements between 25-27 are in the "increased risk" or cautionary zone and measurements over 27 are in the "high risk" or danger zone.⁴⁹ Although the BMI tells only part of the story (as it does not distinguish fat from lean or muscle mass and so, it has been argued that some people are merely "big") the trend over recent years for student BMIs has been steadily rising. The average in AY 95 was 26.0 and the current AY 03 average is 26.4. Looking at the genders separately, in AY 95, the average female BMI was 23.3 and in AY 03, 24.6. The male BMI average in AY 95 was 26.1 and currently, in AY 03, the average male BMI is 26.6.

In this class, AY 03, 80 students (39%) had a BMI measurement of 27 or greater: 74 (36%) males and 6 (8%) females, indicating that by APFRI standards, they are overweight. Since BMI is just one factor to explore when looking at fitness, APFRI also looks at other measures to determine an individual's fitness level.

Abdominal Girth

Abdominal girth is a significant added dimension of fitness measurement. The National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute recommends abdominal girth measurements of less than 40 inches for males and less than 35 inches for females as a cutoff for maintaining healthy conditions to deter heart disease.⁵⁰ Over the past number of years, student abdominal girths have been steadily climbing. In 1999, the average male abdominal girth measurement was 34.9 whereas the average waist for AY 03 male students is 35.33 inches. In 2000, the female student girth was 29.0 and currently, the AY 03 average, female student girth is 30.24 inches. 19 students (9%) of this current year border or exceed the recommendations, specifically, 16 male (84%) and 3 female (16%) students.

However, other researchers have suggested that more accurate indications of healthy heart fitness are waist measurements with more stringent cut-offs. Dr. T. S. Han and associate researchers recommend no greater than 37 inches for males and no greater than 32 inches for females.⁵¹ In this case, 54 (28%) male and 5 (21%) female students of the AY 03 class exceed the recommendations. Results from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (2002) also suggest that waistline measurements are more highly correlated with cardiovascular risk than Body Mass Index.⁵² Researchers examining this survey recommend cut-off scores of 35 inches for men and 33 inches for women.⁵³ In this case, 95 male (51%) and 4 female (16%) students (AY 03) exceed the recommendations, indicating that they may have a higher risk for heart disease than their peers with waist measurements within the recommended thresholds.

PERCEPTIONS OF FITNESS BY U.S. ARMY WAR COLLEGE STUDENTS (AY 03).

It is clear that measurements and data present a clinical picture of an individual's fitness level. It is equally important to review perceptions of fitness. Senior leaders' perceptions may impact functional performance, example-setting and professional relationships. Despite mandates and regulations, how do senior leaders view fitness? How do they view their own fitness and how do they view that of their peers? To acquire knowledge on perceptions, a survey was conducted of the Army students of the U.S. AWC (AY 03).

FINDINGS: AWC SURVEY RESULTS

A 40-question survey (see Appendix A) was sent to all U.S. Army students (AY 03). Of the 215 surveys mailed (via student mailboxes) 163 (76%) were returned (via the college mail room). Of the 163 returned, two were not used because one was completely blank (except for the student's name) and on a second, the student did not complete the 2 middle pages. Therefore 161 survey results (75%) were analyzed. Of note, although the survey contained 40 questions, only 19 questions specific to fitness and perceptions of senior leaders are addressed in the results which follow. (A brief look at possible trends of those students who did not respond to the survey will be presented towards the latter part of this paper.)

DEMOGRAPHICS:

Personality Type

Participants were asked their personality type (derived from the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) test⁵⁴) to determine if there were trends in personality and fitness and whether

or not motivation, to be or stay fit, is significant. 153 participants (95%) noted their personality type (see Figure 1):

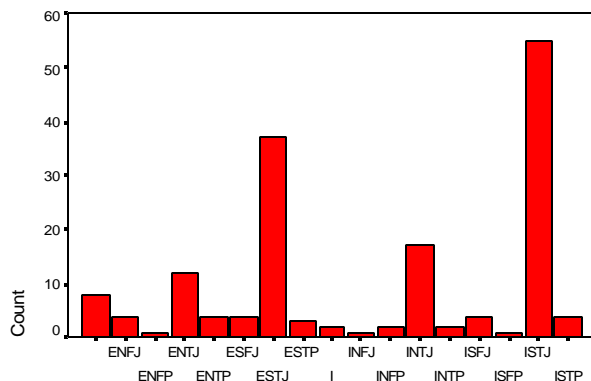


FIGURE 1: PERSONALITY TYPE

- 89 students (58%) noted that they were Introverts.
- 64 students (42%) noted they were Extroverts.
- The most common personality type was ISTJ (Introversion; Sensing; Thinking; Judging).
- 55 (34%) of the students were ISTJ.
- The second most common was ESTJ (Extroversion; Sensing; Thinking; Judging).
- 37 (23%) of the students were ESTJ.

Unfortunately, since very little research has been done comparing personality traits and fitness levels and or motivation to be fit, this variable cannot be currently compared to any published research. However, the following was found: There were no significant differences between the Extroverts and the Introverts when comparing BMI measurements. When comparing actual APFT scores, however, 21% of the Introverts had maximal scores versus 17% of the Extroverts. Yet, the Introverts also had more students with the lowest scores. 11% of the Introverts scored less than 225 compared to 4% of the Extroverts. Overall, the data reviewed did not enable the researcher to discern a relationship between personality type and motivation to be or stay fit. More research in this area is recommended.

Gender

- Male: 141 (88%)
- Female: 20 (12%)

Age (Figure 2)

The ages of the student respondents ranged from a low of 39 years to a high of 57 years. The average age was 44.1 years.

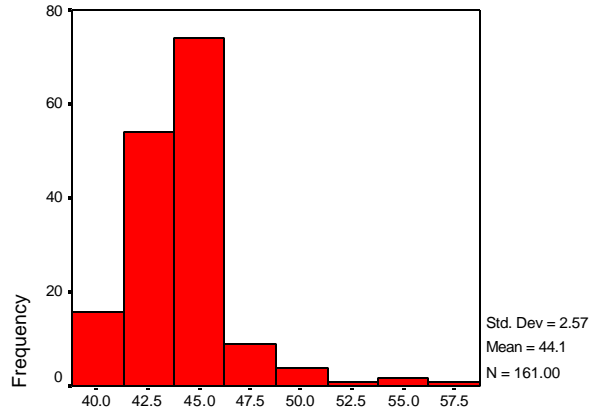


FIGURE 2: AGE

Branch of Service (Figure 3)

Of the 161 participants, the following branch designations were noted:

- Combat Arms: 90 (56%)
- Combat Support: 32 (20%)
- Combat Service Support: 39 (24%)

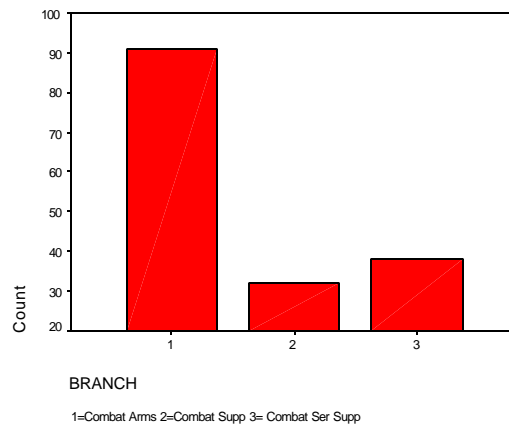


FIGURE 3: BRANCH OF SERVICE

Most Recent APFT Score (Figure 4)

For this question, participants were given 7 groupings of scores from which to choose:

<180 / 180-225 / 225-240 / 240-270 / 270-285 / 285-300 / >300

Two aspects of this response were examined: the variation of scores ranging from minimum to maximum and the accuracy of the responses compared to the record APFT. Of the 161 student respondents, 151 completed the APFT (10 were on profile).

- 6 students (4%) stated they scored 180-225 (Indicating a low level of fitness.)
- 41 students (27%) stated they scored 225-270.
- 74 students (49%) stated they scored 270-300 (Indicating an above average level of fitness.)
- 30 students (20%) stated they scored the maximum 300 points (Indicating the highest level of fitness.)

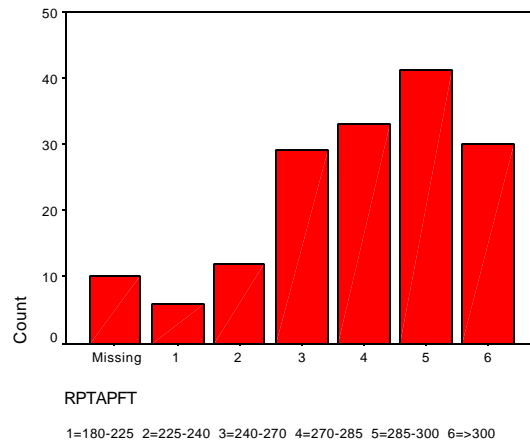


FIGURE 4: STUDENT REPORTED APFT SCORE

The respondents' APFT scores were compared to the actual scores received in October 2002 (provided by the Carlisle Barracks HRD, Figure 5). The majority of the respondents accurately reported their score; however, 34 respondents (13%) noted scores higher than actually received in October (with many significantly higher by 20 or more points and 6 officers having a greater than 30 pt difference). Several explanations may exist for this mismatch,

ranging from inattentiveness to disingenuousness, or to an effort to make oneself look better because of his/her recognition of the importance of this area.

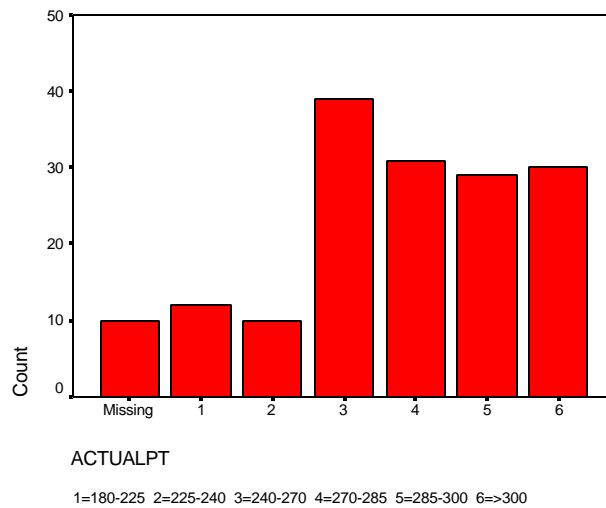


FIGURE 5: ACTUAL APFT SCORE (OCT 02)

In further review of this group of misreporting students, it was noted that they differed from the rest of the student responders in three key areas: BMI measurements, how fit they consider themselves and how fit an image they think they portray. Overall, this group had a BMI measurement average 2 points higher than the larger group: 27.5 versus 25.0. On an average, they considered themselves slightly less fit and portraying a slightly less fit image than the larger group of student responders.

SUBJECTIVE QUESTIONS ON FITNESS AND LEADERSHIP

The following data represent the responses to the subjective questions asked on the survey. The results are divided into 4 parts: perceptions on Fitness and Leadership; perceptions of Personal Fitness Status; perceptions of Peer/Senior Leader fitness; and perceptions on Factors Influencing Fitness.

Perceptions on Fitness and Leadership

In response to the first question, **“Do you think fitness is important for senior leader effectiveness?”** the vast majority of the students, 159 (98.8%), said Very Important or Important. Of this majority, 70 students (43.5%) felt fitness was Very Important and 89 students (55.3%) felt it was Important (Figure 6).

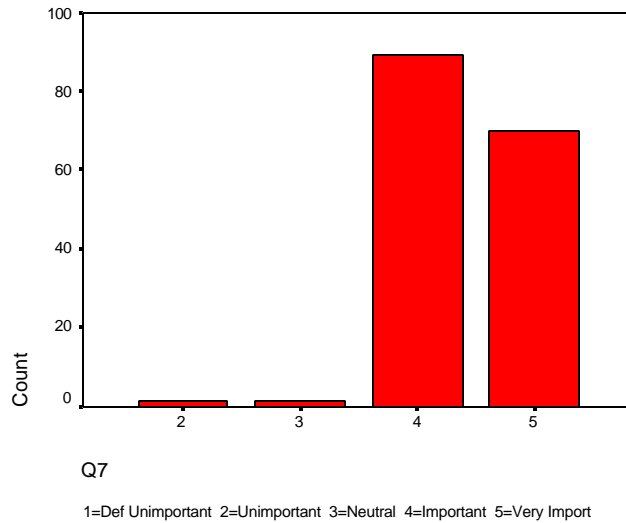


FIGURE 6: IMPORTANCE OF FITNESS FOR LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS

The difference between the two groups who answered Very Important versus Important was interesting. The first group (Very Important) had a lower BMI mean measurement (25.8) than the latter group (Important) who had a mean BMI measurement of 26.8. The Very Important group also had a slightly higher mean actual APFT score than the Important group.

In response to the second question: **“When you see a senior leader who appears overweight, how does this affect your opinion about his/her leadership abilities?”**, the majority of students, 142 (88.2%), said it Strongly Affects or Affects their opinion about his/her leadership abilities (leaves a negative impression). Of this majority, 38 students (23.6%) felt it Strongly Affects their opinion and 104 students (64.6%) felt it Affected their opinion. 14 students (8.7%) were Neutral on this issue (Figure 7).

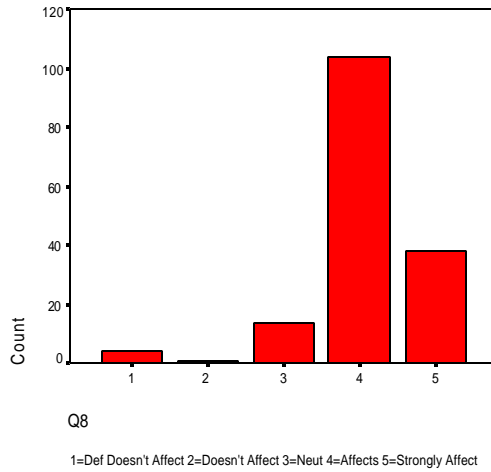


FIGURE 7: HOW DOES IT AFFECT YOUR OPINION ABOUT LEADERSHIP ABILITIES?

The difference between the responders who considered their opinion Strongly Affected by an overweight leader’s appearance versus just Affected was interesting as well. The group who was Strongly Affected had a lower BMI mean measurement and scored higher on average on the actual APFT than the group who responded with just Affected their opinion.

On question number three: **If you needed career guidance/advice from an Army Leader senior to you, how important would the appearance of fitness of that leader be to you?**, 97 students (60.2%) said it was Very Important or Important with 15 students (9%) feeling it was Very Important and 82 students (50.9%) feeling it was Important. 43 students (26.7%) were Neutral on this issue. 15 students (9.3%) said it was Unimportant and 5 students (3.1%) said it was Definitely Unimportant (Figure 8).

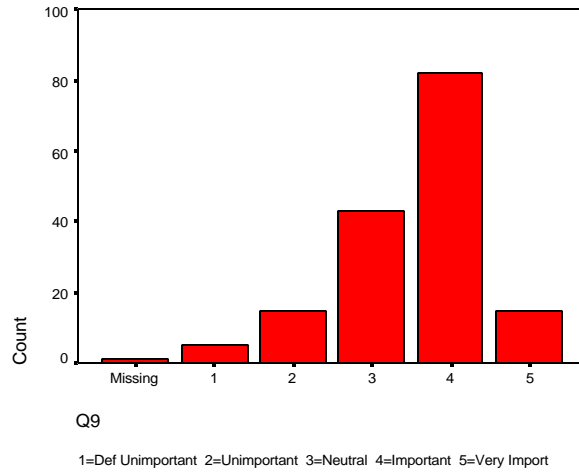


FIGURE 8: IMPORTANCE OF APPEARANCE ON CAREER GUIDANCE

Perceptions on Personal Fitness Status

On the fourth question: **How physically fit do you consider yourself to be?**, 17 students (10.6%) felt they were Far Above Average; 79 students (49.1%) felt they were Above Average; 50 students (31.1%) felt they were Average; 12 students (7.5%) felt they were only Somewhat Fit; and 3 students (1.9%) felt they were Not Very Fit (Figure 9).

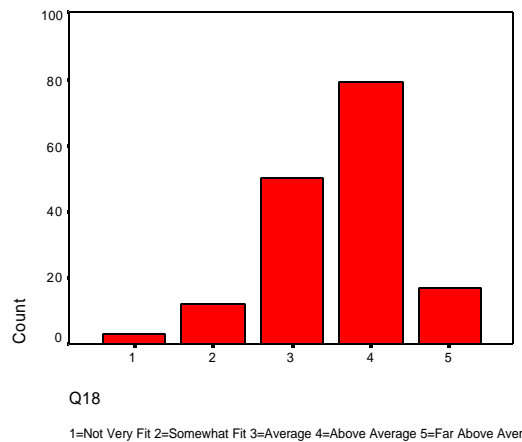


FIGURE 9: HOW PHYSICALLY FIT DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF?

In answer to question five: **Do you maintain a personal fitness program?**, 155 students (96.3%) said they did, while 6 students (3.7%) stated they did not maintain a fitness program.

In response to question six: **Do you think you present a physically fit image?**, 16 students (9.9%) felt they presented a Far Above Average image; 61 students (37.9%) felt they were Above Average; 71 students (44.1%) felt they were Average; 11 students (6.8%) felt they presented a Somewhat Fit image; and 2 students (1.2%) felt they presented a Not Very Fit image (Figure 10).

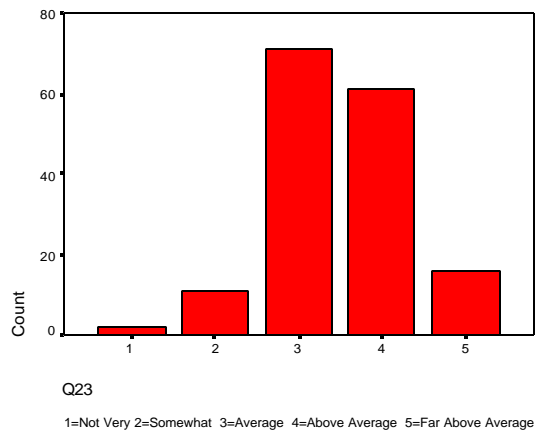


FIGURE 10: DO YOU PRESENT A PHYSICALLY FIT IMAGE?

For question seven: **Would you say you were able to maintain a healthy diet?**, 105 students (65.2%) stated they maintained a healthy diet, while 54 students (33.5%), stated they did not.

Perceptions of Peer/Senior Leader Fitness

In answer to question eight: **“What percentage of the Army officers in your seminar do you think are unfit?”**, 72 students (44.7%) felt that no one in their seminar was unfit;

52 students (32.3%) felt that between 1-10% were unfit; 20 students (12.4%) felt that between 10-20% were unfit; and 12 students (7.5%) felt that between 20-25% were unfit (Figure 11).

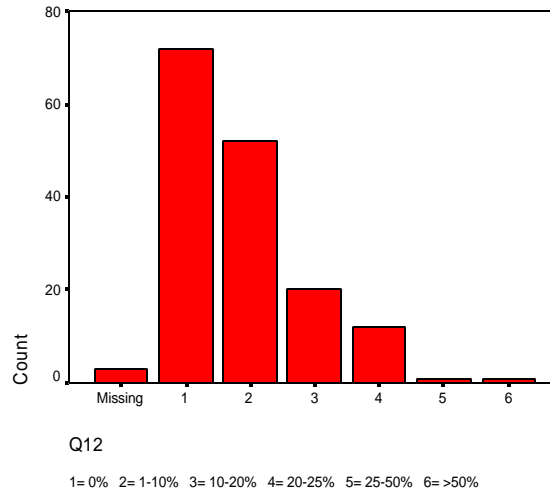


FIGURE 11: PERCENTAGE OF SEMINAR MATES YOU THINK ARE UNFIT

Regarding question nine: **“In the past 3 years, have you known, or known of, a peer or superior who has not accurately reported his/her Ht/Wt data?”**, 12 students (7.5%) have known individuals who inaccurately reported their data, while 149 students (92.5%) have not known individuals who inaccurately reported their Ht/Wt data.

For question ten: **“In the past 3 years, have you known, or known of, a peer or superior who has not accurately reported his/her APFT data?”**, 13 students (8.1%) have known individuals who have not accurately reported their data, while 148 students (91.9%) have not.

Of note, an additional 19 students (11.8%) made comments after these questions ranging from “I’ve known individuals who have avoided the APFT” to “I’ve known individuals who have counted improper push-ups”, among others.

Perceptions on Factors Influencing Fitness

Responding to question eleven: **“In the past 3 years, have you been injured for any reason?”**, an overwhelming majority, 145 students (90.1%), have been injured while 15 students (9.3%) have not been injured.

For follow-on question twelve, **“Have injuries interrupted your fitness program and if so, for how long?”**, 23 students (14.3%) said Not At All; 24 students (14.9%) said from 1-2 weeks; 31 students (19.3%) said from 2-4 weeks; and 81 students (50.3%) said their injury interrupted their fitness program for greater than 4 weeks (Figure 12).

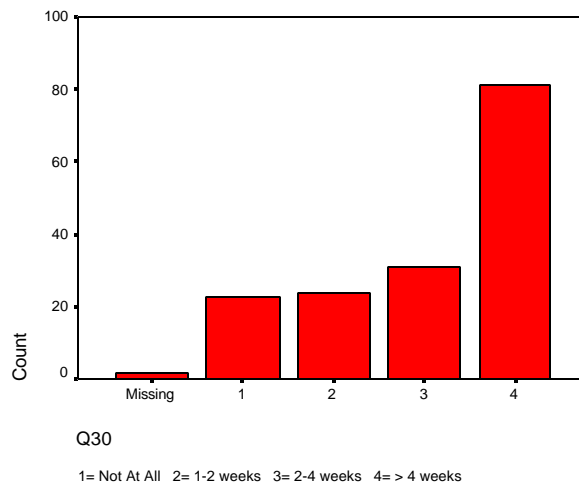


FIGURE 12: LENGTH OF FITNESS PROGRAM INTERRUPTION

In answer to question thirteen: **“What factor had the greatest impact in preventing/deterring you from attaining your optimal fitness program?”**, the majority, 101 students (62.7%), said Time at Work; 20 students (12.4%) said Commute Time; 4 students (2.5 %) said Evening Commitments; and 35 students (21.7%) stated other assorted conflicts (Figure 13).

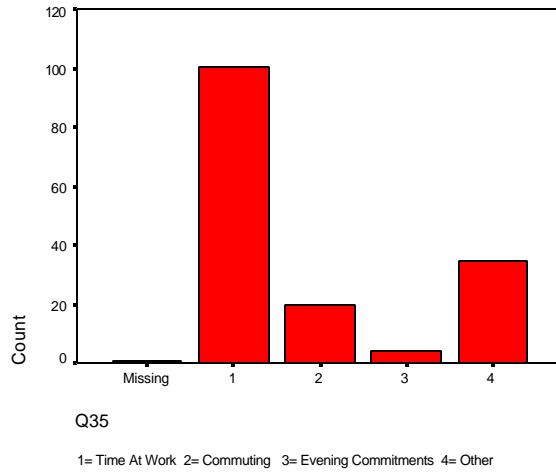


FIGURE 13: FACTORS PREVENTING OPTIMAL FITNESS

In answer to the final question: “**Being at the War College has prompted you to...**”, 25 students (15.5%) stated they Re-Initiated Their Fitness Program; 64 students (39.8%) stated they Maintained Their Fitness Program and 67 students (41.6%) stated they Enhanced Their Fitness Program, all indicating that the environment at the War College was highly conducive to maintaining fitness (Figure 14).

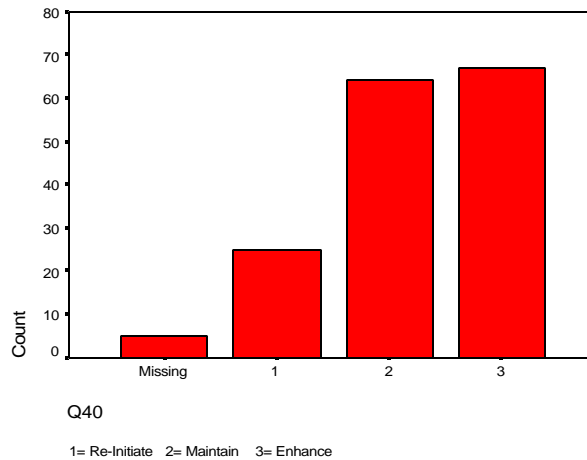


FIGURE 14: BEING AT THE WAR COLLEGE HAS PROMPTED...

INITIAL CONCLUSIONS

Initial conclusions from the data and the survey will be presented by answering the presentation questions asked at the start of the project:

- Is fitness important for Senior Leaders?
- Are the U.S. Army students (AY 03) fit?
- Are the student perceptions about Senior Leader fitness accurate?
- What factors impact Senior Leader fitness?
- What should be re-evaluated?

IS FITNESS IMPORTANT FOR SENIOR LEADERS?

Senior leaders say it is. The overwhelming number of students responded positively that Senior Leader fitness is important or very important. Many commented that fitness was not only important for effectiveness and leadership ability, but for example-setting and role-modeling as well. History corroborates these survey findings as John Keegan noted:

“The personal bond between leader and follower lies at the root of all explanations of what does and does not happen in battle...”⁵⁵

Additionally, it appears from the data gathered that the more fit senior leaders are, the more they expect their leaders to be/appear fit.

ARE THE U.S. ARMY STUDENTS (AY 03) FIT?

Overall, and according to the stated definitions, the U.S. Army students are fit. According to the Army standards, the majority are fitness role-models: all the students successfully passed the APFT and Army Ht/Wt/body fat composition (tape test) for a 100% pass rate with a notable 30 students (18.6%) scoring 300 or greater points on the APFT. Of concern, however, 12 students (7.5%) scored at the lowest end of the fitness scale (180-225 points).

According to the APFRI data, the majority are also fit. In regards to the Ht/Wt/body fat composition, 98% of the students met the Army Ht/Wt standard when measured at the beginning of the school year. Of concern, however, 5 students (2%) exceeded the Army body fat composition standard. In reviewing the students' Body Mass Index (BMI): the majority are

fit, 67% had acceptable BMIs. Trends, however, may be indicating a rise in body mass as 80 students (39%) had BMIs over the recommended maximum number. And finally, in reviewing the students' abdominal girth, the majority are fit, yet trends may be indicating a rise in this measurement as well: 91% were within range, yet, 19 students (9%) had abdominal girths over the recommended maximum.

Overall, therefore, the U.S. Army students (AY 03) are fit. However, as noted, there are from 3-24% of the students who have fitness issues. Is this a significant number? If we look at the general population, perhaps not. However, we are speaking of an elite group of military officers, the senior leaders of the Army. The finding that from 3-24% of AWC students have fitness issues may indeed be significant for both their personal health as well as for their perceived effectiveness as a senior leader, mentor and role model. The analysis below provides additional insight into that relationship.

ARE THE PERCEPTIONS ABOUT SENIOR LEADER FITNESS ACCURATE?

- Self-Perception

Overall, Senior Leaders feel that they are fit and present a fit image. Nearly all maintain a fitness program and the majority have healthy diets. However, 15 students (9.4%) do not feel fit; 6 students (3.7%) do not maintain a fitness program and 33% do not maintain a healthy diet.

- Peer-Perceptions

Overall, Senior Leaders questioned the fitness level of their peers. There is a notable percentage (55.3%) that feels 10% or more of their peers appear unfit.

- Accuracy in Reporting and Senior Leader Fitness

Overall, 88.2% of the students felt there were no issues with the accuracy of reporting the APFT scores and/or Army Ht/Wt measurements. However, between 7.5% and 11.8% feel there were reporting issues. Additionally, there is a mis-match (13%) between student actual APFT scores and those the students reported in the survey. Therefore, in the area of Accuracy in Reporting and Senior Leader Fitness the results are inconclusive. There may be issues that warrant further study.

WHAT FACTORS IMPACT SENIOR LEADER FITNESS?

The greatest factor that impacts the ability of senior leaders to maintain their optimal fitness level is the time they spend at work. The majority stated that work overwhelmed their

day. Many stated that last minute taskings interrupted their fitness plans for that day. Others stated that their bosses expected physical fitness to be conducted on other than “duty time” and when duty time exceeded 10-12 hours, fitness was excluded. Many stated that evening commitments interrupted their fitness schedules. Overall, fitness was difficult to incorporate into their busy military lives. It was very interesting to note, however, that the majority of students felt that the environment at the War College enabled their fitness goals.

Injury also plays a role in that over 90% reported an injury that interrupted their fitness programs in the past three years. Many students were able to cope with the injury and perform alternate physical fitness exercises, but many claimed a greater than four week interruption in their fitness regimes. This high injury rate warrants further study.

WHAT SHOULD BE RE-EVALUATED?

The data and survey results raise a number of significant issues that deserve further investigation. If one considers only the ability of AWC students to meet the requirements for physical readiness within the U.S. Army standards, there is not necessarily a problem with current senior leader fitness. However, a senior leader’s fitness involves much more than just meeting the requirements of the APFT, as the findings of this study demonstrate:

- 10% scored at the lowest end of the APFT scale
- 39% have BMI scores indicating overweightness
- 33% do not maintain a healthy diet
- 90% have incurred injuries in the past 3 years that have interrupted fitness programs
- 13% reported different scores on their APFT indicating inaccuracy issues
- 11% have known senior leaders who have inaccurately reported fitness data
- 88% consider the appearance of overweight as important for perceptions of Senior Leader abilities
- 9% feel they are only somewhat fit or less
- 8% feel they present a less than fit appearance
- 55% perceive their peers as presenting a less than fit appearance
- 63% claim that in the past 3 years, time at work was the biggest deterrence to optimal fitness
- 97% stated that being at the AWC encouraged fitness with 57% of students noting that the environment at the War College was conducive for fitness re-initiation or enhancement

Further examination of these interesting findings is important.

FINAL REVIEW AND CONCLUSIONS

- Why did 10% score at the lowest end of the APFT scale?

There may be three possibilities for this finding: these students may be injured yet able to meet the minimal APFT standard; these students may feel that meeting the minimal standard is adequate; or, these students are marginally fit and can only meet the minimum standard.

- Why did 39% have BMI scores indicating overweightness?

There may be two possibilities for this finding: these students may be muscular, or these students may be overweight.

- Why did 33% not maintain a healthy diet?

Three possibilities may exist for this finding: these students may not have the time or taken the time to eat healthily; these students may have not been motivated to eat healthy; or although unlikely, these students may not have had available healthy foods.

- Why have 90% incurred injuries in the past 3 years that have interrupted fitness programs?

Possibilities for this finding include: these students are older and age is a component of injury rates; these students may not be properly conditioned; or these students may be prone to overuse injuries.

- Why were there Accuracy in Reporting issues?
 - o Notably, why did 13% report scores on their APFT that differed from those actually recorded?

Possibilities for this finding are: these students may have forgotten their scores or these students may have reported higher scores to appear more fit.

- o Additionally, why were there 11% who have known senior leaders who have inaccurately reported fitness data?

Possibilities for this finding include: these senior leaders may have misrepresented themselves to ensure they met the standard or these senior leaders may have misrepresented themselves to appear more fit than they actually are.

- Is the Appearance of Fitness important?

- o Why did 88% consider the appearance of fitness as important for Senior Leaders?

At least two possibilities exist for this finding: these students have internalized the Army standards and definition and/or these students have had first-hand experiences with senior leaders who have been unfit or appeared unfit.

- o Why did 8% feel they present a less than fit appearance, yet 55% perceive their peers as presenting a less than fit appearance?

Several possibilities exist for this finding: definitions of the appearance of fitness may vary; people aren't aware that their image does not present a fit one; perceptions are more stringent than reality; or perceptions may reflect reality.

- Maintenance of Fitness

- o Why did 63% claim that in the past 3 years, time at work was the biggest deterrence to optimal fitness?

Again, several possibilities are suggested for this finding: command climate doesn't allow for fitness; students perceived that there was too much work in their jobs to be able to incorporate fitness; students do not feel that fitness is part of their work day; or students do not make fitness a priority.

- o Why did 97% state that being at the AWC encouraged fitness with 16% of students noting that the environment at the War College was conducive for fitness re-initiation?

Possibilities for this finding are: being a student is different than being at work; being a student has fewer demands and affords more time; students have made fitness a priority; or APFRI assessments, results and educational offerings had an impact.

NON-RESPONDERS AND NON-PARTICIPANTS

Data on the students who chose not to participate in the AWC "Impact of Fitness on Senior Leaders" survey and/or the APFRI fitness assessments were reviewed.

The demographic data of the non-responder group compared to the responder group were fairly similar. The differences appeared in actual APFT scores and the BMI measurements. The APFT scores demonstrated that as a whole, this group scored lower in most categories. The average APFT of the non-responder group was 256 compared to 268 of the responder group. 4 nonresponding students (7.7%) maximized the test with a score of 300 points, compared to 34 students (17%) who responded. 15.4% of the non-responders (8

students) scored less than 225 points compared to only 10% of the responders (20 students). So, overall, the non-responders scored lower on their APFT than the responders. Also, 11% (6 students) of the non-responders were on profile compared to 6.6% (10 students) of the responder group.

When comparing Body Mass Index, the numbers are not especially significant: the non-responder group had a mean BMI measurement of 26.4 versus the responder group BMI measurement of 26.39.

The non-participants in the APFRI assessment were a group of 5 individuals. Their mean APFT score was 261 and of further interest, 3 of these individuals also chose not to participate in the fitness survey.

The above information was gathered from only a small group of officers in the AWC AY 03 class. However, it does seem to point to the fact that these individuals may have had fitness issues and therefore, chose not to participate in the APFRI fitness assessments or the AWC "Impact of Fitness on Senior Leaders" survey.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Fitness and strategic leadership should be welded together; keeping fit should be a way of life for senior leaders. It is apparent that the majority of the students at the U.S. Army War College believe this and do model this belief. However, a significant percentage has issues with fitness. With such an elite group of people, these issues should not exist. Unless temporarily incapacitated (because injury should not stop fitness, merely alter the program), this group of people should be "visible and active" models of fitness, to include: maintaining a fit image, maintaining a fitness program and upholding integrity with fitness issues.

Four recommendations are offered. First, the Army should redefine their definition of "appearance." The vagueness of "present a trim military appearance at all times" does not capture the essence of what is desired. A suggested definition that elaborates on the preceding is the following:

"Present a trim military appearance at all times. In any uniform: Dress, Class A, B, BDU or PT, the soldier should be neatly dressed and the uniform should fit as designed. Soldiers should not have large or disproportionate protrusions of the abdomen, gluteus or neck. They should portray a fit, go-to-war posture."

Although appearance is indeed a difficult term to define, it still requires clarification in the present regulation if it is to become a meaningful guide for both senior leaders and those they lead.

The second recommendation is to enforce appearance standards. Once the definition of “appearance” is revised for increased understandability and objectivity, then commanders need to take it seriously and expect a fit image from all of their soldiers. The study findings reinforce the nexus between appearance and perceived effectiveness; therefore it is indeed important to enforce appearance standards. The challenge will be to ensure fitness programs are adhered to so the appearance of fitness will ensue.

The third recommendation is to further look at the inaccuracy issues that stem from the reporting mechanism for the Army HT/Wt and APFT standards. With this group of elite officers, one would not expect confusion in this area; however, as was discovered, questions exist. If people are misreporting, why? Furthermore, if the Army so values integrity, why are people allowed to let standards slide? Further research should be accomplished to study this concern.

The final and most important recommendation is to make fitness a part of the duty day for all soldiers. As was previously mentioned, the OPTEMPO in the Army is at a high level and does not appear to be declining.⁵⁶ This includes not only deployments, but training exercises and garrison duties as well.⁵⁷ Unchecked OPTEMPO can degrade the soldier and leader well-being in terms of morale, retention and family relations.⁵⁸ Physical and personal fitness programs, therefore, must be maintained and accomplished as part of the daily mission. Additionally, being in a field or troop unit should not be the only time leaders stay fit. Leaders at all levels and in all jobs/positions need to make fitness a part of their lives, to incorporate and model it. Leaders should demand it of themselves and their subordinates to take the time during the duty day to keep fit. We have heard it from numerous general officers. These same generals would perhaps be more effective if they would model their expectations for subordinates. Mandated duty-time Physical Training (PT) should be outlined in an Army Regulation and stressed at all Army professional development schools. Finally, physical/personal fitness discussions should be incorporated into quarterly performance counseling sessions.

As an element of this last recommendation to incorporate fitness into daily military life, the U.S. Army should not only ensure the permanence of the Army Physical Fitness Research Institute at the Army War College, but expand its mission by installing a cell at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth. This proposal will reach officers midway into their Army careers and instill into these future leaders the significance and

importance of fitness as a way of life. To assess and remind officers at the top level schools is important and necessary, but to start them on the fitness career path even earlier will be a greater benefit to both the individual officer and the Army.

The impact of fitness on senior leadership at the strategic level is far-reaching. At this top level, leaders influence and make policy, shape force structures, monitor the readiness levels, and allocate resources, among numerous other influential actions and decisions. It is critical that they take fitness seriously and role-model these beliefs. The future Army soldiers and leaders will face a more tumultuous world than the present and will require every advantage possible for success.

WORD COUNT = 9,034

APPENDIX A

SURVEY: IMPACT OF FITNESS ON SENIOR LEADER

Name: _____

Please apply the following definitions when answering the survey:

Box #: _____

Definition of fitness for Army officers: Passes the APFT with no difficulty,
AND Meets the Army (table) Ht/Wt standards or Meets the Army tape standards,
AND Maintains a fitness program (does aerobic/anaerobic exercise, at least 20 min/day, at least 5 days/week)

Definition of senior leaders: Current Army students attending the Army War College (AY03)

Your candid answers to the following SURVEY questions will be greatly appreciated.
If you feel uncomfortable answering any question, please feel free to skip it.

Demographics:

1. What personality type are you? (Myers/Briggs) (Fill in with letters) ___ ___ ___ ___

2. What body type would you consider yourself to be (circle one please) ?

Slight-framed (Ectomorph) Medium-framed (Mesomorph) Large-framed (Endomorph)

3. What is your age? _____

4. What is your gender? Male ___ Female ___

5. What is your Branch of Service?

Combat Arms ___
Combat Support ___
Combat Service Support ___

6. Most recent APFT score:

< 180 ___ 180-225 ___ 225-240 ___ 240-270 ___ 270-285 ___ 285-300 ___ > 300 ___

Perceptions of Fitness and Leadership

7. How important do you think fitness is for senior leader effectiveness?

Definitely Unimportant ___ Unimportant ___ Neutral ___ Important ___ Very Important ___

Comment: _____

8. When you see a senior leader who appears overweight, how does this affect your opinion about his/her leadership abilities?

Definitely Doesn't Affect ___ Doesn't Affect ___ Neutral ___ Affects ___ Strongly Affects ___

Comment: _____

9. If you needed career guidance/advice from an Army leader senior to you, how important would the appearance of fitness of that leader be to you?

Definitely Unimportant ___ Unimportant ___ Neutral ___ Important ___ Very Important ___

Comment: _____

10. Of the leaders senior to you that you have known or know (within the past 3 years), what percentage of them do you believe were/are unfit?

0% ___ 1-10% ___ 10-20% ___ 20-25% ___ 25-50% ___ >50% ___

Comment: _____

11. Did his/her fitness level affect your opinion of this leader?

Yes ___ No ___ In what way? _____

12. What percentage of the Army officers in your seminar (AY03) do you think are unfit?

0% ___ 1-10% ___ 10-20% ___ 20-25% ___ 25-50 % ___ >50% ___

Comment: _____

13. Do you think the leaders senior to you, when you were a Captain, were more or less fit than your Seminar colleagues are now?

Much Less Fit ___ Less fit ___ Equally Fit ___ More Fit ___ Much More Fit ___

Comment: _____

14. Has your perception of physical fitness changed since you were a Captain?

Yes ___ No ___ In what way?: _____

15. Do you/have you encouraged your subordinate officers to maintain a personal fitness program?

Yes ___ No ___

Comment: _____

16. In the past 3 years, did you ever provide a negative counseling to a subordinate officer on:

Weight ___

Fitness ___

Appearance (relating to weight or fitness) ___

Comments:

17. In the past 3 years, have you known, or known of, a peer or superior who has **not** accurately reported his/her :

a. Ht/Wt? Yes ___ No ___ How many times? ___ Comment: _____

b. APFT Score? Yes ___ No ___ How many times? ___ Comment: _____

Personal Fitness Status

18. How physically fit do you consider yourself to be?

Not Very Fit ___ Somewhat Fit ___ Average ___ Above Average ___ Far Above Average ___

Comment: _____

19. Do you maintain a personal fitness program?

Yes ___ No ___

Comment: _____

20. Frequency of your program:

None ___ 3- 4x/week ___ 1- 2x/week ___ 5x or greater/week ___

21. What form of exercise does your program include?

Running ___ Biking ___ Swimming ___ Strength Training ___ Other: _____

22. Do you exercise on the weekends?

Yes: ___ 1x ___ 2x ___ >2x ___ Comment: _____

No ___ Comment: _____

23. Do you think you present a physically fit image?

Not Very ___ Somewhat ___ Average ___ Above Average ___ Far Above Average ___

Comment: _____

In the past 3 years:

24. Have you ever maxed the APFT?

Yes ___ Number of times: ___ Comment: _____

No ___ Comment: _____

25. Have you ever **not** met the Army Ht/Wt standards?

Yes ___ No ___ Comment: _____

26. What is your opinion of the current Army Ht/Wt standards?

Far Too Lenient ___ Lenient ___ Fair ___ Strict ___ Far Too Strict ___

27. Have you ever **not** met the Army's tape test standards?

Yes ___ No ___ Comment: _____

28. Have you ever **not** passed the APFT?

Yes ___ No ___ Comment: _____

29. Have you been injured for any reason?

Yes ___ Number of times: ___ Comment _____

No ___ Comment: _____

30. Have injuries interrupted your fitness program and if so, for how long?

Not at all ___ 1-2 weeks ___ 2-4 weeks ___ > 4 weeks ___

Comment: _____

Environment:

During your assignment prior to attending the Army War College:

31. How much time did you spend commuting to work each day?

< 15 min ___ 15-30 min ___ 30-60min ___ 1-1 1/2hrs ___ 1 1/2-2 hrs ___ >2hrs ___

Comment: _____

32. How many hours per day did you spend at work?

8-9 hrs ___ 10-12 hrs ___ 13-15 hrs ___ > 15 hrs ___

Comment: _____

33. In terms of your answer in #32 above, how many hours per day did you spend on projects/issues that you deemed not really important or you believed should have been dealt with at a lower level?

<1 hr ___ 1-2 hrs ___ 2-3 hrs ___ > 3 hrs ___ Comment: _____

34. How often did you have evening, **work** related, commitments/activities?

< 1x/week ___ 2-3 x/week ___ 3-4x/week ___ 4-5x/week ___ >5x/week ___

Comments: _____

35. Please rank, from 1-5 (1 having the greatest impact) the factors that prevented/deterred you from attaining your optimal fitness program:

- Commuting time to and from work
- Time spent at work
- Time spent working on projects/taskings that you deemed unimportant
- Time spent working on projects/taskings that you believed should have been dealt with at a lower level
- Time spent at work-related evening commitments/events
- Other

Comment: _____

36. If you were able to maintain a personal fitness program (during your regular work day), what time of the day did you exercise?

Before work _____ Noon/lunch time _____ During the work day _____ After work _____

Comment: _____

37. Would you say you were able to maintain a healthy diet?

Yes _____ No _____ Comment _____

38. Approximately, how many days per month were you on TDY?

1-2 _____ 3-5 _____ 6-8 _____ 9-12 _____ 13-15 _____ >15 _____ Comments: _____

39. How much of the time while TDY were you able to follow your fitness program to your level of satisfaction?

None _____ 25% _____ 50% _____ 75% _____ 100% _____ Comments: _____

Last Question ☺:

40. Being at the Army War College prompted you to (select one from below) your fitness program?

- Re-initiate _____
- Maintain _____
- Enhance: _____

Comment: _____

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this survey. Your answers will help inform the research on officer perception of senior leader physical fitness. When the research is complete you will be provided access to the results of the survey.

ENDNOTES

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¹⁸ Carl A. Castro and Amy B. Adler, "OPTEMPO: Effects on Soldier and Unit Readiness," Parameters 29 (Autumn 1999): 1.

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²⁰ John Duncan, Mark A. Vaitkus, and William F. Barko, "The U.S. Army War College and the Road to Executive Health and Fitness," in Guide to Executive Health and Fitness (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Army Physical Fitness Research Institute, U.S. Army War College, August, 2000), 8.

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³¹ Although there is no obtainable written data that documents General Mackmull's height and weight, he was known to be a large, heavy man and was considered to be an overweight leader by many of his subordinates. This information was gathered from an interview with an Army War College (AY 03) student, 20 March 2003.

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⁴¹ S. L. A. Marshall, Men Against Fire (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1978) 168.

⁴² S. L. A. Marshall, Men Against Fire (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1978) 172.

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⁴⁴ The APFRI assessment is voluntary; eight U.S. Army students opted not to participate.

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