

# LOGISTICS JUNIOR OFFICER DEVELOPMENT IN A PERIOD OF PERSISTENT CONFLICT

A Monograph

by

MAJ Michael C. Anderson  
U.S. Army



School of Advanced Military Studies  
United States Army Command and General Staff College  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

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Name of Candidate: MAJ Michael C. Anderson

Monograph Title: Logistics Junior Officer Development a Period of Persistent Conflict

Approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_, Monograph Director  
Christopher Marsh, Ph.D.

\_\_\_\_\_, Seminar Leader  
D. Clint Benfield, LtCol

\_\_\_\_\_, Director, School of Advanced Military Studies  
Thomas C. Graves, COL

Accepted this 23rd day of May 2013 by:

\_\_\_\_\_, Director, Graduate Degree Programs  
Robert F. Baumann, Ph.D.

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## ABSTRACT

LOGISTICS JUNIOR OFFICER DEVELOPMENT IN A PERIOD OF PERSISTENT CONFLICT, by MAJ Michael C. Anderson, 40 pages.

The Army uses two very different deployment models for sustainment units. Brigade Support Battalions within Brigade Combat Teams deploy as battalions after training together. Sustainment units outside of Brigade Combat Teams, echelons above brigade units, deploy as individual company and platoon teams. Those units train with one headquarters and deploy and work for another headquarters unit. As echelon above brigade units transition on the battlefield, company commanders can have four or more battalion and brigade commanders in an 18-month company command.

This study investigates if the turbulence of echelons above brigade units deploying on their own Army Forces Generation cycle impacts junior officer development, specifically between company commanders and battalion commanders. Analysis of interviews with commanders at company, battalion, and brigade level demonstrate that the disjointed Army Forces Generation model utilized by echelons above brigade units impact leader development and other organizational dynamics.

This monograph provides details on the unforeseen impacts of the echelons above brigade deployment model.

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## ACRONYMS

ADP	Army Doctrine Publication
ADRP	Army Doctrine Reference Publication
ALRM	Army Leadership Requirements Model
AR	Army Regulation
ARFORGEN	Army Forces Generation
BCT	Brigade Combat Team
BSB	Brigade Support Battalion
CAC	Combined Arms Center
CASCOM	Combined Arms Support Command
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CSA	Chief of Staff of the Army
CSSB	Combat Sustainment Support Battalion
CTC	Combat Training Center
CTE	Collective Training Exercise
DA	Department of the Army
DRB	Division Ready Brigade
EAB	Echelons Above Brigade
ESC	Expeditionary Sustainment Command
FM	Field Manual
FRG	Family Readiness Group
FRSA	Family Readiness Support Advisor
FSC	Forward Support Company
OPTEMPO	Operations Tempo
OER	Officer Evaluation Report
RSOI	Reception, Staging, Onward movement, and Integration
SB	Sustainment Brigade

STB	Special Troops Battalion
TOE	Table of Organization and Equipment
TRADOC	Training and Doctrine Command
VTC	Video Tele-Conference



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## INTRODUCTION

A company commander completes a rigorous and thorough training plan to prepare himself and his 146 soldiers for deployment. When the day to deploy finally comes, he goes to the airfield, shakes the hand of his battalion and brigade commanders, and boards the aircraft. His commanders, the leaders responsible for training him and certifying him for deployment, stay behind. When he gets off the plane in Bagram, Afghanistan, he will shake the hands of new battalion and brigade commanders. These new leaders, men he has never met, will be his chain of command for the near future, until they leave at the end of their respective deployments and the process begins anew with a new chain of command. It is probable he will have two battalion and two brigade commanders during his deployment, all men he did not meet until serving with them in a combat zone.

Conversely, another company commander on a different installation also boards an aircraft bound for Afghanistan. However, his battalion commander boards the same aircraft as the company commander; the brigade commander will follow just a few days later. The company commander worked for the same battalion and brigade commander for the last six months. For the 12 months of his deployment, he will work for the same men. As he boards the aircraft, he knows and understands each leader's intent, priorities, and leadership style.

These two very different scenarios are an accurate representation of what takes place for company commanders of logistics units. In the first example, a commander of an echelon above brigade (EAB) unit will work for a different command team than his home station chain of command. The second example is typical of a brigade combat team (BCT). In a BCT, an entire unit trains and deploys together as an organization. This monograph will examine if either scenario is inherently better or specifically detrimental to leader development for junior officers. Through a series of interviews with company, battalion, and brigade commanders who deployed

in command of both EAB and BCT logistics units; trends emerged demonstrating ARFORGEN turbulence in EAB units hamper a commander's leadership development efforts.

### Leadership and Leader Development

Leadership and leader development are not exclusive to the military. Every organization throughout the world and throughout history wants good leaders. Great leaders in all fields are held in high esteem. Jack Welch at General Electric, The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr in the Civil Rights Movement and John Elway on the football field were all praised for their leadership. Even criminal organizations or evil groups seek great leaders, and can thrive under their leadership.

Those three men have little in common. With no obvious similarities, how does one define leadership and identify their common traits. Peter G. Northouse, author of *Leadership: Practice and Theory*, tracked the evolving definitions of leadership throughout the twentieth century. In 1991, J.C. Rost researched leadership literature written from 1900 to 1990 and found over 200 separate definitions.<sup>1</sup> The definition evolved from stern, draconian terms such as B.V. Moore's 1927 offering, "the ability to impress the will of the leader on those led and induce obedience, respect, loyalty, and cooperation."<sup>2</sup> By 1960, the definition offered by Ohio State University's Melvin Seeman softened to "acts by persons which influence other persons in a shared direction."<sup>3</sup> This definition shows leadership is not limited to those with formal authority. Finally, in the twenty-first century, Northouse states "leadership scholars agree on one thing: they

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<sup>1</sup>Peter G. Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 6th ed. (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2013), 2.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Melvin Seeman, *Social Status and Leadership* (Columbus: Ohio State University, 1960), 53.

can't come up with a common definition for leadership...The bottom line is that leadership is a complex concept for which a determined definition may long be in flux."<sup>4</sup> Northouse attempts to cut through all the definitions and theories to arrive at one definition. He defines leadership as "a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal."<sup>5</sup> Perhaps Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart's definition of obscenity also applies to leadership, "I'll know it when I see it."

The highest leaders in an organization get the most attention, positive or negative. Company Chief Executive Officers (CEO) can receive large bonuses when a company succeeds. Conversely, newspapers write stories when CEOs get fired. Shareholders and creditors blame CEOs for scandal within their companies, even if subordinate leaders were at fault. Those subordinate and junior leaders directly touch more people than a CEO and have significant influence on the success or failure of an organization, sometimes more than the CEO. In a conversation with Vivek Varma, Executive Vice President of Public Affairs at Starbucks, he said the individual store managers are the most important employees at Starbucks because they are working on their own, interact with customers every day, and train employees, thereby setting the tone for the store. Those store managers are leaders and vital to Starbucks' success.

Businesses, educators, government, and sports teams all rely on good leadership. Just like Starbucks, they rely on junior leaders for their success as much as senior leaders. Every organization needs people at all levels that can meet Northouse's definition of leadership and influence a group toward a common goal. However, it is not realistic to expect organizations to simply find enough good leaders through a good hiring process. In Starbucks' case, they have

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<sup>4</sup>Northouse, 4.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid, 5.

20,891 stores in over 60 countries.<sup>6</sup> Even if some managers manage more than one store, Starbucks needs thousands of store managers; thousands of leaders across the world to be successful. As they grow (nearly 300 Starbucks started in China in the last 12 months), they need even more leaders.<sup>7</sup> To remain competitive, Starbucks must build and develop employees to be good leaders. While some people are gifted with more charisma or charm than are others, everybody can develop and enhance his or her leadership skills.

Leadership development is a multi-billion dollar industry in the United States. The American Society for Training and Development estimates in its 2012 State of the Industry Report that American businesses spent \$156.3 billion on training and development in 2012.<sup>8</sup> For comparison, the U.S. Army budget request in Fiscal Year 2014 is \$129.6 billion.<sup>9</sup> That enormous investment in leader development demonstrates a widely-held belief that education and training can develop leaders. John C. Maxwell, a respected author on leadership for over 30 years, has 60 paperback titles and his own page at Amazon.com.<sup>10</sup> Maxwell's own web page offers books, seminars, consulting, and other leadership training. In addition to Maxwell, Amazon lists over 86,000 leadership books. With a seemingly endless pool of resources, one would believe that civilian organizations have successfully solved leadership development. However, Jay A. Conger

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<sup>6</sup>“How Many Starbucks Are There?” Loxcel Consulting, <http://www.loxcel.com/sbux-faq.html> (accessed April 18, 2013).

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>“2012 State of the Industry,” American Society of Training and Development, <http://www.astd.org/Publications/Research-Reports/2012/2012-State-of-the-Industry> (accessed April 18, 2013).

<sup>9</sup>Overview, United States Department Of Defense Fiscal Year 2014 Budget Request, (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, April 2013), A-3.

<sup>10</sup>“John C. Maxwell,” Amazon, <http://www.amazon.com/John-C.-Maxwell> (accessed April 18, 2013).

paints a very different picture in his paper, “Why Leadership Efforts Fail.” He points to three common shortfalls in leadership development efforts: Ownership is Power Mindset, Productization of Leadership Development, and Make-Believe Metrics. Too often, according to Conger, leaders try to control their domain and protect their position and perceived power. Instead of spreading authority, accountability, and information, leaders control information and create artificial stovepipes that prevent an organization from maximizing its potential. The productization of leadership development is trying to latch on to the next trend in leadership development or focusing on a gimmick instead of substantive programs. Leadership development is a process and requires commitment from all levels of leadership within an organization. Following every current trend leads to a disjointed effort. Junior leaders will lose focus in this environment. Finally, make-believe metrics is trying to measure things that do not contribute to increased capability or capacity, but are easy to measure and make people feel good. It is measuring activity, not productivity. According to Conger, the most important metric in leadership development is a company better able to fill its key jobs internally, or does it have to repeatedly hire leaders externally.

Leaders are vital for any organization to succeed. While senior leaders garner the most attention, junior leaders are vital to a business’s success. Businesses in America that understand the importance of leader development invest heavily to improve leadership in their organizations. However, even with seemingly endless resources at their disposal, civilian organizations have not definitively solved leadership development.

#### Army Leadership

The Army defines leadership as “the process of influencing people by providing purpose, direction, and motivation while operating to accomplish the mission and improving the

organization.”<sup>11</sup> It further defines an Army leader as “anyone who by virtue of assumed role or assigned responsibility inspires and influences people to accomplish organizational goals.”<sup>12</sup> These definitions are unchanged from the previous Army leadership doctrine, Field Manual (FM), 6-22. The Army’s capstone leadership manuals, Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 6-22 and Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 6-22, provide the standards for Army leadership and guidelines for achieving them. Most importantly, they clearly state the Army can develop leaders. “Leadership – and increased proficiency in leadership – can be developed.”<sup>13</sup>

ADP and ADRP 6-22 use the Army Leadership Requirements Model (ALRM) to display traits and skills it desires in a leader. Divided into two sections, attributes and competencies, the ALRM is a guide for all leaders, regardless of rank or level of leadership. Within the core leader competencies are *Leads*, with the sub-tasks of leads others and builds trust; and *Develops*, with the sub-tasks of creates a positive environment and develop others. The figure below shows the Army Leadership Requirements Model from ADP 6-22. In chapter one, ADRP 6-22 says, “Leader competencies can be developed.”<sup>14</sup> In accordance with Army doctrine, leaders are not born. Leadership is not a trait, like height or hair color; it is a skill and it is a leader’s responsibility to develop junior leaders.

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<sup>11</sup>Army Doctrine Publication 6-22, *Army Leadership* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 2012), 1.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid, 9.

<sup>14</sup>Army Doctrine Reference Publication 6-22, *Army Leadership* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 2012), 1-6.



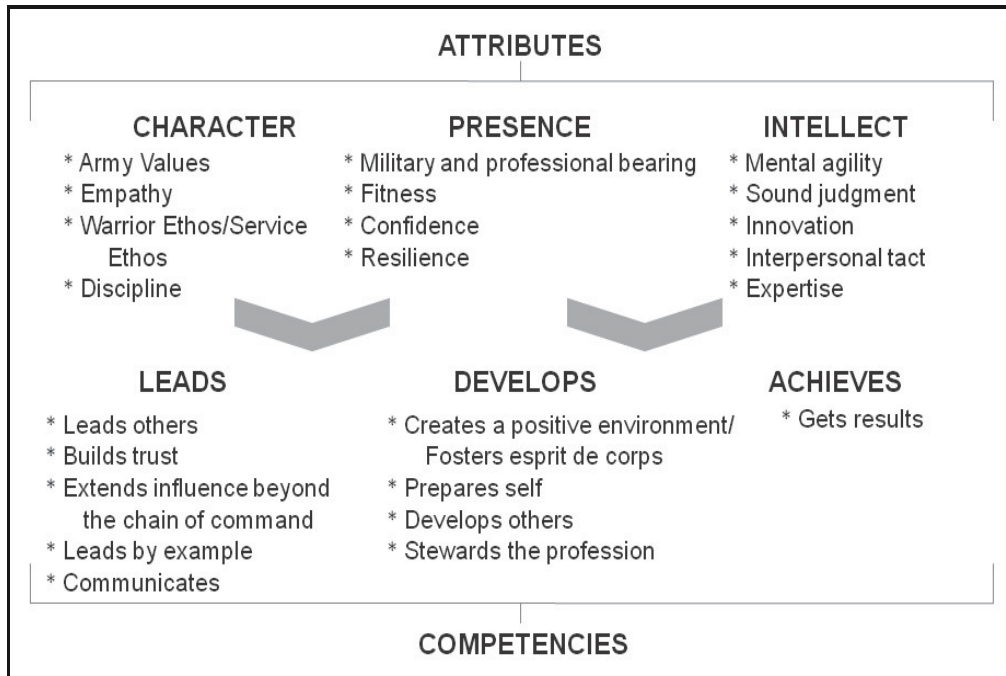


Figure 1. Army Leadership Requirements Model

Source: Army Doctrine Publication 6-22, *Army Leadership* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 2012), 5.

The Army defines three levels of leadership: direct, organizational, and strategic. Direct leaders have a lot of direct interaction with their subordinates and use one-on-one communication to develop subordinates. Squad leaders, platoon leaders, and company commanders are direct level leaders. Organizational leaders influence their organizations through their subordinate leaders and staffs. Often in charge of hundreds or thousands of troops, organizational leaders have less direct interaction with their soldiers. Organizational leaders are battalion commander up to corps commanders, lieutenant colonels to lieutenant generals. Strategic level leadership influences tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands of personnel. Strategic leaders work with uncertainty and must consider how their actions and decisions influence a wide range of actors beyond their own formation. Major commands (Training and Doctrine Command, Geographic

Combatant Commands, and other four-star general headquarters) up to Department of Defense level are strategic leaders. Figure 2 below from ADRP 6-22 depicts the three leader leadership levels based on rank and range of influence. This study focuses on organizational level leaders and their influence on and development of direct leaders.

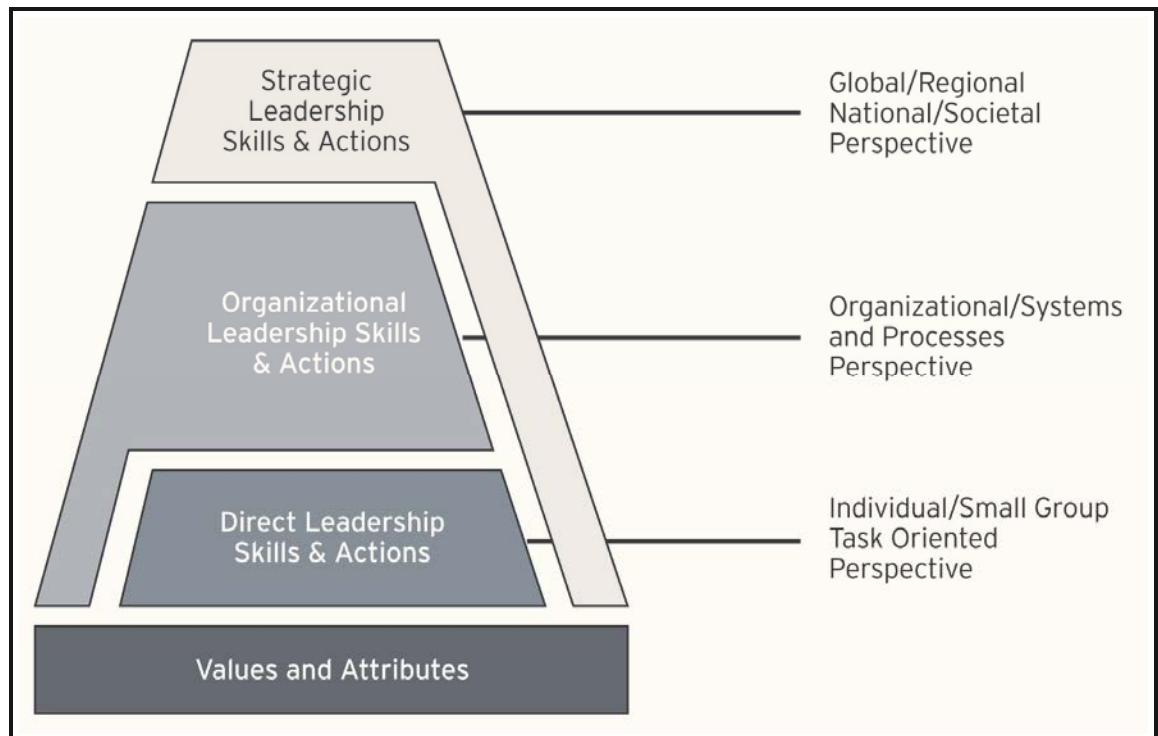


Figure 2. Army Leadership Levels

Source: Army Doctrine Reference Publication 6-22, *Army Leadership* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 2012), 2-4.

### Leader Development

In Army doctrine, “[l]eader development is a deliberate, continuous, sequential, and progressive process grounded in the Army Values.... The Army requires all its leaders to develop

subordinates into leaders for the next level.”<sup>15</sup> ADRP 6-22 lays out a very clear definition of leader development and its associated requirements. The Army uses three developmental domains to categorize individual development: institutional, organizational, and self-development. This study focuses on organizational; the actions that should take place between a leader and subordinate in operational units, specifically battalions and brigades.

Leader development and mission accomplishment are not mutually exclusive principles; they are inexorably linked. General Robert W. Cone, the Commanding General of US Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), told an audience at the Command and General Staff College that battalion commanders tell him they can’t do leader development because they are too busy training.<sup>16</sup> Army doctrine says leader development is part of mission accomplishment and training. ADP 6-22 clearly states, “Accomplishing the current mission is not enough – the leader is responsible for developing individuals and improving the organization for the near- and long-term.”<sup>17</sup> If senior leaders are not developing junior officers, they risk losing quality, young talent and diminish the talent pool for Army’s future. Leader development is an investment in the Army’s future.

The first step in leader development is to assess the needs of subordinate soldiers. This step includes seeing a subordinate in a variety of situations to identify strengths and weaknesses and determine how the junior leader learns. A senior leader must observe the subordinate in the core leader competencies; measure the performance against a standard; and, most importantly,

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<sup>15</sup>Army Doctrine Reference Publication 6-22, *Army Leadership* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 2012), 7-8.

<sup>16</sup>General David Cone, “Transforming the Army” (lecture, Eisenhower Auditorium, Fort Leavenworth, KS, April 08, 2013).

<sup>17</sup>Army Doctrine Publication 6-22, 1.

provide feedback to the junior leader and provide an opportunity to respond. Doctrine does not provide a timeline for those events; but to develop an objective assessment takes dedicated time and effort. Upon completion of the assessment, the senior leader must design a developmental plan with the junior officer. The subordinate should help develop the plan to ensure buy-in and full accountability of both parties. Properly completing an assessment of a junior leader takes time and thought from the senior commander.

Leaders have three primary tools to develop their subordinate leaders: counseling, coaching, and mentoring. Each one has a specific purpose and all three methods may not be appropriate for every situation. The table below gives a brief overview of the three techniques. This monograph analyzes counseling because it occurs between the leader and junior officer. Coaching and mentoring can occur between a leader and subordinate, but is not restricted to that relationship. However, direct supervisors with a counseling responsibility can develop into mentors over time. Observations later in the paper will discuss the transition from counselor to mentor.

Leader development in all of its forms requires trust and a climate that encourages learning and growth. Trust does not develop overnight. ADRP 6-22 states, “[t]rust builds over time through mutual respect, shared understanding, and common experiences.”<sup>18</sup> Developing and cultivating trust within an organization contributes to a positive command climate and supports leader development. This study uses these definitions as the guide to determine if senior leaders in EAB sustainment units are properly developing their junior leaders, and if not, determine a root or contributing cause.

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid, 6-7.

## Brigade Combat Team

A BCT structure will vary by type. An armor, light infantry, airborne, or Stryker brigade will have some minor structural variances. However, all BCTs will share some fundamental characteristics; and though the Department of the Army is drafting changes, the essential principles of a BCT will remain the same.

Each BCT has maneuver battalions (infantry, armor, specific to the type of BCT), an artillery battalion, a cavalry or reconnaissance squadron, and a brigade support battalion (BSB). Other units such as a headquarters company, signal company, or engineer company may be organized in a special troops battalion or separately under the brigade headquarters. The Army designed the BCT organization to deploy as one entity. Accordingly, it also trains together prior to deployment. Figure 3 shows a generic heavy brigade combat team. An infantry brigade combat team looks very similar, but is resourced with different equipment. A Stryker brigade combat team does not have a brigade special troops battalion and organizes its intelligence, signal, and engineer assets directly under the brigade headquarters. All the units depicted in Figure 3 are organic to the BCT headquarters and will train and deploy as one, complete entity.

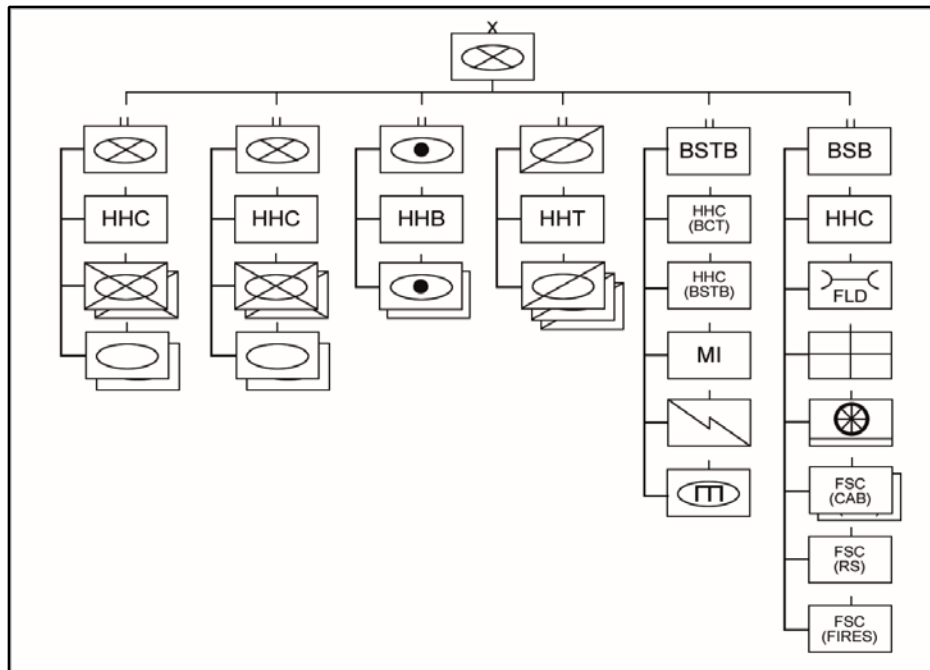


Figure 3. Heavy Brigade Combat Team

Source: Field Manual 3-90.6, *Brigade Combat Team* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 2010), 1-7.

Focusing specifically on the BSB (far right formation in Figure 3.), they have a unique structure. The battalion has four companies that work for the battalion headquarters. A headquarters company, a distribution company, a maintenance company, and a medical company work for the BSB battalion commander. Leaders often refer to these four companies as the BSB’s “base companies.” Additionally, the BSB has four Forward Support Companies (FSC) assigned to it (except in a Stryker BCT). Each FSC supports a specific battalion within the brigade (one to each maneuver battalion, fires battalion, and reconnaissance squadron). The FSCs conduct training with their supported battalion and the FSC commander answers directly to the supported battalion commander. The BSB commander is responsible to resource the FSC with personnel and equipment, and provide reinforcing support when necessary. Generally, the BSB commander

has only administrative responsibilities of the FSCs. There are leader development challenges concerning the FSC commanders, but they are beyond the scope of this investigation. This monograph focuses on the four base companies within the BSB.

### Echelons Above Brigade

While the Army designed a BCT to meet its sustainment needs with its organic BSB, other units are necessary to bring in supplies and support non-BCT units. Support and sustainment units above the BCT are echelons above brigade (EAB). Unlike the BCT, EAB units deploy at the company and detachment level, independent of their home station battalion headquarters. For example, a finance detachment has 21 soldiers. That detachment will deploy, on its own, and fall under its new company, battalion, and brigade in a combat zone. The Army organizes EAB units in this fashion to provide senior sustainment planners a great deal of flexibility in designing a sustainment formation tailored specifically for the requirements in theater. Sustainment planners call the ability to create tailored units from several formations “plug and play.” Sustainment planners organize the companies into formations called Combat Sustainment Support Battalions and further into Sustainment Brigades (SB) and ultimately into an Expeditionary Sustainment Command (ESC).

At home station, these units train together, but when a deployment comes, any company can deploy without its battalion headquarters and will fall under a new battalion headquarters upon deployment. Conversely, a CSSB or SB headquarters could deploy with none of its home station subordinate units and inherit a completely new, unfamiliar organization upon deployment. As units deploy in company and smaller formations, leadership relationships can be very turbulent. One EAB company commander could have four different battalion commanders in an 18-month command. One company commander interviewed for this study had six commanders in

32 months.<sup>19</sup> A company commander starts with his commander at home station, deploys to a new battalion commander, then the battalion headquarters rotates units and finally upon redeployment the company commander meets his fourth battalion commander.

The Army uses these two contrasting styles frequently today. This monograph aims to determine if one deployment format is demonstrably better than another is for developing junior officers and specifically if the EAB deployment model carried over 10 years of persistent conflict has negatively affected junior logistics officer growth and development.

### Army Forces Generation (ARFORGEN)

The Army Forces Generation (ARFORGEN) model, originally approved in 2006, changed the old model of tiered readiness based on type of unit.<sup>20</sup> Under the tiered system, for example, the XVIII Airborne Corps used to call itself “America’s 911” because it had the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division and 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division with one brigade of each division on ‘Division Ready Brigade’ (DRB) status. The DRB had elements ready to deploy within 18-hours of notification. In the tiered format, some units were always ready to deploy and were manned and equipped accordingly. Likewise, lower tiered units were lower in priority for both equipment and personnel. If there was a limited resource for training, the higher tiered unit received priority. The same priority applied to repair parts, supplies, etc.

This system was effective for the Cold War and immediately following. It facilitated U.S. response to contingencies and short-term operations such as Operation Urgent Fury in Grenada in 1983 and Operation Just Cause in Panama in 1989. It also worked well for Operations Desert

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<sup>19</sup>Respondent 10 Interview, November 4, 2012.

<sup>20</sup>“2010 Army Posture Statement” (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 2010), Addendum F.



Shield/Storm in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. An initial unit, the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division, deployed first to Saudi Arabia and over the following seven months, the Army flowed in troops in accordance with its war plan and the tiered system. The tiered system functioned well in the early stages of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom; units deployed to Afghanistan one month after September 11, 2001. However, when the Army entered a period of prolonged conflict, the tiered system was not as effective at prioritizing and resourcing units over extended periods. Under the direction of General Peter J. Schoomaker, the Chief of Staff of the Army (CSA), the Army restructured its approach to preparing units for deployment.

The ARFORGEN process divides the deployment process into three phases: RESET, TRAIN/READY, and AVAILABLE. Designed as a three-year cycle, a unit's position on the ARFORGEN deployment cycle, rather than a position on a tiered chart drive its prioritization for resources. However, though designed as a three-year system, it operated on a 24-month cycle until fiscal year 2012 to meet requirements for Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom.

In this format, units in RESET conduct individual training, schooling, and reunite with family following deployment. The Army works to fill the unit with personnel and fill equipment shortages. Scheduled for six months, when RESET is over the unit should be prepared to start collective training and move into the TRAIN/READY phase. In the TRAIN/READY phase units execute collective training, culminating with a final, evaluated Collective Training Evaluation (CTE); a rotation at a Combat Training Center (CTC) such as the National Training Center (NTC) at Fort Irwin, CA, and validation for deployment by their higher headquarters.

Upon completion of the TRAIN/READY phase and validation, the unit moves into the AVAILABLE phase. Now the unit is ready to deploy. During persistent conflict, those units deemed AVAILABLE immediately deployed to fill operational requirements. As deployment operations tempo (OPTEMPO) decreases, instead of deploying, the AVAILABLE units are ready to deploy in response to a contingency requirement. When the unit returns from deployment or

completes one year in the AVAILABLE pool, it returns to the RESET phase and starts the ARFORGEN process over again. Figure 4 depicts the ARFORGEN model from AR 525-29, Army Force Generation.

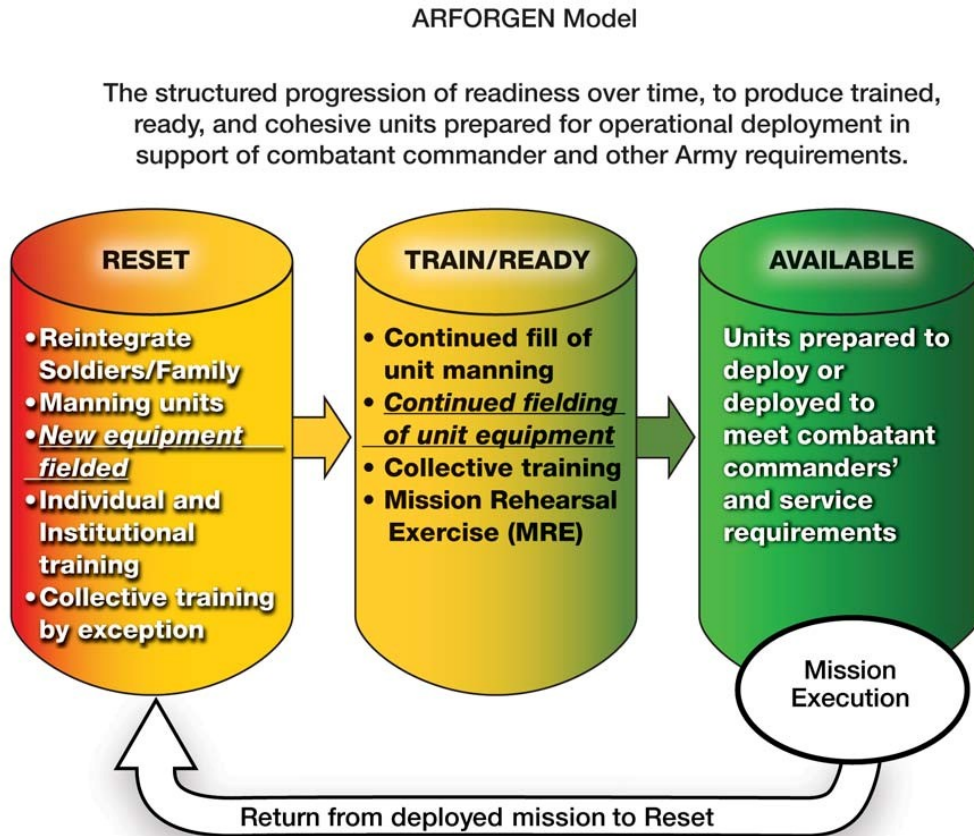


Figure 4. Army Forces Generation Model

Source: Army Regulation 525-29, *Army Force Generation* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 2011), 5.

A BCT goes through this process as a single entity. The brigade headquarters and each subordinate battalion trains together under one timeline and one unifying piece of training guidance. The brigade headquarters that employs the unit in home station will also employ it on an operational deployment. That gives the brigade headquarters a real, vested interest in ensuring

every subordinate unit is manned and equipped properly. It also gives them a motivation to ensure subordinate units complete every training requirement to standard.

Comparatively, an EAB headquarters unit has conflicting priorities. A SB commander at home station must prepare his headquarters to deploy, while simultaneously preparing subordinate units to deploy to different theaters and work for other chains of command. Additionally, the brigade commander must start learning the new units he will command upon deployment. Professionalism dictates that he perform each of these tasks to the best of his ability. However, he and his staff have a finite amount of intellectual energy and time. Is it reasonable to assume that an EAB staff can prepare units for deployments to multiple locations, learn the new task organization it will receive upon deployment, and develop a plan to support the units that don't deploy as well as or as thoroughly as a BCT that is focused on one brigade going to one location? In addition, a BCT commander will build and develop his team before deployment, train with them, and instill his priorities and philosophy within his organization. He can assess his subordinate leaders and focus his efforts on those leaders requiring more development.

## METHODOLOGY

The Army's leadership doctrine, ADP and ADRP 6-22, lays out the requirement for leader development and expectations for senior leaders. In addition, Army Regulation AR 22-100 sets specific requirements for senior leaders regarding junior officer counseling and development. Using doctrine as the standard, the measure of effectiveness is whether battalion and brigade commanders are actually meeting these requirements. To examine this issue, battalion and brigade commanders responded to a series of interviews probing their experiences developing and assessing their subordinate leaders. As a comparison group, company commanders also responded to gauge their experience and determine if it paralleled that of battalion and brigade commanders.

This investigation used focused interviews because a representative, random survey was not possible for this project. Resources are not available to survey a sufficient number of personnel, tabulate the collected data, and analyze the results. In addition, this investigation focused on respondents with specific career experiences and professional qualifications. Therefore, an exploratory methodology was used to target personnel meeting the required criterion. The interviews that were conducted utilized a survey instrument (see Appendix A), much the way a pre-trial survey might be used to develop an instrument for a larger sample survey.

Commissioned officers that deployed in a command position, company through brigade, were the target audience for this survey. In total, sixteen officers responded to interview requests. When multiple commanders at all levels said rear detachment operations were an issue, the study interviewed a rear-detachment battalion commander for that perspective. Some personnel required multiple interviews to provide additional input on answers from other respondents. With a small sample size, confidentiality is essential. In order to guarantee candid feedback from respondents, quotes and vignettes do not identify a specific individual without his expressed consent. Names used within a quotation are pseudonyms. A table below provides a summary of the sample's demographics based on level of command, commissioning source, EAB or BSB command, and enlisted experience. One respondent deployed as a battalion and brigade commander. For this study's demographics, he is a brigade commander because the survey focused on that deployment.

<b>Respondent Number</b>	<b>Level of Command when Deployed</b>	<b>AC/RC</b>	<b>Enlisted Time</b>	<b>Commissioning Source</b>	<b>BCT / EAB</b>
1	Brigade	AC	NO	ROTC	EAB
2	Brigade	AC	NO	USMA	EAB
3	Brigade	AC	NO	ROTC	EAB
4	Battalion	AC	NO	ROTC	EAB
5	Battalion	AC	NO	ROTC	EAB
6	Battalion	AC	NO	ROTC	EAB
7	Battalion	RC	YES	OCS	EAB
8	Battalion	AC	NO	ROTC	EAB
9	Battalion	AC	NO	ROTC	BCT
10	Company	AC	Y (USMC)	ROTC	EAB
11	Company	AC	NO	ROTC	EAB
12	Company	AC	NO	ROTC	BCT
13	Company	AC	NO	ROTC	BCT
14	Company	AC	YES	ROTC	EAB
15	Company	AC	NO	ROTC	BCT
16	Rear-Det	AC	NO	ROTC	EAB Rear-Det

Table 1. Respondent Data

*Source:* Created by author.

Survey respondents are stationed across the United States in over 11 locations. Again, due to budget constraints, in-person interviews were impractical. The interviews took place via email, telephone, and video tele-conference (VTC). After a respondent replied to an initial email request, they received a survey via email prior to scheduling a phone interview. The initial email and follow-on email described the monograph topic, indicated the requested interview was research for this study, and requested the subject's consent to take part in the study. Each prospective subject was provided ample opportunity to ask questions and seek further clarification on the nature of the study. All relevant information about the nature of the study was disclosed to the prospective subject, and they were assured that they were not under any

obligation to take part and that nothing would be attributed directly to them. With the email interviews, written informed consent was received; for the telephonic interviews (which were recorded) oral informed consent was received.

It was important to allow the subjects time to think through their responses before speaking on the phone and build trust in the respondent. To get candid feedback that could be critical of an individual or organization, respondents had to know the interview would not catch them off guard by a deceptive or unexpected question. Some respondents returned the completed survey prior to the phone interview. That aided in preparation for the phone interview and saved time, but not returning the survey did not diminish the quality of the interview. Before starting any questioning or reviewing the emailed responses, the monograph topic and project was again discussed and each interviewee was assured they would not be quoted by name in the study without their approval. Most of the interviewees, particularly the battalion and brigade commanders, were familiar with the School of Advanced Military Studies and monograph process. The phone and VTC interviews were semi-structured to encourage a free dialogue between interviewer and respondent. On a few occasions, interviewees asked that specific comments not be used, or only used for context but not quoted in the paper, even without names. These requests were honored each time. One planned trip to Fort Lee, Virginia to conduct five interviews and additional research at Combined Arms Support Command (CASCOM) was cancelled for lack of funding.

Upon completion of the interviews, responses were sorted by demographic groups to determine trends. Responses received relative values to standardize and provide qualitative data for assessment. The table below shows company commanders' responses to questions about counseling frequency. By comparing the qualitative data, one can assess if one organizational structure demonstrates a propensity for more or better counseling. Appendix B contains additional charts used to assess data.

## FINDINGS

Analysis of the interviews and qualitative data revealed five recurring observations:

1. In a stable environment, counseling and leadership development depend on the leader much more than the structure of an organization.
2. In an EAB unit with disjointed ARFORGEN cycle, battalion and brigade commanders can and do conduct leader development, but at a cost to other events and efforts and usually less in-depth than in BCTs.
3. As a function of a disjointed ARFORGEN cycle, EAB units establish ad hoc battalion and brigade headquarters that still have complete subordinate units and must conduct all the functions of the standard staff. The ad hoc headquarters and changing leadership are not only detrimental to junior officer development, they also consume more time and energy of deployed and deploying commanders than those of BCTs and place home station training of remaining units at risk.
4. Family Readiness Groups (FRG) as a function of the EAB deployment model, are a tremendous strain on a commander's time and families do not receive the same level of support as their BCT counterparts.
5. Junior leaders and senior leaders do not view counseling the same way. A battalion commander may view a walk through the motor pool talking about ways to improve a weak company maintenance program as counseling. However, the company commander does not think he was 'counseled' unless it was in writing.

Observation 1: In a stable environment, leader development depends upon the leader involved, not the organizational structure.

All battalion and brigade commanders interviewed stated that leader development was a priority in their organization. That response was expected; few leaders will say leader development is not important to them and their organization. Some commanders focused

differently as a function of distance between organizations and time available for battlefield circulation. When a majority of an organization was on the same base as the commander, the commander focused two command levels down, e.g. battalion commanders mentored platoon leaders as well as the company commander. However, if a battalion had companies or detachment on several different bases, the commander focused on leaders one level down and only worked two levels down sporadically as time allowed. That trend was consistent throughout CSSBs and BSBs and especially true of SB commanders because their units occupied a tremendous number of bases. In Afghanistan, before March 2010, one SB commander had subordinate units operating in every Regional Command of the country while his headquarters was at Bagram Air Field in Regional Command East. Afghanistan is approximately the size of Texas with a very immature road network; reaching the remote areas for a SB commander to meet, counsel, and mentor a company commander was nearly impossible. Based on aircraft availability, it may take a week to visit even one or two dispersed commanders in Regional Command West. Even after March 2010, when a second SB deployed to Afghanistan as part of President Obama's *Uplift of Forces*, each SB commander was responsible for approximately half the country and had soldiers serving on up to 27 forward operating bases.

While every senior commander stated leader development was a priority, not every subordinate company commander felt the same way. A certain degree of this is subject to perception and Observation 5 will be address that issue. However, in some cases company commanders reported they that their battalion or brigade commanders did not counsel them, or only counseled them when receiving their Officer Evaluation Report (OER) or report card. Company commanders from both CSSBs and BSBs reported mixed results with neither organization showing a clear distinction as more or less engaged. Nearly all company commanders reported less interaction with their brigade commanders. That is expected given the ratio of company commanders to battalion and brigade commanders and the greater geographic



dispersion brigade commanders face. As with battalion commanders, SB and BCT commanders did not demonstrate a clear trend toward one type of organization lending itself toward leader development. It can be reasonably determined that neither the BCT nor SB structure is inherently better or more conducive to junior leader development.

Observation 2: In units with a disjointed ARFORGEN Cycle, leadership development has a higher opportunity cost than a brigade combat team.

Commanders are constrained by a finite amount of time available to them. Every choice they make that commits either their time or energy is a choice not to do something else. Economists define this as opportunity cost.<sup>21</sup> When a commander chooses to spend time in leader development, he is consciously choosing not to use his time and intellectual energy on other priorities. A battalion commander in Afghanistan said he specifically did not expend as much time on a directed project from his brigade commander as the commander wanted in part, because he invested time in leader development. In his judgment, leader development was a better investment for the Army than improving infrastructure on Kandahar Air Field.<sup>22</sup> Making decisions about the best use of limited time is true for all commanders regardless of level or type of unit. However, unlike Observation 1, which showed no correlation between type of unit and priority of leader development, the cost in time is greater for EAB units than in a BCT.

A BCT commander and subordinate battalion commanders do not have the turnover of a SB while deployed. One SB deployed to Afghanistan had 31 company-sized subordinate units that rotated during the SB commander's deployment.<sup>23</sup> With four subordinate battalions, each battalion averaged eight company-sized units. Each battalion had eight changes of command or

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<sup>21</sup>Steven E. Landsburg, *Price Theory Applications* (Toronto: Harcourt, 1992), 43.

<sup>22</sup>Respondent 6 Interview, November 30, 2012.

<sup>23</sup>Respondent 2 Interview, January 12, 2013.

new unit builds during their deployment. All the EAB battalion commanders interviewed for this study invested time in getting to know and assess their junior leaders. As one battalion commander described it, “you’re constantly starting over, never gaining momentum. It’s the little things, like how does this guy learn, teaching him how I want information, building relationships with me, the Command Sergeant Major, the staff; all of that takes time and you’re always starting over. It consumes a lot of the organization’s time and energy.”<sup>24</sup>

Battalion commanders gave varying responses for how long it took them to assess new leaders. Responses varied from 1 day to 90 days. A brigade commander said any assessment in less than six weeks is shortchanging the officer.<sup>25</sup> Army doctrine provides a guideline and criteria with which to assess a new officer, but does not specify how long it should take.<sup>26</sup> Accordingly, each commander had a different methodology and timeline for the initial assessment. However, every method thatches time from a commander and has an opportunity cost.

The same circumstances exist when the headquarters does not deploy, but has subordinate units in all phases of the ARFORGEN cycle simultaneously. One battalion commander said he spent so much time “leveling the bubbles” at home-station it limited his ability to move on to bigger things as a battalion.<sup>27</sup> As he described it, the events to deploy or redeploy a brigade of 3,500 soldiers or a detachment of 21 soldiers are the same. The difference is scale. Both units require pre-deployment training, property book accountability, barracks closed out, deployment ceremonies, etc. The BCT’s requirements are certainly much larger, but they are

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<sup>24</sup>Respondent 6 Interview, November 30, 2012.

<sup>25</sup>Respondent 2 Interview, January 12, 2013.

<sup>26</sup>Army Doctrine Reference Publication 6-22, 7-9

<sup>27</sup>Respondent 6 Interview, November 30, 2012.

done one time. In a SB or CSSB, the unit is going through those rotations throughout the year. In the same way it consumes a deployed commander's time, a commander at home-station must spend time and energy on this critical mission. He cannot commit this time to leader development and counseling. The same commander added, "I know the BCT deployment model isn't perfect and has problems, but I'd rather have those problems."<sup>28</sup>

Contrasting the EAB model with the BCT model, the BCT battalion commanders learned about their subordinate and higher leaders while training, when lives are not on the line. While deployed, company level changes of command are infrequent, and when they do take place, the new commander is often a member of the staff already familiar with the organization and its leaders. This infrequent change, further mitigated by using familiar personnel means a battalion commander expends less time and energy in the learning process, which enables him to expend more effort on mentorship than the EAB commander. Not only does the BCT model assist the battalion commanders in developing junior leaders, it benefits the junior leader commanding his unit. Consider the following three quotes from deployed company commanders. First, from a company commander in a BSB deployed to Iraq, "I knew exactly what Lieutenant Colonel Smith wanted and expected before we ever left (deployed). The first 60 to 90 days deployed are tough with learning the environment, signing for equipment, and assuming the mission. I don't want to think about how much harder it would have been if I was learning a new boss and staff."<sup>29</sup> Next from a BSB company commander also deployed to Iraq, "I worked for Lieutenant Colonel Jones for a year before the deployment. I knew him; he knew me; we had a relationship. RSOI (reception, staging, onward movement, and integration) was tough; getting all our stuff off the

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>Respondent 12 Interview, November 30, 2012.

ship, signing for new stuff, and prepping to move north (from Kuwait to Baghdad). Knowing Lieutenant Colonel Jones so well and who I could count on in the staff was important. It would have really sucked doing that with a new boss I didn't know. I was pretty stressed during RSOI because we had so many irons in the fire. Doing that all alone because my boss was already in Iraq waiting for me would have been too much."<sup>30</sup> Finally, from an EAB company commander deployed to Afghanistan: "For the first seven months, mentorship was kind of an afterthought."<sup>31</sup> Those quotes, while a small sample of the examples collected during the interview process, are representative of the experiences of other company commanders interviewed and probably representative of the experience of company commanders in general. While some EAB company commanders said new commanders counseled them while deployed, commanders at both levels spent valuable time getting to know each other. Progress with one commander is lost with the new commander.

ADRP 6-22 defines mentorship as "the voluntary developmental relationship that exists between a person of greater experience and a person of lesser experience that is characterized by mutual trust and respect."<sup>32</sup> It further characterizes the mentor relationship as being initiated by the developing leader, not the more experienced leader. As junior leaders quickly transition among battalion commanders, they do not build the requisite trust to seek long-term mentorship from their deployed battalion commanders. No EAB company commander questioned maintained contact with their deployed battalion commanders, but they all maintained contact, and in some cases mentorship, with their home station commanders with whom they spend the most time.

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<sup>30</sup>Respondent 13 Interview, October, 23, 2012.

<sup>31</sup>Respondent 10 Interview, November 4, 2012.

<sup>32</sup>Army Doctrine Reference Publication 6-22, 7-11.

EAB battalion commanders gave similar responses. Most did not maintain contact with their deployed subordinate commanders, but maintain regular contact with their staff officers and home station company commanders.

Building trust takes time. Junior leaders must have time to build trust and camaraderie their battalion and brigade commanders if the Army expects them to choose long-term mentors. Each company commander interviewed both EAB and BSB, commanded at least 17 months; one commanded the same company for 32 months. If junior officers do not develop a mentorship relationship with a battalion or brigade commander in that time because of repeated leader rotation, the officer and ultimately the Army suffers.

#### A Different Approach

Most respondents at all levels indicated they viewed continuity within a chain of command as a positive thing. Those that did not have it felt they would have benefitted from it. There was one notable exception. Major Nelson commanded an EAB transportation company at Fort Carson, Colorado and deployed to Afghanistan. Both the battalion and brigade headquarters were serving in Southwest Asia when Nelson assumed command. The battalion commander returned from and changed command approximately three months later. His third battalion commander trained him for deployment and shook his hand as he boarded the aircraft. Upon arrival in theater, he did not have a battalion commander and answered to the brigade deputy commander. Nelson's unit was a new capability to Afghanistan. The associated battalion headquarters did not arrive in theater for seven months. When the CSSB headquarters deployed he had a dedicated battalion commander and staff. He eventually redeployed to his sixth and final battalion commander, a rear-detachment commander (because the battalion and brigade headquarters deployed, again). Most commanders interviewed, regardless of level of command, felt this was a terrible situation. However, Nelson felt it was a positive experience. He claimed

having six commanders allowed him to see different leadership styles and different approaches to situations. While he admits he did not receive much formal counseling, he feels he learned to develop his leadership. As he described it, he got to “reinvent” himself for each commander. He got a clean slate each time. He also learned to be an advocate for his unit. “I had a commander’s in brief with them in my conference room so I could talk to them commander to commander in my environment. I did the same thing in Afghanistan. I gave them a full up briefing on my company. That gave them a level of confidence in me. I did that for every single battalion and brigade commander I had.”<sup>33</sup> When asked if he would have preferred to have just one or two battalion commanders instead of six, particularly during the deployment he responded, “intuitively I would say yes, but I think I actually developed more from the commanders I had.”<sup>34</sup>

When asked about Nelson’s unique outlook, commanders at all levels were surprised, but understood the rationale. An SB commander deployed to Afghanistan said, “that response really reflects the maturity of the commander if he can view that as a positive.”<sup>35</sup> An EAB company commander strongly disagreed. He planned to leave the Army after command because of the experience. He felt like he was on his own for most of his command.<sup>36</sup> A BSB company commander that had one commander for training and deployment and a second commander upon redeployment said, “having a lot of bosses during command may develop the commander, but it can’t be good for the unit.”<sup>37</sup> When asked to respond, Nelson believed he was able to effectively

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<sup>33</sup>Respondent 10 Interview, November 4, 2012.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

<sup>35</sup>Respondent 3 Interview, November 9, 2012.

<sup>36</sup>Respondent 11 Interview, November 30, 2012.

<sup>37</sup>Respondent 12 Interview, November 30, 2012.

shield his unit from most of the turbulence generated by changes in the chain of command.<sup>38</sup>

Nelson's approach may be an isolated phenomenon, or it may hold true for many commanders, if they can take Nelson's perspective.

### Slipping Through the Cracks

While Nelson's approach shows a possible intrinsic benefit to multiple commanders, there is another side to the issue. One battalion commander recounted the story of a company commander in his deployed formation. The new commander deployed approximately seven months into the battalion commander's tour. Shortly after assuming his company mission from the outgoing unit, problems started to arise within his organization. The battalion commander tried to work with the commander and platoon leaders to improve his leadership within the unit. Eventually, it was clear the problems in the unit stemmed from the company commander. The battalion commander started to address the issues when his own replacement arrived and transfer of authority tasks started. The new commander did not want anyone else's opinions to cloud his judgment and conducted his own assessment. These gaps in leadership and assessment windows can delay necessary corrective and punitive action, such as a relief from command. At the very least, they interrupt and impede the counseling and development some officers need, and the soldiers suffer the cost.

Senior leaders say transitions are one of the hardest things to execute properly and require significant effort.<sup>39</sup> The disjointed EAB ARFORGEN model makes these transitions harder for the Army's most junior commanders. As a result, these company commanders have less time

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<sup>38</sup>Respondent 10 Email, March 30, 2012.

<sup>39</sup>Major General Edward C. Cardon, "Thoughts for SAMS Students,"(lecture, Marshall Auditorium, Fort Leavenworth, KS, September 17, 2012).

under a battalion commander and the relationship cannot develop as deeply as a BSB battalion and company commander. Leader development suffers.

Observation 3: Due to the ARFORGEN cycle, EAB units create ad hoc headquarters with complete subordinate formations. These ad hoc headquarters are detrimental to officer development.

When a BCT deploys, most of the personnel deploy with the unit. Typically, the only personnel left behind are injured soldiers unable to deploy, some unique school or transfer situations, and a small cadre to operate the BCT Rear Detachment. Rear Detachment responsibilities include receiving repatriated soldiers, training new replacement soldiers, being a liaison with the FRG, and planning, with the installation, for the unit's homecoming. Usually a brigade leaves a skeleton staff behind for this mission from the brigade's personnel. All personnel come from the brigade's assigned personnel. The brigade does not receive additional personnel because the Army does not authorize positions for Rear Detachment. An organization's Modified Table of Organization and Equipment (MTOE) defines what personnel it is authorized. The Army's Human Resources Command uses the unit's MTOE to fill a unit with personnel. The Army designs the MTOE for deployment; not deployment, and Rear Detachment.

When a SB deploys, it deploys as only the headquarters and its organic special troops battalion (STB). All other subordinate units at home station are on a separate ARFORGEN timeline. Thus, the Rear Detachment for a SB must perform all the functions and responsibilities the full SB performs, to include preparing subordinate companies for deployment and support to the installation. A SB's MTOE strength is 276 personnel.<sup>40</sup> The rear detachments of three surveyed, deployed SBs averaged 100. It is not reasonable to believe a staff of 100 can do the

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<sup>40</sup>“2013 SUS BDE MTOE,” FMSWeb Force Management Database, [https://fmsweb.army.mil/protected/WebTAADS/Frame\\_TOE.asp?TOE=63302R000&PP\\_Choice=2&DOC\\_TYPE=RD\\_FMS&FY=13&TOE\\_FORMAT=GFM](https://fmsweb.army.mil/protected/WebTAADS/Frame_TOE.asp?TOE=63302R000&PP_Choice=2&DOC_TYPE=RD_FMS&FY=13&TOE_FORMAT=GFM) (accessed April 10, 2013).



amount or quality of work as a staff of 276. Leader development can become an afterthought for an overmatched staff. Specifically, one SB rear detachment Lieutenant Colonel described his experience, “I just didn’t have time. We were barely keeping up with the requirements from down range and division. Division didn’t want to hear that we were a rear detachment. They expected the same service they always got.”<sup>41</sup>

On installations with no SB headquarters, there was even less oversight. When one company commander’s CSSB headquarters deployed to Iraq, the installation attached his company to an ad hoc battalion created from various organizations on post and led by the Provost Marshal (PMO). He described his experience, “My battalion headquarters left, and I didn’t have a SB on my post. I just got tucked under this make-shift unit. I never saw the PMO that was the commander until our deployment ceremony. It was really on me to get the company ready.”<sup>42</sup> The system failed that company commander. While some responsibility lies with the officer that did not reach out to the company commander, as an ad hoc organization he had a full plate of challenges and did not have the resources to lead units through the ARFORGEN process.

Junior leaders transition between leaders in rear detachment units and other ad hoc organizations; and though these leaders may want and intend to counsel junior officers, they can be overwhelmed by their daily duties. The Army needs to recognize the impact these rear detachment formations are having on junior leaders and readiness in EAB units and develop a more stable solution to the problem.

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<sup>41</sup>Respondent 16 Interview, February 15, 2013.

<sup>42</sup>Respondent 11 Interview, November 30, 2012.

#### Observation 4: Family Readiness Groups in EAB organizations.

The Army strives for unity of command and unity of effort in all operations. Unity of Command is the operation of all forces under a single, responsible leader with the requisite authority toward a common purpose.<sup>43</sup> Unity of effort is the coordinated pursuit of a common purpose, regardless if all units work for the same commander.<sup>44</sup> Unity of command is not necessary for unity of effort, but it can make it easier to focus organizations when they answer to one leader. When organizations are effectively using unity of command and effort, the organization is working under the same guidance, in the same direction, for the same purpose. Unity of effort helps eliminate wasted time by people working on unnecessary projects, or two people doing the same thing. Unity of command enables unity of effort because guidance and direction comes from one source. These critical principles are applicable beyond strictly military operations.

When a BCT deploys as a single entity there is a support structure parallel to the chain of command that supports families. The FRG support structure provides a link between the rear detachment and family members. The FRG helps families by organizing events (both virtual and in-person) where the rear detachment leadership can update families. In a BCT, the brigade headquarters and each battalion have a paid, civilian Family Readiness Support Advisor (FRSA). The FRSA receives training to help the family volunteers keep families informed and coordinate events such as VTCs for families, holiday gift drives, and welcome home ceremonies. As with the military leadership in a BCT, all the FRSAs and individual company FRG leaders are working on the same problem. The BCT may deploy over a 10-day period, but the brigade deploys as a unit.

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<sup>43</sup>Army Doctrine Reference Publication 1-02, 1-38.

<sup>44</sup>Army Doctrine Reference Publication 1-02, 1-39.

There is a brigade headquarters and six battalion headquarters vetting and sending information to the rear detachment and a unified FRSA structure. Both the chain of command and support chain have unity of command and unity of effort.

In a SB, that unity of effort and unity of command does not exist within the FRG structure for deployed units. A SB and its subordinate battalion headquarters have FRSA's with the same training and qualifications as their BCT counterparts. They are hardworking individuals doing their best for the soldiers and the organizations. However, they face a much harder problem without any additional resources. At home station, a CSSB FRSA coordinates events for the battalion headquarters and all its subordinate companies. When the companies start to deploy to different locations, the FRSA is still helping those units. However, the FRSA has no relationship with the deployed headquarters and its chain of command or FRG structure. In addition, that FRSA is trying to maintain support for units still at home station. When a CSSB headquarters deploys, it gains five to seven new companies, all unknown to its home station FRSA. FRSA's at EAB units must build relationships that their BCT counterparts do not, but they have no additional resources.

It is particularly difficult for commanders, in the midst of a deployment or training, to manage information passed between service members and families. Controlling rumors and misinformation generated by well-intentioned people can consume a lot of time for the FRSA, rear detachment commander, and deployed commander.

Observation 5: Junior leaders and senior leaders do not view counseling the same way.

While all brigade and battalion commanders interviewed said counseling was important to them, sometimes their direct subordinates disagreed. Each battalion commander interviewed said he conducted a thorough initial counseling with new commanders. Most company commanders said they did not receive an initial counseling. However, when probed further, some disclosed that their commander, either brigade or battalion, did, in fact, sit down with them early

in their job and go over standards and expectations. The difference in perception came from the level of formality. If the battalion commander did not capture the counseling on a Department of the Army (DA) Form 4856, Developmental Counseling Form, the junior officer did not feel counseled. According to one battalion commander, “I told that platoon leader three times to fix the rigger pad. Then I put it on paper and it was done the next day.”<sup>45</sup>

Most battalion commanders did not want to appear too legalistic and formal in their approach, thus the absence of a DA 4856. They felt a lower degree of formality helped foster a relationship of trust and approachability between the commanders. However, most junior commanders felt they the counseling did not happen. Interestingly, some of the company commanders that did not feel counseled without a DA 4856 admitted not always using the form when they counseled their own lieutenants.

ADRP 6-22 discusses counseling, but does not state it must be on paper, only that “[c]ounseling uses a standard format to help mentally organize and isolate relevant issues.”<sup>46</sup> Paragraphs on coaching and mentoring do not call for a formal process or use of a DA Form. Battalion commanders, in their duties of developing others, must be clear with their subordinates in what constitutes a counseling session. It is probably not necessary to put every conversation on paper; communication and trust would likely break down between leaders. However, it is incumbent on the counselor to ensure the counseled officer understands the purpose of the meeting.

The discrepancy in counseling perception was nearly universal across both BCTs and EAB units. Neither organization showed a marked trend or inherent advantage in this regard.

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<sup>45</sup>Respondent 6 Interview, November 30, 2012.

<sup>46</sup>Army Doctrine Reference Publication 6-22, *Army Leadership* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 2012), 7-10.

Similar to Observation 1, the quality of counseling was dependent on the leader, not the structure of the organization.

## CONCLUSION

General Cone, TRADOC Commanding General, has acknowledged the BCT and EAB discrepancy in leader development. He said TRADOC and Combined Arms Command are working on new training initiatives to bridge this gap. Lieutenant General David Perkins, CAC Commanding General, will present them soon to the CSA.<sup>47</sup> This study demonstrates the discrepancy in leader development and provides insight for future research. In addition to leader development, this study provides other areas for research based on challenges from deployed commanders of EAB units. The small sample size in this study precludes determining causality. However, more research can conclusively determine causality and provide potential solutions.

After analyzing the five observations, it is clear that CSSBs and SBs have great leaders and develop quality junior leaders in their formations, just as BCTs do. There is no evidence that one type of organization produces better leaders based on its structure alone. Operating at home station, with all subordinate units at home station, EAB units develop outstanding leaders. However, leader development will suffer under the current disjointed ARFORGEN cycle. The 'plug and play' nature of EAB forces provides senior planners a great deal of flexibility in building a tailored formation for deployment. That flexibility comes at a cost. In this case, the cost of flexibility is leader development, headquarters development, unit cohesion, and mission accomplishment.

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<sup>47</sup>General David Cone, "Transforming the Army" (lecture, Eisenhower Auditorium, Fort Leavenworth, KS) April 08, 2013.

Leader development suffers in the constant shuffling of leaders. Leader development requires a level of trust that takes time to build. When CSSBs and subordinate companies are on different ARFORGEN cycles, battalion commanders spend time assessing new leaders and getting to know them. They must build that relationship with each company commander to develop an assessment and plan to develop the junior officer. That is much harder in an EAB unit with the turbulence caused by the disjointed ARFORGEN cycle.

Headquarters, particularly at the battalion level suffer. The battalion staff, only 71 personnel in a CSSB,<sup>48</sup> must integrate new units into operations, facilitate, and prepare units for their departure. Every EAB battalion and brigade commander interviewed for this study created a working group and a meeting to track and plan specifically for the ARFORGEN of subordinate units. Guiding new units through the RSOI process is labor intensive. Even when systems are in place and a headquarters is proficient, the time and energy spent on ARFORGEN is time taken from other activities. At home station, training suffers, while deployed it may be time for analysis or development of better systems elsewhere in the organization. The opportunity cost of a staff working on ARFORGEN can be high.

Unit cohesion is a casualty of the EAB ARFORGEN model, particularly at the company and below levels. In a BCT, junior soldiers identify with their battalion and their company. Some of that unit cohesion is lost in the EAB model. It is hard for a junior soldier in any organization to identify with the brigade. The brigade appears so high to a young soldier. But in a BCT, the soldier saw the brigade commander and command sergeant major during his training and at the deployment ceremony. In an EAB unit, a young soldier may not see the brigade commander at all

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<sup>48</sup>“2013 CSSB MTOE,” FMSWeb Force Management Database, [https://fmsweb.army.mil/protected/WebTAADS/Frame\\_TOE.asp?TOE=63426R000&PP\\_Choice=2&DOC\\_TYPE=RD\\_FMS&FY=13&TOE\\_FORMAT=GFM](https://fmsweb.army.mil/protected/WebTAADS/Frame_TOE.asp?TOE=63426R000&PP_Choice=2&DOC_TYPE=RD_FMS&FY=13&TOE_FORMAT=GFM) (accessed April 10, 2013).

because they work on bases hundreds of miles apart and the brigade commander's deployment timeline only overlapped with the junior soldier for four months. That soldier, and likely his whole unit, has no connection to the SB headquarters. The three SB commanders interviewed dedicated a lot of their time to battlefield circulation, one spent three days of every week on the road,<sup>49</sup> another spent six weeks away from his headquarters at home station travelling to see subordinate formations and supported units.<sup>50</sup> Even committing much of their time to travel, each commander wanted to connect better to all his subordinate units. SB commanders must make a tough decision between battlefield circulation and being at their headquarters to command their organization. When commanders have soldiers at up to 27 locations across over 450 miles of territory, and each location will change units during SB commander's deployment, it is impossible for a brigade commander to create a link to all his formations. The battalion commanders are not as challenged in the scope, but still face a daunting task in building a cohesive organization out of 5-7 assembled companies. A CSSB command in Iraq had up to 12 companies and over 1,900 soldiers.<sup>51</sup> Though he invested significant traveling to meet and counsel those company commanders, he did not feel a connection with most of them.

When new battalion and brigade commanders come on board, they bring a new vision and new priorities. Sometimes the new guidance conflicts with the old guidance and the junior soldiers endure the brunt of the change. As one EAB company commander deployed to Afghanistan explained, "I had three brigade commanders during my tour. Each one had a different opinion on Class IX (repair parts) and SSA (warehouse) operations. I complied with

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<sup>49</sup>Respondent 3 Interview, November 9, 2012.

<sup>50</sup>Respondent 1 Interview, January 22, 2013.

<sup>51</sup>Respondent 8 Interview, December 14, 2012.

each one, but my soldiers didn't understand why they spent weeks working on a project only to have the new guy want it torn down. It isn't easy to keep your guys motivated, and you end up looking like an idiot." Bringing in new leaders with fresh vision and motivation is great, but a BCT does that with 3,500 soldiers that trained under the same vision and arrive in theater fresh and motivated. When a battalion or brigade headquarters comes in and tries to change course or energize an organization that has been in theater for a while, they risk being dismissed or resented as the 'new guys.' When units do not coalesce around a unifying vision or mission, they are unlikely to achieve their full potential.

Finally, mission accomplishment suffers under the EAB model of ARFORGEN. That strong statement does not mean soldiers went hungry or without bullets because of the EAB ARFORGEN model. However, it does mean that EAB units did not accomplish as much or work, as efficiently because of time and energy spent on the disjointed ARFORGEN model for EAB units. One battalion commander said he did not complete a project for a new postal facility in Afghanistan, in part, because of the time and energy expended in counseling and managing the effects of ARFORGEN.<sup>52</sup> One brigade commander said he did not get to work on some home station initiatives and missed a staff exercise because he was travelling to see as many units as possible that would be in his deployed formation.<sup>53</sup> One SB commander personally chaired a meeting every week to track the ARFORGEN process. Another brigade chaired a similar meeting with the brigade deputy commanding officer. These are two of the organization's most senior leaders chairing the ARFORGEN meeting. Each week those leaders spent preparation time, meeting time and time afterwards to formulate and provide guidance on a process that only EAB

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<sup>52</sup>Respondent 6 Interview, November 30, 2012.

<sup>53</sup>Respondent 1 Interview, January 22, 2013.



units face and for which they are not resourced. EAB sustainment units provided support to U.S. and coalition forces throughout Iraq and Afghanistan. If not dedicating time and manpower to the disjointed ARFORGEN cycle they could have dedicated more effort to being more efficient, partnership with local national military units, and other critical initiatives.

The findings in this study are consistent with a similar study by Colonel Rodney Fogg in 2011. Colonel Fogg's analysis included additional factors including manning priorities and emerging requirements of such as Military Transition Teams in Iraq. Colonel Fogg's analysis, coupled with the commander's challenges presented in this study, provide a solid foundation for future studies on a larger scale.

Fortunately, the Army recognizes the challenges associated with the EAB sustainment structure and ARFORGEN model. Combined Arms Support Command, the organization that develops sustainment force structure and doctrine for the U.S. Army at Fort Lee, Virginia, is working on an initiative that will create a standardized CSSB. This new CSSB will train together at home station and deploy as one entity. Each CSSB will have a headquarters and headquarters company, quartermaster supply company, maintenance company and transportation company. Additional capabilities, such as water purification, aerial delivery, or laundry and shower would deploy as required. If a CSSB deploys and has seven subordinate companies, four will be organic and three will go through ARFORGEN under the current model. While it is not a perfect solution, it significantly improves the current situation. Under this model, a CSSB commander will train with and mentor four of his commanders at home station. When deployed, his learning curve will be much less steep and he will have more time and energy to dedicate to developing the new commanders and other staff initiatives. Five of six deployed battalion commanders interviewed preferred this new model. The one dissenting opinion came from a commander that had up to 12 companies in his formation Iraq. He believed the flexibility in the current structure was worth the cost involved.

Army leaders at all levels answered the nation's call for the last 12 years of persistent conflict. Specifically, logistics junior leaders did amazing work in the challenging cities of Iraq and austere mountains of Afghanistan. It is time for the Army's senior leaders to evaluate the organizational structures and deployment models to learn and improve the formation. No one can accurately predict the time, location, or nature of America's next conflict. However, regardless of the circumstances, the Army will need quality leaders to succeed. It is imperative to develop those leaders in peace, to prepare for war.

## APPENDIX A: BRIGADE COMMANDER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### **Basic Background: Research Ahead of Time if possible**

When did you take command?

What unit did you command?

Where and when did you deploy?

### **Home Station:**

1. Did you have subordinate companies and or battalion headquarters deploy while you were in command?

Were those companies going to work for a different headquarters while deployed?

How much interaction did you or your staff have with those deployed headquarters prior to deployment?

If a subordinate battalion headquarters deployed, what did you do with the remaining companies – Task Organization?

### **Deployment:**

1. How much interaction, before deployment, did you have with your future higher headquarters?

2. How much interaction, before deployment, did you have with your future subordinate units?

3. Do you feel you had a good understanding of your future commander's intent and priorities before you deployed?

4. Approximately how many subordinate companies were in your deployed Task Organization?

5. Did all of those units rotate within your deployment?

6. What interaction did you/your staff have with those subordinate units, especially the battalion headquarters before they joined your organization?

7. Approximately how many dispersed locations did you have within your command (focusing on locations with leadership one or two levels below your own)?

8. How often were you able to get to those locations?

9. How often did you meet, one on one with subordinate commanders?

Local (one same FOB as your HQ)

Dispersed Commanders

10. How long did it take for you to get a good assessment of a subordinate commander's strengths and weaknesses?

Local

Dispersed

11. Do you feel you had enough time/opportunity to develop or mentor the subordinate commanders?

Local

Dispersed

12. What, if anything, do you think you could have done differently?

13. How did you structure your Rear-Detachment for your headquarters and any subordinate HQs that deployed?

14. How did the Rear-Detachment process work – was it an effective organization to lead other units through ARFORGEN?

15. Did you have any systemic problems with FRGs, either for subordinate organizations while deployed, or home station units not having a good, continuous flow of information?

16. What, if any, changes to the organization would have improved mentorship or development?

17. Do you maintain contact with any of your former subordinate commanders at battalion or company level?

## APPENDIX B: BATTALION COMMANDER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### **Basics:**

1. When did you take command?
2. What unit did you command (specify BSB or EAB)?
3. Where and when did you deploy?

### **EAB Battalions Only:**

#### **Home Station:**

1. Did you have subordinate companies or separate platoons deploy while you were in command?  
Were those units bound to work for a different battalion headquarters while deployed?  
How much interaction did you and/or your staff have with those deployed headquarters prior to deployment?  
If a portion of a subordinate company deployed, taking the company commander but leaving at least one platoon, what did you do with the remaining companies – Task Organization?

#### **Deployment:**

1. How much interaction, before deployment, did you have with your future higher headquarters?
2. How much interaction, before deployment, did you have with your future subordinate units?
3. Do you feel you had a good understanding of your future commander's intent and priorities before you deployed?
4. Approximately how many subordinate companies were in your deployed Task Organization?
5. Did all of those units rotate within your deployment?
6. What interaction did you/your staff have with those subordinate units, before they joined your organization?
7. Approximately how many dispersed locations did you have within your command, specifically platoon and company locations?
8. How often were you able to get to those locations?
9. How often did you meet, one on one with subordinate commanders and platoon leaders?  
Local (one same FOB as your HQ)  
Dispersed
10. How long did it take for you to get a good assessment of a subordinate commander's strengths and weaknesses?  
Local  
Dispersed
11. Do you feel you had enough time/opportunity to develop or mentor the subordinate commanders?  
Local  
Dispersed
12. What, if anything, do you think you could have done differently?
13. What, if any, changes to the organization would have improved mentorship or development?
14. Do you maintain contact with any of your former subordinate commanders at company or platoon level?

### **BSB Commanders Only:**

#### **Home Station:**

1. How long were you in command before deployment?
2. Did you have any major training events with your brigade commander prior to deployment (MRX, CTC, etc)?
3. On average, approximately how long were your subordinate company commanders in command before deploying?
4. Did you have any battalion or brigade level training events (FTX, MRX, CTC) with all your

deployed subordinate company commanders?

5. Did you have a good understanding of your subordinate commander's strengths and weaknesses prior to deployment?

**Deployment:**

1. How many company commanders changed command during the deployment?

2. How many commanders were geographically dispersed from your location?

3. How often were you able to meet, individually or collectively with your subordinate commanders?

4. Do you feel you had the appropriate amount of time in a deployed environment to counsel or mentor subordinate commanders and platoon leaders?

## APPENDIX C: COMPANY COMMANDER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### **Basics:**

1. When did you take command?
2. What unit did you command (specify BSB or EAB)?
3. Where and when did you deploy?

### **EAB Battalions Only:**

#### **Home Station:**

1. Did you have subordinate companies or separate platoons deploy while you were in command?  
Were those units bound to work for a different battalion headquarters while deployed?  
How much interaction did you and/or your staff have with those deployed headquarters prior to deployment?  
If a portion of a subordinate company deployed, taking the company commander but leaving at least one platoon, what did you do with the remaining companies – Task Organization?

#### **Deployment:**

1. How much interaction, before deployment, did you have with your future higher headquarters?
2. How much interaction, before deployment, did you have with your future subordinate units?
3. Do you feel you had a good understanding of your future commander's intent and priorities before you deployed?
4. Approximately how many subordinate companies were in your deployed Task Organization?
5. Did all of those units rotate within your deployment?
6. What interaction did you/your staff have with those subordinate units, before they joined your organization?
7. Approximately how many dispersed locations did you have within your command, specifically platoon and company locations?
8. How often were you able to get to those locations?
9. How often did you meet, one on one with subordinate commanders and platoon leaders?  
Local (one same FOB as your HQ)  
Dispersed
10. How long did it take for you to get a good assessment of a subordinate commander's strengths and weaknesses?  
Local  
Dispersed
11. Do you feel you had enough time/opportunity to develop or mentor the subordinate commanders?  
Local  
Dispersed
12. What, if anything, do you think you could have done differently?
13. What, if any, changes to the organization would have improved mentorship or development?
14. Do you maintain contact with any of your former subordinate commanders at company or platoon level?

### **BSB Commanders Only:**

#### **Home Station:**

1. How long were you in command before deployment?
2. Did you have any major training events with your brigade commander prior to deployment (MRX, CTC, etc)?
3. On average, approximately how long were your subordinate company commanders in command before deploying?
4. Did you have any battalion or brigade level training events (FTX, MRX, CTC) with all your

deployed subordinate company commanders?

5. Did you have a good understanding of your subordinate commander's strengths and weaknesses prior to deployment?

**Deployment:**

1. How many company commanders changed command during the deployment?

2. How many commanders were geographically dispersed from your location?

3. How often were you able to meet, individually or collectively with your subordinate commanders?

4. Do you feel you had the appropriate amount of time in a deployed environment to counsel or mentor subordinate commanders and platoon leaders?

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