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ATTACKING THE LION: A STUDY OF COHESION IN NAVAL SPECIAL WARFARE OPERATIONAL UNITS

by

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13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words)

Why is it that some military organizations succeed and others do not? What characteristics elude unsuccessful fighting groups that successful ones are able to capture and translate into positive outcomes? The study of organizational theory and design spans the multiple typologies of organizational functions and forms. However, at the foundation of all groups are the individuals and the interaction of those individuals within the organization. Given this, the concept of unit cohesion can provide some insight in the search for discovering what makes organizations successful.

Why study unit cohesion within Naval Special Warfare (NSW) operational units? The simple answer is because cohesion can increase performance and effectiveness. Prior to the last century, the concept of unit cohesion was based on the anecdotal observations of military commanders and historians. The rise of the fields of psychology and sociology led to an increase in the study and understanding of unit cohesion. This study utilizes survey research to investigate specific factors related to unit cohesion in NSW operational units and how they are related to current issues in the community. Ultimately, the impacts of these relationships provide a basis for recommendations intended to improve cohesion in, and overall effectiveness of NSW operational units.

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ATTACKING THE LION: A STUDY OF COHESION IN NAVAL SPECIAL WARFARE OPERATIONAL UNITS

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ATG	Attraction to Group
BUD/S	Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL School
CPCQ	Combat Platoon Cohesion Questionnaire
C2	Command and Control
CO	Commanding Officer
C-SORT	Computerized - Special Operations Resilience Test
DRS-15	Dispositional Resilience Scale – 15
FID	Foreign Internal Defense
GCC	Geographic Combatant Commanders
GI	Group Integration
HB	Horizontal Bonding
LOGSU	Logistics Support Unit
NCDU	Naval Combat Demolition Units
NMF	National Mission Force
NPRST	Navy Personnel, Research, Studies, and Technology
NSW	Naval Special Warfare
NSW-21	Naval Special Warfare – 21
NSWG	Naval Special Warfare Group
OB	Organizational Bonding
OSS	Office of Strategic Services
PCI	Platoon Cohesion Index
PRODEV	Professional Development
PRD	Projected Rotation Date

SEAL	Sea Air Land
SF	Special Forces
SIT	Squadron Integration Training
SOF	Special Operations Force
TMF	Theater Mission Force
TRADET	Training Detachment
TSOC	Theater Special Operations Command
UDT	Underwater Demolition Teams
ULT	Unit Level Training
USSOCOM	United States Special Operations Command
VB	Vertical Bonding
WARCOM	Naval Special Warfare Command
XO	Executive Officer

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Naval Special Warfare (NSW) is a military force that relies heavily on the capabilities of individuals and the resultant capabilities of operational units that are comprised of those individuals. The ability of NSW's primary units of action, the Troop, to act as a cohesive unit is directly related to its ability to perform effectively in any operational environment. This study examines unit cohesion in NSW Troops and offers four recommendations that will aid in forming more cohesive operational units and, ultimately, increasing the effectiveness of the NSW force.

The following recommendations are presented in detail in Chapter VII of this study: 1) Conduct a strategic mission and capability evaluation within NSW—within the broader strategic vision of U.S Special Operations Command (USSOCOM)—in order to address disparities between NSW recruitment, selection, and training processes and current operational requirements; 2) Implement a Junior Leaders Conference that gives NSW community stakeholders an outlet to voice opinions, take part in community discussion, and open lines of communication with senior NSW commanders; 3) Develop a personnel rotation model that maintains leadership continuity through offset leadership rotation in NSW operational units to increase mission flexibility and improve unit cohesion and performance; and 4) Implement a program to develop psychological hardiness in NSW tactical leaders so that those leaders are equipped with additional tools to establish and expand cohesion in operational units and thereby improve performance and effectiveness.

These recommendations are developed from an analysis of issues researched for this study. The primary research methods for this study were a survey and personal interviews with members of NSW. These produced quantitative and qualitative data that offered insights into unit cohesion, as well as other issues that indicate second- and third-order effects on cohesion.

The survey results demonstrate that cohesion in NSW Troops is higher than the published norms; however, the comments and interviews indicate that there factors

external to the Troop that adversely affect cohesion and performance. A model developed in this study called the Perception-Reality Gap explains the majority of these issues. This model describes how the expectations of the members of the operational elements differ drastically from the accepted requirements that result in the employment of forces.

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To say the process of writing this thesis was equal parts challenging and rewarding would be a considerable understatement. A project of this scope and magnitude is not completed without generous external help and guidance. Our gratitude and respect deservedly go to a great number of people whose contribution to this project made it a meaningful and gratifying undertaking.

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I. INTRODUCTION

> Four brave men who do not know each other will not dare attack a lion. Four less brave men, but knowing each other well, sure of their reliability and consequently of mutual aid, will attack resolutely.
>
> Colonel Ardent du Picq[1]

Unit cohesion has at times been considered the *sine qua non* of battlefield performance. At other times, military commanders have diminished the relative importance of cohesion in favor of mass and sheer numbers. In the last 100 years, the idea and study of unit cohesion has moved beyond the meditations of philosopher warriors into the qualitative and quantitative realm of social science. Applying the modern tools of social science to the ancient notion of unit cohesion yields insights into how to better organize and train military units and ultimately improve their performance and effectiveness.

A. BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE

Naval Special Warfare (NSW) traces its history from the beaches of Europe and the Pacific in World War II. In the years since, NSW has adapted to changes in the global and national security environment. As a small Special Operation Force (SOF), NSW units rely on stealth, teamwork, and violence of action to survive and succeed in missions against larger opponents. Developing bonds of trust between individuals and cohesion within units is critical to the success and survival of the NSW units operating in austere, ambiguous, and hostile environments.

Prior to the last century, the concept of unit cohesion was based on the anecdotal observations of military commanders and historians. The rise of the fields of psychology and sociology led to an increase in the study and understanding of unit cohesion. Contributing to the understanding and analysis of cohesion are the concepts of primary and secondary groups. Distinguishing between primary and secondary groups allowed for

[1] Charles Jean Jacques Joseph Ardant du Picq, *Battle Studies: Ancient and Modern Battle*, trans. Col. John N. Greely and Maj. Robert C. Cotton, Translated from Eighth Edition in French (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1921), 110.

the development of appropriate levels of analysis in cohesion studies. The overall concept of cohesion and the factors of influence vary when the level of analysis is moved from the individual to the primary group and, ultimately, the secondary group.

Why study unit cohesion, and more specifically, why investigate unit cohesion within NSW operational units? The simple answer is because cohesion is directly related to performance. Therefore, the goal of this study is to investigate the factors of unit cohesion in NSW operational units with the intention improving the performance and effectiveness of the community as a whole. Ultimately, this investigation will identify specific factors, how there are related to current issues in the community, and lead to recommendations to improve cohesion in NSW and thereby performance.

B. THEORETICAL MODEL

Current cohesion literature is generally separated into the categories of military units, work groups, and sports teams. Each of these categories and the associated research provide insight into the factors of cohesion within NSW. Within these categories, the early unidimensional models of cohesion have yielded to more the encompassing multidimensional models. This investigation uses a multidimensional model because it better represents the factors influencing cohesion in NSW operational units.

The social psychologists Guy L. Siebold and Dennis R. Kelly developed a multidimensional model based on three basic factors contributing to cohesion in military units. The three factors of horizontal, vertical, and organizational bonding are then each separated in affective and instrumental aspects. This model is valuable but does not represent the totality of factors influencing cohesion in NSW. To complete the theoretical framework developed in this study, the factors of leadership, selection and training, and hardiness are added.

Hardiness is a relatively new concept that has been identified and developed over the last 30 years. Hardiness measures an individual's locus of control across the three domains of commitment, control, and challenge. A high-hardy individual is someone who has an internal locus of control. An individual with an internal locus of control is someone who believes he can influence and control the environment around them.

Conversely, a person with an external locus of control, low hardy, is someone who views his external environment as the primary influence on them.

C. METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH

This study utilizes survey research as the primary means of data collection. In order to examine the hypothesized effects on unit cohesion in NSW Troops, this study combines two existing surveys with a series of original questions developed by the authors. Each survey section aligns with the factors addressed in the theoretical framework above. An adaptation of the Platoon Cohesion Index (PCI), developed by Siebold and Kelley, addresses the task and social cohesion aspects of this study's framework, while the Dispositional Resiliency Scale-15 (DRS-15) developed by Paul Bartone, examines the hardiness aspect of the framework. Finally, the factors of leadership and selection and training are examined in a section of the survey developed by the authors. This survey was distributed to individuals assigned to NSW's primary unit of action, the Troop.

In addition to the survey questionnaire, interview questions were developed to provide an external assessment by mid-level leaders within NSW of cohesion and other factors affecting Troop performance. These assessments provide the larger context from within which the interplay of factors external and internal to the Troop is examined.

The results of the research are best understood by separating them into qualitative and quantitative categories. For the quantitative analysis, the use of descriptive statistics and regression analysis provide some of the more noteworthy results. The qualitative responses, both from the interview questions and the comment blocks available on the survey, offer a somewhat less objective, though no less meaningful, sense of many of the larger issues relevant to unit cohesion in NSW operational units.

D. RECOMMENDATIONS

From the quantitative and qualitative results, a number of observations and recommendations are drawn that seek to establish conditions that can improve unit cohesion and effectiveness within NSW. Due to the trickle-down impacts of decisions made within a bureaucratic structure, most of these recommendations, though ultimately seeking to impact cohesion and effectiveness, are directed at the larger organizational level. Additionally, several observations drawn from the research are made that have applicability to all levels of organization within NSW.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. INTRODUCTION

It can be seen from simple observation that some groups work well together while others struggle to accomplish the most basic task. Political and business leaders, sociologists and scientists, and generals and admirals throughout history have sought to understand this phenomenon and have attempted to define, explain, and harness the cohesiveness of groups. Beyond the anecdotal observations of history, the last 100 years has produced numerous theories on the nature, causes, and outcomes of group cohesion. The existing research of group cohesion has been thoroughly examined in three principal settings: (1) military units, (2) industrial/business work groups, and (3) sport teams. This chapter will review the literature of cohesion and explain the relevant theory relating to this study.

B. PRIMARY GROUPS

When shifting the level of analysis external to the individual, it is necessary to understand the scope of the unit to be examined. This study will examine factors affecting the primary group. Sociologist Charles Cooley developed the idea of the primary group. Cooley defines the primary group as:

> Those characterized by intimate face-to-face association and cooperation. They are primary in several senses, but chiefly in that they are fundamental in forming the social nature and ideals of the individual. The result of intimate association, psychologically, is a certain fusion of individualities in a common whole, so that one's very self, for many purposes at least, is the common life and purpose of the group. Perhaps the simplest way of describing this wholeness is by saying that it is a 'we'; it involves the sort of sympathy and mutual identification for which 'we' is the natural expression.[2]

The importance of the primary group, particularly in military units, is described in the often-referenced paper by sociologists Edward A. Shils and Morris Janowitz, on

[2] Charles Horton Cooley, *Social Organization: A Study of the Larger Mind* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911), 23.

cohesion in the Wehrmacht in WWII.[3] They hypothesize "that a soldier's ability to resist is a function of the capacity of his immediate primary group to avoid social disintegration."[4] The social aspect of cohesion will be addressed further in the cohesion section. Shils and Janowitz build from Cooley's construct of the primary group. They further hypothesize that primary group bonds are so powerful that the Allied propaganda attempts to discredit and show the "wrongfulness" of secondary and political groups were largely unsuccessful.[5] They argue that the strength of the primary group is what maintains a cohesive military unit.

The primary group is the unit an individual associates, works, and socializes with on a regular face-to-face basis. Groups beyond this classification are referred to as secondary groups. This study will examine the factors of primary group cohesion in Naval Special Warfare (NSW). The primary group in NSW is the Troop.[6] The size, organization, and employment of an NSW Troop fit the primary group model. Members of NSW Troops not only work and interact on a regular basis, but their very survival can depend on one another, in both training and combat scenarios. Secondary groups are groups that an individual is affiliated with but does not interact with on a regular basis. In the context of this study, the secondary groups of NSW operators are the organizational echelons above the NSW Troop: SEAL Squadron, NSW Group, and the NSW community as a whole. An NSW operator will see and interact with his Troop (primary group) and Troop leadership on a daily, if not hourly, basis. The same operator will know and recognize the Commanding Officer (CO) of his SEAL Team (secondary group);

[3] Edward A. Shils and Morris Janowitz were U.S. intelligence officers during WWII and interrogated captured Wehrmacht soldiers. Their paper used anecdotal information from these interrogations to develop a theory on why the Wehrmacht fought "stubbornly to the end."

[4] Edward A. Shils and Morris Janowitz, "Cohesion and Disintegration in the Wehrmacht in World War II," *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 12, no. 2 (1948): 281.

[5] Shils and Janowitz, "Cohesion and Disintegration in the Wehrmacht in World War II," 281.

[6] There are three core operational units in NSW. The SEAL Squad is a 7-8 man unit, the Platoon is a 15-16 man unit, and the Troop is a 30-35 man unit. A Platoon is made up of two Squads and a Troop contains two Platoons plus a small Command and Control (C2) section. NSW Platoons and Troops share the names U.S. Army organizational unit; however, the size and functions are different. A U.S. Army Platoon is an approximate 40-man unit that is usually made up of four separate Squads. A U.S. Army Troop is a cavalry unit that is similar in size and organization to a U.S. Army Company.

however, the operator would rarely interact with the CO in a professional or personal capacity. Figure 1 graphically depicts this example.

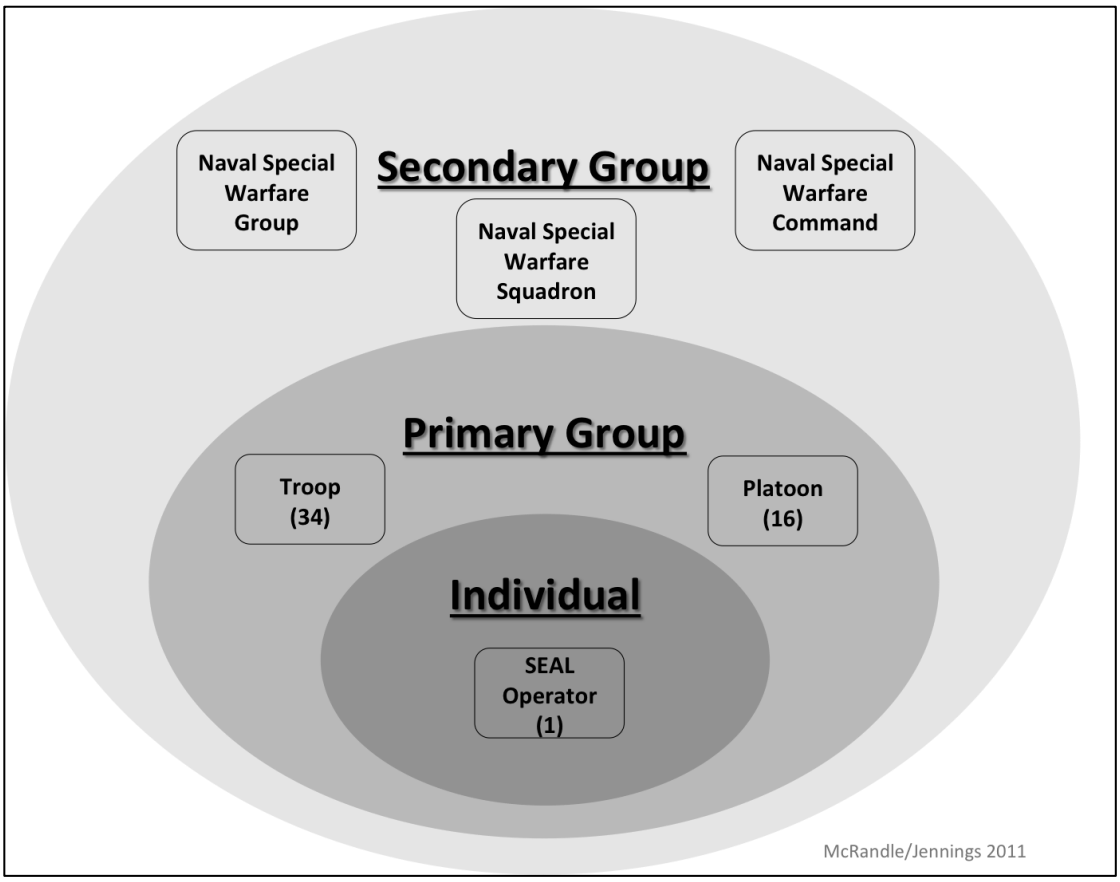

Figure 1. Group Dimensions, NSW Example

C. WHY STUDY UNIT COHESION?

1. Effectiveness-Performance

There would hardly be reason to study unit cohesion, outside of general knowledge, if there was no utility in understanding the concept. This utility can be found in the correlation between unit cohesion and improved effectiveness and performance. There is a vast amount of literature describing, quantifying, and debating the importance

of unit cohesion. Several studies use the technique of meta-analysis to synthesize multiple cohesion-performance studies across multiple group types.[7]

Social psychology professors Charles R. Evan and Kenneth L. Dion examined 16 studies with a total of 373 groups evaluated. The groups consisted of sports teams, experimental groups, and military units. Their meta-analysis found that "cohesive groups, on average, tend to be more productive than non-cohesive groups" and "that the relationship between group cohesion and group performance … is moderately strong and in a positive direction" with an uncorrected mean correlation of +.364."[8]

Social science researcher Laurel W. Oliver, in a paper for the U.S. Army Research Institute, examined 14 studies of real-world groups. This meta-analysis is particularly pertinent to this study because nine of the groups evaluated are military groups. The paper concludes that there is a "moderately strong positive relationship between cohesion" with the weighted mean effect of +.320.[9]

Psychologists Brian Mullen and Carolyn Copper conducted a meta-analysis of 49 studies that examined the relationship between cohesion and performance, addressing three factors of cohesiveness—interpersonal attraction, commitment to task, and group pride.[10] This analysis contains a tremendous amount of information pertaining to many aspects of unit cohesion. Similar to the previously referenced studies, the Mullen and Copper meta-analysis shows "that the cohesiveness-performance effect does, in fact, exist

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[7] Gene V. Glass, "Primary, Secondary, and Meta-Analysis of Research," *Educational Researcher* 5, no. 10 (November 1, 1976): 3. Glass noted the lack of academic and statistical rigor in "armchair literature reviews" and defines meta-analysis as "the statistical analysis of a large collection of analysis results from individual studies."

[8] Charles R. Evans and Kenneth L. Dion, "Group Cohesion and Performance," *Small Group Research* 22, no. 2 (May 1, 1991): 179.

[9] Laurel W. Oliver, *The Relationship of Group Cohesion to Group Performance: A Research Integration Attempt* (Alexandria, VA: U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, 1988), 11, 13, http://handle.dtic.mil/100.2/ADA199069.

[10] Brian Mullen and Carolyn Copper, "The Relation Between Group Cohesiveness and Performance: An Integration," *Psychological Bulletin* 115, no. 2 (March 1994): 221.

to a highly significant degree."[11] This study finds the weighted mean effect of the cohesion-performance effect to be +.248 and that "commitment to task appears to emerge as the critical component of cohesiveness."[12]

The research team of Daniel J. Beal et al. uses a "more fine-grained approach" to evaluate the correlation of performance and effectiveness and addresses some differences in results of their meta-analysis compared to the Mullen and Copper study.[13] Beal et al. found "stronger correlations between cohesion and performance when performance was defined as behavior (as opposed to outcome), when it was assessed with efficiency measures (as opposed to effectiveness measures), and as patterns of team workflow became more intensive."[14] Contrary to Mullen and Copper, Beal et al. found a correlation between interpersonal attraction, commitment to task, and group pride and performance. This study found the mean corrected correlation between cohesion performance as performance to be +.301.[15]

Across several meta-analyses, there is concurrence that there is a correlated increase in effectiveness and performance with an increase also in unit cohesion. This concurrence demonstrates that efforts to understand and to improve unit cohesion have a utility beyond generalized knowledge.

a. Causality

The relationship between cohesion and effectiveness is nebulous and can often lead to "chicken and egg" debates about causality. Anecdotal observation shows that winning or successful groups and sports teams generally experience an increase in cohesion. There seems to be a reinforcing loop that positive cohesion can improve performance and positive performance can improve cohesion. Mullen and Copper

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[11] Mullen and Copper, "The Relation Between Group Cohesiveness and Performance," 222.

[12] Ibid., 216, 221.

[13] Daniel J. Beal et al., "Cohesion and Performance in Groups: A Meta-Analytic Clarification of Construct Relations," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 88, no. 6 (December 2003): 990.

[14] Beal et al., "Cohesion and Performance in Groups," 989.

[15] Ibid., 996.

"suggest that changes in cohesiveness that can be brought about by performance are likely to be stronger than changes in performance that can be brought about by cohesiveness."[16]

D. WHAT COHESION IS NOT

To better understand unit cohesion, it is beneficial to remove confusing and conflicting definitions before specifying what the subject is. This section will examine one level of analysis above and one level below the primary group. These levels of analysis are continuous and overlapping with no finite borders delineating where one level ends and another begins.[17] Therefore, the level of analysis above and below the primary group must be identified because both will have an effect on cohesion in the primary group.

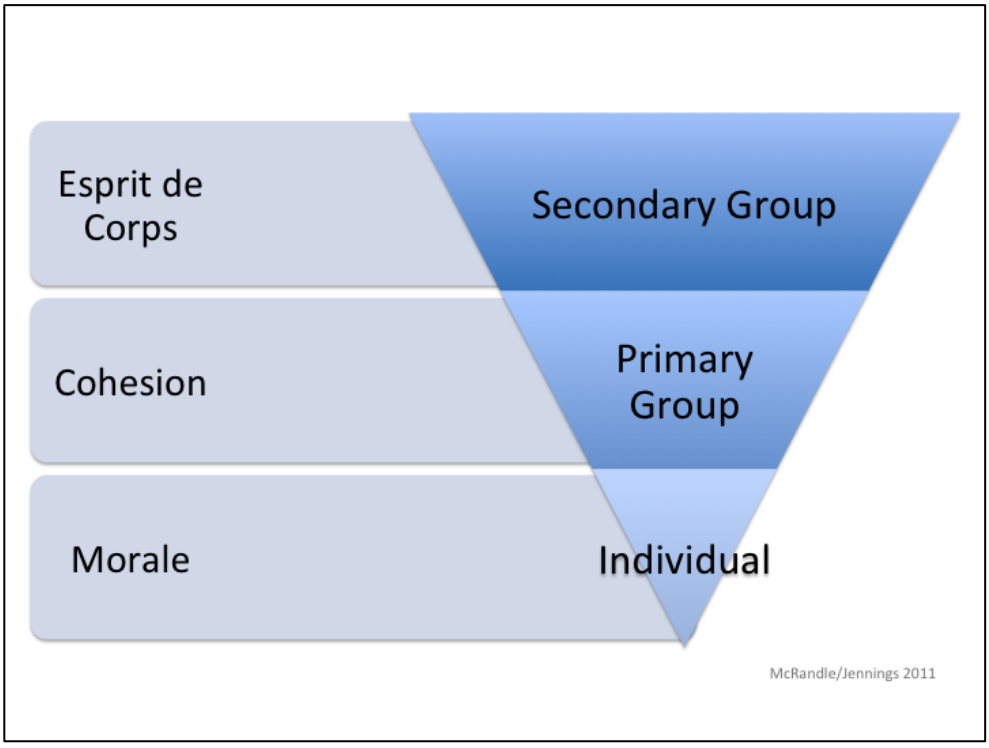

Figure 2. Level of Analysis

[16] Mullen and Copper, "The Relation Between Group Cohesiveness and Performance," 224.

[17] Larry H. Ingraham and Frederick J. Manning, "Cohesion: Who Needs It, What Is It and How Do We Get It To Them?," *Military Review* 61, no. 6 (1981): 7.

Figure 2 visually depicts the levels of analysis directly above and below the primary group. Additionally, the figure shows the aspects of cohesion relevant to the individual and the secondary group. Now that the levels of analysis above and below the primary group have been described, we can focus on what unit cohesion is.

1. Morale

The individual is at the level of analysis below the primary group level. In relation to group cohesion, the primary individual factor affecting the group as a whole is the individual's morale. Morale is "the individual level of analysis as a psychological state of mind characterized by a sense of well-being based on confidence in the self and in primary groups."[18] The social psychologist Robert J. MacCoun wrote an extensive chapter on unit cohesion and military performance for a RAND report investigating the military policy of Don't Ask, Don't Tell (DADT). He writes that morale "reflect[s] the general level of motivation and satisfaction among members of a group."[19] Both of these definitions are appropriate with respect to the level of analysis. Each shows that morale is unique to the individual and that the individual's morale will affect the cohesion of the group. Working from cohesion down to morale, one researcher describes how group cohesion will also improve individual morale and job satisfaction.[20]

2. Esprit de Corps

At the secondary group level of analysis, the factor corresponding to cohesion is group pride. Earlier in this chapter, we defined secondary groups as groups that an individual is affiliated with but does not interact with on a regular basis. The main distinction between primary and secondary groups is that primary groups are influenced by daily face-to-face interaction. Beal et al. describes group pride as "the extent to which group members exhibit liking for the status or the ideologies that the group supports or

[18] Ingraham and Manning, "Cohesion," 7.

[19] Robert J. MacCoun, "What is known about Unit Cohesion and Military Performance," in *Sexual Orientation and U.S. Military Personnel Policy: Options and Assessment*, ed. Bernard D. Rostker and Scott A. Harris (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1993), 289, http://www.rand.org/pubs/monograph_reports/MR323/index.html.

[20] Michael A. Hogg, *The Social Psychology of Group Cohesiveness: From Attraction to Social Identity* (New York: New York University Press, 1992), 120.

represents, or the shared importance of being a member of the group."[21] Group pride is a term generally used outside of the military context; whereas, the term *esprit de corps*, literally "spirit of the body," is more often used within the military context and is deeply rooted in military history.[22] U.S Army psychologists Lt. Col. Larry H. Ingraham and Maj. Frederick J. Manning further expand their description of esprit de corps as being "generally reserved for large collectives above the level of face-to-face interaction, also characterized by pride in group membership, but especially by unity of purpose and devotion to the cause."[23]

E. WHAT COHESION IS

There are nearly as many definitions and descriptions of cohesion as there are authors on the subject. This problem is compounded by the fact that there is little agreement within the field of how to measure cohesion.[24] Part of this problem stems from that fact that group cohesion means different things to different groups. The purpose and context of the group will affect the perceptions of what cohesion is to each respective group. The concept of cohesion will have a completely different purpose and context for a therapy group, a National Football League team, a SEAL Troop, and a group of undergraduates in a psychology experiment.

1. Unidimensional

At the conceptual level, there has been debate about whether cohesion is unidimensional or multidimensional. Early definitions and investigations into the nature

[21] Beal et al., "Cohesion and Performance in Groups," 995.

[22] Ingraham and Manning, "Cohesion," 6.

[23] Ibid., 7.

[24] All of these authors describe the extensive history of attempting to define and measure cohesion. If fact, most authors writing on the subject in last 30 years have noted this problem. Albert V. Carron and Lawrence R. Brawley, "Cohesion: Conceptual and Measurement Issues," *Small Group Research* 31, no. 1 (2000): 245; Milly Casey-Campbell and Martin L. Martens, "Sticking It All Together: A Critical Assessment of the Group Cohesion–Performance Literature," *International Journal of Management Reviews* 11, no. 2 (June 2009): 224; Albert A. Cota et al., "The Structure of Group Cohesion," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 21, no. 6 (1995): 573; N. J. Evans and P. A. Jarvis, "Group Cohesion: A Review and Reevaluation," *Small Group Research* 11, no. 4 (1980): 359; Paul S. Goodman, Elizabeth Ravlin, and Marshall Schminke, "Understanding Groups in Organizations," *Research in Organizational Behavior* 9 (1987): 145; Peter E. Mudrack, "Defining Group Cohesiveness: A Legacy of Confusion," *Small Group Research* 20, no. 1 (February 1, 1989): 38.

of cohesion were strictly unidimensional. Representative of unidimensional models, an early study of cohesion defined it as the "total field of forces causing members to remain in the group."[25] In the late 1970s and early 1980s, a renewed academic interest in the concept of cohesion developed into the current multidimensional models.

2. Multidimensional

The early unidimensional models of unit cohesion proved inadequate and researchers sought to find models including more dimensions to encompass the totality of cohesion. The sports psychologists Albert V. Carron et al. developed a multidimensional conceptual model while developing an instrument to assess cohesion in sport teams (Group Environment Questionnaire). Their model of cohesion is based on the categories, or dimensions, of group integration and individual attractions to the group.[26] Carron and Brawley further explain that group integration (GI) "reflect[s] the individual's perceptions about what the group believes about its closeness, similarity, and bonding as a whole and the degree of unification of the group field." Individual Attractions to the Group (ATG) "reflect[s] the individual's personal motivations to remain in the group, as well as his or her personal feelings about the group."[27] Each category is then further subdivided into task and social aspects. The task aspect is viewed as a general orientation toward achieving the group's goals and objectives and the social aspect is viewed as the general orientation toward developing and maintaining social relationships within the group.[28] This multidimensional approach leads Carron to define cohesion as "a dynamic process that is reflected in the tendency for a group to stick together and remain united in the pursuit of its instrumental objectives and/or for the satisfaction of member affective needs."[29]

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[25] Leon Festinger, Stanley Schachter, and Kurt W. Back, *Social Pressures in Informal Groups: A Study of Human Factors in Housing* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1950), 164.

[26] Albert V. Carron, W. N. Widmeyer, and Lawrence R. Brawley, "The Development of an Instrument to Assess Cohesion in Sport Teams: The Group Environment Questionnaire," *Journal of Sport Psychology* 7, no. 3 (1985): 248.

[27] Carron and Brawley, "Cohesion: Conceptual and Measurement Issues," 90.

[28] Carron, Widmeyer, and Brawley, "The Development of an Instrument to Assess Cohesion in Sport Teams," 248.

[29] Carron and Brawley, "Cohesion: Conceptual and Measurement Issues," 94.

In a military context, Col. James Griffith examined the factors of cohesion in 93 companies of U.S. Army soldiers. He identified seven subscales of cohesion: unit social climate, concerned leadership, unit teamwork, sense of pride, small-unit command confidence, senior command confidence, and company combat.[30] From his empirical research, he develops a two "fundamental" dimension conceptual model of cohesion encapsulating the direction and functions of cohesion. The direction of cohesion is the contrast between vertical cohesion (superior-subordinate relations) and horizontal cohesion (peer-to-peer relations). The functions of cohesion are the contrasts between the instrumental, or task performance, aspects of cohesion and the affective, or interpersonal support, aspects of cohesion.[31] Griffith's seven subscales all nest within the two dimensional model.

Similar to the Carron et al. sports model, social psychologists Guy L. Siebold and Dennis R. Kelly began to develop an instrument to measure cohesion in military units, the Combat Platoon Cohesion Questionnaire (CPCQ). Their definition of cohesion set the foundation for their conceptual model: "cohesion is a unit or group state varying in the extent to which the mechanisms of social control maintain a structured pattern of positive social relationships (bonds) between unit members, individually and collectively, necessary to achieve the unit or group's purpose."[32] From this definition, they operationalize three types of bonding that affects cohesion: horizontal, vertical, and organizational. Horizontal and vertical bonding is defined similarly to Griffith's explanation above. Organizational bonding is described as the relationships between the unit members and their unit as a whole. Siebold and Kelly, like Griffith, consider relationship or bond to have both affective (emotional/reactive) and instrumental (task/proactive) aspects.[33]

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[30] James Griffith, "Measurement of Group Cohesion in US Army Units," *Basic and Applied Social Psychology* 9, no. 2 (1988): 159.

[31] Griffith, "Measurement of Group Cohesion in US Army Units," 165.

[32] Guy L. Siebold and Dennis R. Kelly, *Development of the Combat Platoon Cohesion Questionnaire* (Alexandria, VA: U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, 1988), 1, http://handle.dtic.mil/100.2/ADA204917.

[33] Siebold and Kelly, *Development of the Combat Platoon Cohesion Questionnaire*, 2.

The CPCQ was subsequently developed into the shorter Platoon Cohesion Index (PCI).[34] The PCI uses the same conceptual model as the CPCQ with the three types of bonding with two corresponding aspects. Since the PCI serves as the foundation for our investigation of cohesion in NSW, we will attempt to better explain the conceptual model and define the two aspects of each bonding type. Table 1 defines and explains the different aspect of each bonding type.

PCI Conceptual Model

	Relationship (Bonds)	
	Affective	**Instrumental**
Horizontal	Peer bonding - the extent to which peers trust and care about one another.	Teamwork - how well the peers work together to get the job done.
Vertical	Leader caring - the degree to which leaders look out for and help their subordinates.	Leader competence - the extent to which leaders have the skills and abilities to lead in training and in combat.
Organizational	Member identification with the unit and what it stands for and feeling good or bad about the unit.	Exchange relationship in which the members work to achieve the organization's goals in exchange for the organization facilitating the members' attainment of their needs and goals.

Table 1. PCI Conceptual Model[35]

3. Primary and Secondary Dimensions

Albert A. Cota et al. agree that multidimensional conceptual models have a better potential to explain what is empirically and theoretically known about cohesion than unidimensional models.[36] In fact, they praise both Carron and Griffith for advancing the field in developing multidimensional models.[37] Cota et al. builds on specific group

[34] Guy L. Siebold and Dennis R. Kelly, *Development of the Platoon Cohesion Index* (Alexandria, VA: U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, 1988), 2, http://handle.dtic.mil/100.2/ADA205478.

[35] Siebold and Kelly, *Development of the Platoon Cohesion Index*, 2, 3.

[36] Cota et al., "The Structure of Group Cohesion," 576.

[37] Carron, Widmeyer, and Brawley, "The Development of an Instrument to Assess Cohesion in Sport Teams," 575.

models of Carron and Griffith to develop an even broader heuristic that will incorporate all types of groups. Their examination of both the empirical and conceptual literature of cohesion leads them to the notion of primary and secondary dimensions of group cohesion. "Primary dimensions are applicable to describing the cohesiveness of all or most types of groups, whereas secondary dimensions are applicable to describing the cohesiveness of specific types of groups."[38] This heuristic recognizes that regardless of type, function, or purpose, there are broad similarities across all groups in the primary dimension. The distinct natures of specific groups types is captured in the notion of secondary dimensions. This primary and secondary dimensional analysis is how we developed our hypotheses related to factors of cohesion in NSW.

F. HARDINESS

The concept of hardiness appears in numerous papers that indicate a relationship to unit cohesion. Suzanne C. Kobasa first described the concept of hardiness in a longitudinal study of executives at the telecommunication corporation AT&T. The study examined the relationship between levels of stress and rates of illness. In the course of the study, she found a very distinct pattern in the rates of illness in the high stress group. The pattern clearly delineated the two groups, the high stress/low illness and high stress/high illness. Kobasa hypothesized that "persons who experience high degrees of stress without falling ill have a personality structure differentiating them from persons who become sick under stress."[39] The study revealed that the high stress/low illness group shared three general characteristics: (a) they believe that they can control or influence the events of their experience (control), (b) they feel deeply involved in or committed to the activities of their lives (commitment), and (c) they anticipate change as an exciting challenge to further development (challenge).[40] She described the high stress/low illness group members with the three characteristics from above as hardy individuals. Several studies

[38] Cota et al., "The Structure of Group Cohesion," 576.

[39] Suzanne C. Kobasa, "Stressful Life Events, Personality, and Health: An Inquiry into Hardiness," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 37, no. 1 (January 1979): 3.

[40] Kobasa, "Stressful Life Events, Personality, and Health: An Inquiry into Hardiness," 3.

have tested the factors contributing to the hardiness concept and confirm Kobasa hypothesis on the three factors contributing to hardiness.[41]

1. Dispositional Resilience Scale (DRS)

Since Kobasa's initial research, multiple instruments have been developed to measure hardiness.[42] The Dispositional Resilience Scale (DRS) is a hardiness measurement instrument developed by U.S. Army research psychologist Paul T. Bartone and used in numerous hardiness studies on U.S. military personnel.[43] The DRS was originally a 45-item instrument and has subsequently been narrowed to a 30-item and finally to a 15-item instrument.[44] The DRS-15 will be the instrument used in our survey research to measure hardiness in NSW individuals.

G. SELECTION AND TRAINING

Some researchers have proposed that higher levels of selection and increasingly difficult training will help increase unit cohesion.[45] Another study compared Special Forces (SF) teams to conventional units and found higher levels of mental and physical health and greater levels of job and career satisfaction in the SF teams.[46] One problem with this study is that it simply assumes that the SF units have higher levels of cohesion.

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[41] Steven C. Funk, "Hardiness: A Review of Theory and Research," *Health Psychology* 11, no. 5 (1992): 335-345; Mina Westman, "The Relationship Between Stress and Performance: The Moderating Effect of Hardiness," *Human Performance* 3, no. 3 (1990): 141; Nerella V. Ramanaiah, J. Patrick Sharpe, and Anupama Byravan, "Hardiness and Major Personality Factors," *Psychological Reports* 84, no. 2 (1999): 497–500.

[42] Funk, "Hardiness," 336; Salvatore R. Maddi, "Relevance of Hardiness Assessment and Training to the Military Context," *Military Psychology* 19, no. 1 (2007): 64.

[43] Paul T. Bartone, "Development and Validation of a Short Hardiness Measure" (Paper presented at the Third Annual Convention of the American Psychological Society, Washington, D.C., June 1991), http://www.hardiness-resilience.com/docs/aps91b.pdf; Paul T. Bartone, "Resilience Under Military Operational Stress: Can Leaders Influence Hardiness?," *Military Psychology* 18, no. 3 (2006): 131–148; Paul T. Bartone et al., "Psychological Hardiness Predicts Success in US Army Special Forces Candidates," *International Journal of Selection and Assessment* 16, no. 1 (March 2008): 78–81.

[44] P. T. Bartone et al., "The impact of a military air disaster on the health of assistance workers: A prospective study," *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease* 177, no. 6 (1989): 317; Paul T. Bartone, "Test-Retest Reliability of the Dispositional Resilience Scale-15, A Brief Hardiness Scale," *Psychological Reports* 101 (2007): 943–944.

[45] Griffith, "Measurement of Group Cohesion in US Army Units," 167.

[46] Frederick J. Manning and Terrence D. Fullerton, "Health and Well-Being in Highly Cohesive Units of the U.S. Army," *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 18, no. 6 (1988): 515.

The researchers did not test and compare levels of cohesion between the SF and conventional units. Beyond this study, there is a deficiency in comparing cohesion levels between SOF and conventional units.

Part of the research design of this study is to compare levels of cohesion between two distinct groups within NSW that have different levels of selection and training. Defense analyst Michele L. Malvesti specifies two distinct mission forces within Special Operations Forces (SOF): theater mission forces and national mission forces. Theater mission forces are assigned to Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOC) and are "designed to maintain a persistent presence and cultivate long-term military-to-military relationships within their respective regions, as well as provide the Geographic Combatant Commanders dedicated Special Operations capability." Conversely, national mission forces do not report to TSOCs and are designed for "extremely sensitive operations, often of national importance."[47]

National mission forces usually involve additional levels of selection and training above and beyond theater mission forces. To compare the effects of additional selection and training within NSW, levels of cohesion will be compared between the two forces.

H. THE BAD AND THE UGLY

Unit cohesion has numerous benefits; specifically, higher levels of cohesion correlate to improved performance and effectiveness. Unfortunately, there are aspects of cohesion that can cause problems for the individual, the primary group, and the secondary group. Extremely high levels of primary group cohesion can lead to a drift from the goals of the secondary or organizational group. Griffith cites an example of new employees at a Western Electric plant being physically impeded, by more experienced coworkers, from higher levels of productivity to conform to primary group output levels.[48] The primary group found utility in slowing production to the group's benefit, but to the detriment of the company. High levels of social cohesion can lead to bouts of rigid

[47] Michele L. Malvesti, *To Serve the Nation: US Special Operations Forces in an Era of Persistent Conflict* (Washington, D.C.: Center for a New American Security, 2010), 9, 11.

[48] Griffith, "Measurement of Group Cohesion in US Army Units," 168.

thinking and poor decision-making called groupthink.[49] Groupthink is described as "deficient group decision-making processes that have a high probability of producing poor decisions with disastrous consequences."[50] Social psychologist Stanley Milgram, in his famous Milgram experiments, warns that too much vertical cohesion or obedience to authority can have negative consequences as well.[51] At the other end of the spectrum, groups of proven performers can fail if they do not cohere and work as a team. The 2004 USA Olympic men's basketball team was composed of star talent from the National Basketball Association, but could not, or would not, work together to perform at the expected level.[52] The teams poor cohesion led to their disappointing bronze medal performance.

Cohesion can be viewed as a continuum with an ideal point somewhere in the middle. Both too much and too little cohesion will render the performance correlation useless.

[49] Irving L. Janis, *Victims of Groupthink: A Psychological Study of Foreign-Policy Decisions and Fiascoes* (Boston, MA: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1972).

[50] Hogg, *The Social Psychology of Group Cohesiveness: From Attraction to Social Identity*, 135.

[51] Stanley Milgram, "Group Pressure and Action Against a Person," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 69, no. 2 (August 1964): 137–143.

[52] David DuPree, "U.S. Men's Basketball Falls Flat on World Stage," *USA Today*, August 15, 2004, sec. Olympics.

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III. THEORY

This study attempts to answer two questions that address a significant aspect of overall NSW effectiveness. First, what factors influence unit cohesion among NSW Troops? This question establishes the basis of the empirical research conducted in this study. The results of this initial research will provide the foundation upon which the second question can be answered. Second, what measures can be taken to improve unit cohesion within the NSW Troop? This question builds upon the first research question and seeks to suggest potential remedies to the voids identified through the empirical research.

Underlying this second question is the assumption that unit cohesion within NSW Troops needs improvement in the first place. This assumption is based upon observations made by leadership within the NSW community specifically regarding a phenomenon known informally as "flush-and-fill." This issue is a byproduct of an organizational transformation that will be discussed in Chapter IV.

A. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

As identified in the literature, there are a number of theories suggesting myriad causal mechanisms that contribute to cohesion among groups. Upon examining these theories and applying their respective principles to the focus of this study, it was determined that a multidimensional approach is best suited to examine unit cohesion within NSW units. Building upon the work conducted by Albert A. Cota et al., from Chapter II, this study uses a similar approach and frames the hypotheses within the context of primary and secondary dimensions of unit cohesion. Primary dimensions are those factors of unit cohesion that are common amongst all or most groups. Secondary dimensions are those factors that are common amongst specific types of groups.[53] For example, the different factors of cohesion between sports teams and therapy groups are considered secondary dimensional factors. Conversely, factors applicable to both types

[53] Cota et al., "The Structure of Group Cohesion," 573.

of groups are considered to fall within the primary dimension. The hypotheses are constructed around independent variables stemming from each of these dimensions.

1. Primary Dimension

Though the primary dimension encompasses factors that are common among a disparate selection of groups, the dynamics within this dimension can be vastly different depending on the nature of the group in question. This can certainly be said of the nature of a group such as NSW and the work it performs. Much of the work that NSW units perform is physically and mentally demanding and quite often highly dangerous. This requires a high degree of alignment in terms of task accomplishment and trust between the individual members of the group. Furthermore, the amount of time NSW Troops spend together in training and on deployment requires that these personal relationships be well developed with regard to work accomplishment and personal interaction outside of the work environment. The review of the pertinent literature in Chapter II identified the affective (social) and instrumental (task) aspects of cohesion that can vary in importance depending upon the work a certain group performs. These aspects of cohesion are common across most groups; however, the degree to which these matter to NSW may be greater because of the unique tasks that they perform and the amount of personal interaction required of the individuals in order to be successful.

a. Hypothesis 1 – Social Cohesion

Increased trust and commitment among Troop members and their leadership will lead to increased levels of unit cohesion because individuals exhibiting greater levels of commitment to one another are able to translate shared social experiences into a professional relationship.

b. Hypothesis 2 – Task Cohesion

Greater commitment to operational and task performance by Troop members and their leadership leads to increased levels of unit cohesion because task-oriented individuals with a common goal will unite in an effort to accomplish that goal in spite of vastly different social, economic, or educational backgrounds.

2. Secondary Dimension

The unique nature of the tasks carried out by the military in general—and NSW in particular—adhere to the criteria for examination within the secondary dimension of cohesion described thus far. Specific to NSW, the historic foundations of the selection process—dating back to the immediate requirement to form demolition units during World War II[54]—likely have significant implications for cohesion within the operational elements. Additionally, the concept of hardiness, introduced in Chapter II, suggests that individuals possessing this trait are first, more likely to complete an arduous selection and training process, and second, more prone to succeed under the austere conditions and hostile environments in which NSW forces operate.

a. Hypothesis 3 – Selection and Training

Units whose selection criteria and training curriculum are more arduous tend to be more cohesive due to the fact that the individuals within these units have endured a rite of passage that establishes a commonly shared experience.

b. Hypothesis 4 – Hardiness

Increased level of collective individual hardiness in groups leads to increased levels of unit cohesion within that group because the individuals are able to recognize an opportunity for growth within hardship and translate that growth into positive output.

3. Other Factors

a. Leadership

Leadership is a multifaceted dynamic that can affect various aspects of unit cohesion. Specifically, this investigation will examine three factors of leadership: how leadership deals with adversity, leadership compassion, and Troop member

[54] Chapter IV provides a brief history of Naval Special Warfare.

confidence of leadership in combat. Additional questions outside of the Platoon Cohesion Index (PCI) and the Dispositional Resilience Scale-15 (DRS-15) were added to the overall survey to measure these factors.

B. THEORETICAL MODEL

The model of cohesion developed by social psychologists Guy L. Siebold and Dennis R. Kelly in the Combat Platoon Cohesion Questionnaire (CPCQ) and further refined in the PCI is based on three basic factors contributing to unit cohesion. The three factors of horizontal, vertical, and organizational bonding are then each separated in affective and instrumental aspects. Figure 3 graphically represents the six factors affecting unit cohesion in the CPCQ and PCI model.

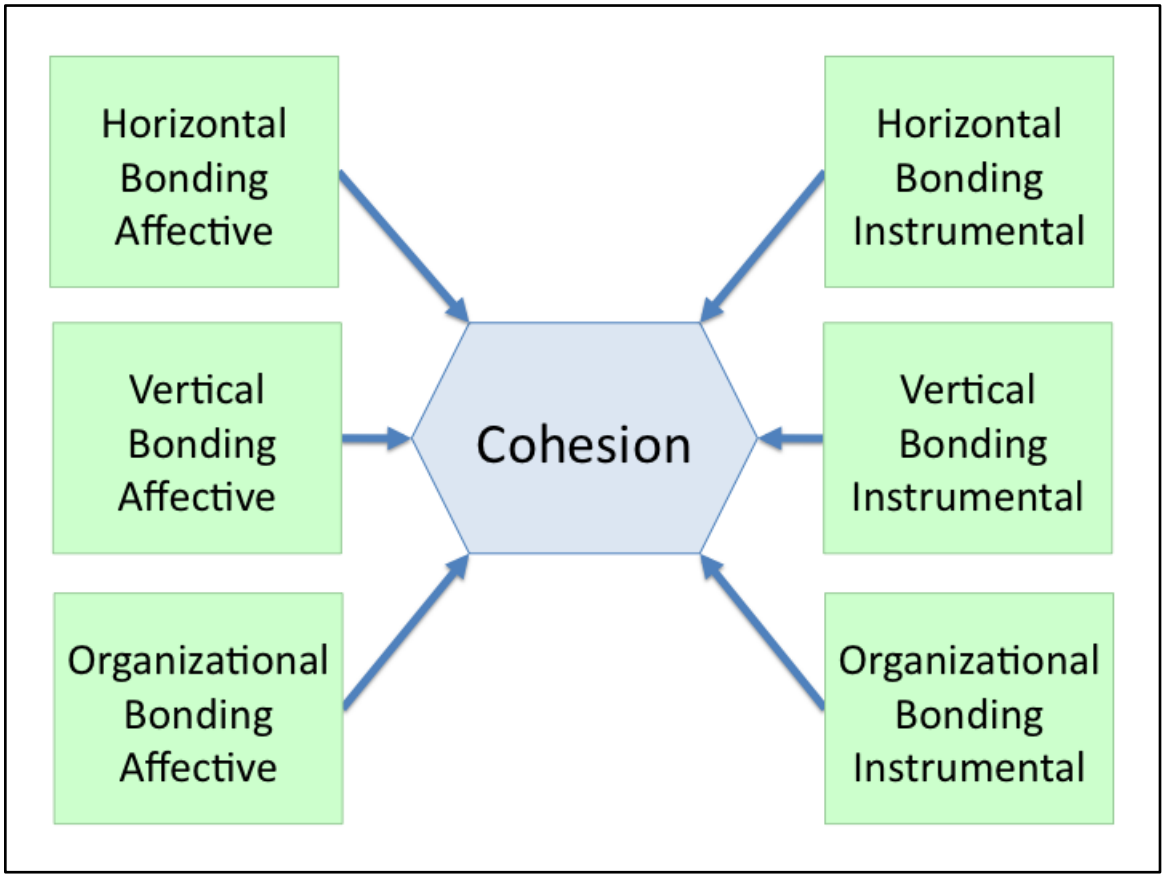

Figure 3. Cohesion Components[55]

[55] Siebold and Kelly, *Development of the Combat Platoon Cohesion Questionnaire*, 3.

Table 1 in Chapter II provides the basic definitions of the six cohesion components. Each cohesion component corresponds to a basic concept that is relatively easy to understand. Siebold and Kelly describe these basics concepts as cohesion measure scale areas. These cohesion measure scale areas are displayed in Figure 4 by using the same graphic in Figure 3 and replacing the cohesion component with the corresponding cohesion measure scale areas.

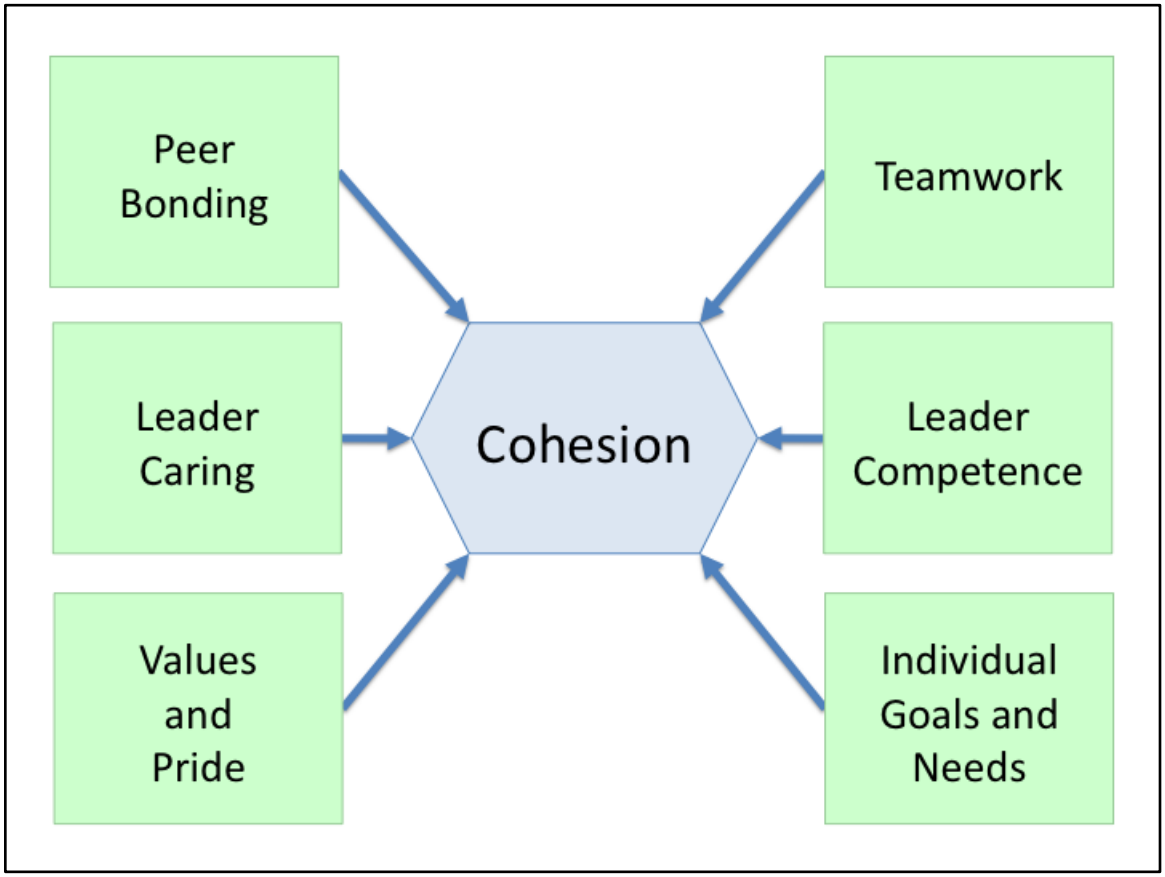

Figure 4. Cohesion Measure Scale Areas from Siebold and Kelly[56]

Hypothesis 1 is derived from affective horizontal and vertical bonding and the corresponding areas of peer bonding and leader caring on the cohesion measure scale. Hypothesis 2 is derived from instrumental horizontal and vertical bonding and the corresponding areas of teamwork and leader competence. Comparing the components of

[56] Siebold and Kelly, *Development of the Combat Platoon Cohesion Questionnaire*, 5.

cohesion between Theater Mission Forces (TMF) and National Mission Forces (NMF) will highlight the influence of selection and training in Hypothesis 3. Hypothesis 4 will be explored by comparing the DRS-15 to aspects of the PCI and the additional questions outside of the PCI and DRS. This will provide some insight into how Kobasa's concept of hardiness influences unit cohesion.

Combining the four hypotheses described above with the additional factors of leadership comprises the overall concept of unit cohesion to be explored in this study. Figure 5 combines all the proposed factors and graphically represents the theoretical framework outlined above. Five conceptual contributors combine to affect unit cohesion. The correlation between cohesion and effectiveness, described in Chapter II, is the reason for conducting this investigation.

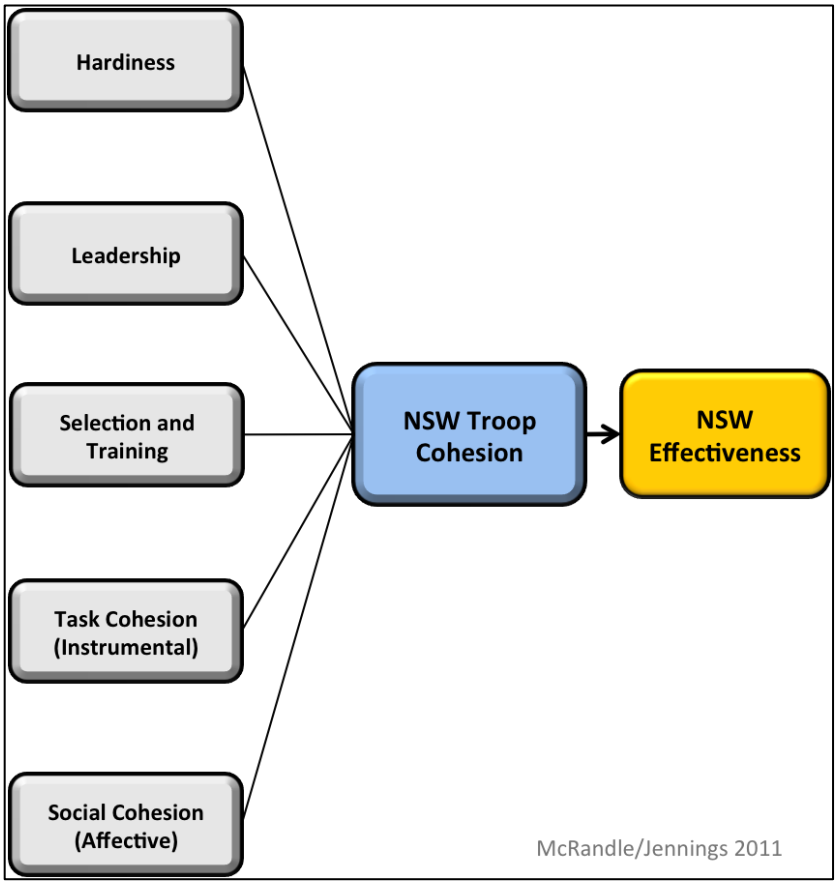

Figure 5. Theory of NSW Unit Cohesion

C. LEVEL OF ANALYSIS

The core operational unit of NSW has been in a constant state of change and refinement throughout the roughly 70-year history of NSW. From the 5-to-7 man boat crews of the Naval Combat Demolition Units (NCDU) in Europe, the 100-man Underwater Demolition Teams (UDT) in the Pacific, the 14-man Platoons of SEALs in Vietnam, to 35-man SEAL Troops employed in the current conflicts, the numerical size of the core operational unit has changed to meet tactical needs. The target unit of this cohesion investigation is the current 35-man SEAL Troop. Although the Troop comprises smaller functional units that can work independently, it is the Troop that works, trains, and deploys together. Troop members become thoroughly acquainted, both professionally and personally, during the 24-month workup and deployment cycle.

The notion of the primary group, developed by the sociologist Charles Cooley, is described in the literature review. The primary group is "characterized by intimate face-to-face association and cooperation."[57] The size and practical utilization of a SEAL Troop is in alignment with this definition of the primary group. Troop members are highly interdependent and must work together to accomplish designated assignments and tasks. Both training assignments and operational deployments are usually at the Troop level. This time together, usually away from higher command, reinforces the primary group bonds of the Troop.

Outside of the scope of primary group cohesion are the NSW organizational units directly above and below the SEAL Troop. The next organizational level above the SEAL Troop is the Squadron. The Squadron or SEAL Team is comprised of three or four SEAL Troops and is too large an organization to meet the criteria for being labeled a primary group. An NSW operator would have little interaction with another operator in another Troop and very rarely would the operator be in contact with leadership in the headquarters element of the Squadron.

If this investigation had been conducted prior to 2001, the primary group studied would have been SEAL Platoon. The SEAL Platoon is a 16-man unit that is one

[57] Cooley, *Social Organization*, 23.

organizational level below the current Troop structure. Prior to the NSW-21 reorganization, the SEAL Platoon was the core operational unit of NSW. Like the Troops of today, the Platoon trained and was organized to deploy as a stand-alone unit. The Platoon organizational level also meets the primary group definition; however, the new task organization of NSW-21 and operational requirements have the shifted to the Troop model. As such, NSW Platoon cohesion is not the focus of this investigation.

The qualifier "NSW" must be attached when referencing the nomenclature Platoon because a NSW Platoon is different from an Army Platoon. This can be confusing because the survey used to measure cohesion in this investigation was based on the Army Platoon model. The closest organizational equivalent of the Army Platoon in NSW is SEAL Troop. The equivalence is not in mission or training but in the number of assigned personnel and levels of daily interaction.

The CPCQ was developed by Guy Siebold and Dennis Kelly and is the precursor to the PCI that will be used in this study. In developing the questionnaire Siebold and Kelly considered "the appropriate echelon level to measure cohesion."[58] Since this questionnaire was developed to measure cohesion in Army units, the study examined the dynamics of leadership and unit employment at the squad, Platoon, and company levels to determine the most appropriate level to measure cohesion. Army companies were found to be too large since whole Platoons are often "cross-attached" and companies did not frequently work together as whole units. The study found the optimal level meeting Cooley's description of the primary group to be the Army Platoon (NSW Troop equivalent). Siebold and Kelly choose the Platoon level of organization for analysis by interviewing squad, Platoon, and company leaders and by examining survey results.[59] Additionally, the Platoon and NSW Troop equivalent are within the construct of the primary group.

[58] Siebold and Kelly, *Development of the Combat Platoon Cohesion Questionnaire*, 4.

[59] Ibid.

IV. SETTING THE STAGE: HISTORY, ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE, AND CURRENT ISSUES

A. A SHORT HISTORY OF NSW

1. Origins

The Naval Special Warfare (NSW) forces of today trace their heritage, as do many modern U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF), to World War II. Specifically, NSW draws upon the legacies of such units as the Amphibious Scouts and Raiders (Joint), Naval Combat Demolition Units (NCDU), the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) Operational Swimmers, and the Underwater Demolition Teams (UDT). Each of these units was created to address a specific wartime requirement and of which, only the UDT remained after the close of the war. The UDTs eventually provided the initial manpower for the establishment of the first Sea, Air, and Land (SEAL) Teams in 1962.

During World War II, these naval special operations units were predominantly employed in support of large amphibious invasion forces. From North Africa during the first allied landings in November 1942, to the island hopping campaigns in the Pacific theater in 1944 and 1945, the necessity of massive amphibious landings to close with the enemy brought with it the requirement to scout and clear the approaches to the enemy beaches.[60] This brought about the creation of first, the Scouts and Raiders, followed by the NCDUs, and finally, the UDTs. Each new unit, despite their employment in different theaters—Scouts and Raiders and NCDU predominantly operated in the European theater and the UDTs were exclusively in the Pacific theater—built upon the lessons learned from the earlier units and adapted those lessons to the evolving conditions of the war.

Perhaps the least recognized of the World War II U.S. Navy special operation units was the OSS Operational Swimmers, a unit that arguably had the most significant impact on the evolution of NSW's hallmark capability: combat diving. A young medical student named Christian Lambertson developed the Lambertson Amphibious Respiratory Unit (LARU), which was the precursor to the equipment used by today's SEAL combat

[60] Kevin Dockery, *Navy SEALs: The Complete History*, 1st ed. (New York: Berkley Books, 2004), 5.

divers. Spurned by the Navy when he demonstrated his new technology for them, he turned to the OSS where the reception was considerably warmer, and thus was born the OSS Operational Swimmers. Lambertson went on to develop tactics and techniques that formed the basis of combat diving doctrine for NSW that are still in prominent use today.[61]

2. Post-World War II Era

After defeating the Axis powers in 1945, the massive U.S. military that had been created to wage wars in two theaters now faced significant downsizing. The naval special operations units that had performed so admirably on the invasion beachheads now seemed extraneous to the larger U.S. Navy. Compounding this was the struggle for relevance that the Navy now faced after the defeat of the only hostile navies that posed a threat to the United States.[62] The UDT escaped the extinction and remained intact, albeit with significantly reduced numbers. In an effort to remain relevant and continually push the envelope, the UDT men began to expand their skill set beyond their traditional role and learn more extensive commando skills that would light the path for the creation of the SEAL Teams in the near future.[63]

As the first major undeclared war of the Cold War era in 1950, the Korean War demanded a necessary expansion in the role of the UDTs as the likelihood of major opposed amphibious landings in the future steadily diminished.[64] Thus, the evolution of the naval commandos continued throughout this conflict as they became increasingly involved in sabotage and unconventional operations farther and farther from the high water line.

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[61] Orr Kelly, *Brave Men - Dark Waters* (Pocket, 2003), 46–49.

[62] George Baer, *One Hundred Years of Sea Power: The U.S. Navy, 1890-1990* (Stanford University Press, 1996), 275–277.

[63] Kelly, *Brave Men - Dark Waters*, 59–67.

[64] The one notable exception to this was the landing at Inchon in late 1950. Beyond this, there were scant opportunities for the UDT to be employed in their traditional roles. Kelly, *Brave Men - Dark Waters*, 70.

3. Vietnam Era

The years following the Korean War found the UDT men continuing their innovative work, though still in search of a specific role within the evolving US military structure. The election of President John F. Kennedy in 1961 catapulted to the forefront the concepts of unconventional and irregular warfare that would become most closely associated with special operations forces.

In response to President John F. Kennedy's call for increased capabilities in "guerrilla-style" warfare, the Navy commissioned two SEa, Air, and Land (SEAL) Teams—SEAL Team ONE in Coronado, California and SEAL Team TWO in Norfolk, Virginia—in January 1962.[65] The test of the new unit's capabilities lay before them.

> All that had gone before with the UDTs, the actions in Korea, World War II, the Scouts and Raiders, and finally the NCDUs on Normandy Beach laid the groundwork for the SEALs. Vietnam would prove what they had become, the finest unconventional fighting force of the United States military.[66]

The SEALs' initial entry to Vietnam in 1963 began in an advisory role, as was part of their charter as the Navy's proponent for Kennedy's unconventional warfare capability. By 1966 however, the SEALs began operating primarily in a unilateral capacity when they were sent to the Rung Sat Special Zone to root out Viet Cong. Tasked to collect intelligence and conduct reconnaissance patrols, the SEALS took advantage of the considerable flexibility in their guidance by expanding operations and the "ambush became the primary SEAL field operation."[67] These operations continued throughout the remainder of the conflict as the SEALs developed into an extremely proficient counter-guerrilla force that accounted for numerous devastating blows against the Viet Cong.

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[65] Kevin Dockery, *SEALs in Action* (New York: Avon, 1991), 79–82.

[66] Dockery, *Navy SEALs*, 255.

[67] Dockery, *SEALs in Action*, 93.

4. Post-Vietnam Era

The era immediately following the Vietnam conflict was marked by an identity crisis for the SEALs and UDT. As the SEALs had become accustomed to the riverine environment during the war years, the post-war years found them once again at odds with the blue water Navy. There was discussion at some point of placing the active SEALs units in the Reserves, since the Navy perceived the special operations force to contain little value in its refocused preparations for a major conflict with the Soviet Union. This led to a self-assessment, as the SEALs had to define their mission set and subsequently "sell" themselves to the several fleets that theirs was a necessary capability for the fleet to retain.[68]

After narrowly escaping this brush with irrelevance, and the subsequent lean years of the 1970s, the following decade brought some of the most historically significant changes to date for all United States SOF, not just NSW. Most important among these was the Nunn-Cohen Amendment to the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act in 1986, legislation that created a unified combatant command in charge of all US SOF, United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) in April, 1987.[69] The direct impact to Naval Special Warfare came at the same time, when the Naval Special Warfare Command (WARCOM) was established as the Navy's special operations component command under USSOCOM. This resulted in more direct support monetarily, as the new unified command had what amounted to its own checkbook in Major Force Plan-11 (MFP-11).[70] With the re-structuring now complete, a number of smaller contingency operations would provide the opportunity for SOCOM to test its mettle before it received its most demanding task: serving as a supported command in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

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[68] Susan Marquis, *Unconventional Warfare: Rebuilding U.S. Special Operations Forces* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1997), 65–68.

[69] Marquis, *Unconventional Warfare*, 86–89, 145–147.

[70] Ibid., 209.

5. Global War on Terrorism Era

Since the beginning of the campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq in 2001 and 2003, respectively, NSW has maintained an enduring presence in both conflict zones. The missions that NSW forces have conducted range from the kinetic, such as targeted raids, to more non-kinetic, such as training partner forces in an effort to build capacity in the security forces of the respective countries. NSW has played a valuable role in these conflicts, even in light of the fact that neither country boasts a significant, or, in the case of Afghanistan any, coastline, which has often been an argument against employing NSW forces in such places. Nevertheless, the role of NSW has undeniably changed in comparison to previous conflicts.

Looking as far back as World War II, most U.S. naval special operations units served very specific and often transitory needs. The absence of sufficient stability and an uncertain future could, in some ways, be attributed to the manner in which these forces fell within the U.S. Navy hierarchy. The focus of the Navy has, for the most part, always been the large ships in the fleet. However, continuous adaptation and innovation, exhibited by episodic organizational change, has allowed NSW to remain relevant and survive, even through the lean years of post-war downsizing. The following section examines the effect of the most recent of these organizational changes, Naval Special Warfare-21 (NSW-21), on the ability of the operational units to function as cohesive elements.

B. ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE: NSW-21'S IMPACT ON UNIT COHESION

In 2000 and 2001, the NSW force underwent the most significant organizational restructuring in the nearly 60-year existence of the organization. Dubbed NSW-21, this restructuring was implemented in an effort to consolidate redundant functions and standardize certain processes across the force.[71] The aftermath of this transformation has, as with many major changes, had both positive and negative consequences.

[71] Louis M. McCray and Steven K. Renly, "Naval Special Warfare 21: An Analysis of Organizational Change in the 21st Century" (Monterey, CA: Naval Postgraduate School, 2001), 1, http://edocs.nps.edu/npspubs/scholarly/theses/2001/Dec/01Dec_Renly.pdf.

The uncertain future of conflict beyond the near horizon of Iraq and Afghanistan calls for SOF that are highly adaptive to the changing nature of warfare. This suggests that certain centralizing features of the NSW-21 model are a paradoxical match to the flexible units required in an uncertain environment. Organizational design theory suggests that for units that operate in environments with significant uncertainty, there exists an inherently high level of trust and cohesiveness among the individuals that comprise the unit.[72] One of the preeminent organizational theorists, Henry Mintzberg, developed a theory that describes how organizations operating in complex and unstable environments—which can certainly be said of the SOF operational environments—must cope with high levels of uncertainty. Such organizations cope with this complexity through a mechanism known as mutual adjustment. Mutual adjustment is epitomized by the ability of the core operators to adapt to each other as they progress; certainly, in a physically hostile environment such as combat, unit cohesion is an integral part of this mechanism.

1. NSW-21 Revisited

The NSW-21 realignment was initiated to achieve five specific goals: 1) development of a new NSW Squadron design; 2) realignment of training; 3) restructuring the force; 4) optimizing command and control relationships in forward operational areas; and 5) creation of a new Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (C4ISR) backbone.[73] It has been in the implementation of the first three of these initiatives that the most direct impact on unit cohesion can be found.

a. Development of the NSW Squadron

Almost immediately, noticeable change wrought from the NSW-21 realignment came from the first of these initiatives: the creation of the NSW Squadron. This did not establish a new hierarchy; rather, it transformed the existing structure of the

[72] Henry Mintzberg, *The Structuring of Organizations: A Synthesis of the Research* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1979).

[73] Eric H. Seeger, *A Tribute to Special Operations* (Tampa, FL: Faircount, 2003), 133, 199.

SEAL Team into a deployable entity by adding combat enablers that provided the headquarters element the ability to function in a deployed command and control capacity. Prior to this, the SEAL Team operated strictly in a "man, train, and equip" capacity. The intent of this was to replace the SEAL Platoon with the Squadron as NSW's "core deployable asset."[74]

(1) Impact on Unit Cohesion. From a theoretical perspective, the impact this change has on cohesion is best understood when looking at the levels of analysis. As mentioned in Chapter II, the level of analysis where cohesion prevails is at the primary group, in this case, the Platoon and Troop. By placing the emphasis of the operational focus on the squadron under this construct, the role of the Platoon is somewhat diminished. This can be perceived as an encroachment on the capabilities of the primary group by the secondary group, negatively impacting the group dynamic and possibly diminishing unit cohesion and individual morale.

b. Realignment of Training

As described in a previous study on the topic of NSW-21 conducted by Louis McCray and Steven Renly at the Naval Postgraduate School, under what was called the "old organizational strategy," SEAL Teams conducted the training for their Platoons at the team level.[75] Thus, on each coast, where there were three teams under the old strategy, there existed the potential for three completely different products in terms of the standard operating procedures (SOP) and tactics that the operational elements practiced. The disadvantage this presented was a limitation of the interoperability with Platoons from different teams. NSW-21 changed this significantly.

When the realignment of training occurred, the training cells organic to each individual team were consolidated into a single Training Detachment (TRADET), now located at the Group level headquarters. TRADET would facilitate training for all four of the subordinate squadrons and was primarily responsible for providing training during Unit Level Training (ULT).

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[74] McCray and Renly, "Naval Special Warfare 21," 50.

[75] Ibid., 59.

(1) Impact on Unit Cohesion. The aggregate effect on cohesion specific to this initiative is probably negligible. While the establishment of another hierarchical command structure represented a resource drain from the operational elements, certain economies were no doubt realized by consolidating three separate entities into one, albeit larger, organization. Furthermore, the standardization of training provided a considerable amount of predictability for both the recipients of the training, the Platoon members, and the trainers themselves. The downside of this is an unavoidable amount of rigidity. The structure of an organization such as TRADET is suitable for the very stable training environment and thus, many of the processes become routine. These arrangements make adaptation and change a more difficult endeavor.[76] Since the current operational environment is marked by enduring change, if the training environment is unable to keep pace, then the units receiving the training are likely to suffer. At the unit level this can perpetuate what is defined in this study as a perception-reality gap; in this particular case, the mismatch of the perception gained in training with the reality of operational employment.

c. Restructuring the Force

The third initiative of the NSW-21 transformation is marked by two major changes: the restructuring of the training and deployment cycle and the creation of new commands to support the overall initiative. The restructuring of the training and deployment cycle was a necessity for the new training detachments to support pre-deployment training. Again, because of the more rigid nature of the supporting organization, the system needed to become more rigid in turn. The training cycle was reconfigured so that all Squadrons now completed a two-year cycle, broken into four distinct six month blocks of training and deployment [professional development (PRODEV), unit-level training (ULT), squadron integration training (SIT), and deployment]. Figure 6 provides a graphical depiction of this cycle for one NSW Group.

[76] Henry Mintzberg, "Organization Design: Fashion or Fit?," *Harvard Business Review* (February 1981): 9.

In addition to the TRADETs, two new SEAL Teams—SEAL Team SEVEN in Coronado and SEAL Team TEN in Little Creek—and two Logistics Support Units (LOGSU)—responsible for maintaining and issuing operational equipment for the deployable squadrons—were established under the NSW-21 initiative. The addition of one SEAL Team to each coast, now totaling four on each coast, allowed the two year training and deployment cycle to be maintained continuously.

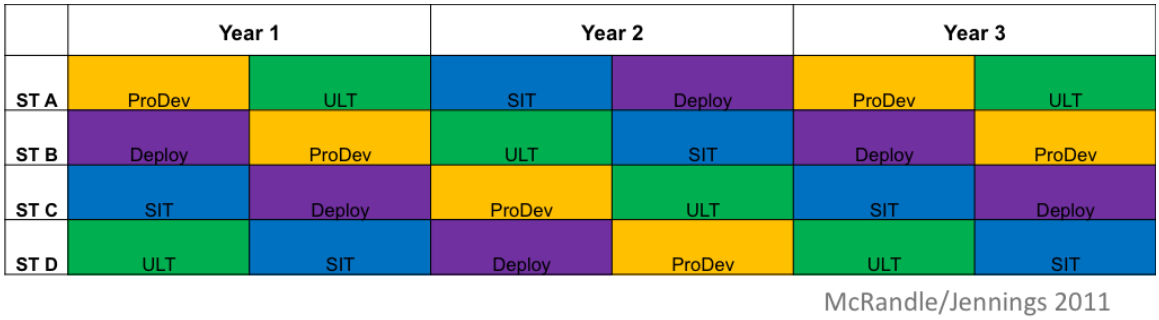

Figure 6. Notional Training and Deployment Cycle[77]

(1) Impact on Unit Cohesion. The rigid nature of the training and deployment cycle under the NSW-21 initiative is one of the primary contributors to the issue of "flush and fill," addressed later in this chapter. The flush and fill phenomenon contributes to the difficulty of the leadership to establish a cohesive unit because once a cycle is complete, the majority of the experienced personnel transfer out of the command, new personnel are brought in, and the cycle begins anew. Furthermore, the external demand for experienced personnel created by the TRADETs draws from the operational core of the Troops, diminishing the ability of the unit to cohere across multiple iterations of the training and deployment cycle. While any one of these three initiatives just addressed is not necessarily singularly responsible for any negative impact to cohesion, the combination has created conditions under which cohesion may suffer in the Troops.

[77] This cycle is representative of the training and deployment cycle for the component squadrons/teams within a Naval Special Warfare Group. The combination of actual unit designators and their respective deployment schedule is sensitive information.

2. Post NSW-21 Developments: The Only Constant Is Change

Much has changed since the NSW-21 realignment was initiated in 2002. Most prominent among these changes has been the uninterrupted state of conflict that NSW forces have experienced since the initiative was implemented. From the outset, NSW-21 has been tested under the most austere of conditions: protracted combat. Nevertheless, there have been a number of necessary changes to the original concept. The most important for the purposes of this study, occurred in late-2010.

a. Change In the Training and Deployment Cycle

Until late-2010, all NSW units assigned to Naval Special Warfare Groups (NSWG) ONE and TWO were on the two-year cycle described above. This recently changed for both Groups in order to accommodate changing theater requirements. The full cycle is still 24-months; however, instead of there being four distinct blocks, three of the four squadrons on each coast will train for 16 months and subsequently deploy for eight months, while one of the four squadrons will be on a shorter cycle of eight months of training and four months of deployment.[78] As a result, the latter group will complete two of these shorter cycles for each one that the former completes. Figure 7 depicts this cycle graphically.

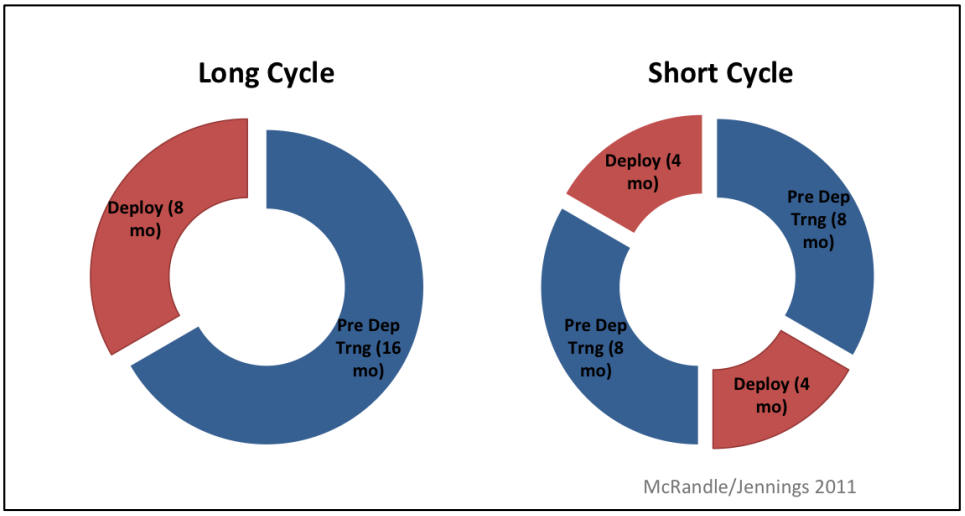

Figure 7. Current NSW Training and Deployment Cycles

[78] Personal interview, SEAL O-4/Lt. Cmdr., February, 2011.

b. The Troop Is the New Platoon

The concept of the SEAL Platoon as the primary NSW unit of action has prevailed since the days of the UDT in World War II, when their primary operational elements were comprised of two officers and 15 enlisted men.[79] As the requirements for Operation's ENDURING FREEDOM and IRAQI FREEDOM increased, so, too, did the level of authority necessary to provide command and control (C2) over NSW elements. An element known as a Task Unit has long been a part of NSW doctrine, serving as a task organized element established for a specific operation and assigned the necessary elements to enable it to achieve its objective. This element was designed for contingency operations and sufficed in providing C2 prior to the current state of protracted conflict; however, the complexity of operating in a joint environment with conventional forces demanded a higher level of authority. Therefore, the Task Unit grew in permanence and became known as the Troop throughout the predeployment work up and now generally serves as NSW's primary maneuver element.[80]

C. CURRENT ISSUES RELATED TO UNIT COHESION

The following topics are compiled from evidence gathered from interviews conducted during the course of this research, the authors' personal experience in NSW as enlisted and officer members, and from survey comments. This section addresses a number of wide ranging issues that serve as indicators for the absence or presence of unit cohesion. This section lays the groundwork for the central issues that will be examined in greater detail when analyzing the survey results.

1. "Flush and Fill"

Despite the recent change in the training and deployment cycle, the individual SEALs assigned to each Troop remain together, either conducting training or in a deployed status, for the same 24-month period that they were under the previous training

[79] Dockery, *Navy SEALs*, 79.

[80] The entity of a task unit still exists under the current structure. The entity known as a Troop is just the maneuver element, comprised exclusively of SEALs, that provides the core of the Task Unit once deployed and assigned to a deployed higher headquarters. Thus, the Troop Commander becomes the Task Unit commander and assumes responsibility for all of the additional combat enablers.

and deployment cycle. The problem lies in the fact that very little continuity exists from each 24-month cycle to the next, and the continuity that does exist comes from the more junior enlisted personnel who just completed their first deployment. This phenomenon is known by the dubious title of "flush and fill."

A by-product of the NSW-21 re-alignment, "flush and fill" exists primarily due to the growth of the NSW force and the consequent expanding requirements, as well as the rigidity of the training and deployment cycle. The effect of this issue is manifested in the readiness of the unit. Following deployment and the transfer of personnel, a returning Troop is reduced to the lowest state of readiness until it has completed the necessary requirements mandated to qualify once again as combat ready. Figure 8 illustrates a notional readiness cycle for a Squadron and its Troops under both the long and short cycle constructs. As can be seen, the long cycle Troops suffer a significant decrease in readiness at the end of one training and deployment cycle; whereas, the short cycle Troops are able to complete two cycles and arguably, are able to gain more efficiencies by virtue of working together through more iterations of the cycle's components. The potential advantages of this will be discussed in Chapter VII.

Another concern the flush and fill issues raises is that with large numbers of personnel transferring out of the Troop prior to completing their first tour at the command, the dominant demographic within the Troops is now first-time members, or "new guys." [81] This most likely comes as a result of the increased requirements and a recent decrease in retention.[82]

[81] A tour for an enlisted member on his first assignment in NSW is five years. A tour for an officer is two years. Thus, an enlisted member will generally complete only two deployment cycles before moving to another assignment.

[82] Rear Adm. Edward G. Winters, "Naval Special Warfare Pressure on the Force" (Naval Special Warfare Command Presentation, Coronado, CA, January 26, 2011), Slide 2, 4.

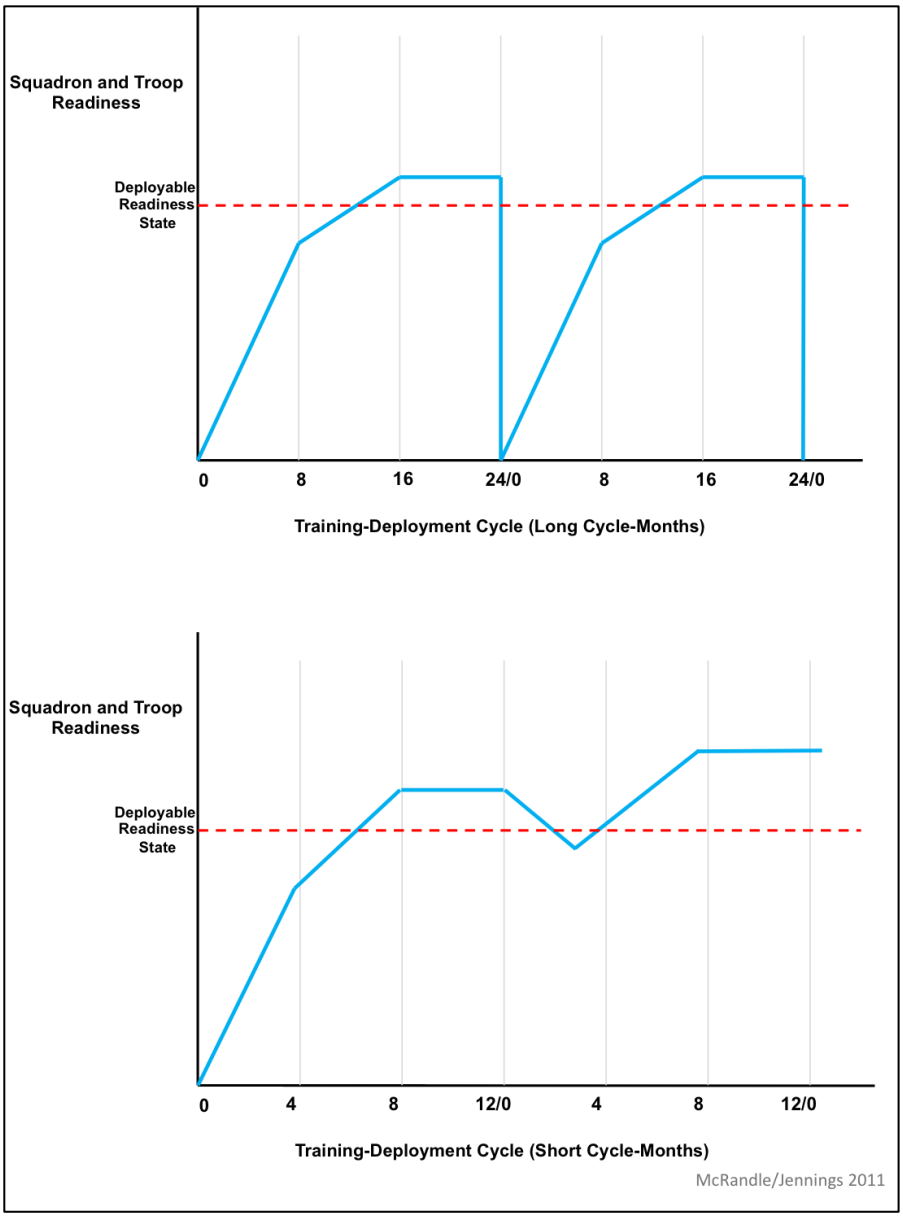

Figure 8. Squadron and Troop Readiness

2. Retention

The issue of retention is also related to unit cohesion, though this relationship is not necessarily indicated by a causal relationship. Any discussion of the relationship between the issues of cohesion and retention runs the risk of falling prey to the chicken or the egg dilemma. The questions raised are: Are Troops less cohesive because there is greater turnover, resulting in less experienced and potentially less qualified operators?

Or, are more people getting out because the units are not as closely knit and there is less nonmaterial incentive to retain them? Recent research suggests the former. A Quick Poll, conducted by the Navy Personnel, Research, Studies & Technology (NPRST) in early 2010 revealed that the top three reasons for both SEAL officers and enlisted to leave the Navy were: 1) Time spent away from home (officers–72%; enlisted-60%), 2) Impact of Navy on family (officer-68%; enlisted-53%), and 3) Balance between work and personal time (officer-58%; enlisted-49%).[83]

Although this research does not suggest a direct causal relationship with unit cohesion, there are studies that hypothesize a correlation between increased turnover and a decrease in group cohesiveness.[84] The idea being that as larger numbers of experienced SEALs make the decision to leave the military, there will be a void that can likely only be filled by lesser experienced individuals. Thus, a drop in retention of experienced SEALs, even though it does not directly influence a decline in unit cohesion, can perpetuate a decline if cohesion is already low, or if there is some other factor at work against cohesion.

3. Meaningful Employment

The concept of meaningful employment refers to the internal perception by individuals within the operational units that they are being employed in a manner representative of their unit's skill level. One needs to look only at the word "perception" to understand that this is largely a subjective concept. Therefore, measuring its impact empirically proves exceedingly difficult.

The 2010 Quick Poll, conducted by the NPRST, also found that the most important factor contributing to increased command morale was "operational

[83] Carol Newell, Kimberly Whittam, and Zannette Uriell, "2010 SEAL/SWCC/EOD/Divers Retention Quick Poll", April 29, 2010, Slides 18–23.

[84] Jennifer George, "Understanding Prosocial Behavior, Sales Performance, and Turnover: A Group-Level Analysis in a Service Context," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 75, no. 6 (December 1990): 700.

employment."[85] Still, this does not alleviate the subjectivity of the concept; it merely confirms the existence of a correlation between "command morale" and the perception of meaningful employment. Any reference to this issue might be a stronger indicator of issues with unit leadership in managing expectations than of an actual value judgment on a unit's operational employment. Both authors have experienced deployments to locations that were deemed less than optimal, yet the units associated with the mission exhibited relatively high levels of cohesiveness.

In describing the issue of meaningful employment, one SEAL officer said that it is not so much the actual employment that is the concern as is the perceived value of the employment held by certain "internal haves and have-nots" at the commands. This refers to the belief resident in certain elements that different units within the Squadron, the Group, or even NSW as a whole might be receiving a "better deal" regarding their deployment location. By this rationale, the issue of meaningful employment is actually better understood as a matter of perception, or expectation, management.[86] Additionally, this is similarly related to the concept of hardiness, described in Chapters II and III. Specifically, in the sense that high-hardy leaders are able to convey to their men the importance of their mission under what might be viewed as less than desirable employment conditions. While this addresses the issue of leadership ability to manage expectations, it does not address the root of the problem: how the initial perceptions of operational employment were established.

4. Perception-Reality Gap

Closely related to meaningful employment and expectation management is a concept developed in the course of this research dubbed the perception-reality gap. This

[85] Newell, Whittam, and Uriell, "2010 SEAL/SWCC/EOD/Divers Retention Quick Poll," Slide 14. No definition of "Operational Employment" was provided, though it is reasonable to assume the terms meaningful employment and operational employment can be used synonymously in this context. Additionally, the terminology of "command morale" is slightly different than what has been defined thus far in this study. In Chapter II, morale was defined as an individual trait, while something existing at the command level, or the secondary group, would be defined as *esprit de corps*. According to the framework established in this study, this reference to "command morale" most fittingly equates to the concept of unit cohesion.

[86] Personal interview, SEAL O-5/Cmdr., February, 2011.

issue seemed to resonate with most interviewees as one of the most, if not the most, important issues related to unit cohesion. This gap begins with what one interviewee called "false advertising," stating that everything SEAL candidates and trainees are exposed to—from recruiting videos to literature concerning NSW—emphasizes the kinetic aspect of special operations.[87] This is continually reinforced through SEAL Qualification Training—where candidates complete the crucible of initial training and receive their Special Warfare insignia, the Trident—and Unit Level Training once they arrive at their first command. Potentially, a young SEAL might never even be exposed to a mission such as Foreign Internal Defense (FID)[88]—predominately a non-kinetic activity—until deployment. Yet, these missions are commonly assigned to deploying NSW units, despite the lack of proper preparation for such missions.

The concept of expectation management becomes crucially important here because, left unmanaged, a young SEAL's perception of what NSW does when its forces deploy will rely solely on the "false advertising" and the conditioning to kinetic action that prevails throughout training. Without continual expectation management on the part of the unit leaders, the perception-reality gap risks becoming toxic to unit cohesion once reality sets in. However, this seems incongruous that the expectations of members of an elite combat unit should have to be suppressed prior to deploying to a combat theater; furthermore, this hints at larger organizational inconsistencies that the burden of this task should fall on the tactical leaders alone.

5. Leadership

Building upon the levels of analysis introduced in Chapter II, the leadership of each group—primary and secondary—shares the burden of ensuring the effectiveness of their particular charges. In the broadest sense, the leadership at various levels has the responsibility of implementing, communicating, and, if necessary, recommending

[87] Personal interview, SEAL O-5/Cmdr. (select), February, 2011.

[88] U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Publication 3-07.1: Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Foreign Internal Defense (FID)* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, April 30, 2004), ix. The Joint Publication defines FID as "... the participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programs taken by another government or designated organization, to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency."

changes to the organization's vision and mission. A breakdown in any one of these leadership tasks can have tremendous effects on unit cohesion.

a. Secondary Group Leadership

Secondary group leadership refers to all of the levels of leadership above the Troop level. Specific to NSW, this begins with the strategic vision established at the force level. This vision should articulate a future-oriented concept of what the organization's roles are within the larger SOF community and, most importantly, should be "...consistent with (the organization's) actual capabilities."[89] This last part is important and is related to some of the larger issues within NSW.

Some of the more significant issues discussed in the interviews include the lack of predictability, uncertainty of what the future may hold for the force, and the sense that the leadership continually volunteers an already overstretched force for additional commitments.[90] This point, in particular, is exacerbated when that commitment may not fall in line with the perceived capabilities of the operational units. All of these, but particularly unpredictability and uncertainty, are significant indicators of, at best, poor communication of a strategic vision and, at worst, the lack of a coherent strategic vision.

b. Primary Group Leadership

Primary group leadership refers to the leadership at the Troop and Platoon level. The impact that this demographic has on unit cohesion becomes one of the linchpins in the determination of the operational element's success or failure. As mentioned previously in this section, the primary group leaders must manage the "gap" between what is perceived and what is real. Accordingly, the larger the gap, the greater the burden is that is placed on the Troop and Platoon leadership to unite their men to accomplish the assigned mission.

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[89] Edwin A. Locke, *The Essence of Leadership: The Four Keys to Leading Successfully* (Lexington Books, 1991), 56.

[90] Personal interview, SEAL O-4/Lt. Cmdr., February, 2011; Personal interview, SEAL O-5/Cmdr., February, 2011; Personal interview, SEAL E-8/Sen. Chief, March, 2011

D. CONCLUSION

Throughout the relatively brief history of NSW, many changes have adjusted the direction of the force's development; however, among the most important concepts unaltered by the changes has been the culture and spirit of the organization. Innovation, adaptability, performance under the most austere of conditions; these indicators have been the hallmark of Naval Special Warfare since its inception. Today's conflict environment provides a significant demand signal for the capabilities that have historically been, and continue to be, the specialty of NSW operational elements; yet, there are still indicators of negative impacts to unit cohesion. If this is so, then why are the operators seemingly unhappy? The next chapter introduces how this question might be answered.

V. SURVEYS AND INTERVIEWS

The primary means of data collection for this study was achieved by a survey questionnaire administered to each operational Troop within Naval Special Warfare (NSW). Qualitative data to supplement the quantitative survey results was gathered through a series of personal interviews with senior officer and enlisted leaders external to the Troops.

A. SURVEY

The primary method of data collection used for this study was survey research. A large-*n* (approximately 900 NSW operators), cross-sectional methodology was employed in the form of a survey questionnaire.[91] By definition, a survey is a cross-sectional study; however, due to the cyclical nature of the rotations of NSW units discussed in Chapter IV, the data can also be viewed in a manner somewhat analogous to a time-series study. Though the study was not able to follow a specific unit, or group of units over time, the unique nature of the current training-deployment cycle provided a longitudinal snapshot of Troops in the phases of the training-deployment cycle. This cycle, and the nearly uniform training curriculum, provides a time series-like study in addition to the cross-sectional method. Obviously, this time series-like method does not account for the characteristics of each of the individuals that comprise the unit, which would be a factor in a true time-series study. However, given that the focus of this study is on the primary group, not the individual, this method offers greater applicability for the force overall.

1. Survey Components and Design

The survey is comprised of three sections: a section adapted from the Platoon Cohesion Index (PCI), developed by Guy L. Siebold and Dennis R. Kelly, researchers at the Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences; the Dispositional

[91] This study limits the population of the survey to members of SEAL Troops within operational NSW Squadrons. This is not to minimize the importance of the other operational elements of the NSW community, i.e., Special Boat Teams, SEAL Delivery Vehicle Teams, and Support Activities, but to provide an in depth study of one particular unit.

Resilience Scale (DRS) developed by Paul T. Bartone; and questions developed by the authors that reflect aspects of cohesion that are unique to NSW. Refer to Appendix A for a copy of the survey.

a. Platoon Cohesion Index

Siebold and Kelly developed the Platoon Cohesion Index (PCI) in 1988 as a condensed version of the Combat Platoon Cohesion Questionnaire (CPCQ). The CPCQ is a 98-item questionnaire designed to examine the direction of cohesion, or bonding, within the unit being studied. Specifically, the questions look at the 1) superior-subordinate relationship, or vertical bonding; 2) peer-to-peer relationships, or horizontal bonding; and 3) the relationship between the individual and the parent organization, or organizational bonding. Each of these relationships exhibits two aspects: affective (the emotional or feeling aspect) and instrumental (the task or functional aspect).[92] The nexus of these relationships and their aspects provide the basis for Siebold and Kelly's research.

The PCI retains the same components developed for the CPCQ in a truncated form. This was designed to provide the unit with a useful and not unwieldy tool for self-assessment.[93] The components and the corresponding questions in both the PCI and the NSW Unit Cohesion survey are displayed in Table 2.

The version of the PCI utilized for this research, while similar in content, was administered in a more simplified form than the original developers of the index administered their survey. Specifically, the original PCI was given to the members of Army light and mechanized infantry Platoons and the respective company leadership (officer and senior enlisted) was given a corresponding questionnaire that provided an external assessment of the same variables being examined at the individual level.[94] The authors of this study chose to limit this study to a survey given to the entire operational Troop—leadership and members—in order to simplify matters. This feature in the original implementation of the survey was done primarily to provide internal validity to

[92] Siebold and Kelly, *Development of the Combat Platoon Cohesion Questionnaire*, 2.

[93] Ibid., 1.

[94] Ibid., 7.

the PCI questionnaire. Since the validity of the construct has been established, it was not necessary for the purposes of this study to repeat that particular aspect of the research.[95]

CPCQ/PCI Scales	PCI Items	NSW Survey Items
Horizontal Bonding (HB)		
HB-Affective (HB-A)	3, 4	3.1.3, 3.1.4
HB-Affective, Leaders (HB-A,L)	7, 8	3.1.7, 3.1.8
HB-Instrumental (HB-I)	5, 6	3.1.5, 3.1.6
Vertical Bonding (VB)		
VB-Affective (VB-A)	9, 10	3.1.9, 3.1.10
VB-Instrumental (VB-I)	11, 12	3.1.11, 3.1.12
Organizational Bonding (OB)		
OB-Affective, Member Values (OB-A,MV)	1	3.1.1
OB-Affective, Leader Values (OB-A,LV)	2	3.1.2
OB-Affective, Pride (OB-A,P)	15, 16	3.1.15, 3.1.16
OB-Instrumental, Anomie (OB-I,A)	13, 14	3.1.13, 3.1.14
OB-Instrumental (OB-I,N)	17, 18	3.1.17, 3.1.18
OB-Instrumental, Goals (OB-I,G)	19, 20	3.1.19, 3.1.20

Table 2. PCI and NSW Unit Cohesion Survey Scales[96]

b. Dispositional Resilience Scale (DRS)

The DRS-15 was developed by Dr. Paul T. Bartone and refined over 25 years of research on the subject. The DRS-15 is a shorter version of two other scales (45 and 30 item questionnaires), which examines the personality quality described as hardiness. The DRS-15, used in the research for this study, has been validated through numerous studies involving many demographic groups, including military special operations units.[97]

As with the majority of the contemporary research on the subject of hardiness, the DRS-15 examines the factors of commitment, control, and challenge.

[95] Siebold and Kelly, *Development of the Platoon Cohesion Index*, 14.

[96] Siebold and Kelly, *Development of the Platoon Cohesion Index*, 5. Adapted from Table 1 on the referenced page. For a full description of each of the variables refer to the table in Appendix B. The PCI uses the term "First Termer's;" in the NSW Unit Cohesion survey the term "Member" is used in its place.

[97] Bartone et al., "Psychological Hardiness Predicts Success in US Army Special Forces Candidates."

> Commitment is the tendency to see the world as interesting and meaningful. Control is the belief in one's own ability to control or influence events. Challenge involves seeing change and new experiences as exciting opportunities to learn and develop.[98]

The DRS-15 appears in the NSW Unit Cohesion Survey in Section 1, questions 1 – 15 (See Appendix A).

c. Additional Questions

The remaining questions focus on the additional factors identified in Chapter IV: leadership and selection and training. Three components are examined within the leadership aspect: leadership's ability to deal with adversity, leadership's compassion, and member confidence in the Troop's leadership in combat. Additionally, the authors sought to examine the factors leading to the higher hypothesized levels of cohesion within National Mission Force (NMF) Troops compared to (TMF) Theater Mission Force Troops; thus, the primary factor differentiating the two: selection and training, is examined in this section as well. Figure 9 provides a graphical representation of how the theory, described in Chapter III, informs each of the survey components addressed above.

[98] Paul T. Bartone, "Hardiness-Resilience.com," February 20, 2008, http://www.hardiness-resilience.com/.

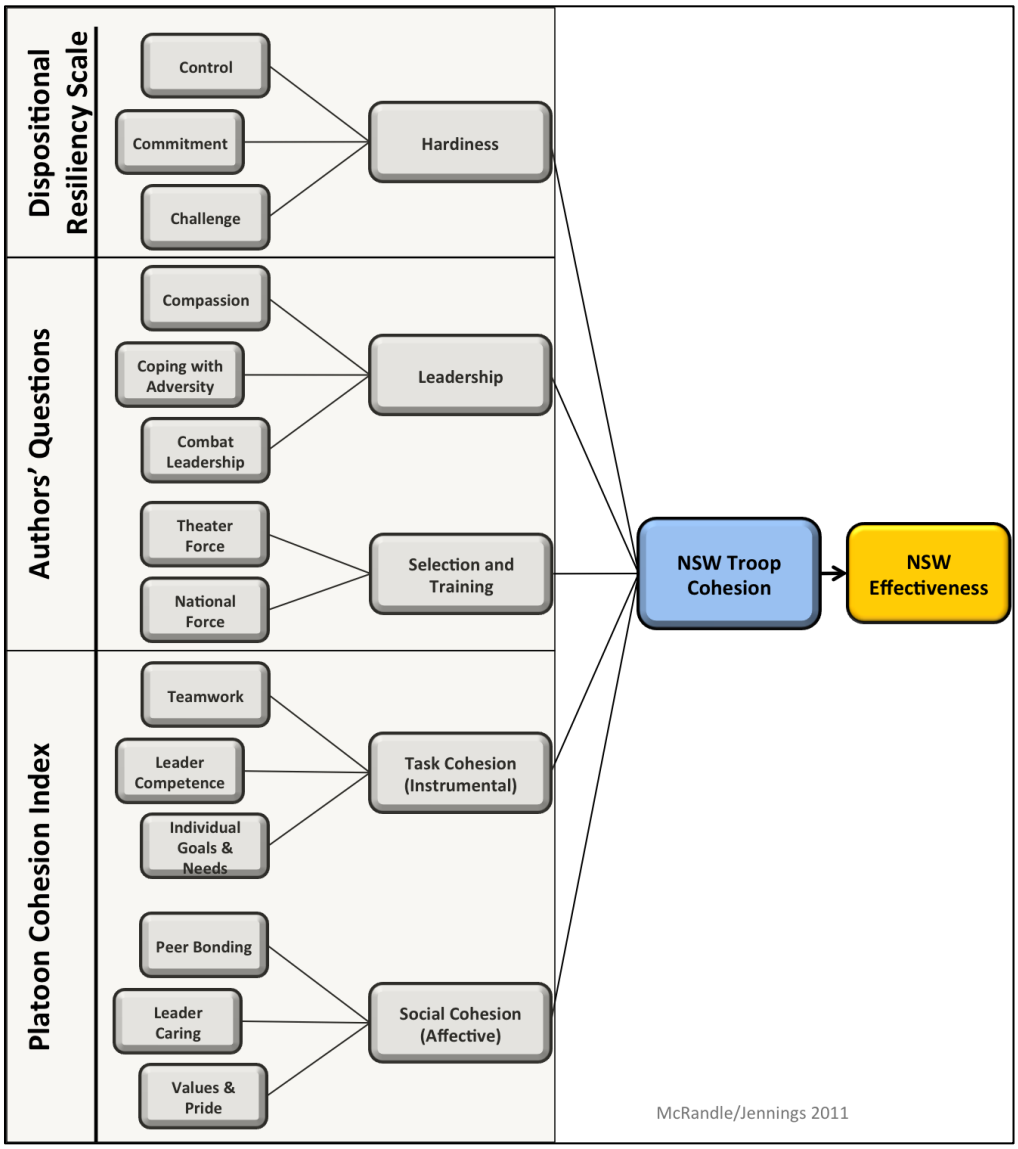

Figure 9. Survey Design and NSW Unit Cohesion Theory

2. Survey Distribution

The electronic survey was distributed to approximately 800 Troop members assigned to SEAL Teams within Naval Special Warfare Groups (NSWG) ONE and TWO. In an effort to maintain the anonymity of the respondents, the hyperlinks for the survey were sent to the Executive Officer (XO) at each SEAL Team for the XO to distribute to their respective Troops. The data was then collected on the online database

to which only the researchers had access. Additionally, a hard copy version of the survey was sent to a representative at the NMF for distribution to potential respondents there.

B. INTERVIEWS

Similar in concept to the external review conducted in the PCI, interviews with mid to senior-level SEAL enlisted and officer leaders were conducted in an effort to supplement the quantitative results drawn from the survey. The intent of the interview was twofold; first, it was designed to establish a consensus of the primary issues within NSW that are related to unit cohesion and second, it serves as a form of external validation for the survey results. The results of the interviews will be examined in more detail in Chapter VI.

The structure of the interview was designed to provide an overarching view of some of the current issues within NSW that are related to the concept of unit cohesion. Because of the varying interpretations of what exactly unit cohesion is, it was first necessary to establish a common baseline for analysis by having each interviewee provide their definition of unit cohesion and how it relates to performance. Next, respondents were asked to discuss the most significant issues facing the NSW community and their relationship to unit cohesion. Respondents were then asked to provide their opinion regarding potential remedies for the issues they addressed. Finally, each respondent was given an opportunity to address anything else related to unit cohesion that had not yet been addressed. Refer to Appendix C for a copy of the interview form.

C. RESEARCH CHALLENGES

The most significant challenge the authors faced in collecting data was getting access to potential respondents. Due to the substantial operational tempo of NSW forces, gaining access to a large audience at any one time to provide an overview of the research proved difficult. Furthermore, there was virtually no access to the deployed NSW units, which account for approximately one-third of the sample population. This resulted in briefing only a limited audience—generally, Troop or Platoon leadership of non-deployed Troops—and petitioning them to serve as advocates on behalf of the researchers. Given the requirements the current conflicts impose, this method

undoubtedly affected the response rate; however, the number of responses received still provided sufficient feedback to investigate the majority of the variables.

1. Recommendations for Future Researchers

a. Access to Respondents

Being that this study was conducted at the unclassified level, nearly all of the correspondence was thus conducted in the unclassified realm, including the survey distribution. However, NSW units conduct most of their daily business on the Secret Internet Protocol Router Network (SIPRnet), a classified network utilized primarily by the Department of Defense. By distributing the survey via this medium, the likelihood of obtaining more survey responses would have undoubtedly been increased. Furthermore, this would have provided greater access to the deployed NSW units who regularly operate on classified networks. Although this would make it more difficult to transfer the data between the classified and unclassified domains for analysis, the value gained from the greater volume and distribution of responses would likely offset any disadvantages presented.

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VI. RESEARCH RESULTS

A. INTRODUCTION

The questionnaire used in this study built upon two previously validated and widely utilized surveys: the 1988 Platoon Cohesion Index (PCI) and the 1995 Dispositional Resilience Scale-15 (DRS-15). In conjunction with the PCI and the DRS-15, this study sought to explore how the four primary leadership positions (Troop Commander, Troop Chief, Platoon Commander, and Platoon Chief) within a Naval Special Warfare (NSW) Troop affect cohesion. Each position was compared along the dimensions of ability to cope with adversity, compassion for subordinates, and combat leadership.

The survey targeted two broad groups within NSW: Theater Mission Forces (TMF) and National Mission Forces (NMF). Within the TMF, two Naval Special Warfare Groups (NSWG) were polled, NSWG ONE and NSWG TWO. Due to heightened operational requirements, access to and responses from the NMF were limited. Thus, the data recovered from this group was largely negligible and incorporated only in the analysis of the overall NSW force. This lack of data prevented a more thorough examination of Hypothesis #3, which posited that units with additional and more arduous selection and training criteria would exhibit increased levels of cohesion within the operational elements. However, despite the inability to study this particular hypothesis, the majority of the remaining data provided interesting insights into the dynamics of unit cohesion in NSW Troops.

The survey itself included a quantitative portion and a qualitative portion. The quantitative section comprised the majority of the overall survey and sought to explore the dynamics of the NSW Troop at the primary group level of analysis. The qualitative portion, which consisted of open field comment blocks largely sought to further explore the current issues in NSW and offer explanations of their relationship to NSW Troop cohesion.

For the purposes of the quantitative portion, descriptive statistics and regression analysis were used to examine the variables hypothesized to contribute to unit cohesion in NSW Troops. The following sections discuss the results of the statistical analysis and the comparative elements of this study with the previously established survey questionnaires.[99]

1. Statistical Analysis Overview

The PCI and the DRS-15 provided valuable data for the analysis of NSW unit cohesion; however, this integration of two previously established questionnaires did not come without challenges. The respective scales utilized in the PCI and the DRS-15 are markedly different from one another. The PCI utilizes a five-point Likert scale ranging from a response of "Strongly Agree" with a corresponding value of +2, to "Strongly Disagree" with a corresponding value of –2.[100] The DRS-15 utilizes a discrete, four-point scale ranging from the negative response of "Not True at All," to the two intermediate responses, "A Little True" and "Quite True," to the positive response of "Completely True." In an effort to maintain as much consistency as possible within the survey, the author-developed questions on leadership maintained the same scale as the PCI.

In order to conduct a more nuanced examination of the relationships between the variables, the respondents were grouped in a number of different categories based on the demographic data provided. These primary subgroups correspond with the geographical location of the commands: West Coast (NSWG ONE forces) and East Coast (NSWG TWO forces). Additionally, distinctions are made between officer, senior enlisted, and enlisted respondents; this is done primarily to glean information relevant to the leadership aspect of this study.

One of the challenges in designing a survey with differing scales was determining the best way to compare the results once they were collected. This factor, in particular, prevented a direct comparison of the averaged responses between the variable of

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[99] *Stata Statistical Software: Release 10* (College Station, TX: StataCorp LP, 2007).

[100] There were no ratings for the three intermediate scale choices. The intent was to offer more flexibility for the respondent by providing for a continuous, vice discrete, assessment of the questions.

hardiness, collected from the DRS-15, and the rest of the independent variables, gathered from the PCI and the author-generated questions. This is less important to the overall analysis as correlation and regression offer a scale-free analysis of the interaction between the observed variables. The only shortfall comes when observing the descriptive statistics and attempting to draw direct comparisons to the hypothesized variables contributing to NSW Troop unit cohesion. Table 3 provides the descriptive statistics for each of this study's independent variables.

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Hardiness	2.273*	.335
Troop Commander	1.563	.715
Troop Chief	1.386	.995
Platoon Commander	1.681	.548
Platoon Chief	1.639	.594
Task Cohesion	1.479	.784
Social Cohesion	1.352	.878
Selection & Training	.258**	.957

* Hardiness values range, on a four-point scale, from 0 to 3; in contrast to the values for the other variables presented in this table that range, on a five point scale, from -2 to +2.

** The scale for the set of variables goes from negative 2 to positive 2; thus, the standard deviation can be seen as an absolute value. This also explains why the standard deviation is greater, in non-negative terms, than the mean. It should also be noted that this variable, though shown in this table, is missing the key component of having polled the NMF in order to establish a distinction between the NMF and the TMF on the basis of selection and training.

Table 3. Independent Variables Means and Standard Deviations

In order to examine the variables in a more direct manner, the scales corresponding to the PCI and DRS-15 were adjusted to provide a more constructive analysis of the means in Table 3 above. Additionally, the variable of leadership was consolidated into one mean to assist in the direct comparison.

Variable	Mean	Adjusted Mean*
Leadership	1.567**	3.567
Task Cohesion	1.479	3.479
Social Cohesion	1.352	3.352
Hardiness	2.273	3.031
Selection & Training	.258	2.258

McRandle/Jennings 2011

* Because the PCI used a scale that incorporated negative numbers, the absolute value of the responses were used. Simply adding 2 to each of the means from the PCI and author-generated questions resolved this issue. Additionally, the scales between the PCI (a scale of 4) and the DRS-15 (a scale of 3) were normalized to the PCI and author generated scale.

** This number represents the mean of the consolidated leadership variables for each level of leadership, taken from the Table 3 values of 1.563, 1.386, 1.681, 1.639.

Table 4. Adjusted Means

Table 4 provides a much more distinct way to observe the impact of the hypothesized factors that contribute to unit cohesion. With the adjusted means, aligned along a scale of 0 to 4, one can now see that the consolidated Leadership variable received the highest levels in survey responses, while Selection and Training received the lowest levels. This is not surprising given the missing component of the NMF responses that were critical to the study of this particular variable. The remaining variables, ranked from higher to lower significance, are Task Cohesion, Social Cohesion, and Hardiness. Not appearing in the table but significant to more refined analysis are the sub-components of leadership. Drawing from Table 3, the adjusted means of the leadership sub-components, in rank order, are: Platoon Commander, Platoon Chief, Troop Commander, and Troop Chief.

From this analysis, it is important to discuss the concept of the primary and secondary groups introduced in Chapter II. The results from the leadership sub-components suggest that perhaps the attraction to the group is not isolated within discrete

groups such as the primary and secondary; rather, the larger group may have smaller subgroups that exert greater influence on the individual.[101]

2. Sample Validity

In order to demonstrate the representativeness of the survey data, a sample from each geographic subgroup—West Coast and East Coast—was taken by using the Troops with the highest response rate within each subgroup. Figures 10 and 11 provide visual comparisons of the important variables from the sample population with the greater subgroup.

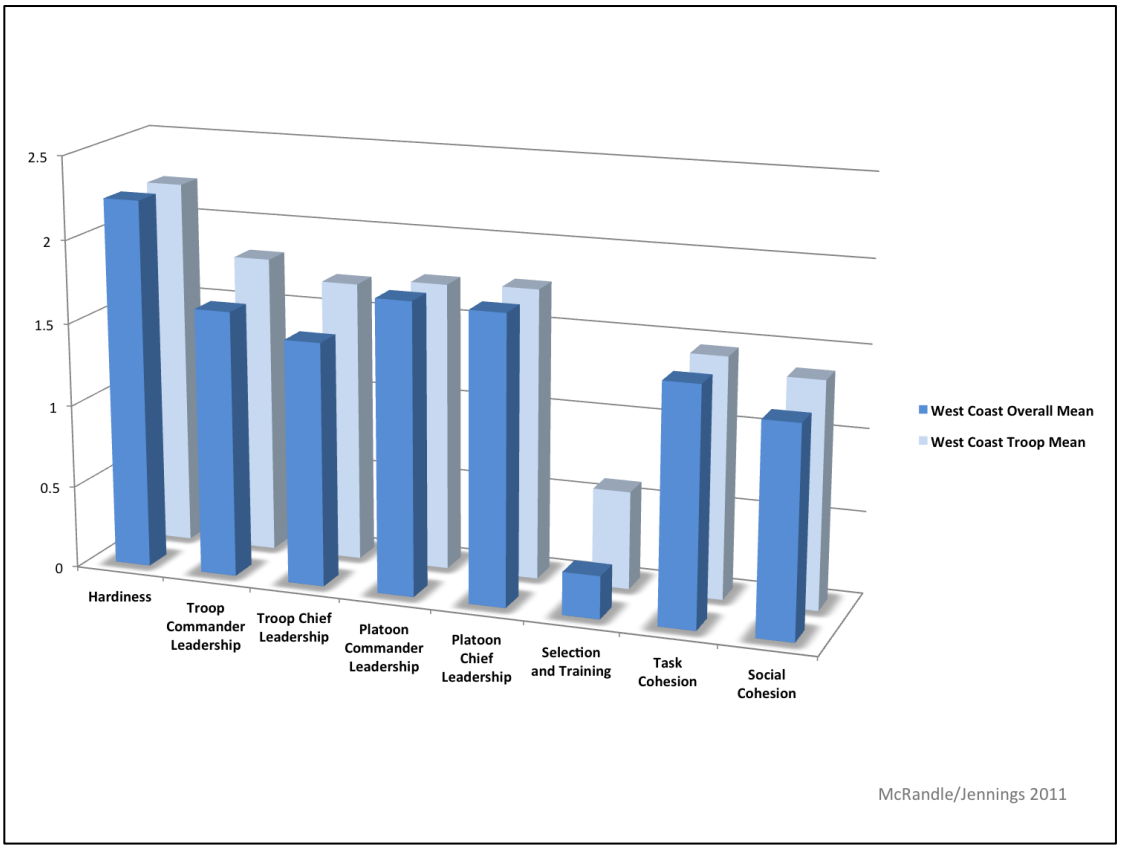

Figure 10. NSW West Coast Sample Validity

[101] This assertion is derived from the adjusted means of the Platoon and Troop leadership mentioned above; the Platoon leadership adjusted means were significantly higher than the Troop leadership adjusted means, suggesting that there exists a greater affinity for the group leadership the closer that level of leadership is to the individual.

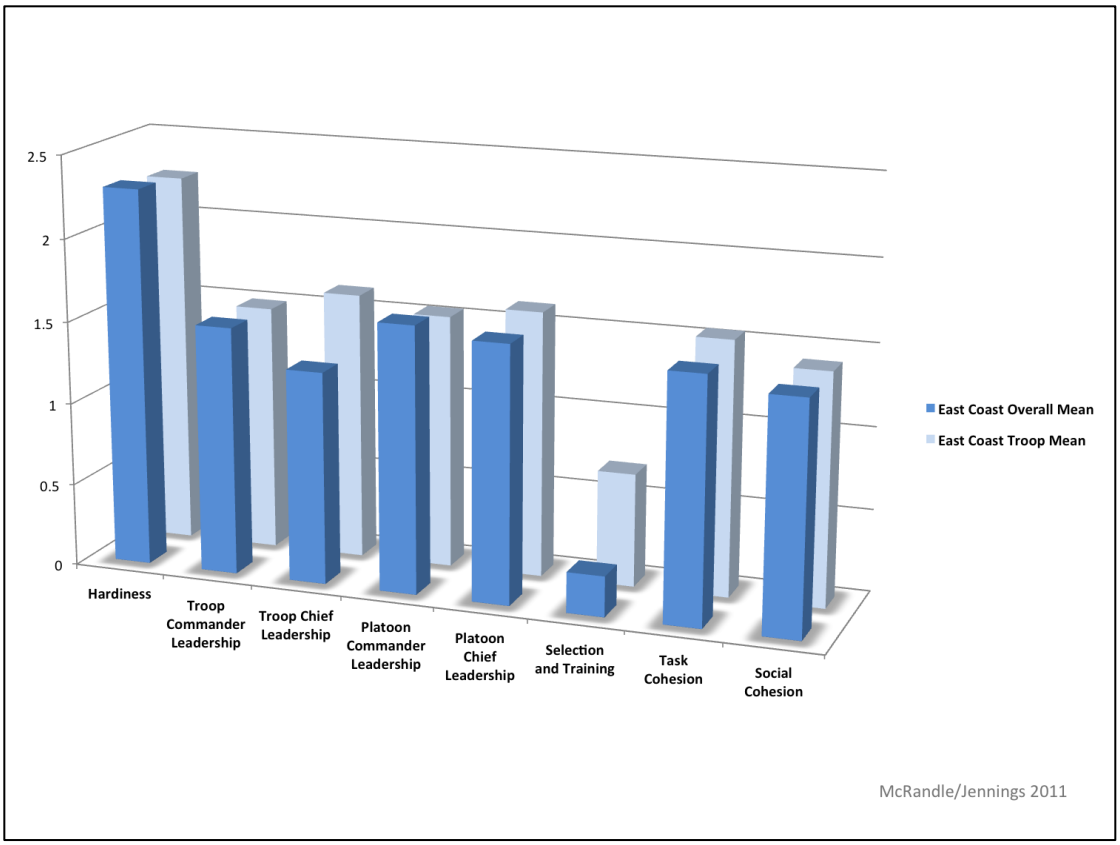

Figure 11. NSW East Coast Sample Validity

As the figures demonstrate, the samples for both subgroups are fairly representative of the overall responses. The most significant differences are found in the Selection and Training variable and with some of the Leadership variables. As mentioned previously, the significance of the Selection and Training variable is minimal due to the limited responses from the NMF. However, the wide variance between both samples and the sub groups is interesting and may be attributable to more than simple anomaly. The reasons for the slight variance in the responses to the leadership variables are more easily explained. Across the broader subgroups, the number of individuals representing the leadership levels being assessed are numerous; whereas within the sample groups there are only two individuals—in the case of the Platoon Commander and Platoon Chief—and only one individual—in the case of the Troop Commander and the Troop Chief—being

assessed for each level of leadership. Despite the perceived visual difference, these sample variables all fall within the acceptable range of statistical deviation and are thus quite representative of the subgroups.

3. External Sample Validity

Because portions of this research were taken from previously conducted studies—the DRS-15 and the PCI—it is necessary to examine the comparative nature of those two studies' results with the results from NSW Unit Cohesion Survey in order to determine if the responses in fact provide a statistically accurate representation. This was done by comparing the scores retrieved from the NSW Unit Cohesion Survey with the descriptive statistics published by the authors of both of the original studies.

a. DRS-15

The results of the NSW Unit Cohesion Survey that measure the hardiness factor provide considerable credibility to the assertions regarding the interplay of hardiness and unit cohesion in NSW Troops. The comparison of the NSW hardiness scores with the overall norms for adult males published by Dr. Paul Bartone reveal that the NSW community is comprised of above-average high-hardy individuals.[102] The scores of the sub-components of commitment, control, and challenge that comprise hardiness are presented graphically in Figure 12.

The distribution of the scores from the NSW study is comparable to the norms for the DRS-15, with the only apparent deviation being a slightly higher score for the control variable. As noted in Chapter V, control is "the belief in one's own ability to control or influence events."[103] One possible explanation of this slight incongruity may be that this particular trait is more often present in self-selected individuals who have overcome the significant barriers to entry of such an organization, as the members of

[102] When the authors received authorization to utilize the DRS-15, they were provided documentation that provided the norms that are used in the analysis mentioned in this chapter. The overall mean for the DRS-15 norms for adult males is 30.345, whereas the mean for NSW hardiness is 34.089, just under four points higher on a 0 to 45 scale.

[103] Bartone, "Hardiness-Resilience.com."

NSW Troops are. Nonetheless, the norms for NSW hardiness establish sufficient validity for the study when compared to the originally published work.

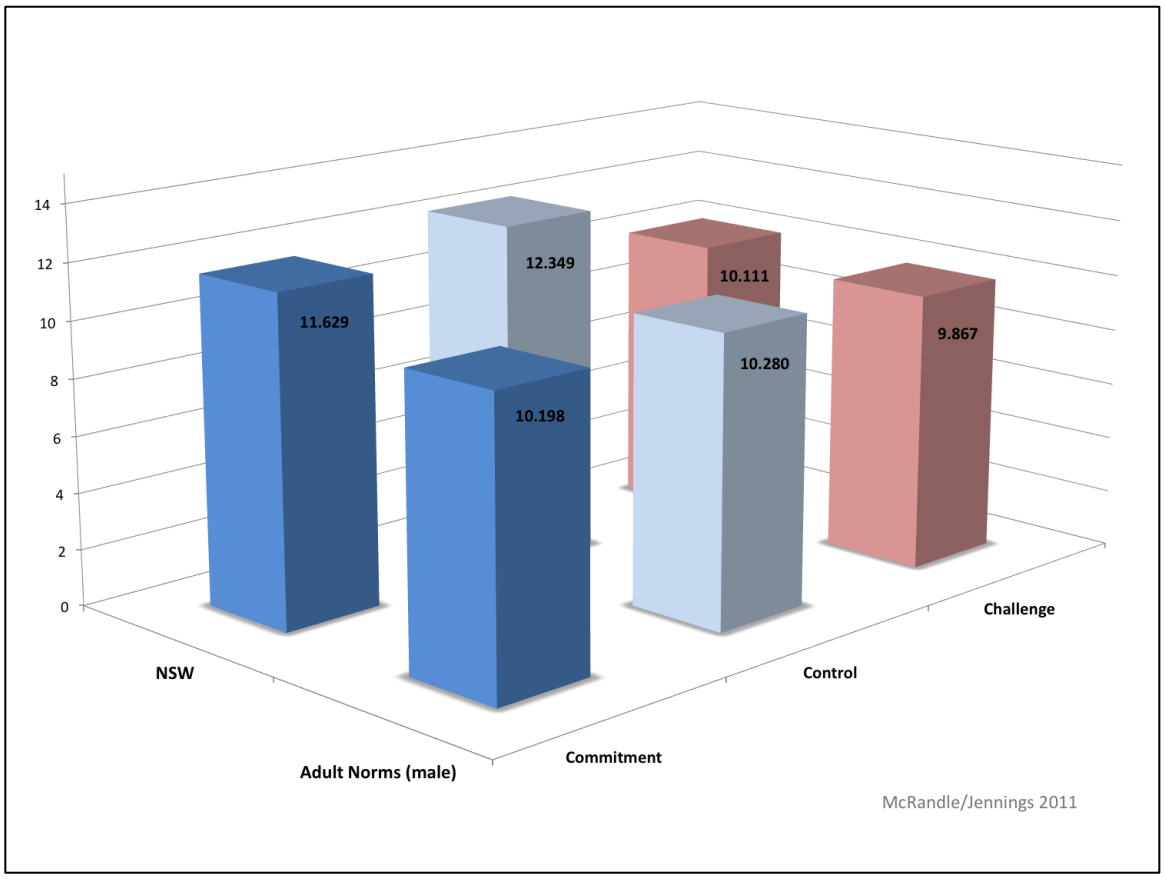

Figure 12. DRS-15 Comparison

In addition to the overall NSW norms, the sub-component of officer leadership with respect to hardiness was examined and revealed that the hardiness scores for these levels of leadership were slightly above the NSW norm.[104] This triadic relationship between hardiness, leadership, and cohesion proves particularly significant and will be examined in greater detail later in this chapter when the regression analysis results are discussed.

[104] The means for NSW officers (n=48) were: Commitment 11.833, Control 12.979, Challenge 10.083, and Overall Hardiness 34.895.

b. PCI

Similar to the DRS-15 results, the comparison between the NSW survey and the PCI norms revealed much higher results in the NSW sample and a similar adherence to the trends of the original study. This would indicate, with some level of certainty, that the results from the NSW survey provide a reasonably accurate depiction of the dynamics of cohesion examined throughout this particular portion of the questionnaire. Figure 13 provides a graphical comparison between the original questionnaire and the NSW survey of each PCI item.

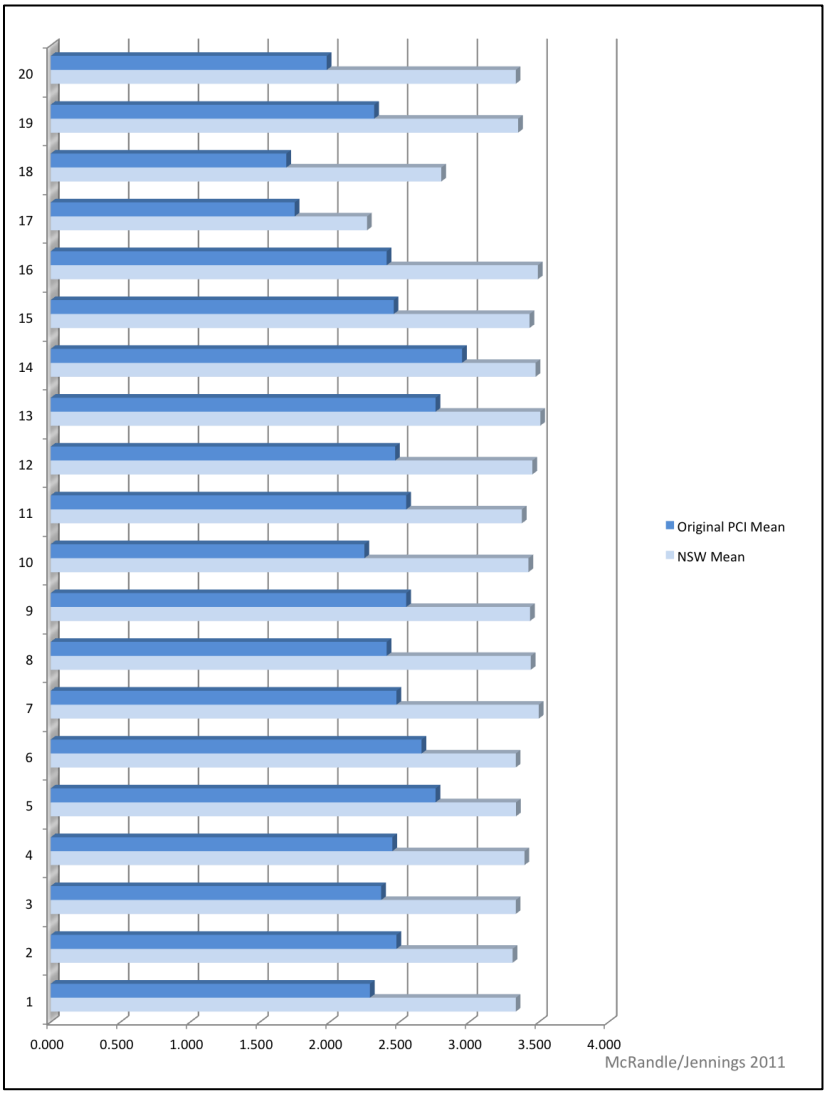

Figure 13. PCI Comparison

c. Comparative Analysis

The substantive validity of both the PCI and the DRS-15 questionnaires was reinforced by the results of the NSW Unit Cohesion Survey. Though there are significant differences between the means of the original PCI and the corresponding responses gathered during the NSW survey, the standard deviations for the studies were not significantly different. This suggests that there are much higher levels of hardiness and cohesion among NSW operational elements and the similar values of standard deviation highlight the representativeness between the populations.[105] While this provides statistical validity to the research itself, it requires a bit of educated speculation to get to the explanatory value of the comparison.

The question this raises then is: What accounts for the higher levels of both hardiness and cohesion in NSW operational units? To the first question on hardiness, a higher score for the mean of the sub-component "control" might suggest that this individual trait may already be inherent in those who self-select for the initial NSW training program; or, that this trait is in some way nurtured through the crucible of training, particularly in the leadership. On the question of the higher levels of cohesion, one possible answer could indicate a relationship with selection and training.

The original study conducted by Dr. Guy Seibold and Dr. Dennis Kelly that developed the Combat Platoon Cohesion Questionnaire (CPCQ) into the PCI—discussed in Chapter V—surveyed 752 members of conventional Army light infantry Platoons.[106] The standard training for a member of these conventional units is considerably shorter and, by comparison, less demanding, both physically and mentally, than accession programs for, not just NSW, but most Special Operation Forces (SOF). Additionally, most conventional forces structure their units in an effort to maximize the "mass" principle of war and are thus willing to accept reduced quality with respect to individual preparedness in exchange for quantity. This factor alone could account for the higher scores within the more selectively screened and trained NSW forces. However,

[105] Refer to Table 9 in Appendix D for the comparative summary statistics for the PCI portion of the questionnaire.

[106] Siebold and Kelly, *Development of the Platoon Cohesion Index*, 8.

without the benefit of the NMF responses to examine this hypothesis further, this discussion remains in the realm of speculation and conjecture, though it certainly offers promising avenues for future research.

B. CORRELATION

The following section examines the correlation discovered in the study of unit cohesion in NSW Troops.[107] The analysis is centered on three key relationships found within the data: (1) the relationship between two key independent variables, social and task cohesion; (2) the relationship between the overall results for cohesion and the leadership variables; and (3) the unique relationships between the levels of leadership within a NSW Troop.

[107] Correlation is a statistical method that describes the nature of the relationship between two variables. These relationships are described in a correlation matrix, which assigns values, or correlation coefficients, to the intersection of two variables and can provide an understanding of the manner in which these variables interact. The squared value of the coefficient – called the coefficient of determination, or r2 – can be seen as a percentage of the common variation between two variables. Simply put, the r2 value describes the proportion of the time that the change in two variables is related to one another. In this sense, the higher the value of r2, the greater dependence the variables share and vice versa. If a correlation coefficient is zero then the r2 will also be zero. This represents a condition called statistical independence, meaning that the change in one variable has no affect on the other variable and that any change is coincidental. Conversely, if the correlation coefficient is 1, then the two variables are perfectly correlated and any change in one variable is proportional to the change in the corresponding variable. Thomas Hill and Paul Lewicki, *Statistics: Methods and Applications* (Tulsa, OK: StatSoft, Inc., 2006), http://statsoft.com/textbook/.

1. NSW Unit Cohesion Overall Correlation

	Cohesion	Hardiness	Trp CDR	Trp Chief	Plt CDR	Plt Chief	Sel & Trng	T-Cohesion	S-Cohesion	NSW Yrs	SQDN Yrs	TRP yrs
Cohesion	1.000											
Hardiness	.411	1.000										
Trp CDR	.659	.460	1.000									
Trp Chief	.649	.417	.781	1.000								
Plt CDR	.639	.431	.675	.535	1.000							
Plt Chief	.509	.448	.604	.587	.741	1.000						
Sel & Trng	.425	.165	.336	.290	.281	.220	1.000					
T-Cohesion	.480	.308	.343	.359	.411	.356	.250	1.000				
S-Cohesion	.527	.317	.428	.423	.442	.359	.314	.946	1.000			
NSW Yrs	.028	.042	.122	.137	.097	.111	-.311	.144	.131	1.000		
SQDN Yrs	-.162	-.155	-.211	-.154	-.123	-.213	-.238	-.066	-.114	.260	1.000	
TRP yrs	-.216	-.110	-.315	-.270	-.197	-.227	-.200	-.160	-.209	.008	.591	1.000

Table 5. Overall Variable Correlation Matrix

Table 5 provides some interesting insights into the dynamic interrelation between the variables examined in the overall model for NSW Troop unit cohesion. The most notable of these is the high correlation between task cohesion and social cohesion. The data indicates that nearly 90% of the time, a change in either task or social cohesion will correspond to a change in the other variable.[108] This highly correlative nature suggests a close relationship between the concepts of "work and play," vis-à-vis the NSW community. Although this is intriguing in its own right, the high correlation presents difficulty when examining the variables together during regression analysis. This will be discussed further in the section on regression.

As noted in an earlier section of this chapter, the relationship between leadership and cohesion is significant and the results of this correlation provide additional justification to that hypothesis. By observing the leadership variables as a collective, it can be seen that around 40% of the change in levels of cohesion within a Troop correspond to changes in the leadership variable. Specifically, this change in cohesion relates to the factors examined within the leadership construct developed in this study: a leader's ability to cope with adversity, compassion for subordinates, and ability to perform leadership functions in a combat capacity.

Extending the factors of leadership a bit farther, one can see that the relationships between leaders are highly correlated as well. While the relationship between all of the leaders appears significant in its own right, the relationship between the leaders at each level of leadership is even more interesting. For instance, take the Platoon level of leadership, represented here by the Platoon commander and the Platoon chief. The relationship between the two senior leaders at the Platoon level indicates that their actions are aligned with respect to the three variables defined within the leadership construct. The same holds true at the Troop level, to an even greater degree. This indicates that NSW leadership at the Troop level and below is functioning efficiently; furthermore, the extent of that efficiency has a significant impact on unit cohesion.

[108] This percentage, described at the beginning of this section on correlation, is determined by squaring the correlation coefficient of .946 (refer to Table 5) to get an r^2 value of .89, or 89%.

C. REGRESSION ANALYSIS

1. Overall Model

The initial and baseline regression analysis compared overall Troop cohesion with the four primary leadership positions through regression analysis. The analysis, in Table 12 (Appendix D), showed the Platoon Commander has the most significant positive impact on unit cohesion within the Troop. Following the Platoon Commander, the Troop Chief has a large impact on Troop cohesion. Further, the analysis shows that the Platoon chief has the least influential impact on cohesion of the four levels of leadership.[109] The results of this analysis show that collectively, leadership within the Troop has meaningful and significant impact on Troop cohesion, specifically the Platoon Commander and the Troop Chief.

From the above evaluation, another regression analysis was conducted adding variables encompassing the four hypotheses of this study: social cohesion, task cohesion, hardiness, and selection and training. The analysis in Table 13 (Appendix D) shows that Troop leadership continued to make large contributions to this revised cohesion model. Additionally, this analysis shows that the level of selection and training factor affects levels of cohesion positively. Like the previous analysis, both the Platoon Commander and Troop Chief stood out as the primary influencers in the leadership category. In this model, social cohesion, task cohesion, and hardiness did not have significant influence on cohesion.[110]

Building from this previous model, another regression analysis was conducted with additional demographic variables displayed in Table 14 (Appendix D). Factors for years in NSW, years at current Team, years in current Troop, and number of deployments were added to the cohesion model. This analysis shows that Troop leadership has both a

[109] The regression analysis shows that the Platoon Commander contribution to cohesion has a coefficient of .502 and the Troop Chief has a coefficient of .331. The Platoon Chief has a negative coefficient while the Troop Commander in marginally positive. However, the results for both the Troop Commander and the Platoon Chief are not as statistically significant because their corresponding p-values are high.

[110] The coefficients for the Platoon Commander and Troop Chief for this model are .406 and .255 respectively. The selection and training factor had a coefficient of .138 and p-value well below .05.

substantive and statistically large impact on cohesion.[111] However, the results also show that social cohesion, task cohesion, and hardiness have less direct influence on cohesion than expected from the proposed theoretical framework.

The three regression analyses conducted above show that demographic factors have little influence on the overall cohesion model. This, combined with the high correlation of task and social cohesion, lead to two additional regression analyses. After removing the demographic factors, cohesion was compared with the leadership variable and the variables associated with the original hypotheses. However, instead of comparing both task and social cohesion again, each factor, task and social cohesion, was compared individually with the remaining two hypotheses and leadership positions (Tables 15 and 16 in Appendix D). This is due to the highly correlated nature of task and social cohesion addressed above in the correlation section. In these analyses, leadership continues to be the primary influencer and the selection and training factors continues to make minor impacts in both models. What is significant with this new model is that, once separated, both task and social cohesion make positive contributions to cohesion at the same relative level of the selection and training factor. This final, refined regression provides the most consistent results with respect to the independent variables. The key to this consistency was separating the factors of task cohesion and social cohesion, due to their highly correlated nature, in the overall regression analysis.

2. Leadership

The regression analyses above show, out of all the factors examined in the NSW Unit Cohesion survey, leadership is the most significant contributor to unit cohesion within the Troop. To determine what factors influence the Troop leadership, further analysis examined how social cohesion, task cohesion, hardiness, and demographic factors are relevant to each leadership position (Tables 17–20 in Appendix D). Since the task and social cohesion factors are so highly correlated the analysis was conducted using

[111] The respective coefficient values for the Platoon Commander and the Troop Chief are .435 and .257. The selection and training factor remained relatively equivalent while the corresponding p-value rose above the statistically significant threshold of .05 to .061. The high p-values for the four demographic factors (years in NSW, years at current Team, years in current Troop, and number of deployments) lessen the statistical significance of the results.

only the task cohesion factor. Task cohesion was chosen over social cohesion due to the slightly greater significance the former had in the overall analysis. This does not significantly change the results of the analysis, though it should be noted that there are slight variations in how each variable affects leadership. The results are consistent across all levels and show that hardiness is overwhelmingly the most significant contributor to leadership.[112]

3. Theoretical Model Revisited

The analysis of the NSW Unit Cohesion survey results serves to refine the theoretical framework developed earlier in Chapter III. Figure 5 in Chapter III shows the factors of the theoretical framework proposed to affect cohesion in NSW Troops: hardiness, leadership, selection and training, task cohesion, and social cohesion. The above analysis shows that leadership, particularly the Platoon Commander and Troop Chief, has the greatest direct impact on cohesion in NSW Troops. Task cohesion, social cohesion, and the selection and training factor make minor positive contributions to overall cohesion model. Hardiness does not appear to influence cohesion directly when analyzed within the original theoretical framework. However, the analysis reveals that hardiness is in fact highly relevant to leadership, which in turn has the strongest impact on the overall level of unit cohesion.

The data reveals a new framework that has hardiness as the primary influence on leadership. The overall cohesion model is primarily influenced by leadership and, to a lesser extent, by task cohesion, social cohesion, and selection and training. This new framework is depicted visually in Figure 14. Though this has adjusted the original theoretical model, this revised model still encompasses all the original hypotheses. In fact, this new framework further highlights the importance of leadership, making it an indispensible factor when examining unit cohesion. It is important to note that it not just

[112] The respective coefficients of hardiness for Troop Commander, Troop Chief, Platoon Commander and Platoon Chief are .726, .769, .562, and .622. The respective p-values for Troop Commander, Troop Chief, Platoon Commander and Platoon Chief are .001, .006, .000, and .001. The consistently low p-values for the hardiness factor across all levels of leadership highlight the significance of these results.

leadership in and of itself that is important; rather, it is the underlying significance of hardiness within the levels of leadership that play the most important role in NSW Troop cohesion.

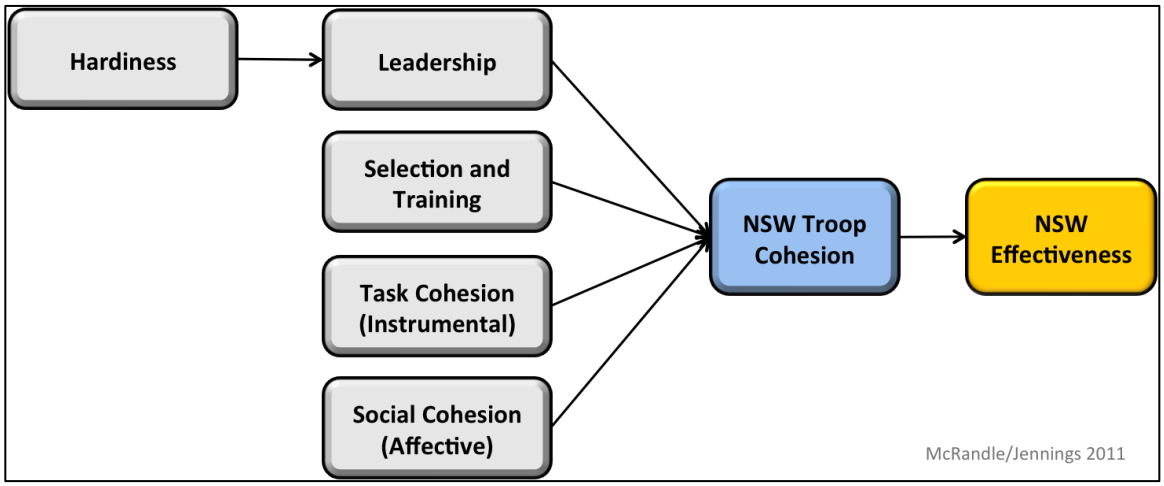

Figure 14. Revised NSW Unit Cohesion Framework

4. Subgroup Analysis

Additional analyses of NSW Unit Cohesion results were conducted comparing results across subgroups within the overall sample. The results support and validate the overall model with leadership, selection and training, task cohesion, and social cohesion directly correlated to the overall cohesion model. The comparisons offer a more nuanced interpretations based on Team location and rank. Specifically, east coast Teams were compared with west coast Teams and officers were compared with enlisted.

Across both coasts, NSW leadership has the most significant influence on cohesion. On the east coast, in addition to hardiness being the main contributor to leadership, hardiness moves into the overall model and directly correlates to cohesion. The analysis of west coast data show that, of all the factors examined, only leadership has an influence on cohesion. Both task and social cohesion have minimal influence on the overall west coast cohesion model. Hardiness contributes to east coast leadership much more than west coast leadership. In addition to hardiness, the east coast leadership is impacted by both task and social cohesion. The west coast leadership is highly influenced by the selection and training factor.

At first glance, the NSW officer regression analysis would appear inconclusive. The results reveal that NSW officers do not believe leadership's contribution to cohesion is significant. However, this is inconsistent with all of the previous analyses that demonstrate the importance of leadership to cohesion. The enlisted results however, reveal that, from their perspective, leadership is in fact the most influential factor contributing to cohesion. The apparent paradox here is that the descriptive statistics show that officers rank leadership nearly as highly as the enlisted personnel.[113] This is understandable when observing these responses within the context of leadership and followership. Those that are being led are more likely to be affected by the actions of their leaders than the leaders are to be affected by their own actions. In effect, leadership matters more to those being led than those doing the leading. Not only are these responses indicative of this leadership-followership dynamic, they also suggest that leadership within the NSW Troop is functioning properly. The enlisted results confirm that leadership is the primary influencer of cohesion in the overall model. Both social and task cohesion are not as influential in the overall cohesion model; however, along with hardiness they contribute to the leadership model.

D. QUALITATIVE SURVEY RESPONSES

The NSW Unit Cohesion Survey consisted of both quantitative responses—those addressed in the previous section of this study—and qualitative responses, where respondents were asked to provide comments on the overall impacts on cohesion, the effect the training and deployment cycle has on cohesion, and any other issues they felt were pertinent to the subject. The respondents provided both positive and negative observations on a variety of issues regarding personal, organizational, and operational dimensions. In an effort to consolidate the comments into a usable format for examination, the responses were categorized based on the levels of analysis introduced in Chapter II: the individual level, the primary group level, and the secondary group level.

As mentioned previously in this chapter, each level of analysis should not be viewed in discrete terms. There are factors that impact the individual level and the

[113] Refer to Histograms in Appendix D, Figures 24–33.

primary group level in equal part; however, the following section will address each issue in relation to the level of analysis having the most direct influence on the topic.

1. Individual Level

The origins of the effects on unit cohesion are dynamic and external influences at the individual level are sometimes overlooked. The individual level factor that appeared most often throughout the survey responses was the amount of family or personal time available to the members and the subsequent impact it has on an individual's dedication to the group.

Related to factors detracting from unit cohesion is the limited amount of family interaction or personal time Troop members have outside of their work duties. This comes as little surprise given the increasing demands on the military in general, and SOF in particular, in the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. This encompasses not only to the amount of time spent deployed but also the time spent training in preparation for deployment, usually away from home. One comment addressed this by noting the concern of "actually being home when we are at 'at home.'"[114] This can transfer to the primary group level, for obvious reasons, when the stress of family issues or personal fatigue impacts the ability of the members to focus on work-related tasks when called upon.

The family and personal time issue was addressed briefly in Chapter IV in the discussion on retention. This should signal that reduced family and personal time is less a problem for cohesion than it is a significant issue for NSW retention. The Quick Poll cited in Chapter IV indicates the top three concerns both officer and enlisted SEALs had for deciding to stay in the military were 1) time spent away from home, 2) impact of navy on family, and 3) balance between work and personal time.[115] Therefore, that this issue

[114] Anonymous Survey Respondent, February 2011.

[115] Newell, Whittam, and Uriell, "2010 SEAL/SWCC/EOD/Divers Retention Quick Poll," Slides 18–23.

should appear again in this survey is not altogether surprising; however, it becomes even more interesting when shown how it interacts with the factors at the primary, and even secondary, group level.

2. Primary Group

The family and personal time factor addressed within the individual level of analysis becomes even more important for cohesion when it is applied to the primary group. This level incorporates the combination of multiple individual factors, as well as the organizational dynamics inherent to hierarchies. The concepts of trust, shared adversity, personal interaction, leadership, and continuity resonate most prominently across this level.

The concept of trust and the importance it has on the Troop's ability to cohere is mentioned often throughout the survey. The majority of these comments stem from the prompt for feedback on the training and deployment cycle and the impact it has on cohesion. Most respondents stress the importance of the training and deployment cycle in developing trust in one another. This begins with the amount of time spent together in the simulated combat environment of training and becomes even more important when placed in circumstances of actual combat. Troop members must have that trust, not just in their teammates' abilities as operators, but also in their responsibilities that extend beyond training and the combat zone.

Closely related to trust is the idea of shared adversity. This is separated from trust in the analysis because it appears that trust, as well as many other factors, comes as a result of the adversity Troop members share throughout training and deployment. This concept relates to the bonds created under stressful circumstances. Within NSW, this can be imbued during the initial crucible of Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL (BUD/S) training, which every SEAL must complete and therefore could qualify as an individual trait; however, within the survey responses, this was used primarily to describe the Troop training and deployment cycle. The common theme of these comments includes terms such as camaraderie, commitment, and hardship.

Incorporating the previous two issues, the idea of personal interaction appeared frequently in the comments. This can be seen as encompassing both the trust and shared adversity concepts, as well as being related to the variables of task and social cohesion, addressed in the quantitative portion of the survey. This also provides some insight into the high correlation between the social cohesion and task cohesion variables mentioned earlier in this chapter. The following quote provides a succinct representation of these concepts.

> By the time a Platoon deploys, its operators know everything about one another, both on a personal and operational level. This cohesion is further strengthened during deployment and the conduct of combat operations.[116]

However, this personal interaction does not come without at a cost. The cost of personal interaction with teammates is paid in reduced time with one's family, or personal time. The balance must be struck between the amount of bonding necessary to form a cohesive unit and the amount of time away from work to pursue individual needs. Clearly, as the following quote from an anonymous respondent demonstrates, this balance is not always being struck. "This [amount of time together in training] allows us to become like a family. I think I spend more time with my Troop than with my wife and kids."[117]

To the extent the above issues can be mitigated at the Troop level, it is incumbent upon the Troop leadership to recognize and address such issues before they become disruptive to the ability of the Troop to function. As with the quantitative responses, leadership appears as a significant factor in the comments provided by the respondents. This study has suggested that the leadership is crucial for a variety of reasons; the following comment implies that leadership is, in fact, the linchpin in determining the success or failure of a Troop.

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[116] Anonymous Survey Respondent, February 2011.

[117] Anonymous Survey Respondent, February 2011.

> If you have good leadership, even if the training provided sucks, they will adjust training to make sure the men get what they need to be successful. I've seen great training cycles and Platoons that sucked because the headshed sucked. Leadership is everything.[118]

This suggests that leadership can be both a positive and a negative determinant in Troop cohesion. Quality leadership is a necessary, but not always sufficient, condition to foster unit cohesion.

The final theme pertaining to the primary group that appeared consistently in the comments deals with continuity. Specifically for NSW, this manifests itself in the form of the "flush and fill" issue first raised in Chapter IV. Directly related to unit readiness, continuity appeared in both positive and negative terms in its relationship to unit cohesion. In the positive sense, the following observation by another anonymous respondent underscores the importance of, not just cohesion, but effectiveness as well.

> Inter-deployment training cycle (multiple rotation/deployments with the same team members) improves the cohesiveness of any unit. The more continuity that is kept can only build on a unit's overall effectiveness and capacity.[119]

Conversely, the lack of continuity is perceived to have significant influence on the ability to form cohesion Troops. "However, under the 'flush and fill' detailing process this puts everyone back to square one, especially in terms of cohesiveness."[120]

The issue of continuity can have further reaching effects than just readiness and cohesion, however. Building on the idea of reduced readiness at the beginning of each cycle, this implies that greater time is needed to prepare the Troop to reach an operational state. This ties back into the issue of finding a balance between family and personal time and work time. Understanding that continuity contributes to readiness and readiness precedes effectiveness, there are powerful reasons for seeking to maintain greater continuity within NSW Troops, not only for its relationship to cohesion, but also for the implications it has on effectiveness.

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[118] Anonymous Survey Respondent, February 2011.

[119] Anonymous Survey Respondent, February 2011.

[120] Anonymous Survey Respondent, February 2011.

The topics addressed above in the individual and primary group levels of analysis serve as indicators of positive and negative dynamics within the overall organization. The following section will address some of the larger issues pertaining to the greater NSW organization, or the secondary group.

3. Secondary Group

Though the secondary group includes every level of command above the Troop, most of the following ideas concern the strategic level of leadership, Naval Special Warfare Command (WARCOM). It should be noted that these results represent perceptions of the individuals within the primary group. This is important to mention because this study draws its data predominantly from the primary group and thus, the results may be skewed somewhat in favor of their perceptions. However, this does not diminish the relevance of the message that is being sent: perception is reality unless a plausible alternative is provided. Thus far, no plausible alternative had been suggested; therefore, the reality that prevails is presented below.

A large number of responses keyed on similarly themed topics that is best described within the construct of vertical communications. Communications from the upper echelons of command include strategic vision, guidance, and overarching policy. The comments identify a disconnection between WARCOM policy and the primary group expectations. "The policies and decisions being made at the WARCOM level are often totally opposite of what the guys are trying to scream [from] the ground level."[121] This suggests a fundamental disagreement between the operational elements of NSW and the NSW higher leadership. Furthermore, this disagreement seems to center on the manner in which forces are employed. A respondent noted:

> Attitudes within our Troop are positive. Unfortunately, attitudes are often dampened by the upper echelon of NSW's decision-making process that prevents us from doing the jobs we feel make a difference.[122]

[121] Anonymous Survey Respondent, February 2011.

[122] Anonymous Survey Respondent, February 2011.

The most consistent theme within these comments is the disparity between what is being asked of the members of the Troops in terms of operational employment and what those individuals understand a SEAL's role in warfare to be. This speaks to the previously addressed issue of meaningful employment.[123] A respondent affirms this in the following quote.

> I cannot stress enough the importance of an individual/group feeling gainfully employed. You can have an amazing group of people who get along and are managed well that will somehow become derailed down the line if they do not feel as though they are accomplishing something.[124]

Meaningful employment has become a buzzword of sorts within NSW and, while it is an important concept, the term itself suggests a certain lack of objectivity involved in the assessment. This suggests that there are both subjective and objective portions to the analysis of the manner in which NSW personnel are employed. The idea of meaningful employment should be considered within the subjective portion; and to consider this concept objectively, the term "appropriate employment" will also be used, suggesting a more significant linkage between preparation and employment.

This should not diminish the importance of meaningful employment. The level of commitment, sacrifice, and dedication exhibited by individuals within NSW Troops creates expectations that can be satisfied only by carrying out the work they prepared so rigorously for. The idea that a certain set of tasks or type of operation holds meaning for someone cannot be understated. Meaningful employment suggests a deeper-seated resonance concerning the tasks that SEALs conduct. This important point alludes to the internalized culture of the NSW community. Thus, employment cannot be made meaningful or appropriate simply by wishing it away or expecting that the operational leadership will manage the expectations of the Troops. When those expectations are unfulfilled, discontent, disappointment, and even anger often becomes the reaction. As noted by another respondent:

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[123] This idea was first introduced in Chapter IV as one of the current issues within NSW.

[124] Anonymous Survey Respondent, February 2011.

> The inability of the upper echelon of NSW to [consistently] put NSW forces in theaters of operation in which SEALs are best suited … has been (in my experience) the single most [sic] contributing factor to any Troop's lack of cohesion.[125]

One final note on meaningful and appropriate employment will bring this discussion of the levels of analysis full circle. The importance of family and personal time has been established as one of the primary motivations for individuals to leave NSW. It is reasonable to suggest that individuals who spend time away from their families for training and deployment could more easily reconcile that time away if those activities were perceived as being meaningful. Simply put, individuals are more likely to accept the cost of reduced family or personal time if that which is taking them away is meaningful and appropriate.

Chapter IV introduced the concept of a perception-reality gap that seems to be closely related to these issues of communication and meaningful and appropriate employment. The following section describes this concept in greater detail.

4. The Perception-Reality Gap Model

The Perception-Reality Gap model, initially described in Chapter IV, serves as a summary of some of the key issues that NSW currently faces, specifically concerning the vertical communications and employment issues discussed above. The crux of the problem ultimately centers on the concept of leadership, both at the strategic and tactical level. From the strategic perspective, the communication of the vision and the force employment decisions play the most important role in establishing the direction of the force. At the tactical level, the leadership bears the responsibility of implementing that vision and ensuring compliance with the outlined strategic guidance. Should the communicated direction of the force come into conflict with more present and powerful influences affecting the primary groups—such as training, indoctrination, and historical culture—a rift begins to form between what is perceived and what is real.

[125] Anonymous Survey Respondent, February 2011.

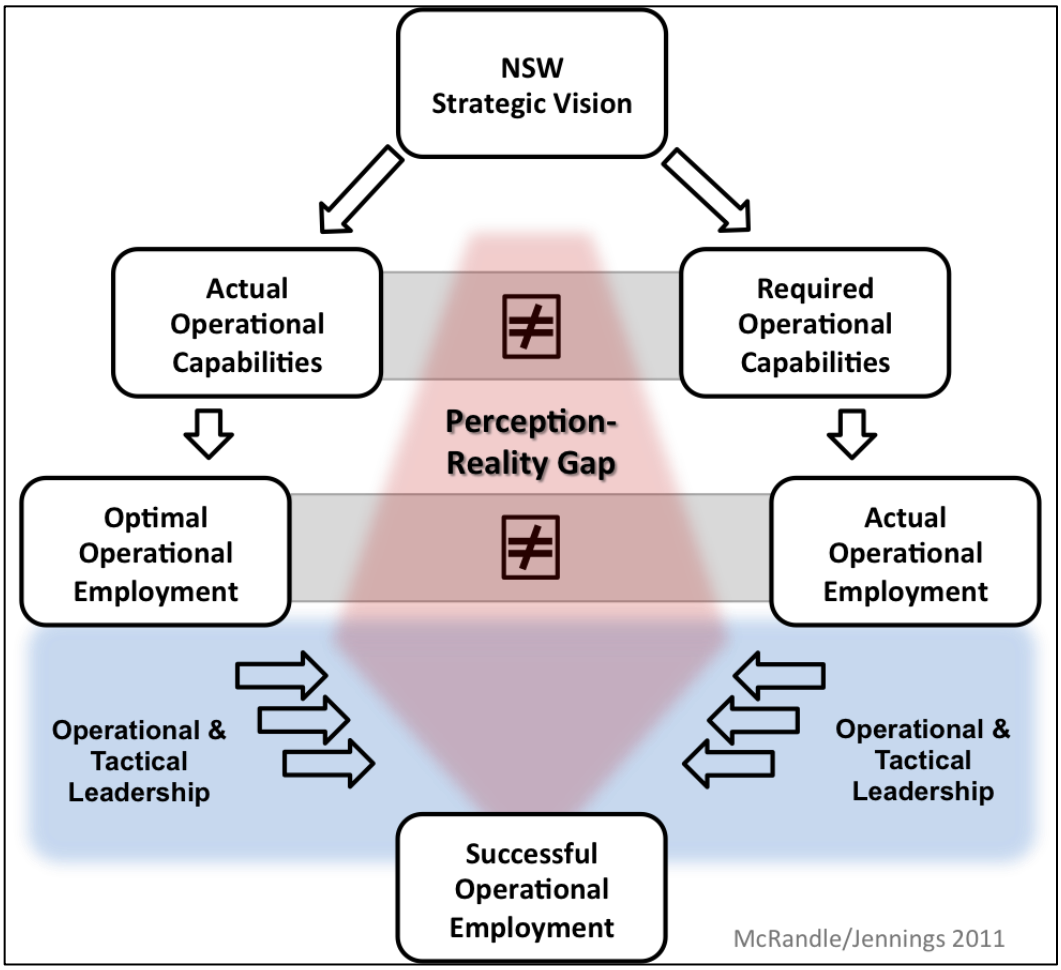

Figure 15. Perception-Reality Gap Model

This rift between perception and reality begins to manifest itself in the context of operational capabilities. Every input that a prospective SEAL receives, from recruitment through initial assignment, indicates a tendency toward employment as a direct action force.[126] Yet, within NSW under the current mission requirements, the units prepared to operate in that capacity outnumber the opportunities for operational employment in such a capacity. The required operational capabilities are established when the strategic leadership translates requirements from theater operational commanders and assigns them to the NSW force. When those requirements do not match with the actual operational capabilities, the gap widens.

[126] U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Publication 3-05: Doctrine for Joint Special Operations* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, December 17, 2003), II-3, 4.

This divergence continues throughout the training cycle and up until deployment. At this point, a force that is prepared for kinetic, direct action raids faces a deployment conducting non-kinetic operations for which there is little, or no, institutional preparation. This last point highlights the concept of appropriate employment, that is, that the objective preparation should closely match the actual employment. Therefore, in those units that are employed in situations that deviate from the commonly held expectations, i.e. optimal operational employment, the task of narrowing the gap between perceived employment and realized employment falls exclusively on the unit leadership.

E. CONCLUSION

The quantitative and qualitative results from the NSW Cohesion survey conducted for this study discovered important insights about the dynamics of NSW Troops and the larger organization within which they exist. The key findings drawn from these sections of the research span the individual, primary group, and secondary group levels of analysis. These results have varying importance to unit cohesion directly. However, as has been demonstrated, all are in some way connected to, and play an important role in, either the fostering, or inhibition, of unit cohesion in NSW Troops.

At the individual level, the most important factor discovered in the NSW Unit Cohesion survey is the diminishing amount of family and personal time. At the primary group level, Troop leadership is the pivotal factor with respect to Troop cohesiveness. More specifically, hardiness proved to be the most consistent variable across each level of leadership and each sub group that was analyzed. Additionally, the relationship between task cohesion and social cohesion, as demonstrated by the highly correlated nature of the two variables, is somewhat unique to NSW. This idea discovered in the quantitative results has provided some context in the examination of the qualitative responses pertaining to personal interaction. Bridging the line between the primary and secondary group levels of analysis is the issue of continuity. This affects the primary group explicitly; however, the embeddedness of this issue within the overall system of the NSW force is such that it cannot be ignored within the secondary level of analysis. At the secondary level, the idea of vertical communication presents difficulty in the

presentation of NSW's strategic message and has deep ties to the manner in which NSW is employed. Finally, the issue of meaningful and appropriate employment and its impact provides linkages all the way down to the individual level of analysis.

Out of these issues within the secondary group level of analysis emerges the Perception-Reality Gap model that identifies and explains the disconnect that exists currently between the strategic leadership of NSW and the operational units. These issues present a significant risk to the effectiveness of NSW operational elements as the military navigates the murky waters of the future of warfare.

VII. IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

> A rapidly changing world deals ruthlessly with organizations that do not change—and USSOCOM is no exception. Guided by a comprehensive, enduring vision and supporting goals, we must constantly reshape ourselves to remain relevant and useful members of the joint team.
>
> General Peter Schoomaker[127]

This project proposed a model of unit cohesion in Naval Special Warfare (NSW) units based on factors of leadership, hardiness, social cohesion, task cohesion, and levels of selection of training. The analysis of the survey data collected clearly demonstrates the profound influence that leadership has on cohesion at the primary group level.[128] This analysis also provides a new theoretical framework for understanding how cohesion works in NSW operational Troops. This new framework demonstrates that hardiness does not exert a direct influence on cohesion; however, of all the factors analyzed, hardiness consistently played a significant role at all four levels of leadership within the NSW Troop While the contribution of hardiness to unit cohesion is not direct, its contribution to leadership is of equal, if not greater, importance to understanding unit cohesion in NSW Troops.

Chapter VI described the results of the statistical analysis and the qualitative observations received through survey comments and personal interviews. This chapter will combine the factors of unit cohesion developed in the theoretical model and the qualitative issues addressed to develop a series of recommendations to improve cohesion and thereby performance in NSW operational units. These recommendations address most of the pertinent issues identified in the previous chapter. It should be noted that each of the recommendations will require further assessment with respect to feasibility and

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[127] Gen. Peter Schoomaker, "Special Operations Forces: The Way Ahead", February 1, 1998, http://www.defense.gov/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=651.

[128] This statistically confirms the qualitative observations made by Shils and Janowitz in one of the earliest studies on the effects of cohesion in military units. Shils and Janowitz, "Cohesion and Disintegration in the Wehrmacht in World War II," 248.

implementation. The research in this study provides a basis for these assessments and should be used when weighing the costs and benefits of implementation.

A. MEANINGFUL AND APPROPRIATE EMPLOYMENT

1. Recommendation

Conduct a strategic mission and capability evaluation within NSW, within the broader strategic vision of Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), to address disparities between NSW recruitment, selection, and training processes and current operational requirements.

2. Discussion

Chapter IV, Setting the Stage, introduced the idea of meaningful employment and how the individuals in NSW Troops perceive it. Chapter VI expanded on the concept and introduced an additional, objective element of appropriate employment. This suggests that there is a disconnection between the training and preparation NSW Troops undergo and the operations that they actually undertake while forward deployed. This disconnection is not always the case; however, the response from the force on the issue of meaningful employment is a significant enough to warrant serious consideration in developing potential remedies.

From the time a prospective SEAL decides to join the U.S. Navy and labors on the lengthy and demanding path to becoming a SEAL, he is bombarded with pop-culture versions of what NSW does when operationally employed. Emphasis in this respect is placed on the demanding and dynamic training a candidate endures to earn the coveted Naval Special Warfare Insignia, the Trident. This entire training and indoctrination process takes in excess of 50 weeks to complete prior to a new SEAL checking in to his first command. During this time, little of the non-kinetic aspect of what comprises many actual SEAL operational deployments is mentioned. This emphasizes the "false advertising" problem mentioned in Chapter IV and represents the incipient stage of the Perception-Reality Gap.

The problems underpinning the Perception-Reality Gap become ingrained at the primary group level during pre-deployment work-up when the preponderance of training focuses on kinetic action. The message being conveyed is straightforward: NSW is a force that conducts kinetic action missions with an emphasis on speed, surprise, and violence of action. For the most part, this mentality prevails throughout the training cycle until, often, the reality of deployment sets in. The result of this gap between expectations and reality appears to be increased disillusionment, particularly when the expectations involve "clos[ing] with the enemy," and reality often falls short of that.[129] This is due, in large part, to the strong organizational culture that has been cultivated throughout NSW's history. This places the organizational culture and current training in direct conflict with NSW's operational requirements and employment.

3. Conclusion: Strategic Mission and Capability Evaluation

To address the Perception-Reality Gap that has been created, NSW should undertake a Strategic Mission and Capability Evaluation that considers a shift in how NSW forces are employed in operational theaters. This should involve a consideration toward balancing the current theater requirements and the training the Troops receive. Furthermore, this may involve a divestment in, and prioritization of, some activities and additional requirements that do not align with NSW's organizational culture and the training inherent to NSW.

Critical to this evaluation is interaction with NSW's two primary external stakeholders: United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) and the Geographic Combatant Commanders (GCC). The focus of this principally involves the expectations of both stakeholders and leads to a two-part question that must be asked of each: What does USSOCOM and the GCCs expect of NSW and do those expectations align with the organizational culture and current training? If the answer to the second part is no, then a rationale for the strategic evaluation exists.

Another critical point to be mindful of in this evaluation speaks to the perceived disconnect between NSW leadership and operational level units. The strategic evaluation

[129] Anonymous Survey Respondent, February 2011.

mentioned in this section must be an inclusive process that involves leadership at all levels and not an initiative that appears to come down from on high. This is the central theme of the second discussion and recommendation section that seeks to flatten the communications and provide a voice for the operational element in the decisions that are made regarding force-wide operational employment.

B. VERTICAL COMMUNICATIONS

1. Recommendation

Implement a Junior Leaders Conference in order to give NSW community stakeholders an outlet to voice opinions, take part in community discussion, and open lines of communication with senior NSW commanders.

2. Discussion

As mentioned in the previous section, an apparent disconnection between the strategic leadership of NSW and the operational elements—ultimately the NSW Troops—has caused far-reaching issues that have appeared consistently throughout the research results. The common responses indicated a lack of understanding of what was occurring at the Platoon and Troop level. What perhaps more accurately represents this problem is that there are no institutionalized mechanisms or processes by which the strategic leadership can to convey emerging issues or provide broad guidance to the majority of the force on a sustained basis. Of almost equal importance, there are no processes in place with which the individual SEAL writ large, or a representative delegation, can provide feedback and input to emerging issues. By definition, this two-way communication does not exist in NSW.

Opening lines of communication is not an issue of who is right or wrong, since there will almost always be dissention on certain issues in any organization. To invoke a business paradigm, this discussion is focused on opening the lines of communication in order to provide the principal stakeholders an opportunity to weigh in on issues with their board of directors. While it is understood that this is the military, not a democracy or a corporation, the individuals at the stakeholder level represent, among other things,

valuable investments whose retention is in the best interests of the organization. These individuals always have the right to vote with their feet once their obligation is fulfilled and indications exist that suggest this has begun to happen.[130]

3. Conclusion: Junior Leaders Conference

In order to address this communication shortcoming, a Junior Leaders Conference should be established that meets twice a year to discuss pertinent issues within NSW. The conference membership would be comprised of Troop Commanders, Troop Chiefs, Platoon Commanders, and Platoon Chiefs. The forum for this should be off-site and include representative leadership from both east and west coast teams. The issues can range from those that are generated internally within the committee or those that are suggested by the upper echelon; however, the emphasis should be on providing the tactical level leadership an institutionalized role in organizational decision-making.

C. LEADERSHIP CONTINUITY

1. Recommendation

Develop a personnel rotation model that maintains leadership continuity through offset leadership rotation in NSW operational units to increase mission flexibility and improve unit cohesion and performance.

2. Discussion

Chapter II demonstrated that improved performance and effectiveness is directly correlated with increased unit cohesion. This study has shown that leadership is essential to unit cohesion in NSW. However, under the current training-deployment cycle, the personnel demands throughout the community force a complete change of leadership at the Team, Troop, and Platoon level every two years. There is little to no leadership continuity in the current two-year rotation cycle. This problem, known as "flush and fill," was identified and described in Chapter IV. Changing out the leadership wholesale within the primary group squanders the opportunity to strengthen the cohesion already

[130] Winters, "Naval Special Warfare Pressure on the Force," 2, 4.

established and forces the unit to start developing cohesion again from the most basic level. The levels of readiness, effectiveness, and cohesion of the Troop are directly tied to the continuity of leadership. The leadership turnover in the current model produces a saw-tooth pattern of readiness/effectiveness/cohesion over time at the Team level and below.[131] Readiness is at the nadir directly following the leadership turnover, builds during the training cycle, and peaks while on deployment. Offsetting the leadership rotation would increase leadership continuity and help maintain a consistently higher level of cohesion, thereby improving and similarly maintaining the readiness and effectiveness of NSW as a whole.

Additionally, maintaining a higher level of readiness in NSW will actually improve the flexibility of the community. Improved readiness will afford the ability to surge Platoon, Troops, and Teams as necessary to meet in extremis national requirements. This capability is extremely limited in the current training-deployment cycle. Coupled with improved flexibility, offsetting leadership will lead to increased family/personal time. The maintenance of higher levels of readiness will reduce the need for extended training trips. Training would be able to start at a higher level and progress much more rapidly. This would lessen the time required for each training block and allow more family/personal. Lastly, moving to a leadership continuity model has the potential to decrease overall operational costs. Shortened and less frequent training blocks will costs less than the lengthy and often repetitive training blocks of the current model.

3. Conclusion: Ensure Leadership Continuity in NSW Troops

Leadership assignments in NSW should be offset within the unit so that someone who has completed a previous training/deployment cycle occupies one of the key positions within both Platoon and Troop leadership levels. The ideal rotation for maintaining leadership continuity would be to stagger the rotation of commander and chief at both the Troop and Platoon level. This would provide a sustainable leadership continuity model that maintains the highest overall level of readiness. A similar continuity program is already in existence at the junior enlisted level within Platoons. At

[131] See Figure 8 in Chapter IV.

the end of each deployment, while the leadership completely transitions, some of the junior-enlisted in a Platoon are transferred and the rest remain for the next cycle.

Figure 16 provides a notional representation of the relationship between the leadership continuity and unit readiness. This model is based upon the rotation cycle of an east coast SEAL Team that will be discussed further on in this section.

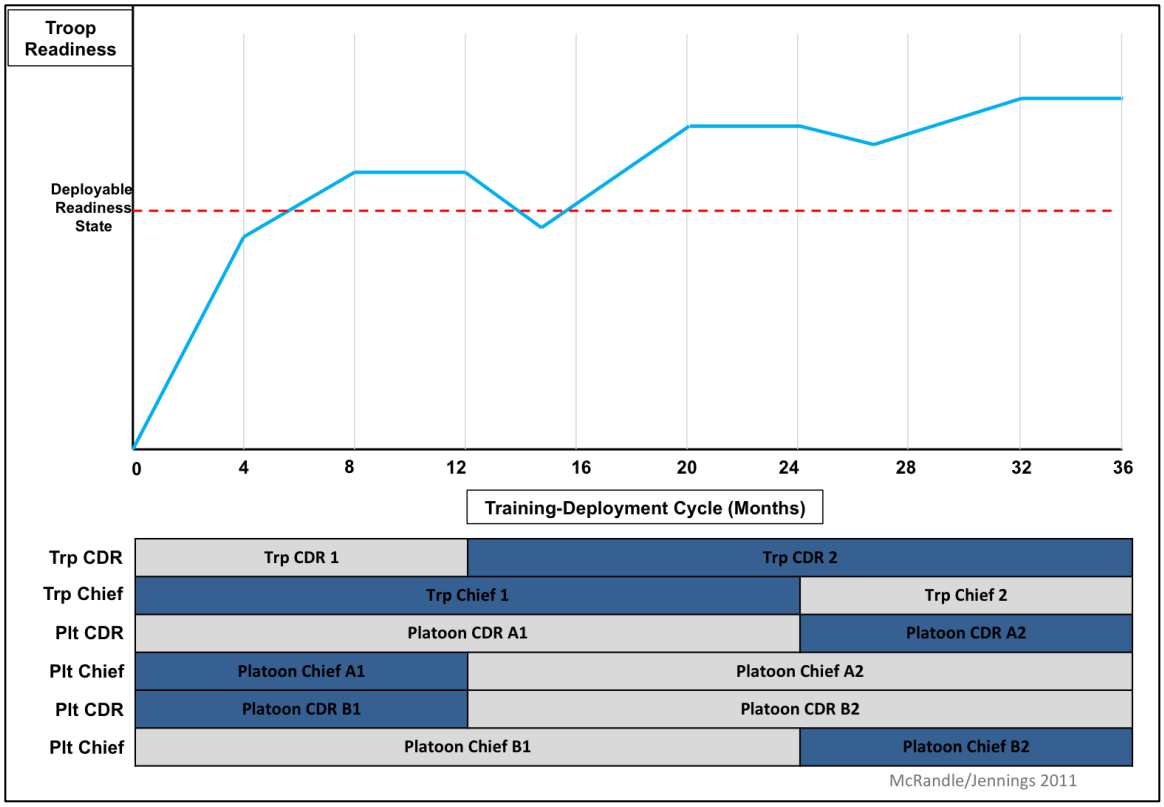

Figure 16. Notional Readiness-Continuity Model

There are several possible ways to implement a program to allow for leadership continuity. This recommendation section will offer two possible solutions. One way to improve leadership continuity would be to lengthen the projected rotation date (PRD) of officers and senior enlisted positions in the Platoon and Troop. This would allow for an offset leadership rotation schedule without altering the current two-year training-deployment cycle. This model would be difficult to implement without drastically changing career path management at both the officer and senior enlisted level. However,

only through more in-depth analysis, can it be determined if the benefits of improved, and maintained, readiness outweigh the cost of implementation.

An East Coast SEAL Team offers another model for implementing a leadership continuity model. This model uses a shortened training-deployment cycle with the rotation of key leaders at both the Troop and Platoon level discussed above. This Team uses a one-year training/deployment (8 months training/4 months deployed) cycle. This implementation scheme has the added benefit of not changing PRD schedules or interfering with the current NSW career path. Additionally, the implementation of this model offers a unique opportunity to evaluate the effect leadership continuity has on both cohesion and readiness in a small-scale test case. If levels of cohesion and performance are maintained at an improved and higher level, as this research suggests, this example could be used as a model and implemented across NSW community.

D. LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

1. Recommendation

Implement a program to develop hardiness in NSW tactical leaders to give those leaders additional tools to establish and expand cohesion in operational units and thereby improve performance and effectiveness.

2. Discussion

The concept of psychological hardiness is long established and fundamental to NSW. A study conducted by the Naval Health Research Center in 1994 attempted to develop a personality profile for a Navy SEAL. SEALs on both coasts were administered a personality profile inventory and compared with adult male norms. The study concludes, "SEALs appear to be calm, *hardy*, secure, and not prone to excessive psychological stress or anxiety [emphasis added]."[132] More recently, hardiness and the related concept resilience has been incorporated into the assessment and selection process for entering Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL School (BUD/S). The computerized

[132] D. E. Braun et al., *Personality Profiles of U.S. Navy Sea-Air-Land (SEAL) Personnel* (San Diego, CA: Naval Health Research Center, May 1994), 13, http://handle.dtic.mil/100.2/ADA281692.

special operations resilience test (C-SORT) measures potential recruits along five personality traits including hardiness.[133] C-SORT values combined with the Physical Screening Test (PST) score has been found to accurately predict BUD/S completion. In an attempt to reduce attrition in training, the combined C-SORT and PST scores are used to determine selection for BUD/S training.

The research conducted in this study shows a causal pathway from hardiness to performance via leadership and cohesion. High hardy leaders have been shown to improve cohesion in the units they lead. This improved cohesion is translated into higher performing and more effective NSW units.

3. Conclusion: Incorporate Hardiness Training

While the results of this research have shown that SEALs have higher than average scores for hardiness, there is room for improvement. Currently, hardiness is measured as a selection tool for accession into BUD/S training; however, it is not taught or formally instructed within the NSW community. If this is an important enough factor to include in an assessment of a potential candidate, why is it not of any further interest once that individual has been selected? It makes sense then, that instruction to increase hardiness within NSW should be incorporated at an institutional level. The potential to improve performance and effectiveness with little cost in time or money is very high. Targeting the key leaders in the Troop for hardiness training will further minimize the cost. Programs like the Junior Officer Training Course (JOTC) and the SEAL Lieutenants Career Course (SLCC) are ideal venues for incorporating hardiness training targeted at NSW Troop leadership. Additionally, relatively low-cost seminars in the civilian sector offer the potential for beneficial training in this area. The established relationship between hardiness, leadership, and cohesion warrants the minimal investment necessary to establish an institutional program for fostering this this trait.

[133] "C-SORT Working Group Out-Brief" (Naval Special Warfare Presentation, Naval Personnel Research, Studies, and Technology, March 2010).

E. OBSERVATIONS

1. Personal Interaction

With respect to task and social cohesion, NSW is a very unique organization. Task and social cohesion are so closely correlated as to be virtually interchangeable. This shows that the line between "work and play" is so fine that it is practically indistinguishable. When viewed externally, this phenomenon is somewhat understandable. The path to becoming a SEAL requires sacrifice, self-selection (twice—the U.S. Navy and NSW), and over a year of additional levels of selection and training. This is just the initial cost of entry. By the time a SEAL deploys for the first time, he has completed hundreds of training evolutions and passed countless performance evaluations. This process will undoubtedly produce an individual who is largely in sync and in line with the goals and norms of the organization and fellow members. In the process, work and socialization merge into one interrelating dynamic, each feeding and building off the other.

2. Family and Personal Time

There are numerous programs already in place to address the family concerns within the NSW community; however, none address the underlying problem directly. The survey respondents raised concerns of operational commitments on family and personal time. The programs that are in place serve only to aid families in coping with the strain of their spouse or parent's frequent absences, while none of the programs directly address the problem facing families: having their loved ones gone frequently.

The solution to this lies within the broader set of initiatives mentioned earlier in this chapter. A comprehensive evaluation of what NSW's priorities are may realign some of the requirements and provide the operational elements with a greater sense of meaningful employment. This can have a ripple effect in that the service member is more likely to be satisfied with the time spent away from home and consequently more able to translate the perceived importance of the operational commitments to his family. Additionally, a higher level of readiness, realized through shorter duration training-deployment cycles, can result in less time away from home in training. These shorter-

duration deployments can also have positive impacts on the family in that it is likely easier for a family to accept two four-month deployments in the space of two years, than it is one eight month deployment within the same period. Implementing these recommendations, in addition to maintaining the family support programs already in place, will better ensure the health of the force for what is likely to be an enduring commitment to the current long war.

F. CONCLUSION

This study has examined several salient issues within the NSW community. The authors' intent, from the outset, has been to provide authoritative data that can be used to support recommendations that represent marked change to improve overall effectiveness in the NSW Force. The study of NSW Troop cohesion provides a two-fold benefit. First, the results serve as a guide for NSW leadership at all levels, providing them with indicators of what important factors can foster, inhibit, contribute to, or degrade unit cohesion in NSW Troops. Second, the study serves as a platform from which to examine some of the larger issues that are tangentially related to unit cohesion.

The survey results revealed that unit cohesion within the Troops is far above the norms of the comparison studies. Yet, the qualitative portion of the research revealed some underlying grievances with linkages to unit cohesion that indicated some greater, force-wide concerns that NSW strategic leadership must address. The recommendations put forth provide an initial step toward creating a more effective, flexible Special Operations Force that is responsive, both to appropriate requirements and, to a dynamic and changing external environment. As Gen. Schoomaker's quote at the beginning of this chapter indicated, NSW leadership should strive to continually improve and manage the Force within this rapidly changing environment. The recommendations presented in this study offer opportunities to improve cohesion, performance, and effectiveness in NSW.

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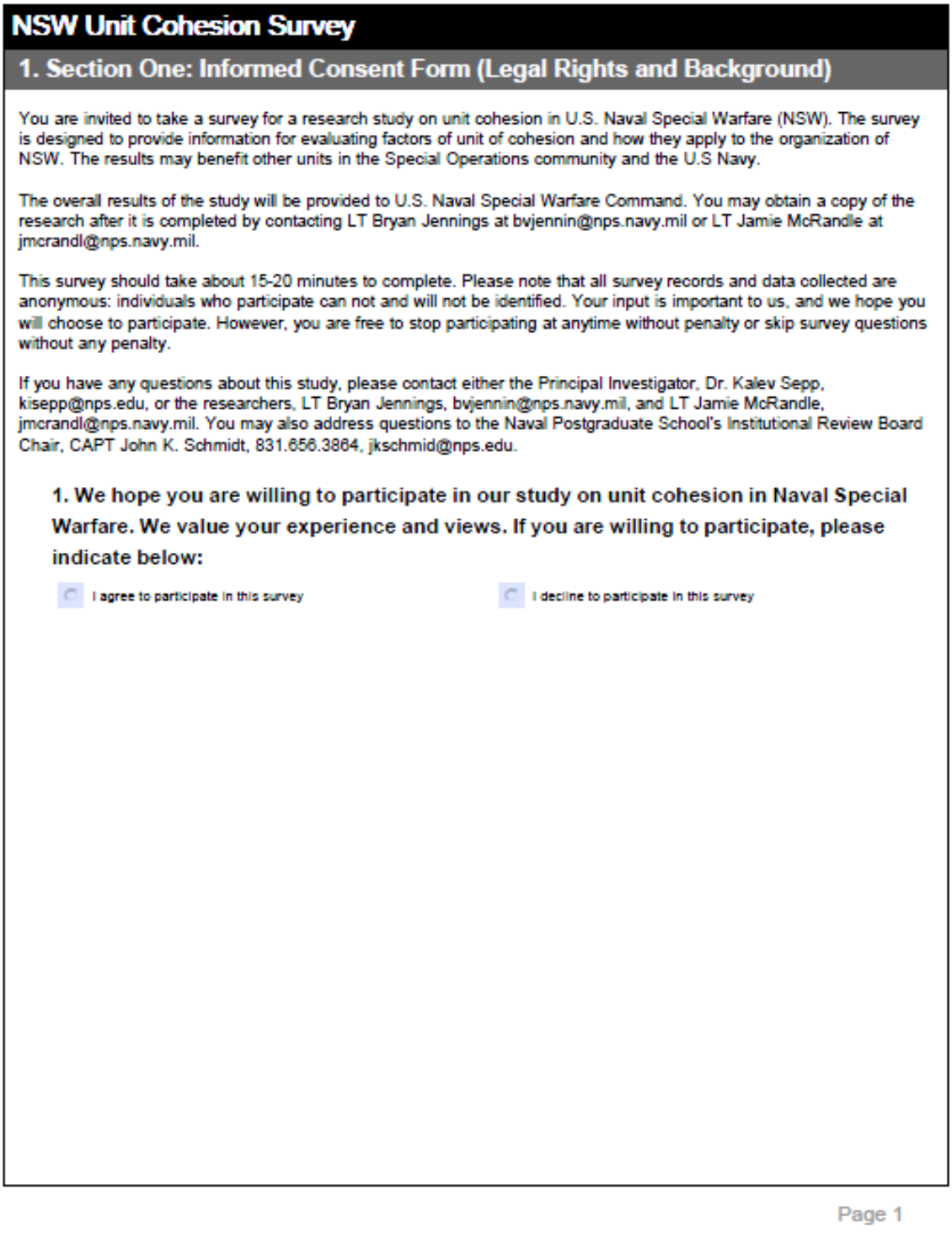
APPENDIX A: NSW UNIT COHESION SURVEY



NSW Unit Cohesion Survey

1. Section One: Informed Consent Form (Legal Rights and Background)

You are invited to take a survey for a research study on unit cohesion in U.S. Naval Special Warfare (NSW). The survey is designed to provide information for evaluating factors of unit of cohesion and how they apply to the organization of NSW. The results may benefit other units in the Special Operations community and the U.S Navy.

The overall results of the study will be provided to U.S. Naval Special Warfare Command. You may obtain a copy of the research after it is completed by contacting LT Bryan Jennings at bvjennin@nps.navy.mil or LT Jamie McRandle at jmcrandl@nps.navy.mil.

This survey should take about 15-20 minutes to complete. Please note that all survey records and data collected are anonymous: individuals who participate can not and will not be identified. Your input is important to us, and we hope you will choose to participate. However, you are free to stop participating at anytime without penalty or skip survey questions without any penalty.

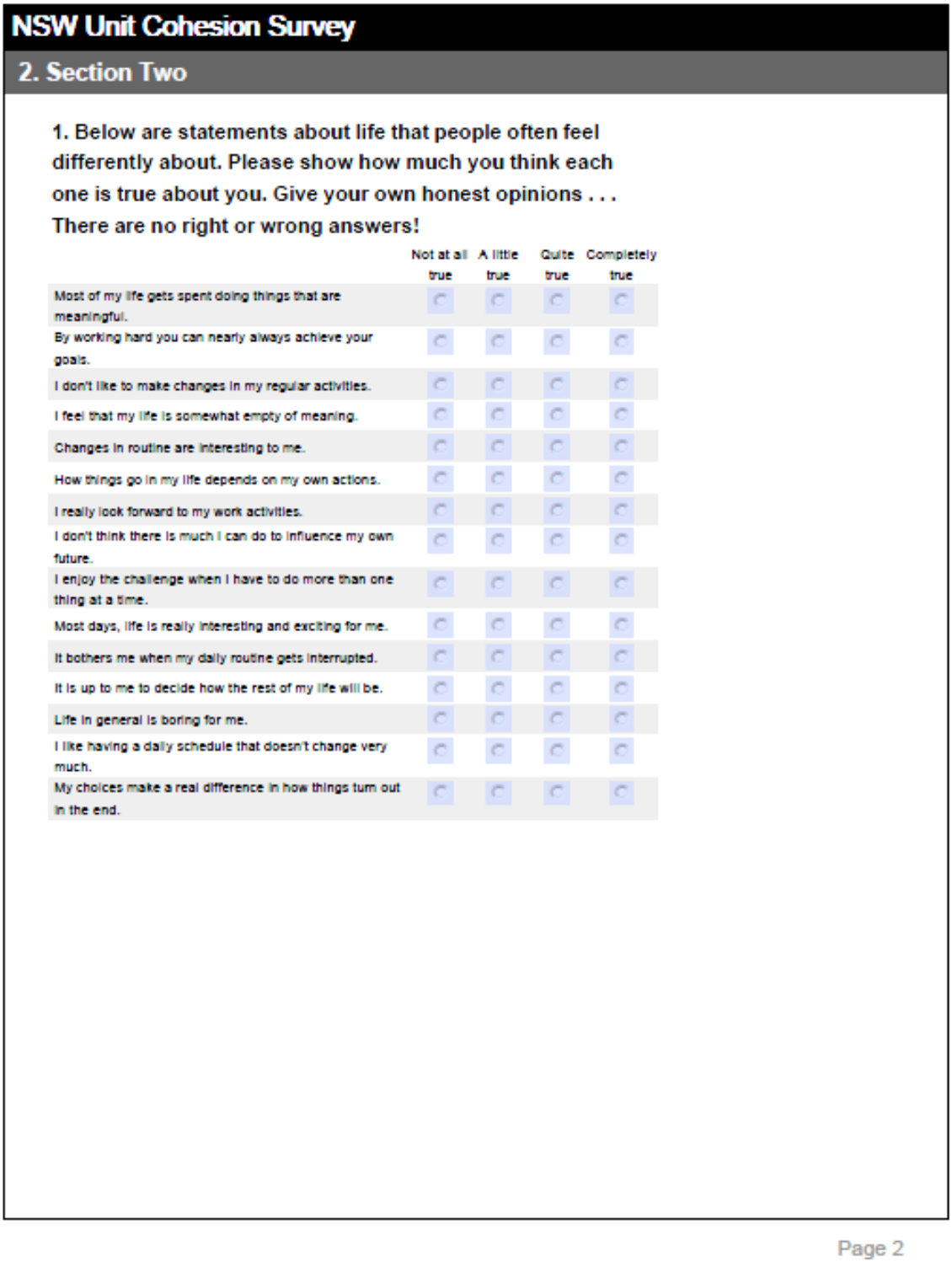
If you have any questions about this study, please contact either the Principal Investigator, Dr. Kalev Sepp, kisepp@nps.edu, or the researchers, LT Bryan Jennings, bvjennin@nps.navy.mil, and LT Jamie McRandle, jmcrandl@nps.navy.mil. You may also address questions to the Naval Postgraduate School's Institutional Review Board Chair, CAPT John K. Schmidt, 831.656.3864, jkschmid@nps.edu.

1. We hope you are willing to participate in our study on unit cohesion in Naval Special Warfare. We value your experience and views. If you are willing to participate, please indicate below:

○ I agree to participate in this survey ○ I decline to participate in this survey

Page 1

Figure 17. NSW Unit Cohesion Survey – Page 1



NSW Unit Cohesion Survey

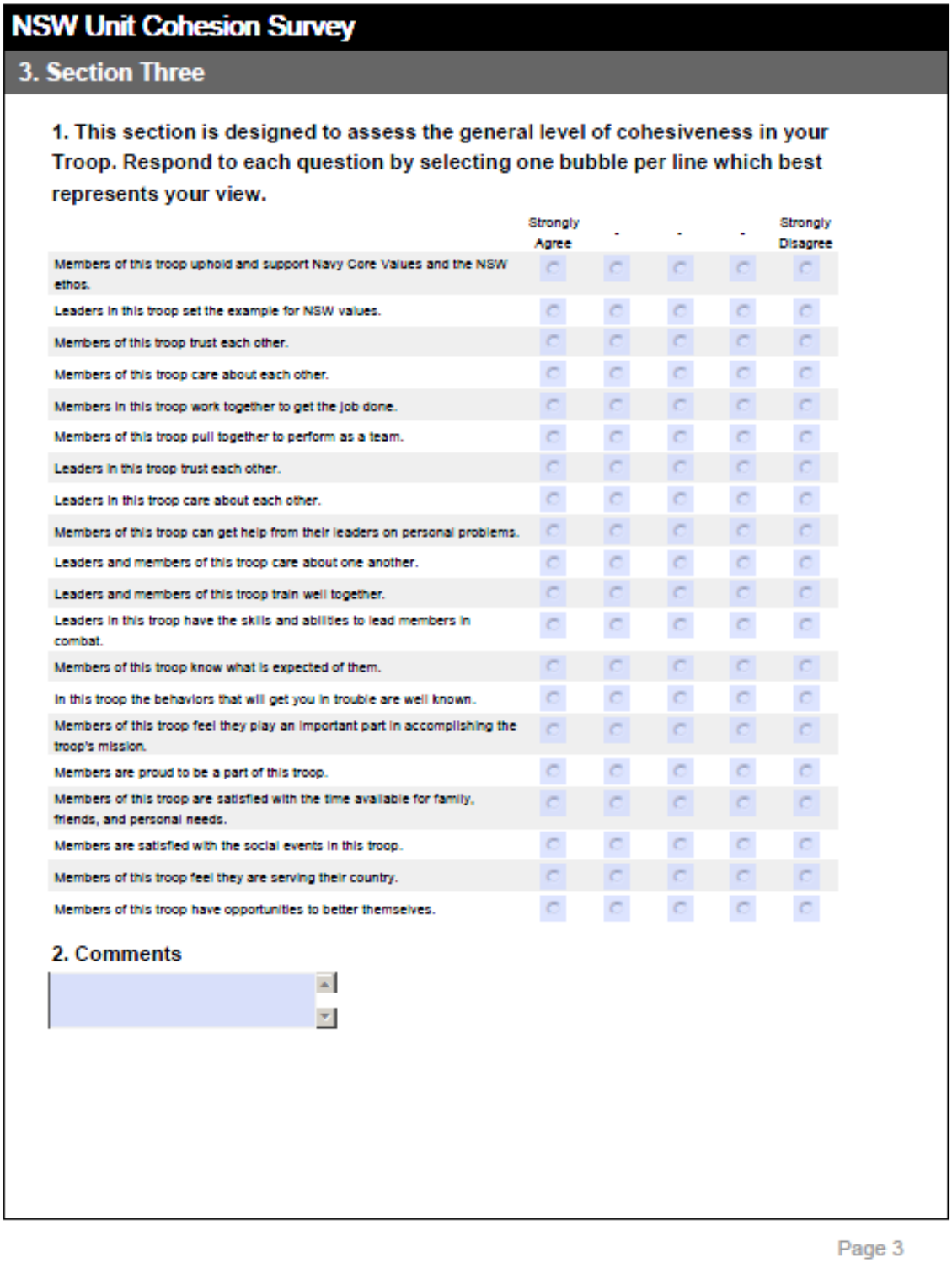
2. Section Two

1. Below are statements about life that people often feel differently about. Please show how much you think each one is true about you. Give your own honest opinions . . . There are no right or wrong answers!

	Not at all true	A little true	Quite true	Completely true
Most of my life gets spent doing things that are meaningful.				
By working hard you can nearly always achieve your goals.				
I don't like to make changes in my regular activities.				
I feel that my life is somewhat empty of meaning.				
Changes in routine are interesting to me.				
How things go in my life depends on my own actions.				
I really look forward to my work activities.				
I don't think there is much I can do to influence my own future.				
I enjoy the challenge when I have to do more than one thing at a time.				
Most days, life is really interesting and exciting for me.				
It bothers me when my daily routine gets interrupted.				
It is up to me to decide how the rest of my life will be.				
Life in general is boring for me.				
I like having a daily schedule that doesn't change very much.				
My choices make a real difference in how things turn out in the end.				

Page 2

Figure 18. NSW Unit Cohesion Survey – Page 2



NSW Unit Cohesion Survey

3. Section Three

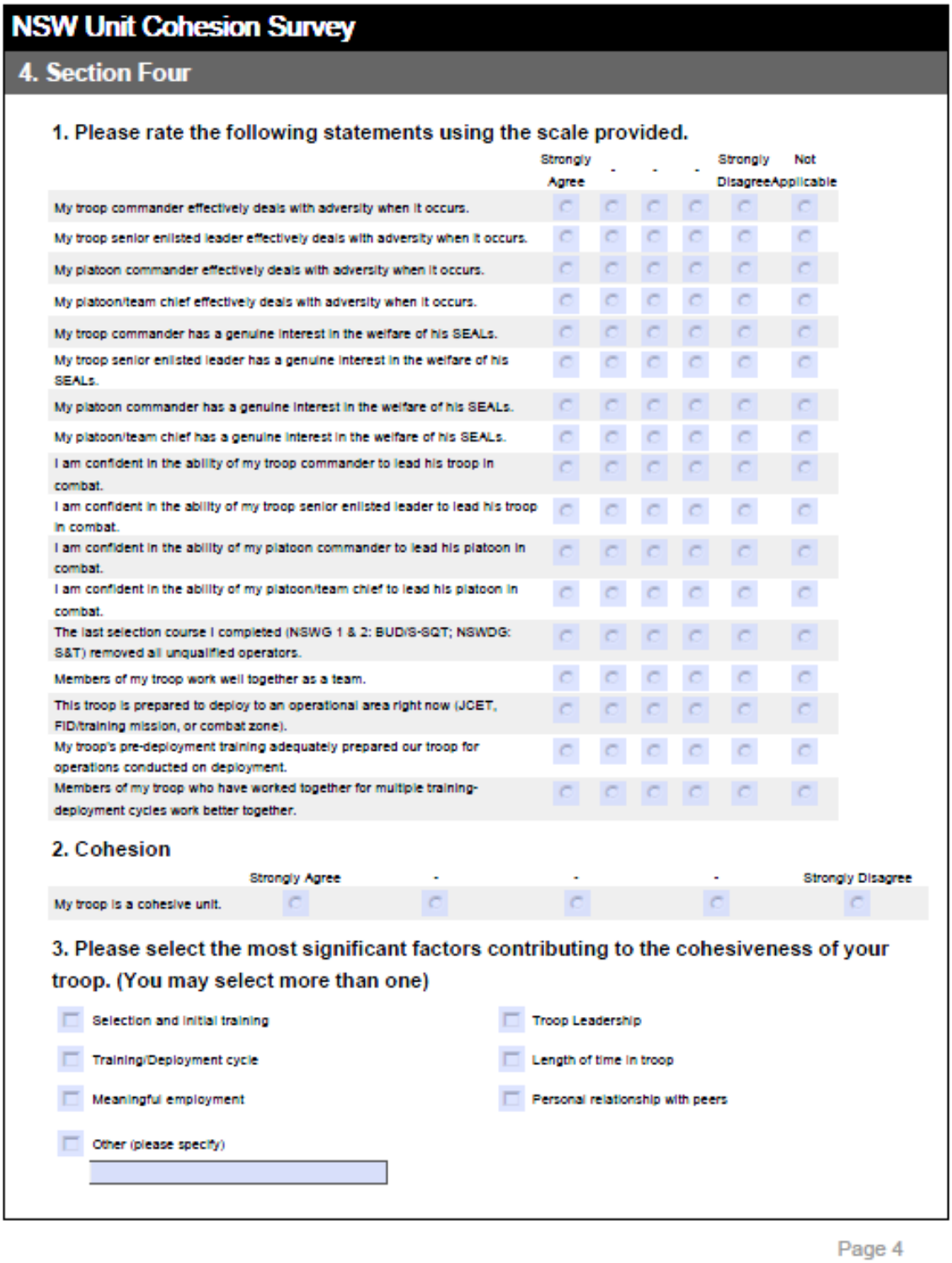
1. This section is designed to assess the general level of cohesiveness in your Troop. Respond to each question by selecting one bubble per line which best represents your view.

	Strongly Agree	-	-	-	Strongly Disagree
Members of this troop uphold and support Navy Core Values and the NSW ethos.					
Leaders in this troop set the example for NSW values.					
Members of this troop trust each other.					
Members of this troop care about each other.					
Members in this troop work together to get the job done.					
Members of this troop pull together to perform as a team.					
Leaders in this troop trust each other.					
Leaders in this troop care about each other.					
Members of this troop can get help from their leaders on personal problems.					
Leaders and members of this troop care about one another.					
Leaders and members of this troop train well together.					
Leaders in this troop have the skills and abilities to lead members in combat.					
Members of this troop know what is expected of them.					
In this troop the behaviors that will get you in trouble are well known.					
Members of this troop feel they play an important part in accomplishing the troop's mission.					
Members are proud to be a part of this troop.					
Members of this troop are satisfied with the time available for family, friends, and personal needs.					
Members are satisfied with the social events in this troop.					
Members of this troop feel they are serving their country.					
Members of this troop have opportunities to better themselves.					

2. Comments

Page 3

Figure 19. NSW Unit Cohesion Survey – Page 3



NSW Unit Cohesion Survey

4. Section Four

1. Please rate the following statements using the scale provided.

	Strongly Agree	-	-	-	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
My troop commander effectively deals with adversity when it occurs.						
My troop senior enlisted leader effectively deals with adversity when it occurs.						
My platoon commander effectively deals with adversity when it occurs.						
My platoon/team chief effectively deals with adversity when it occurs.						
My troop commander has a genuine interest in the welfare of his SEALs.						
My troop senior enlisted leader has a genuine interest in the welfare of his SEALs.						
My platoon commander has a genuine interest in the welfare of his SEALs.						
My platoon/team chief has a genuine interest in the welfare of his SEALs.						
I am confident in the ability of my troop commander to lead his troop in combat.						
I am confident in the ability of my troop senior enlisted leader to lead his troop in combat.						
I am confident in the ability of my platoon commander to lead his platoon in combat.						
I am confident in the ability of my platoon/team chief to lead his platoon in combat.						
The last selection course I completed (NSWG 1 & 2: BUD/S-SQT; NSWDG: S&T) removed all unqualified operators.						
Members of my troop work well together as a team.						
This troop is prepared to deploy to an operational area right now (JCET, FID/training mission, or combat zone).						
My troop's pre-deployment training adequately prepared our troop for operations conducted on deployment.						
Members of my troop who have worked together for multiple training-deployment cycles work better together.						

2. Cohesion

	Strongly Agree	-	-	-	Strongly Disagree
My troop is a cohesive unit.					

3. Please select the most significant factors contributing to the cohesiveness of your troop. (You may select more than one)

- Selection and initial training
- Troop Leadership
- Training/Deployment cycle
- Length of time in troop
- Meaningful employment
- Personal relationship with peers
- Other (please specify)

Page 4

Figure 20. NSW Unit Cohesion Survey – Page 4

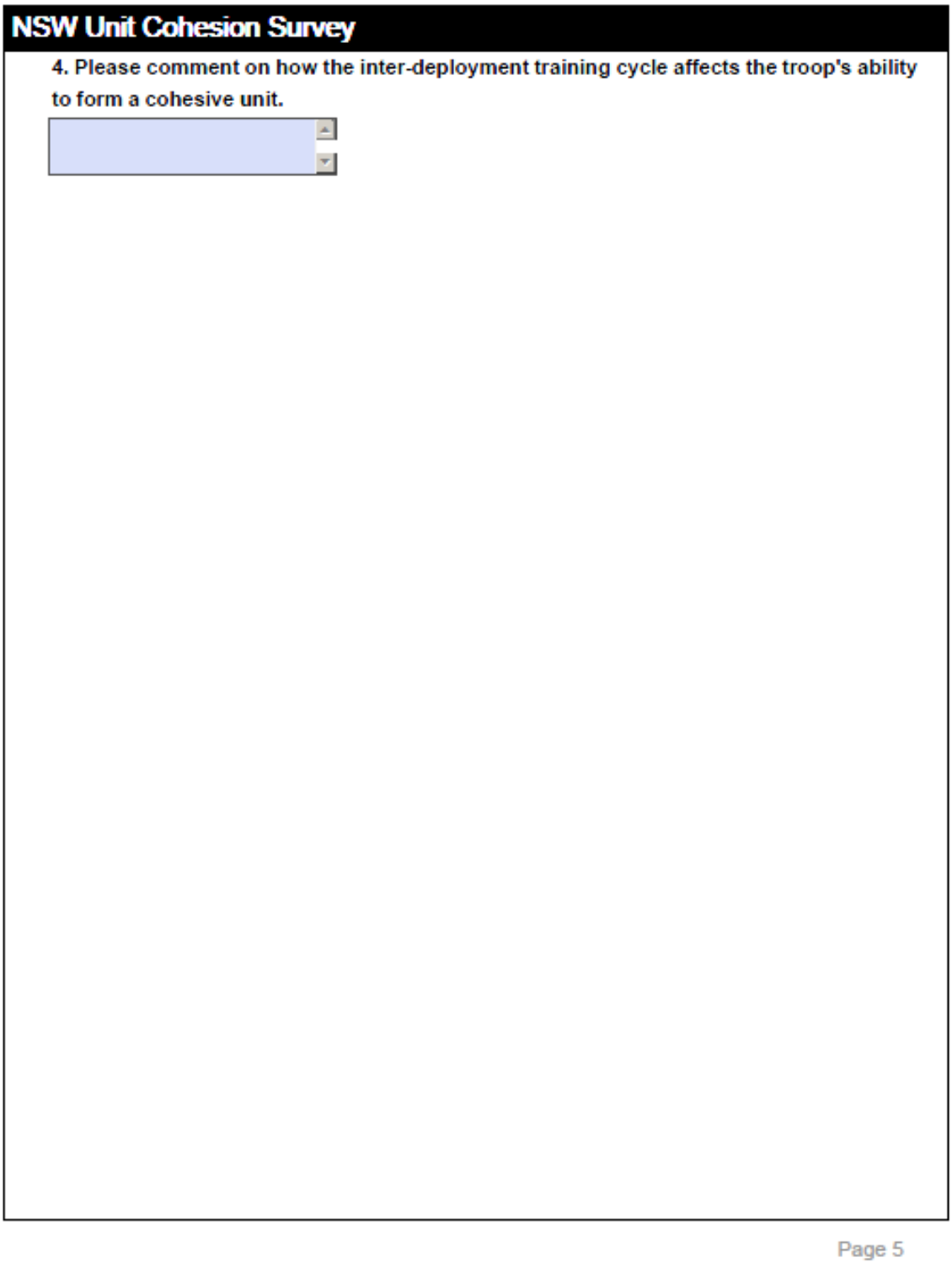


Figure 21. NSW Unit Cohesion Survey – Page 5

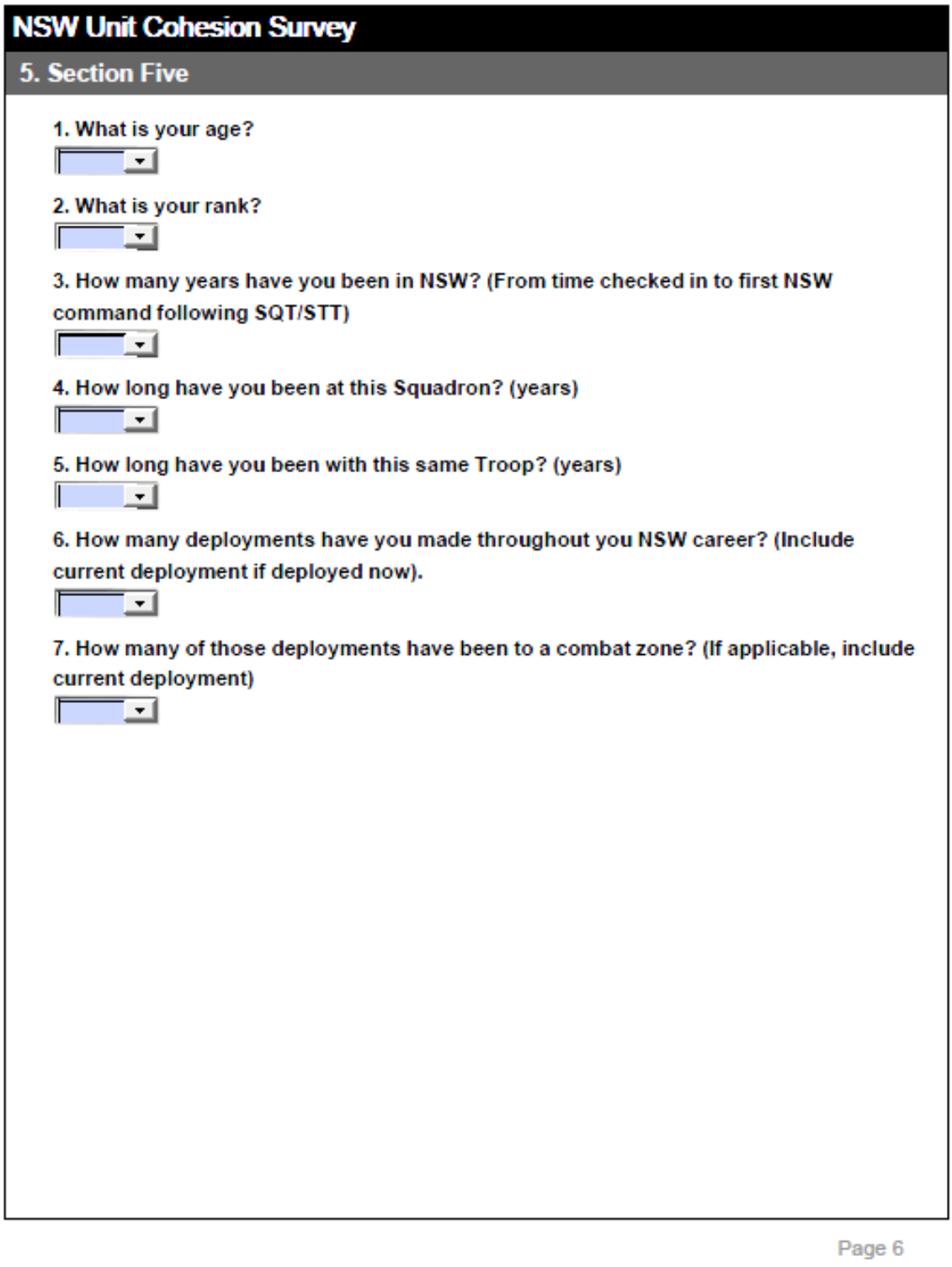


Figure 22. NSW Unit Cohesion Survey – Page 6

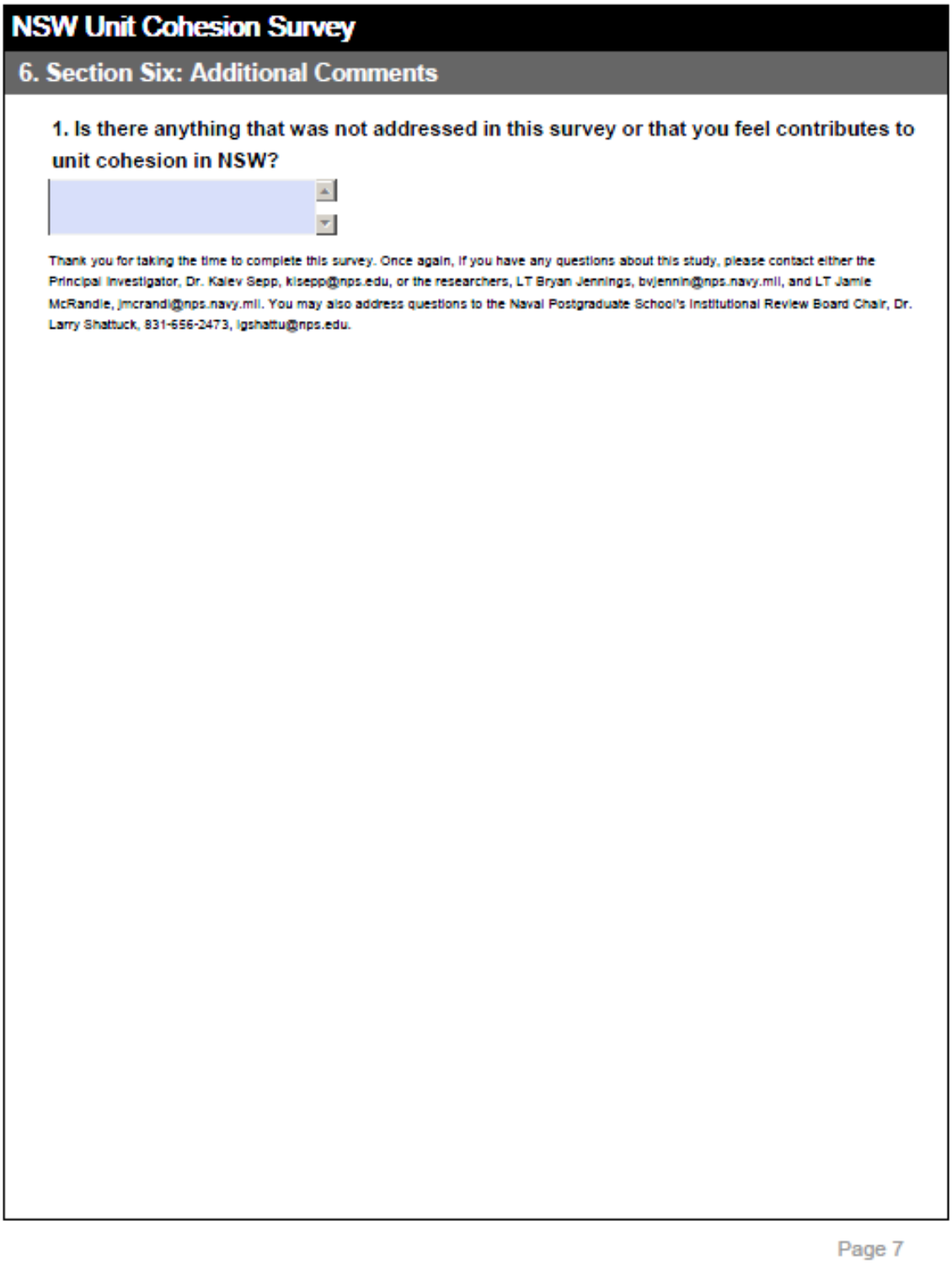


Figure 23. NSW Unit Cohesion Survey – Page 7

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APPENDIX B: PCI-NSW UNIT COHESION SCALES

Horizontal Bonding (HB)	
	HB-Affective (HB-A): addresses the extent that members in a troop trust and care about one another.
	HB-Affective, Leaders (HB-A,L): address the extent that leaders in a troop trust and care about one another.
	HB-Instrumental (HB-I): addresses how well the members of the troop work together as a team.
Vertical Bonding (VB)	
	VB-Affective (VB-A): addresses how much the members and leaders within the troop care about each other.
	VB-Instrumental (VB-I): addresses the technical expertise and training skills of the leaders in the troop.
Organizational Bonding (OB)	
	OB-Affective, Member Values (OB-A,MV): addresses the importance of key Navy and NSW values to troop members.
	OB-Affective, Leader Values (OB-A,LV): addresses the importance of the same values to leaders in the troop.
	OB-Affective, Pride (OB-A,P): addresses how proud individuals are to be members of the troop.
	OB-Instrumental, Anomie (OB-I,A): addresses the extent to which there is a rational environment for action by the troop members.
	OB-Instrumental, Needs (OB-I,N): addresses the extent to which member's basic and social needs are being met.
	OB-Instrumental, Goals (OB-I,G): addresses the extent to which member enlistment goals are being met.

Table 6. Explanation of PCI-NSW Unit Cohesion Scales

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APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

A. INTRODUCTION

Due to your position as a mid to senior level leader in the Naval Special Warfare community, you are invited to participate in an interview about some of the issues currently facing the community. LT Bryan Jennings and LT Jamie McRandle are SEAL officers conducting this study while completing their studies at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey. The focus of this research is to examine factors that contribute to unit cohesion in Naval Special Warfare Troops.

Your input will supplement a survey that has been distributed to each operational Troop across the community. Your unique perspectives and observations will hopefully aid us in understanding how to achieve greater unit cohesion in the Troops and ultimately, help make the Teams a more effective organization. We have the authorization of both the Naval Postgraduate School and Naval Special Warfare Command to conduct this research. The interview responses will be kept completely anonymous, unless otherwise specified by you, and participation is voluntary. Your input is important to us and we hope you will choose to participate. However, you are free to stop participating, or chose to not answer certain questions, at any point during the interview.

B. QUESTIONS

1. Establishing a Baseline

1- Can you describe what you understand unit cohesion to be?

2- Based on your experience and observations, describe the relationship between unit cohesion in NSW elements and that unit's performance. If you can, provide positive and negative examples.

2. Establishing the Problem

3- In your view, what are the top three issues currently affecting Naval Special Warfare at the tactical/operational (Troop) level (could be either positive or negative)? Please describe your rationale behind each choice.

3. Potential Remedies/Status of Current Remedies

4- In reference to the above mentioned issues, what, in your view, are some feasible remedies that might improve cohesion among NSW Troops?

5- Of the issues for which there are currently remedies already in effect, how effective are they at achieving their intended goals? Are there other avenues that have not yet been explored?

6- Rank, in order of <u>overall significance</u>, the following issues and explain:

a) how you feel they impact the cohesiveness of the NSW Troop;
b) how they influence the overall effectiveness of the force.

- ☐ *Meaningful employment* (job satisfaction, sense of purposeful mission)
- ☐ *Turnover following IDTC* (flush and fill).
- ☐ *Squadron and Troop Leadership Experience and Capability*
- ☐ *Retention*
- ☐ *Training and Deployment cycle* (impact of the length of each block on the individuals).
- ☐ *Perception-Reality gap* (Expectation management, Training-employment fit; e.g., training exclusively for DA/Assault and yet (in some cases) deploying to conduct only FID/SFA).

4. Conclusion

7- Are there any other issues related to unit cohesion that you feel would be pertinent to this research that has not been addressed here?

APPENDIX D: STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

A. DEMOGRAPHICS

Rank	Frequency	Percentage
E-3	1	.6
E-4	17	9.8
E-5	49	28.3
E-6	34	19.7
E-7	13	7.5
E-8	11	6.4
O-1	7	4.1
O-2	8	4.6
O-3	22	12.7
O-4	11	6.4
Total	**173**	**100.0**

Table 7. Respondents by Rank

McRandle/Jennings 2011

Major Group	Frequency	Percentage
East Coast	96	53.0
West Coast	77	42.5
NMF	8	4.5
Total	**181**	**100.0**

McRandle/Jennings 2011

Table 8. Respondents by Command

B. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

	Norms		NSW	
Question	**Mean**	**Std Dev**	**Mean**	**Std Dev**
1	2.29	0.88	3.335	0.886
2	2.48	0.95	3.313	0.968
3	2.37	0.92	3.335	0.917
4	2.45	0.89	3.398	0.901
5	2.76	0.9	3.337	0.980
6	2.66	0.91	3.335	0.936
7	2.48	0.96	3.500	0.868
8	2.41	0.96	3.443	0.893
9	2.55	1.04	3.438	0.879
10	2.25	0.97	3.426	0.832
11	2.55	0.91	3.379	0.896
12	2.47	1.09	3.454	0.941
13	2.76	0.87	3.511	0.821
14	2.95	0.89	3.477	0.888
15	2.46	1.01	3.434	0.834
16	2.41	1.13	3.494	0.828
17	1.75	1.3	2.269	1.357
18	1.69	1.17	2.801	1.042
19	2.32	0.98	3.352	0.914
20	1.98	1.26	3.335	0.859

Table 9. PCI Norms Vs. NSW Descriptive Statistics

	West Coast Overall		West Coast Troop	
Variable	**Mean**	**Std Dev**	**Mean**	**Std Dev**
Hardiness	2.232	.335	2.225	.370
Troop Commander	1.612	.724	1.808	.345
Troop Chief	1.475	.949	1.7	.564
Platoon Commander	1.769	.374	1.742	.403
Platoon Chief	1.745	.463	1.758	.427
Selection & Training	.259	1.063	.593	.92
Task Cohesion	1.436	.871	1.457	.911
Social Cohesion	1.268	.978	1.369	.955

McRandle/Jennings 2011

Table 10. West Coast Sample Validity

	East Coast Overall		East Coast Troop	
Variable	**Mean**	**Std Dev**	**Mean**	**Std Dev**
Hardiness	2.292	.339	2.255	.376
Troop Commander	1.506	.725	1.493	.658
Troop Chief	1.288	1.054	1.622	.621
Platoon Commander	1.618	.649	1.538	.706
Platoon Chief	1.559	.672	1.613	.636
Selection & Training	.246	.882	.688	.998
Task Cohesion	1.487	.736	1.146	.676
Social Cohesion	1.404	.807	1.411	.774

McRandle/Jennings 2011

Table 11. East Coast Sample Validity

C. REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Cohesion	Coef	R>|t|
Troop Commander	.123	.349
Troop Chief	.332	.000
Platoon Commander	.501	.001
Platoon Chief	-.157	.240
Number of Observations: 145	R-Squared: .44	

McRandle/Jennings 2011

Table 12. Cohesion – Leadership Regression Analysis

Cohesion	Coef	R>|t|
Troop Commander	.099	.405
Troop Chief	.254	.005
Platoon Commander	.406	.003
Platoon Chief	-.120	.323
Hardiness	.125	.431
Task Cohesion	.186	.290
Social Cohesion	-.041	.813
Selection & Training	.137	.054
Number of Observations: 108	R-Squared: .59	

McRandle/Jennings 2011

Table 13. Cohesion – Leadership and Hypotheses Regression Analysis

Cohesion	Coef	R>|t|
Troop Commander	.034	.811
Troop Chief	.372	.004
Platoon Commander	.370	.045
Platoon Chief	-.128	.363
Hardiness	.050	.816
Task Cohesion	.136	.588
Social Cohesion	.035	.886
Selection & Training	.074	.394
Age	.027	.249
Years in NSW	-.018	.581
No. of Deployments	.018	.846
Combat Deployments	-.095	.291
Number of Observations: 71	R-Squared: .59	

McRandle/Jennings 2011

Table 14. Cohesion – Leadership, Hypotheses, and Demographics Regression Analysis

Overall Cohesion	Coef	$R > \|t\|$
Troop Commander	.094	.419
Troop Chief	.254	.005
Platoon Commander	.404	.003
Platoon Chief	-.116	.332
Hardiness	.127	.421
Task Cohesion	.148	.025
Selection & Training	.136	.012
Number of Observations: 108	R-Squared: .60	

McRandle/Jennings 2011

Table 15. Overall Cohesion (Task Cohesion) Regression Analysis

Overall Cohesion	Coef	$R > \|t\|$
Troop Commander	.075	.520
Troop Chief	.256	.005
Platoon Commander	.408	.003
Platoon Chief	-.102	.394
Hardiness	.140	.376
Social Cohesion	.129	.046
Selection & Training	.132	.016
Number of Observations: 108	R-Squared: .59	

McRandle/Jennings 2011

Table 16. Overall Cohesion (Social Cohesion) Regression Analysis

Troop Commander	Coef	$R>\|t\|$
Hardiness	.727	.001
Task Cohesion	.152	.073
Selection & Training	.177	.023
Years in NSW	-.006	.829
Years in Squadron	-.006	.938
Years in Troop	-.168	.048
No. of Deployments	.045	.430
Number of Observations: 106	R-Squared: .34	

McRandle/Jennings 2011

Table 17. Troop Commander Regression Analysis

Troop Chief	Coef	$R>\|t\|$
Hardiness	.769	.006
Task Cohesion	.204	.080
Selection & Training	.298	.005
Years in NSW	-.002	.960
Years in Squadron	.044	.606
Years in Troop	-.178	.107
No. of Deployments	.046	.551
Number of Observations: 112	R-Squared: .27	

McRandle/Jennings 2011

Table 18. Troop Chief Regression Analysis

Platoon Commander	Coef	$R>\|t\|$
Hardiness	.563	.000
Task Cohesion	.191	.005
Selection & Training	.132	.039
Years in NSW	.006	.790
Years in Squadron	.004	.930
Years in Troop	-.048	.452
No. of Deployments	.016	.891
Number of Observations: 106	R-Squared: .33	

McRandle/Jennings 2011

Table 19. Platoon Commander Regression Analysis

Platoon Chief	Coef	$R>\|t\|$
Hardiness	.623	.001
Task Cohesion	.170	.024
Selection & Training	.102	.144
Years in NSW	.013	.582
Years in Squadron	-.027	.619
Years in Troop	-.039	.581
No. of Deployments	-.014	.771
Number of Observations: 109	R-Squared: .28	

McRandle/Jennings 2011

Table 20. Platoon Chief Regression Analysis

D. HISTOGRAMS

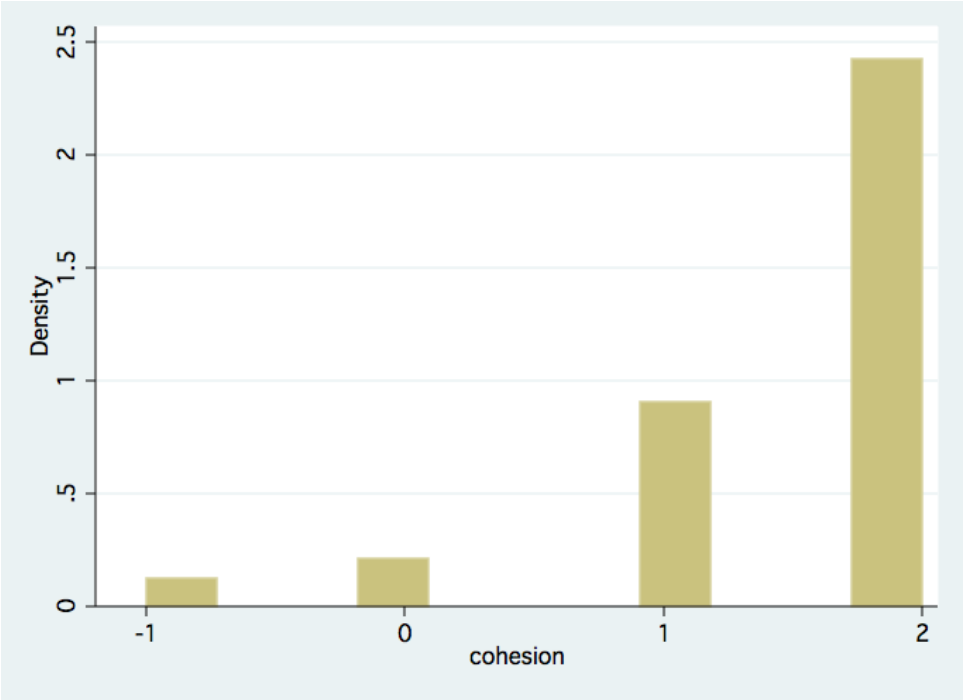

Figure 24. Cohesion Histogram (Enlisted)

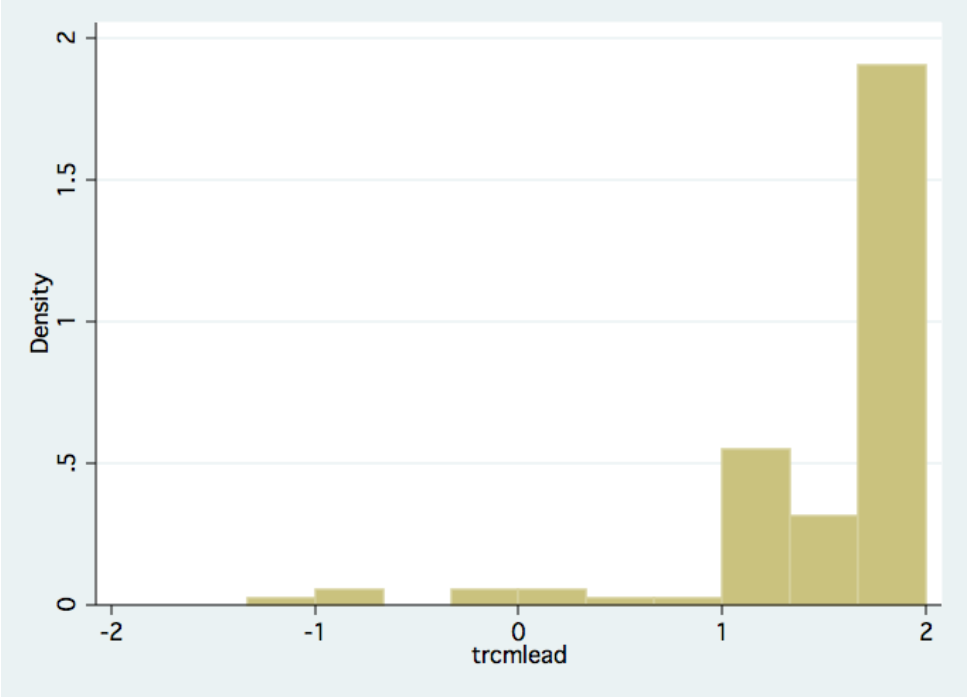

Figure 25. Troop Commander Leadership Histogram (Enlisted)

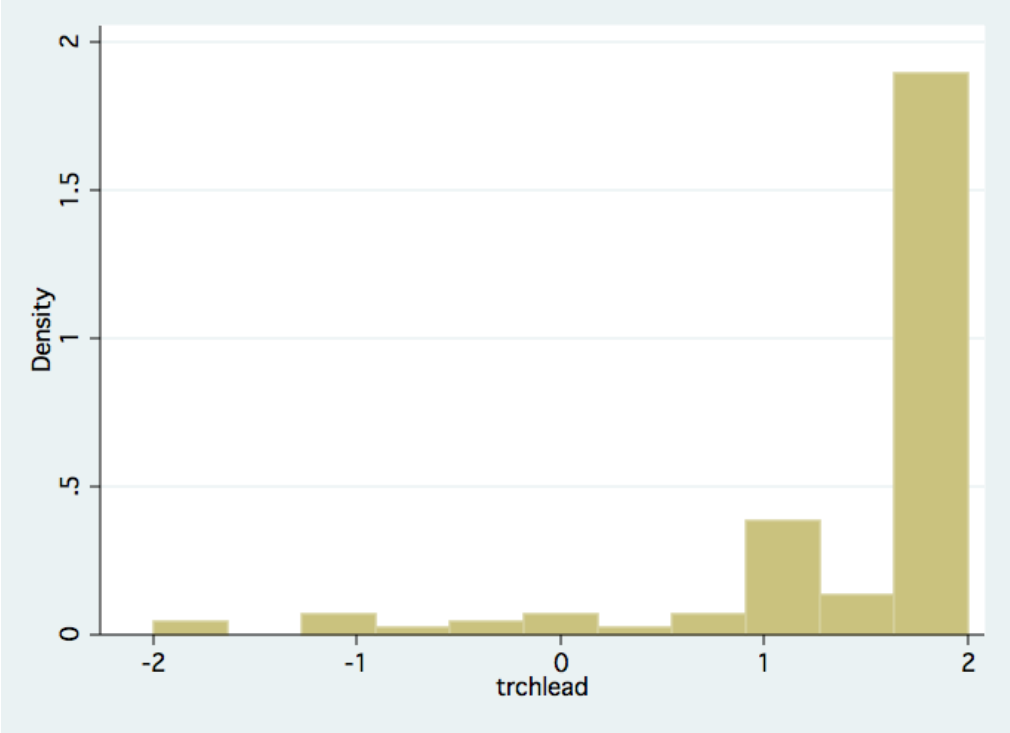

Figure 26. Troop Chief Leadership Histogram (Enlisted)

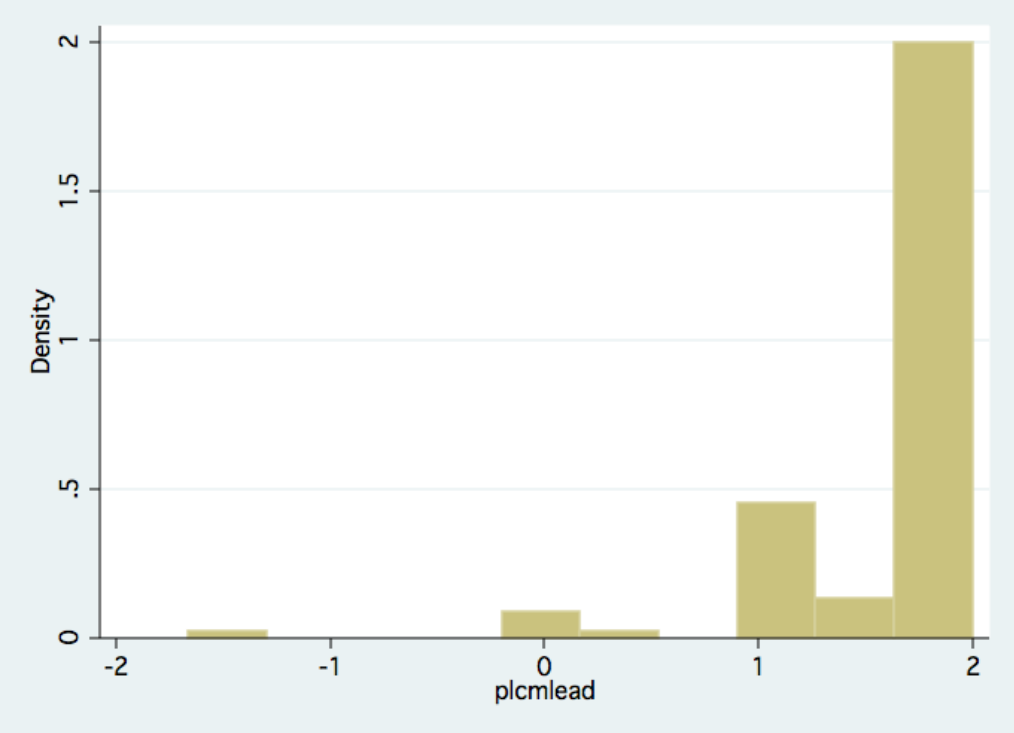

Figure 27. Platoon Commander Leadership Histogram (Enlisted)

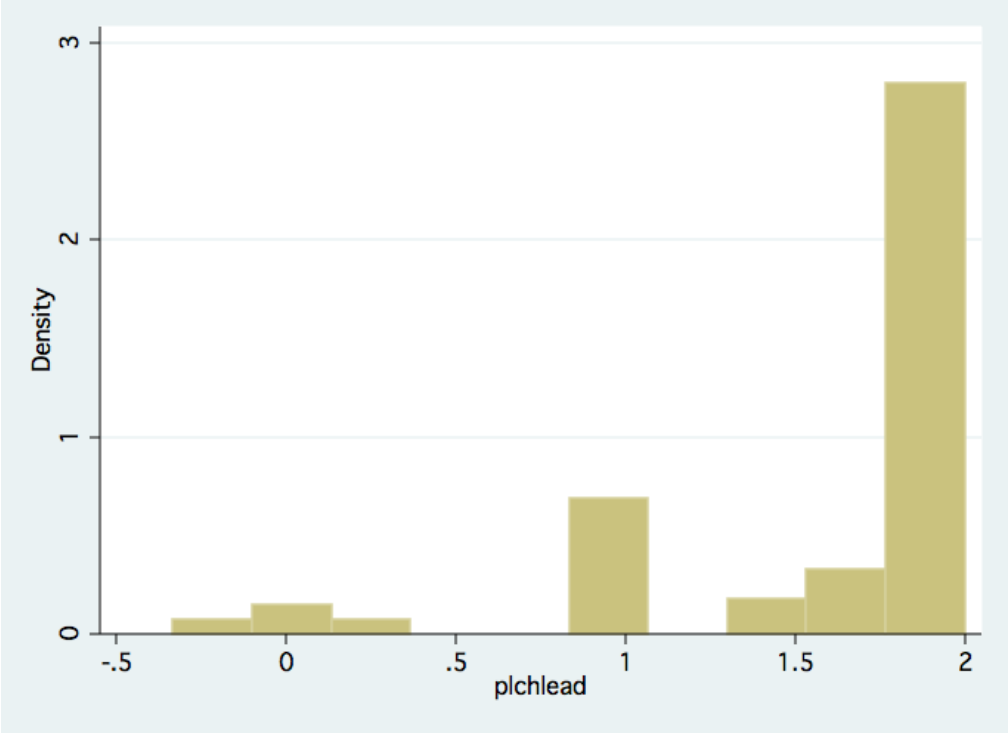

Figure 28. Platoon Chief Leadership Histogram (Enlisted)

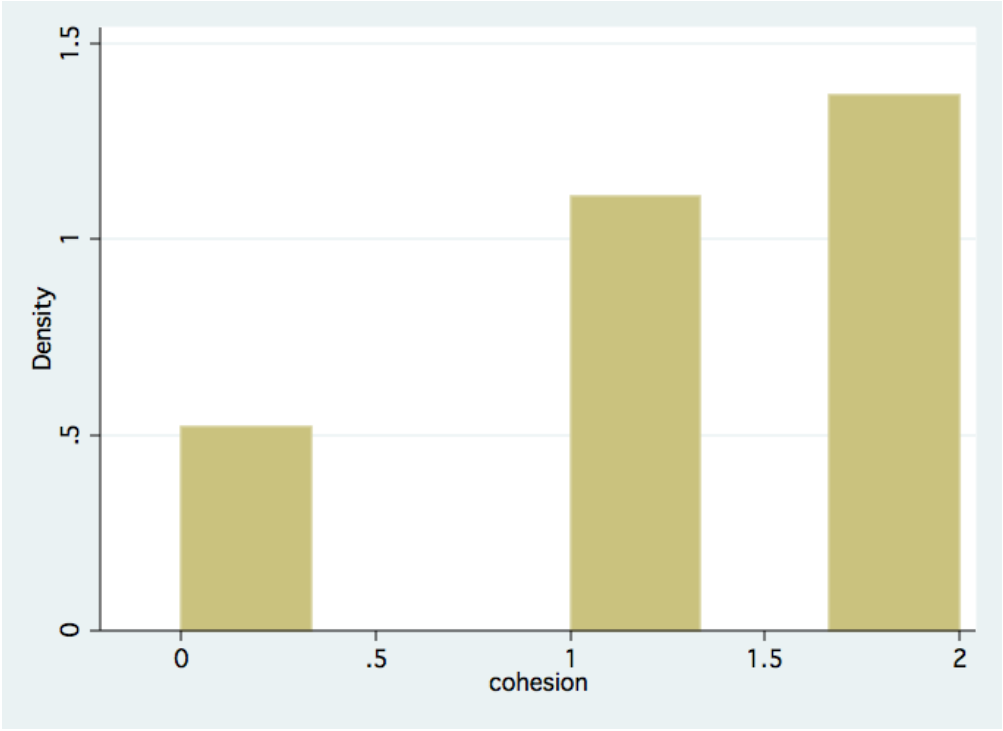

Figure 29. Cohesion (Officer)

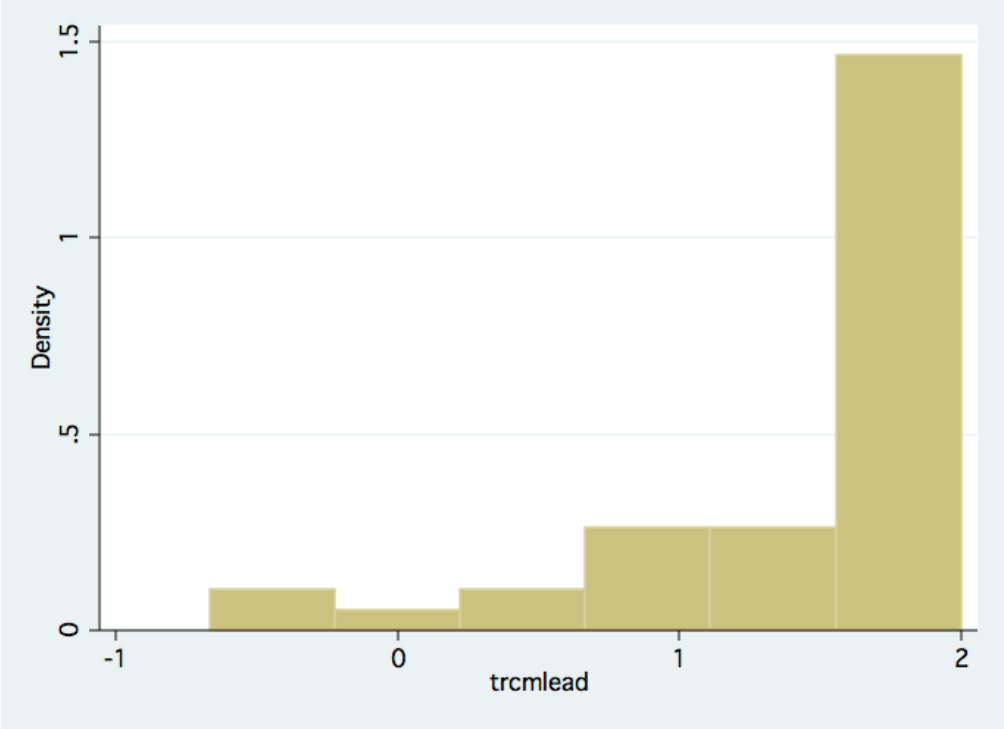

Figure 30. Troop Commander Leadership Histogram (Officer)

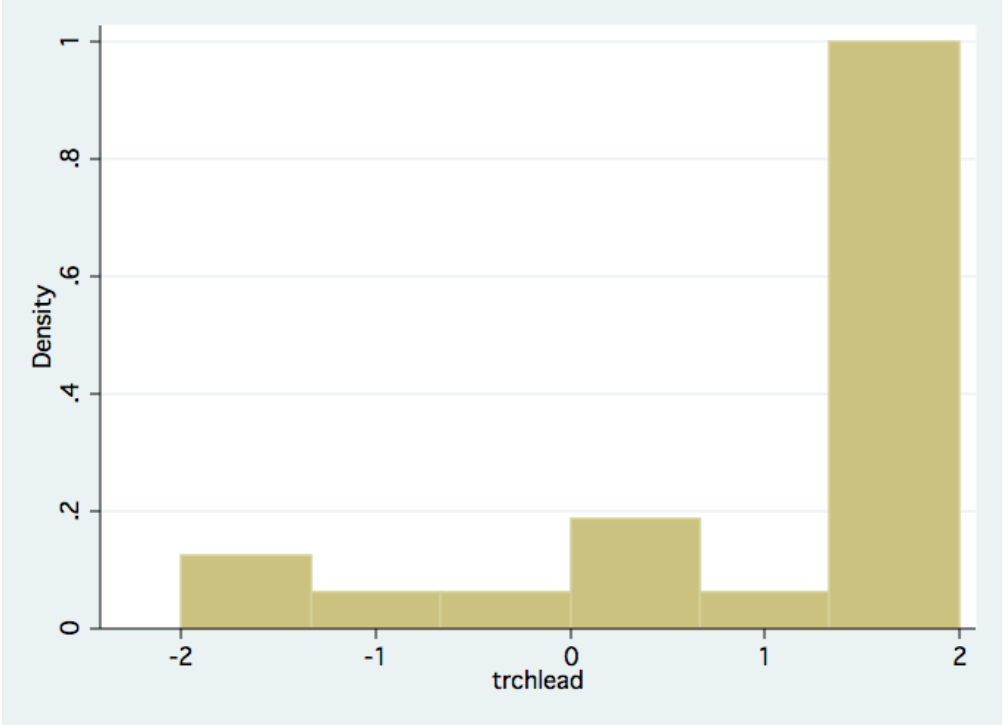

Figure 31. Troop Chief Leadership Histogram (Officer)

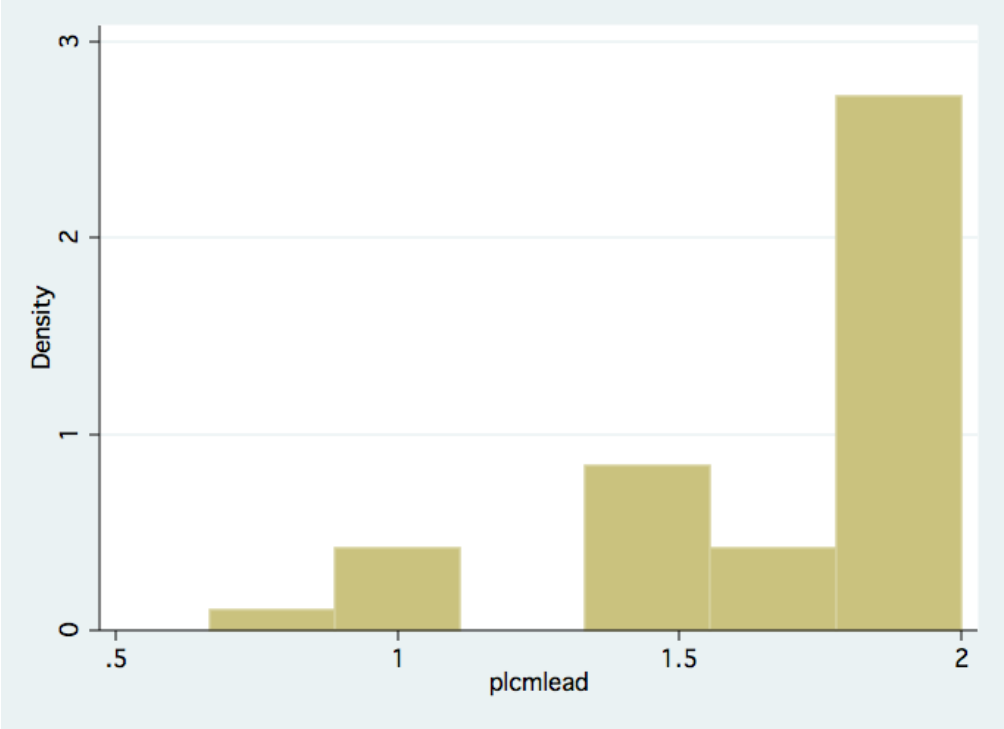

Figure 32. Platoon Commander Leadership Histogram (Officer)

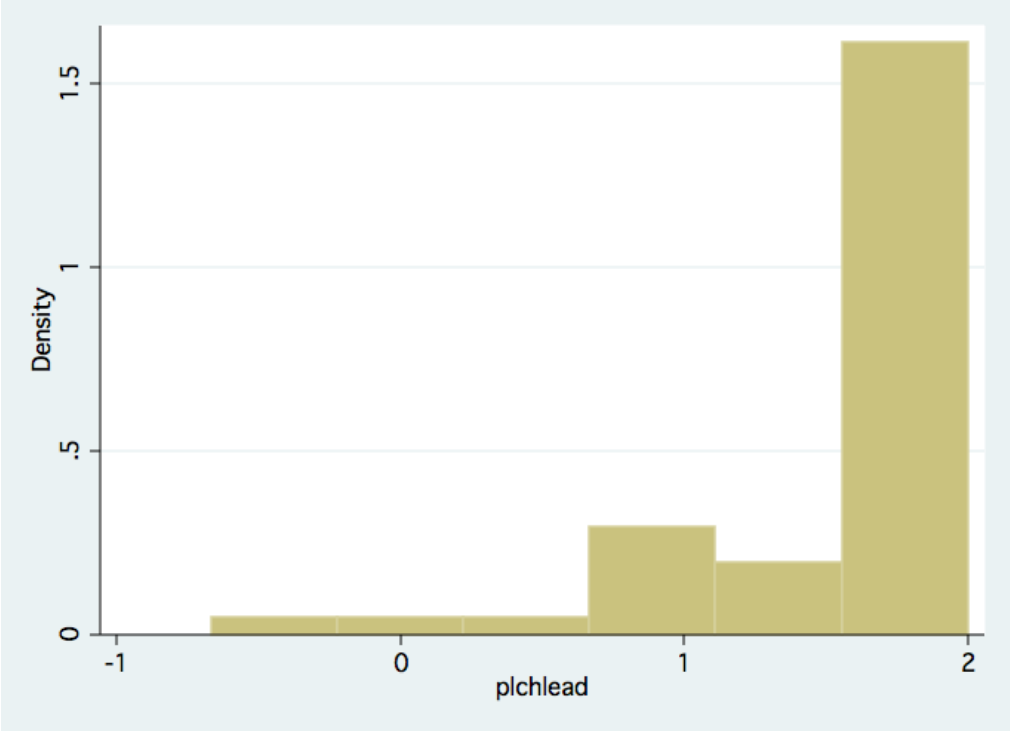

Figure 33. Platoon Chief Leadership Histogram (Officer)

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APPENDIX E: COMMAND APPROVAL LETTER

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
NAVAL SPECIAL WARFARE COMMAND
2000 TRIDENT WAY
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92155-5599

CNSWC 10 Nov 2010

MEMORANDUM FOR Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) Human Research Protection Office

Subj: NPS THESIS RESEARCH PROJECT FOR LT BRYAN V. JENNINGS AND LT JAMES T. MCRANDLE

1. Approval to conduct survey research using personnel assigned to the Naval Special Warfare Command (NSWC) is granted.

2. This approval is granted with the understanding that the survey research will focus on unit cohesion as it is affected by organizational design. The survey will be directed at approximately one thousand NSW operators by web-based or written questionnaire, augmented by interviews. Participation will be voluntary and designed to minimize impact on the units concerned.

3. The point of contact for this memorandum is NSW's Force Education Officer (N34), Dr. Carl Czech at (619) 437-3797.

C. P. GREEN
Assistant Chief of Staff
For Operations, Plans and Policy

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