

OPENING A NEW DOOR FOR JUNIOR OFFICERS IN THE ARMY

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degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE
General Studies

by

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ABSTRACT

OPENING A NEW DOOR FOR JUNIOR OFFICERS IN THE ARMY, by MAJ Joshua T. Geis, 87 pages

Some officers are not meant to be leaders. This statement may contradict everything we try to instill into our officers at West Point, Reserve Officer Training Corps, or Officer Candidate School, but it is the author's belief that some could possibly just want to work as an officer apart of the Army, rather than lead in it. This thesis defines leadership within Army terms. This paper also looks at how the Army promotes its junior officers to further understand that system. In addition, this paper looks at how a light infantry battalion S3 section operates. The Army lacks human continuity in the Battalion S3 section. The operations section of a light infantry battalion always experiences ebbs and flows to knowledge. This paper proposes that if the Army establishes human continuity within the light infantry battalion S3 section with permanent staff officers it will not only focus our officers that want to be leaders, but also fill a much-needed gap in the human continuity of the operations section.

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ACRONYMS

CDR	Commander
CP	Command Post
CTC	Combat Training Center
DCSPER	Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel
DOPMA	Defense Officer Personnel Management Act
DOTMLPF-P	Doctrine, Organization, Training, Material, Leadership and Education, Personnel, Facilities, and Policy
FAO	Foreign Affairs Officer
FM	Field Manual
S3	Battalion or Brigade Operations Officer
STOPSO	Staff Track Operations Officer

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

How can we bring in more highly skilled people and how can we reward those people and promote people not simply on the basis of when they joined but even more and more on the basis of their performance and talent? How can we be that kind of organization?

— Secretary of Defense Ashton B. Carter, quoted in
Combined Arms Center, *Talent Management
Concept of Operations for Force 2025 and Beyond*

Background

Throughout time, the Army has always asked the questions, how do we define leadership, how do we best recruit and retain our officers, and how do we properly use and assign them. During the interwar period a war college officer said;

An officer must be thoroughly acquainted with the various activities of the Army of the United States and that this requires a variety of duties giving him first a practical knowledge of his branch, second, the regular army, and third, the other components of the Army. To have this varied experience a limit of four years on a specific duty has been generally practiced. In general, the officer should not repeat any job.¹

This theme of officers becoming generalists has been a part of the Army culture and still presides today.² The Army is constantly training its officers to train across the spectrum of operations, as it should to a certain extent. There has been a steady drum beat over the past few decades for an approach to a possible shift to a more specialized

¹ Arthur T. Coumbe, “Army Officer Employment: Historical Context” (Report, U.S. Army Cadet Command, Fort Monroe, VA, 2010.), 6.

² Ibid.

approach in some respects.³ The Army seems to grapple with generalization versus specialization with its officer corps.⁴ There seems to be elements within the Army that could prove to be beneficial on multiple fronts with tweaking some of its positions, even adding positions that add some specialization to it in order to gain efficiency.

The purpose of this study is to highlight a need for specialization within an Infantry Battalion S3 Operations Section. The Army lacks, at certain times, specialization at all levels.⁵ It consistently shapes officers to hone skills yet broaden their knowledge. The constant shaping of most officers to be generals one day, produces great general officers the majority of the time.⁶ But what about the officers that are not going to be general officers one day? What about the officers that are hardworking officers, enjoy what they do, and want to focus on where they currently are within the operations of a unit? What about the young officers that do not display leadership qualities, but still can be highly effective and productive officers for their respective units? This paper will look to answer these issues.

A lot of the discussion points throughout this paper will address aspects that speak to the lack of outside the box thinking that suffocates US Army ingenuity. “There is a revolution going on in human resources today and we are not taking part in it. What once

³ Coumbe, “Army Officer Employment,” 4.

⁴ Ibid., 6.

⁵ Ibid., 7.

⁶ Ibid., 6.

worked for us has, in the 21st century, become unnecessarily inflexible and inefficient.”⁷ This was said by the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, Brad R. Carson, on 24 June 2015. The famous saying, “If it ain’t broke don’t fix it”. There are areas that could gain efficiency through other methods of practice and outside the box thinking in the Army. A reevaluation of how we do certain aspects of the military must be heard and new ideas welcomed.

At West Point on 25 February 2011, Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates asked, “How can the Army break up the institutional concrete—its bureaucratic rigidity in its assignments and promotion processes—in order to retain, challenge, and inspire its best, brightest, and most battle-tested young officers to lead the service in the future?”⁸ Army leaders continue to speak about ingenuity and new thinking, yet the Army has the same promotion system, the same ways to manage talent, and for the most part, the same jobs offered for the past decade. What the Army lacks in action, it is all in with talk. Now is the time to stop talking and start acting.

The problem that presents itself these days within these questions is how does the Army address these issues? The Army can address these issues with empowering its leaders in areas it currently does not.⁹ It can address these issues by revamping certain

⁷ Combined Arms Center, *Talent Management Concept of Operations for Force 2025 and Beyond* (Fort Leavenworth: Department of the Army, 2015), 7.

⁸ Ibid., 22.

⁹ Combined Arms Center, “The Army Training and Leader Development Panel Officer Study” (Report to the Army, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 2003), 8.

aspects on how it promotes and retains officers.¹⁰ It can understand where the strains are in units, identify that gap in the system, and provide a path to rectify the current situation.

Currently within the Army promotion system, the clear majority of first lieutenants are promoted to captain and are afforded an opportunity to command a company post their respective Captain Career Course. The assumption is that every newly promoted captain should be given the privilege to command a company. Does this current model make sense in today's army where we find leaders failing to lead their Soldiers at the company level and beyond? Also, if the Army starts a Staff Track Operations Officer (STOPSO) opportunity for officers, what would key developmental time look like for that STOPSO and fellow staff officers?

The Army affords its officers to branch out in the functional area positions during their career. There is no functional area or career path for officers that just want to specialize in staff positions. Should there be? Would the Army benefit from professional staff officers outside the School of Advanced Military Studies program currently offered for higher level staff training and what would be the potential pros and cons of such a program within the Army?

Researcher's Qualification and Bias

The author has 16 years in the US Army. He was selected to become a non-commissioned officer at his two-year mark, the fastest timeline possible. He attended the Warrior's Leader Course and was number one in his class. He has held a leadership

¹⁰ Troy Messer, "Captains Career Course: Leveraging Talented Officers Towards The Army Profession" (Strategic Research Project, US Army War College, Carlisle, PA, 2011), 15.

position for 14 out of those 16 years and has consistently been evaluated as a high-quality leader in the Army in all of the positions that he has held, enlisted and commissioned. He has a strong desire to continue to learn about leadership and its correlation to how the Army manages its personnel.

In regard to leadership, he is a graduate of the Army's premier leadership school, Ranger School. He has been recognized by numerous commands for his above and beyond leadership traits. He also has commanded five different companies within four separate units. Most officers only conduct one or two company commands in their career. To actually command five companies in the Army is likely, unprecedented. This speaks to his ability to provide purpose, direction, and motivation to Soldiers on a daily basis thus displaying his instinctual understanding on how to lead and lead well.¹¹

The author also spent 10 months as an S1 for a US Army Battalion. This experience gave him a look into how the Army promotes and retains its officers. Understanding the doctrine and the associated policies when it comes to personnel operations gave the author a base to operate when conducting his research.

The author spent over 16 months as an Assistant S3. First was a nine-month stint with a Combined Arms Battalion and then a seven-month period with a Light Infantry Battalion. These time periods offered a plethora of learning and a vast job span of duties and responsibilities. An National Training Center rotation as a planner, designing long and short range training calendars, training management, Combined Arms Training Strategy and Army Training Network familiarity and implementation, Mission essential

¹¹ Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 6-22, *Army Leadership* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 1-1.

task list development, deploying and redeploying units, squad and platoon live fires, new equipment fielding and training, platoon and company field training exercise planner, and just the day in and day out operations for 16 months.

Understanding these three key aspects of the authors' background enables the reader to understand that he has a solid foundation in the realms of leadership, personnel actions, and Infantry Battalion operations. It also paints the picture of where he is coming from on certain aspects of the paper. This also shows his possible bias in these realms as well within the paper.

Always being short-handed in the three shop was a daily issue during this time frame. There were never enough hours in the day to get everything done. Also, lieutenants and captains alike were constantly rotating through these shops. This allotted for zero human continuity of systems and product understanding. An attempt is made to discover an understanding of the pros and cons by adding additional personnel to the shop, providing human continuity and determining whether that position would help or hinder operations.

Biased leadership understanding would be attributed to the fact the author has spent the majority of his career in infantry units, especially battalion and below. To counter this bias, the author will only speak to the battalion level of operations. The author has witnessed on several occasions the lack luster performance of some officers that were waiting to take a platoon or a company. The Army constantly deems these less than stellar performers have a right, rather than a privilege, to step into these leadership

positions. This directly contradicts Army leadership doctrine.¹² Field Manual (FM) 6-22 states, “Supervising leaders should foster an attitude that leadership positions are not necessarily automatic appointments. It is a privilege, not an entitlement, to serve in a leadership position. Selections for key leadership positions require thorough consideration.”¹³ How often does this happen at the lieutenant or captain arena? The observed factual evidence of the matter would differ.

Last argument of bias would be from the personnel aspect. The author only has a limited experience in the personnel side of the house and might not fully grasp the big picture of the Army in regard to personnel. This was offset by research and understanding doctrine associated with such actions.

Primary Research Question

Should the Army provide a path for officers in which they are allowed or required to pursue a STOPSO position instead of a command track?

Secondary Research Questions

1. How would the creation of a STOPSO effect leadership within the Army?

First, the reader must understand how the Army defines leadership as its base knowledge. Second, understanding aspects of Army leadership will enable the author to know how leaders are empowered to incorporate a possible new position. Third, it will provide the understanding of how the Army defines a good or bad leader, thus displaying

¹² Department of The Army, Field Manual (FM) 6-22, *Leader Development* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2015), 3-30.

¹³ Ibid.

how leaders might vet potential in junior officers earlier. Last, understanding these base principles of leadership within the Army will provide answers to this question in chapter 4.

2. How would the creation of a STOPSO benefit a light infantry battalion S3 section?

In order to know whether a new position in the S3 section would be beneficial we have to understand who makes up that section. We need to understand what the section is responsible for during garrison operations as well as deployed operations. Also, understanding the problems that face an S3 will help to understand whether a new position would be beneficial or not. Once these base line understandings are established, the question in chapter 4 can be answered.

3. How would the creation of a STOPSO change or improve the current promotions and retentions systems within the Army?

Understanding the promotions of first lieutenants, captains, and officers in general will give the bases to see how a new position might benefit the Army. If the Army adds a new position, they will have to be able to know how a different, more specialized position, would work in the scheme of promotions and retentions. Being able to identify how the Army promotes will enable the author to understand any comparative analysis with other service or commercial businesses.¹⁴ Understanding practices and procedures will provide an answer to this question in chapter 4.

¹⁴ Eamon R. Murray, “Blue Harvest: Evaluating Human Capital Management Policy For The 21st Century Air Force” (Thesis, School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, Maxwell Air Force Base, AL, 2017), 61.

Limitations

1. The limited time to do fulltime research while simultaneously executing the duties of a full-time student at the Command and General Staff College.
2. The Army only has a few regulations and FMs that directly talk to leadership.
3. The last time the author conducted research on this scale was 2003.

Delimitations

The author will not try to define what leadership means outside the Army's definition. The author will also not go deep into the Army's historical promotional processes. This study will only look at how battalion operations sections function. The author acknowledges that findings that the battalion level could have the same effects at echelon but will focus his thesis at the battalion level. Although the staff track operations officer could or could not be useful at echelon, the focus will only be at the battalion level. Last there will be some general discussion on promotions and retention as a whole, but it will at times only focus on first lieutenants and captains.

Assumptions

1. The Army process of promotions will not change during the time period of research for this thesis.
2. Most captains will continue to be slotted into a command slot post their respective Captain Career Course.
3. The Army will not publish updated definitions of leadership during the time period of research for this thesis.

4. The Army will not add a staff branch or functional area that supports a STOPSO.

Significance of Study

The study on whether or not the Army should provide a path for officers in which they are allowed or required to pursue a STOPSO position instead of a command track could be significant for multiple benefits. Three areas of focus previously mentioned could benefit greatly. These three areas are leadership, promotions and retention, and S3 Operations at the battalion level.

First, it could empower leaders at the commanding source to potentially identify traits and qualities in officers that show great administration skills. This could potentially open up a whole new door for junior officers in the Army. The ability from the get-go for an officer to say they want to work on staff that provides that high stability throughout their career could be met with open arms for some. During junior officers' time this could also empower Battalion or Brigade Commanders the opportunity to also identify talent that would be better suited to work in the S3 shop rather than go command a company or continue down the command track.

Second, it could possibly improve effectiveness within an operations section in a battalion. Having that human continuity within the operations section could do wonders not only for the operations staff, but also empower the commander at the same time having a streamlined staff working on all cylinders due to improved efficiency.

Last, answering this question could also help big Army understand that maybe their current out and up policy does not have to be the answer to all officer promotions. Up and stay could be a viable option for more than just the current exemptions in the

regulation.¹⁵ It might help resolve some perceived arguments that all officers should be groomed for higher command. Maybe for some, areas of specialty within the operations section of a battalion, would be more beneficial for them and the Army.

Key Definitions

Above the Zone: “A promotion eligibility category that consists of commissioned or warrant officers of the same grade and competitive category on the active duty list who are eligible for promotion consideration and whose date of rank is senior to any officer in the promotion zone.”¹⁶

Below the Zone: “A promotion eligibility category that consists of commissioned or warrant officers of the same grade and competitive category on the active duty list who are eligible for promotion consideration and whose date of rank is junior to any officer in the promotion zone.”¹⁷

Combat Arms Generalist Position: “A duty position requiring a broad understanding of combined arms doctrine, training, and force structure. A combat arms generalist position is not identified with one specific branch or FA, but is limited to officers whose branches are Infantry, Armor, Field Artillery, Air Defense Artillery,

¹⁵ Sean C. Bernabe, “Changing the Officer Promotion System to Support Unit Focused Stability (UFS)” (Monograph, School of Advanced Military Studies, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 2005), 60.

¹⁶ Department of the Army, Army Regulation (AR) 600-8-29, *Officer Promotions* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2005), 51.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 52.

Aviation, SF, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and who are currently managed in the operations career field.”¹⁸

Competitive Category: “A group of officers who compete among themselves for promotion and, if selected, are promoted in order of rank as additional officers in the higher grade are needed. Competitive categories among warrant officers are authorized by law but have not been designated as a matter of policy.”¹⁹

Defense Officer Personnel Management Act (DOPMA): “DOPMA became effective 15 September 1981. The DOPMA was a major revision to 10 USC and is still the basis for year group management of the company and field grade officer corps. In 1984, the DOPMA provisions of 10 USC were amended to overcome certain unintended consequences of the original act and to give the Service secretaries more flexibility in limiting eligibility for promotion consideration.”²⁰

Direction: “Providing clear direction involves communicating what to do to accomplish a mission: prioritizing tasks, assigning responsibility for completion, and ensuring subordinates understand the standard. Although subordinates want and need direction, they expect challenging tasks, quality training, and adequate resources. They should have appropriate freedom of action. Providing clear direction allows followers to

¹⁸ Department of the Army, Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-3, *Officer Professional Development and Career Management* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), 45.

¹⁹ Department of the Army, AR 600-8-29, *Officer Promotions*, 52.

²⁰ Department of the Army, Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-3, *Officer Professional Development and Career Management*, 27.

adapt to changing circumstances through modifying plans and orders through disciplined initiative within the commander's intent.”²¹

Functional Area: “An FA is a grouping of officers by technical specialty or skill, which usually requires significant education, training, and experience. An officer receives their FA between the 5th and 6th years of service. Individual preference, academic background, manner of performance, training, and experience, and needs of the Army are all considered during the designation process.”²²

Influencing: “Influencing is getting people—military and civilian, governmental and non-governmental partners, or even bystanders such as a local populace—to do what is required. Influencing entails more than simply passing along orders. Through words and personal example, leaders communicate purpose, direction, and motivation.”²³

Leader Development: “Leader development is a deliberate, continuous, sequential, and progressive process grounded in the Army Values. It grows Soldiers and Army Civilians into competent, confident leaders capable of directing teams and organizations.”²⁴

Leadership: “Leadership is the process of influencing people by providing purpose, direction, and motivation to accomplish the mission and improve the organization (ADP 6-22). As an element of combat power, leadership unifies the other

²¹ Department of the Army, ADRP 6-22, *Army Leadership*, 1-2.

²² Department of the Army, Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-3, *Officer Professional Development and Career Management*, 46.

²³ Department of the Army, ADRP 6-22, *Army Leadership*, 1-1.

²⁴ Ibid., Glossary-1.

elements of combat power (information, mission command, movement and maneuver, intelligence, fires, sustainment and protection). Confident, competent, and informed leadership intensifies the effectiveness of the other elements of combat power.”²⁵

Mission Command System: “The arrangement of personnel, networks, information systems, processes and procedures, and facilities and equipment that enable commanders to conduct operations.”²⁶

Motivation: “Motivation supplies the will and initiative to do what is necessary to accomplish a mission. Motivation comes from within, but others’ actions and words affect it. A leader’s role in motivation is to understand the needs and desires of others, to align and elevate individual desires into team goals, and to inspire others to accomplish those larger goals. Some people have high levels of internal motivation to get a job done, while others need more reassurance, positive reinforcement, and feedback.”²⁷

Operations Section: “The S-3 section is the commander's primary staff for planning, coordinating, prioritizing, and integrating all battalion operations. The S-3 section runs the battalion main CP [Command Post], under XO supervision. The S-3 is generally the senior staff member of the tactical CP, commonly called the TAC [Tactical Command Post], if the commander employs one. The operations section’s main duties are to plan, prepare and produce the battalion operations orders, control current operations, and coordinate critical support operations, as required, with the other staff sections. In

²⁵ Department of the Army, ADRP 6-22, *Army Leadership*, 1-1.

²⁶ Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3-0, *Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), Glossary-13.

²⁷ Department of the Army, ADRP 6-22, *Army Leadership*, 1-2.

addition, the operations section develops and synchronizes the intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) collection plan. They also manage the battle rhythm of the TOC [Tactical Operations Center], to include orders production; battle tracking, operations updates and briefings, rehearsals, receipt of reposts, and reports to higher headquarters.”²⁸

Promotion Zone: “A promotion eligibility category (defined by an announced range of DOR) consisting of commissioned officers on the active duty list of the same grade and competitive category who are eligible for promotion consideration, or warrant officers (per Applicability Statement) . . . As lieutenant colonels or below, are eligible for promotion consideration for the first time (excluding any below the zone consideration).”²⁹

UP-or-Out: “requires that an officer be promoted within a certain period of time or leave the service.”³⁰

Zone of Consideration: “Commissioned officers on the active duty list of the same grade and competitive category or warrant officers (per Applicability Statement) whose dates of rank fall within a promotion eligibility category. The zone of consideration consists of the promotion zone, above the zone, and below the zone.”³¹

²⁸ Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3-21.20, *The Infantry Battalion* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), 1-6.

²⁹ Department of the Army, AR 600-8-29, *Officer Promotions*, 54.

³⁰ RAND National Defense Research Institute, “Creating New Career Options for officers in the U.S. Military” (Research Brief, RAND, Santa Monica, CA, 2005), 1.

³¹ Department of the Army, AR 600-8-29, *Officer Promotions*, 54.

Summary

The introduction of this thesis gave a broad understanding of the background to where the thesis is going, a little about the author and his biases, how answering the primary and secondary questions could help the Army, and identified key definitions that will be used throughout the paper. The majority of the literature for this thesis was military based. The spectrum for the literature covered three basic areas: (1) leadership, (2) promotions and retentions, and (3) operations of an infantry battalion.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Change before you have to.

— Jack Welch, quoted in Colarusso, Heckel, Lyle, and Skimmyhorn, “Starting Strong: Talent-Based Branching of Newly Commissioned U.S. Army Officers”

The purpose of this study is to gather information from three different areas of importance: (1) leadership, (2) promotions and retention procedures, and (3) battalion operations. The conclusion will be drawn based on the analysis whether or not a STOPSO would benefit a Battalion S3 Operations Section. Conclusions and recommendations will then be presented based upon the analysis conducted.

The literature review is broken down into 3 areas. The review of official doctrine in regard to leadership. The first subject within leadership focuses on how the Army defines leadership in all aspects. The author will look at defining and codifying leadership using Army manuals that clearly define what leadership means and how it is used by leaders within the Army. The scope of literature is to only official Army writings on leadership. There are many definitions of leadership in literature that are available. These definitions are pertinent to the thesis question but are only important enough to understand as a component to the overall understanding of the primary question.

The next subcomponent to the literature review on leadership is how it relates to the Army Commander. This is key to understanding not only how the Army defines leadership, but what is the actual role of a commander in leadership and how commanders influence outcomes and help implement new programs in accordance with current doctrine.

The last subcomponent to leadership focuses on literature relating to talent management. This subject is viewed as a subcomponent due to the fact that managers of talent within the Army are either located at the Human Resource Command, or those in a leadership position. A lot has been written on talent management in the civilian arena. This study focuses on more military writings, rather than civilian literature.

The second focus area will be promotions and retention procedures. Another key component to answering the thesis question is understanding how the Army, and the Armed Forces for that matter, promotes and retains its officers. In order to potentially change a system to a more specialized officer in one position, the reader must first understand current policy and laws that govern those processes. The literature will mostly be Army doctrine and regulations but will also dive into other findings and studies on the subject.

Last, and most important, the literature review discusses how a battalion S3 operations section functions. One aspect looked into is how the battalion S3 is manned, focusing on a light infantry battalion. This last subject area will also look at the duties and responsibilities of the officers within that section. Finally, literature that defines what a battalion operations section is responsible for during operations will be reviewed. The literature covered during this section will mostly draw from official military doctrine and some other research aspects of military operations, such as the Center for Army Lessons Learned from Combat Training Centers (CTC).

Leadership

“Leadership is the process of influencing people by providing purpose, direction, and motivation to accomplish the mission and improve the organization.”³² This definition is the bedrock for all leaders in the US Army. From the sergeant team leader to the four-star general, if one is in a position of leadership within the Army, they are supposed to understand what this means to the Army, themselves, and to those they lead on a daily basis.

Possessing the ability to influence people not only by words, but by personal actions or example is the standard.³³ In this understanding of influencing, this assumes that the leader knows what is required to get done. The assumption that the leader is working within the set definition that has been established and understood by higher headquarters or by doctrine, regulations, etc. Influencing people to do what they all collectively can understand seems like a common goal. Influencing is even harder when trying to think outside the box to come up with solutions that might go against traditional thinking or current practice and or policy.

³² Department of the Army, ADRP 6-22, *Army Leadership*, 1-1.

³³ Ibid.

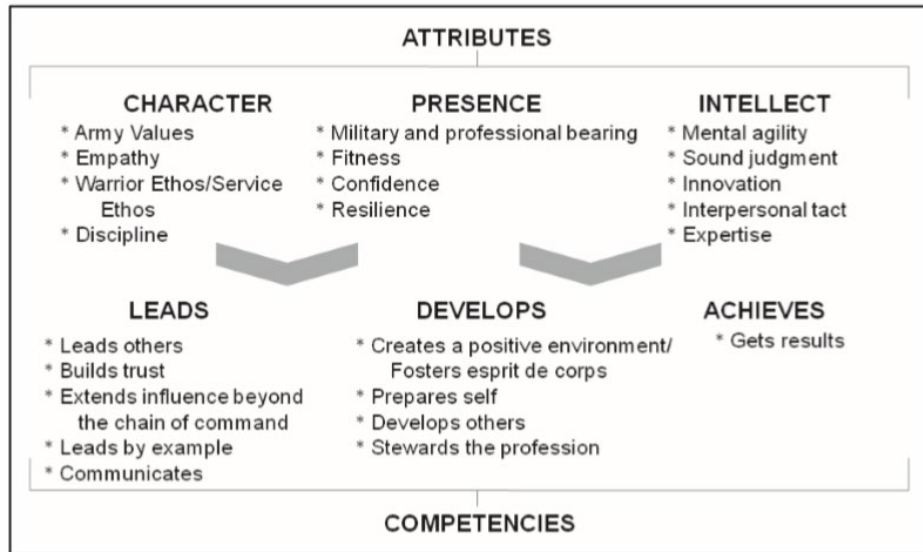


Figure 1. The Army Leadership Requirements' Model

Source: Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 6-22, *Army Leadership* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 1-5.

The Army focuses on formal and informal leadership. Formal leadership is that to which one is appointed by their respective position.³⁴ Informal are those personnel that lead outside the traditional structure.³⁵ Character, presence, intellect, leads, develops, and achieves are the attributes and competencies the Army describes that lead to a competent leader. These attributes and competencies make up the Army leadership requirements' model as depicted in figure 1.³⁶

The chapters of Army Doctrine Reference Publication 6-22 are broken down into these attributes and competencies. The literature goes into great detail with respect to

³⁴ Department of the Army, ADRP 6-22, *Army Leadership*, 1-4.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid., 1-5.

these attributes and competencies. They are the building blocks to the Army's leadership requirements model. Understanding these attributes and competencies allows the reader of this thesis to understand the Army's point of view on leadership and all that leadership encompasses in the Army. This gives context into the problem of whether or not leaders are empowered to act when necessary.

Commanders at all levels should lead the way when it comes to what right looks like. They should fully understand how to provide purpose, motivation, and direction to achieve their stated unit's goals. The positional power granted to them in Army regulations enables them to guide their units in the direction in which they want to take them.

"Command is a prescribed responsibility established by pertinent official directives, policies, and precedents. The key elements of command are authority and responsibility."³⁷ Commanders are responsible for everything their units achieve and fail to achieve. They are responsible for overall mission success and failure in the realms of resourcing, training, employing, and mission success.³⁸ They are responsible for the discipline, morale, health, and overall welfare of not only Soldiers, but their family's wellbeing 24/7 as well.³⁹

One aspect of commanders acting to achieve goals is referred to as mission command. Mission command originated from the German Concept *Auftragstaktik*, which

³⁷ Department of the Army, ADRP 6-22, *Army Leadership*, 1-3.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

means mission type tactics.⁴⁰ This style of command has been around the Army since 1980.⁴¹ It is the action of a commander to execute what they deem necessary within the confines of disciplined initiative, to accomplish the mission, while achieving their higher commander's task assigned to them.⁴²

Army FM 6-22 states, "Supervising leaders should foster an attitude that leadership positions are not necessarily automatic appointments. It is a privilege, not an entitlement, to serve in a leadership position. Selections for key leadership positions require thorough consideration. Each step in the screening and selection process should narrow the field of acceptable candidates."⁴³ If a platoon leader and a company commander positions are considered key leadership positions, then this guidance from Army FM 6-22 directly conflicts with what the Army actually executes on a daily basis.

Every lieutenant in the Army is put into a leadership position, whether they are deemed fit or not by their battalion or brigade commander. Every captain in the Army, upon completion of their respective Captains Career Course, is given a company command. There is zero selection process when they arrive to the unit. This is common knowledge in the Army. No data or study is needed to understand this as fact.

What happens to those identified as weak lieutenants and captains? Well, as previously stated, they are given a position of leadership. Some commanders offset their

⁴⁰ Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 6-0, *Mission Command* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), v.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Department of The Army. FM 6-22, *Leader Development*, 3-30.

weakness by pairing them up with either a strong platoon sergeant or a strong first sergeant. Commanders also might send them to companies that are less reputable than the shining bright start company. Others spend a lot more time on staff than in their branch qualifying position.

Either way, Army doctrine directly conflicts with the reality on the ground at these battalions and brigades. The first-time leaders are selected is when they become battalion commanders, hence the command slate list.

The ability to actually execute a vetting system of personnel for leadership positions to manage talent starts in the Army process around year 16 of an officer's timeline.⁴⁴ This is not executed at the local level, but at the centralized level and is also combined with promotions. This does not exist for platoon leaders and company commanders. Battalion and brigade commanders are not empowered to choose which lieutenants or captains can or cannot take a platoon or a company. This contradictory position by the Army does not empower commanders at the battalion and brigade level to proactively filter officers to lead America's Soldiers.

So, what is the result of this conflicting guidance? Everyone is deemed a leader and afforded the privilege to lead a platoon or command a company even if the battalion and brigade commander do not see that lieutenant or captain capable of commanding. They are given a weak Officer Evaluation Report (OER) and some commanders hope that the board does not promote them forward. Hope is not a method. With promotion

⁴⁴ Human Resource Command, "Infantry Branch Timeline Tool Kit," accessed April 12, 2019, <https://www.milsuite.mil/book/docs/DOC-483665>.

rates at 98.7 percent for first lieutenants to captain in FY18,⁴⁵ they will likely move up to the next rank regardless.

Unless they have any major incidents, they will be promoted. With that high of a percentage last year, over 98 percent of the Army's newly promoted captains are going to command a company. That process is not in line with FM 6-22. It seems as if it is more about quantity than it is quality. Thus, the Army is stating that at this point in an officer's career it is more about giving the opportunity to lead, than vetting leaders and actually conducting talent management.

If done properly, in accordance with FM 6-22 it might look something like figure 2 below.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Human Resource Command, Human Resource Command Slide on Promotions, slide received by author from Human Resource Command, Fort Knox, KY.

⁴⁶ Casey Wardynski, David S. Lyle, and Michael J. Colarusso, "Towards A U.S. Army Officer Corps Strategy For Success: Retaining Talent" (Officer Corps Strategy Monograph Series, US Army War College, Carlisle, PA, 2010), 5.

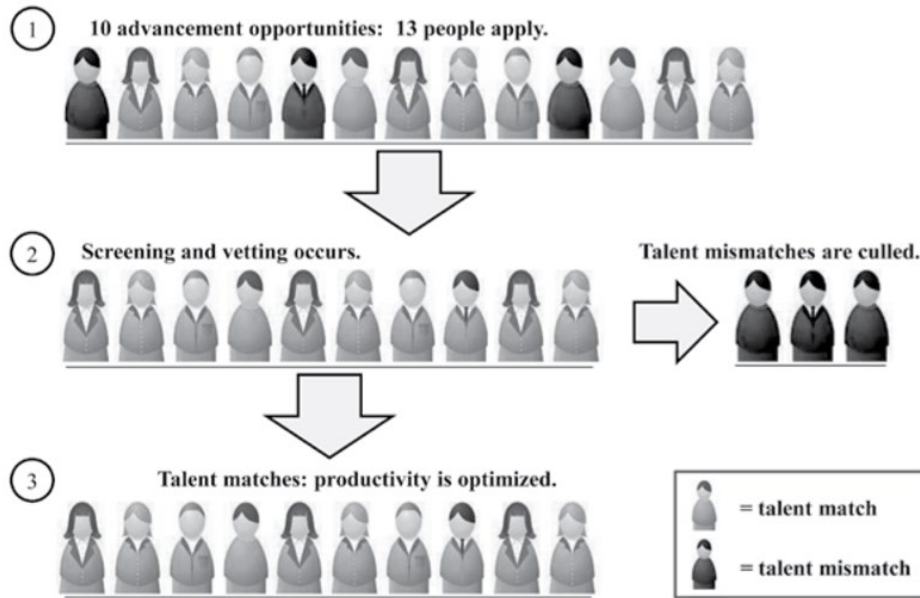


Figure 2. Talent Retention Optimized Workforce Productivity

Source: Casey Wardynski, David S. Lyle, and Michael J. Colarusso, “Towards A U.S. Army Officer Corps Strategy For Success: Retaining Talent” (Officer Corps Strategy Monograph Series, US Army War College, Carlisle, PA, 2010), 5.

In line one of figure 2, it depicts all of the lieutenants or captains coming to a unit. Theoretically there are either ten platoon leader or ten company commander positions open. Line two depicts if the Army went to a newly established vetting system by battalion or brigade commanders, they could identify ten to take those positions and three that would either be removed from the Army or be given another opportunity within the Army to serve their country, but not in a leadership position.

This would stifle quantity potentially, but it would improve overall quality in unit leadership positions and truly empower leaders at the battalion and brigade level. This also creates areas where these officers could be used and have other career paths instead

of that in leadership roles. This would display the true empowerment of leaders at the battalion and brigade level to execute talent management.

If this new vetting system took place you would potentially have higher quality leaders in position for longer periods of time. For example, new lieutenants are not spending enough time in their key development positions as depicted in figure 3.⁴⁷ There are numerous implications with this data. One implication is, that the need for lieutenants and officers in general in the various shops at the battalion and brigade level are in high demand or are put in makeshift jobs due to the excess of lieutenants.⁴⁸

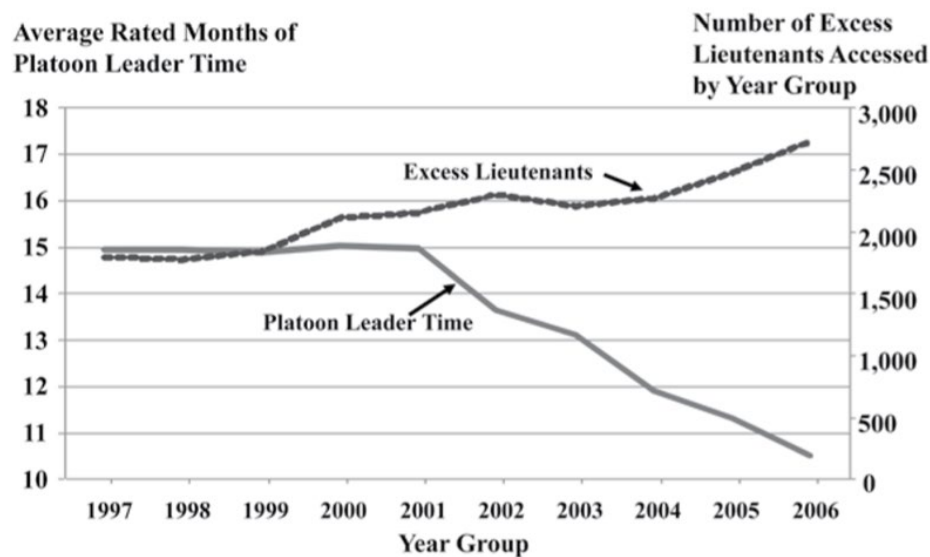


Figure 3. Over-Accessing Officers Is Undercutting Developmental Opportunities for Lieutenant

Source: Casey Wardynski, David S. Lyle, and Michael J. Colarusso, “Towards A U.S. Army Officer Corps Strategy For Success: Retaining Talent” (Officer Corps Strategy Monograph Series, US Army War College, Carlisle, PA, 2010), 6.

⁴⁷ Wardynski, Lyle, and Colarusso, “Towards A U.S. Army Officer Corps Strategy For Success: Retaining Talent,” 6.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 6.

Two, that there are other jobs that the Army needs these lieutenants for rather than just being a platoon leader or an official coded slot. Three, there is potential for lieutenants to be disenfranchised by not being able to perform their duties they signed up to do for at least 12 to 18 months. If there are that many jobs that are not coded for lieutenants but being occupied in staffs, maybe it is time for a codification of those jobs for junior officers.

The dangers to this approach would be that leaders would not be able to properly assess a new lieutenant. One could then understand that the Army placing lieutenants into a leadership position without a full-blown vetting system would be understandable. The new lieutenant has yet to be evaluated in a leadership position. This position not only makes sense, but it speaks to a potential other problem of vetting lieutenants too soon. The Army could face a shortage of captains due to such a vetting system at that level. Thus, vetting the lieutenant at that level in the Army would potentially cause more harm than good.

The same vetting system for captains could produce similar results in regard to more quality company commanders and less leadership failures at that level. This could also prove to help retain the quality officers the Army is trying to keep. Illustration four below depicts that the majority of leaders in the Army think about getting out during their lieutenant and captain years.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Ryan Riley, Josh Hatfield, Kenny Nicely, Heidi Keller-Glaze, John P. Steele, “2010 Center for Army Leadership Annual Survey of Army Leadership (CASAL): Volume 2, Main Findings” (Technical Report, The Center For Army Leadership, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 2011), 28.

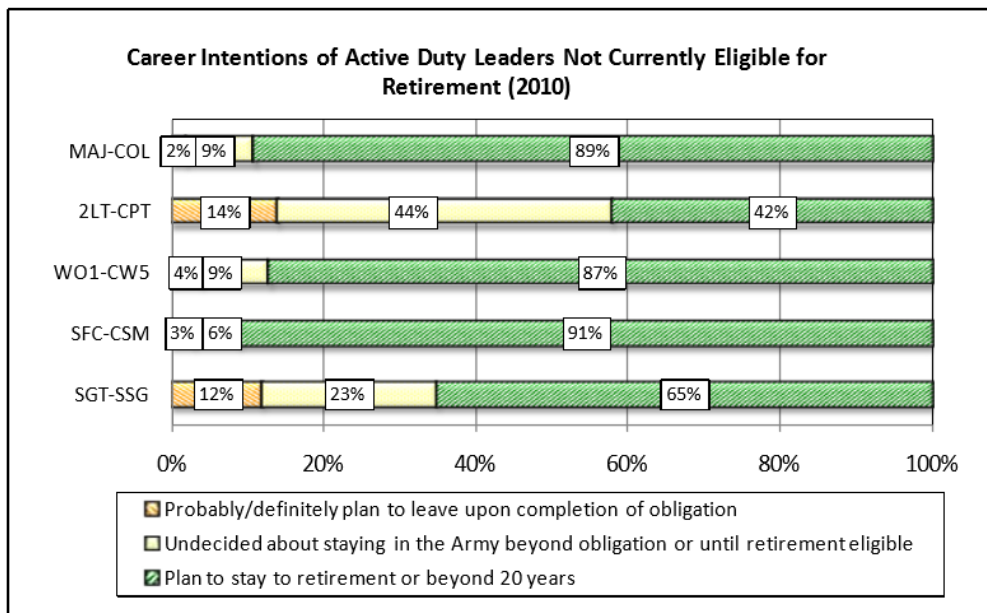


Figure 4. Career Intentions of Active Duty Leaders not Currently Eligible for Retirement

Source: Ryan Riley, Josh Hatfield, Kenny Nicely, Heidi Keller-Glaze, John P. Steele, “2010 Center for Army Leadership Annual Survey of Army Leadership (CASAL): Volume 2, Main Findings” (Technical Report, The Center For Army Leadership, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 2011), 28.

Allowing the vetted captains to command more could entice quality leaders to stay. Enabling other career opportunities for officers could help the Army with retention during the critical time period of lieutenant to captain. This vetting would still be a balancing act between quality and quantity for the Army. However, it would show that the Army is trying to abide by its own definition of vetting leaders prior to being put into positions of leadership. This would be a first step in the right direction for talent management.

By moving towards a talent management system, the right officers can be identified for the right jobs, allowing them to excel in environments that are best suited for their comparative advantages, attributes, competencies and abilities.

Eventually, a talent management system will position the Army to compete with the civilian market for officer talent..⁵⁰

This line from COL Maxton talks to the need for big Army to move from a generic formula of handling officers to a more focused talent management system. This lack of talent management starts early and carries itself through year 16 of an officer career timeline as stated earlier.

The Army started to lay the ground work for a more focused talent management system but has yet to produce it. The Combined Arms Center (CAC) is:

the force modernization proponent for unified land operations, combined arms operations at echelons above brigade (Division, Corps and Theater Army), mission command, airspace control, information operations, irregular warfare, knowledge management, personnel recovery, OPSEC, military deception, security force assistance, UAP interoperability, and the Army Profession. CAC is also the US Army's lead organization for lessons learned, doctrine, training, education, functional training, fielded force integration, managing the Army Leader Development Program, Army Profession Program, Army Training Support System Enterprise, Army Training and Education Management Enterprise, and the Combat Training Center Program. CAC is made up of more than 32,000 Soldiers and Army Civilian Corps employees stationed throughout the United States, Europe, Korea, and SW Asia and eight centers of excellence, 16 branch schools, and seven non-branch schools. The Combined Arms Center synchronizes 37 US Army schools through Army University educating and training more than 500,000 students annually, including nearly 10,000 students from 146 separate nations and more than 10,000 sailors, airmen, and Marines from the Joint Force..⁵¹

In 2015 then Lieutenant General Brown, the Commander of CAC, stated:

For 2025, we must optimize the human performance of every Soldier and Civilian in the Army Total Force and build cohesive teams of trusted professionals who thrive in ambiguity and chaos. To fulfill this mandate, we must also optimize talent management through work force planning and the acquisition, employment,

⁵⁰ Gregory C. Maxton, "The Effect Of Increasing OCS Commissions On Our Senior Leader Bench" (Strategy Research Project, US Army War College, Carlisle, PA, 2011).

⁵¹ Combined Arms Center, "Homepage," accessed April 14, 2019, <https://usacac.army.mil/#>.

development, and retention of Army Professionals. As we build better teams comprised of the right individuals, we improve the Army. The principles and functions described in this concept of operations are not intended to address symptoms or second-order problems. Instead, they are designed to support a holistic transformation by establishing the foundation required to implement and sustain the policies and practices that will optimize talent management. This includes building an Integrated Talent Management Enterprise with a single leader, or executive integrator, at the flag officer level to ensure unity of effort. The Army requires a comprehensive Talent Management Strategy for Force 2025 and Beyond. This concept of operations will inform the development of that strategy.⁵²

This talent management concept of operations for the force of 2025 and beyond is a great concept. It has been four years since that has been published. There have been currently no major changes to how the Army promotes and manages its talent since.

The main driving force in overall officer management is DOPMA, as previously defined. The CAC whitepaper on human dimension really depicts the way forward for DOPMA.

Over the long-term, and contingent on statutory reform of the DOPMA, the Army implements a fundamentally different approach to talent management and leader development. This will include moving away from the traditional model of year-group based assignments and promotions to a model more focused on talent-based assignment.⁵³

First, we must understand some of the basic concepts of how the Army retains, promotes, and manages its officers.

⁵² Combined Arms Center, *Talent Management Concept of Operations for Force 2025 and Beyond* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Government Printing Office, 2015), ii.

⁵³ Combined Arms Center, *The Human Dimension White Paper: A Framework for Optimizing Human Performance* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Government Printing Office, 2014), 21.

US Army Officer Promotion and Retention Procedures

The Army currently promotes its officers in accordance with the previously defined DOPMA. This system conducts the balancing act of when to promote officers and at what percentage. It was enacted in the 1980s and is fully implemented to this day.

The report also describes the bill [DOPMA] as “one of the final steps in the evolutionary process begun in 1946 to unify officer promotion and management procedures among the services.” Thus, the DOPMA of 1980 was not as forward-looking as members of Congress and the Executive Branch claimed. Rather, a large part of its focus was on solving the officer management issues of the Second World War.⁵⁴

It took the US Government 34 years to pass a bill on the promotion of officers and to put a system in place that functioned. Now the Army is 38 years past its initial implementation of DOPMA. There have been some tweaks to the system, but still no overhaul of how the military promotes its officers.

Table 1 depicts roughly the goals of DOPMA in regard to percentage of officers to promote and on what timeline.

⁵⁴ Bernabe, “Changing the Officer Promotion System to Support Unit Focused Stability (UFS),” 41.

Table 1. DOPMA Promotion Opportunity and Timing Goals

Promotion To	Promotion Opportunity	Promotion Timing
Captain	95%	3.5 to 4 years of service
Major	80%	9 to 11 years of service
Lieutenant Colonel	70%	15 to 17 years of service
Colonel	50%	21 to 23 years of service

Source: Charles A. Henning, *Army Officer Shortages: Background and Issues for Congress* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2006), CRS-21.

If an officer is not selected during their primary zone to be promoted, they have two more tries at promotion. This is called the “up or out” system. “The Army created the up or out promotion system in 1916 in an effort to maintain a young and eager officer corps.”⁵⁵ This system is viewed to be a rigid time based, not talent based, approach to promotions in the Army.⁵⁶ This rings true for the majority of officers.

There is an exception to this generally practiced policy that allows officers to stay in the Army. It is not an accepted norm though. It is called selective continuation. These officers, though few, have the opportunity to stay in the Army and be eligible for the next promotion board. Once again, this is not the norm in the Army. Usually after your second try at promotion the Army removes the officer from the force. This is how the Army promotes and removes officers. How does the Army retain officers?

⁵⁵ William D. Linn II, “Officer Development: A Contemporary Roadmap” (Monograph, School of Advanced Military Studies, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 2008), 9.

⁵⁶ Murray, “Blue Harvest,” 26.

One of the issues the Army has with retaining officers is the over accession of officers due to the low retainment during the captain years.⁵⁷ The Army brings in too many lieutenants. They do this because officers generally debate, as previously depicted, getting out around the three to five-year mark. This is due to a short obligation period post commissioning and officers can leave if they want. Figure 5 shows how that looked in 2007.

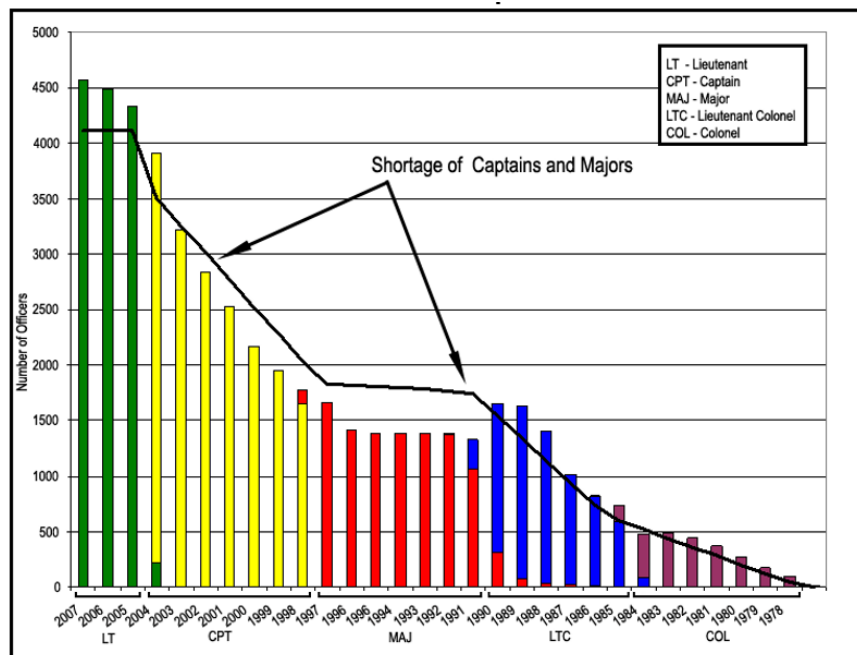


Figure 5. FY 2007 Projection by Year Group

Source: Charles A. Henning, *Army Officer Shortages: Background and Issues for Congress* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2006), CRS-2.

⁵⁷ Casey Wardynski, David S. Lyle, and Michael J. Colarusso, “Accessing Talent: The Foundation of a U.S. Army Officer Corps Strategy” (Officer Corps Strategy Monograph Series, US Army War College, Carlisle, PA, 2010), 14.

A 2011 report (Falk & Rogers) on junior officer retention challenges and opportunities reported that of the 250 former junior military officers surveyed who left service between 2001-2010:

- 80% reported that the best officers that they knew had left the military before serving a full career.
- The primary reason for their own separation was lack of organizational flexibility (i.e., frustrated with a one-size-fits-all system) that provided limited ability for one to control their own career.
- 60% reported OP Tempo as an important consideration in leaving.
- Close to 85% said that the best officers would stay if the military offered better assignments to the best officers and promoted the best officers more quickly.⁵⁸

There are two key takeaways from these findings. One, close to 85 percent talked to the issues of better assignments and promotions of the best officers should be promoted quicker. Better assignments are synonymous with stability for one's family. How does the Army find stability in its constant moving of its officers? Two, 60 percent talked about Operational TEMPO of their units. If the Army cannot reduce Operations TEMPO, can it mitigate risk to staffs with innovative ideas? These two big factors talked about in this study will be addressed in the analysis portion of this thesis.

In the past 15 years, the Army has tried two programs to help in its retention of junior officers. One was the Critical Skills Retention Program and the other the Officer Career Satisfaction Program.⁵⁹ The Critical Skills Retention Program offered sums of money to officers willing to stay for three additional years of service. Seventy-seven percent of those surveyed said they were going to stay past their service obligation

⁵⁸ Riley et al., "2010 Center for Army Leadership Annual Survey of Army Leadership (CASAL)," 25.

⁵⁹ Wardynski, Lyle, and Colarusso, "Towards A U.S. Army Officer Corps Strategy For Success: Retaining Talent," 25.

regardless of the money incentive.⁶⁰ This was a quick fix to a problem that in the end, fixed nothing and only hurt the retention system.

Officer Career Satisfaction Program, however, looked at the deeper problem of retention and is working out in a better manner. The Army offered personnel at the Reserve Officer Training Corp and the United States Military Academy branch of choice, post of choice, and guaranteed graduate school for a three years extension of their service obligation.⁶¹ This program, to this day, helps with retention not only in the near term, but for the future to come. The graduate program itself has been the biggest factor of the overall success of the Officer Career Satisfaction Program which has raised officer retention rates by 50 percent.⁶² This is key to having quality officers all throughout the Army's formation, especially in the Army's fast paced light infantry battalion S3operations section.

Light Infantry Battalion S3 Operations Section

"The S-3 section is the commander's primary staff for planning, coordinating, prioritizing, and integrating all battalion operations."⁶³ Although this is the broadest of meanings, and all encompassing, the feat that the personnel have to accomplish on a daily basis is demanding.

⁶⁰ Wardynski, Lyle, and Colarusso, "Towards A U.S. Army Officer Corps Strategy For Success: Retaining Talent," 26.

⁶¹ Ibid., 27.

⁶² Ibid., 31.

⁶³ Department of the Army, FM 3-21.20, *The Infantry Battalion*, 1-6.

First there are only four total officers assigned within a light infantry battalion S3 section. There is the S3 who is a major, two captains that are the plans officer and the assistant S3, and a lieutenant whose focus is on Chemical Biological Radiation, Nuclear operations. This basically leaves three officers. The major who oversees and drives the train for all operations. The plans captain who does all of the long-range planning and the assistant S3 who does all of the current operations planning.

One major, two captains, and a lieutenant can get a lot done. They have been doing it for decades. Needless to say, the noncommissioned officers contribute greatly to the mission of the S3 section. As previously depicted, there are usually a few spare lieutenants in the S3 section if you are lucky. So, what do they do? What is the mission of the S3 section? All Operations!

All units in the US Army work off what they call T-Week. This is defined as the week training is conducted. This facilitates timely planning for events. How this is broken down is seen in table 2 from FM 7-0.

Table 2. T-Week Concept

T-Week	Actions
UTP publication to T-13	Identify major training facilities
Week T-12	Conduct training event mission analysis
Week T-11	Refine training event requirements
Week T-10	Publish WARNORD and begin preexecution checks
Week T-9	Confirm resource requests
Week T-8	Execute reconnaissance and lock in resources
Week T-7	Publish the training event OPORD
Week T-6	Lock in training; publish training schedules
Week T-5	Complete plan and supporting products
Week T-4	Conduct certifications and complete prerequisite training
Week T-3	Conduct rehearsals
Week T-2	Finalize support and conduct OPFOR rehearsal
Week T-1	Draw equipment and supplies and execute subordinate rehearsals and checks
T-Week	Execute training
Week T+1	Recover, conduct final AARs, and assess training
AAR after action review	OPORD operation order
OPFOR opposing force	WARNORD warning order

Source: Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 7-0, *Train to Win in a Complex World* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2016), H-2.

What this concept looks like in reality is depicted in table 3. Usually the hand over from future operations to current operations happens once the operations order is published at T-7. This shows that at any given time, a plans officer in a battalion will have to manage seven weeks of operations simultaneously. He or she is in charge of understanding T-13, analyzing T-12, refining T-11, publishing a warning order for T-10, confirming resources for T-9 (although in today's Army, these resources will be locked in way further in advance), conducting reconnaissance of T-8's mission, and then publishing the training event for T-7. By doctrine, that is what is on the planning officer's plate for the week.

Table 3. S3 Section Management of T-Week Concept

T-13	T-12	T-11	T-10	T-9	T-8	T-7	T-6	T-5	T-4	T-3	T-2	T-1	T	T+1							
At	T-13	T-12	T-11	T-10	T-9	T-8	T-7	T-6	T-5	T-4	T-3	T-2	T-1	T	T+1						
any given	T-13	T-12	T-11	T-10	T-9	T-8	T-7	T-6	T-5	T-4	T-3	T-2	T-1	T	T+1						
time, one officer	T-13	T-12	T-11	T-10	T-9	T-8	T-7	T-6	T-5	T-4	T-3	T-2	T-1	T	T+1						
is responsible for up	T-13	T-12	T-11	T-10	T-9	T-8	T-7	T-6	T-5	T-4	T-3	T-2	T-1	T	T+1						
to 7-8 weeks of operations	T-13	T-12	T-11	T-10	T-9	T-8	T-7	T-6	T-5	T-4	T-3	T-2	T-1	T	T+1						
Future OPS=7 WEEKS						T-13	T-12	T-11	T-10	T-9	T-8	T-7	T-6	T-5	T-4	T-3	T-2	T-1	T	T+1	
Current OPS=8WEEKS							T-13	T-12	T-11	T-10	T-9	T-8	T-7	T-6	T-5	T-4	T-3	T-2	T-1	T	T+1

Source: Created by author.

This takes into zero account everything the Commander, S3, and higher are throwing at him or her that week as well. The same goes for the assistant S3 or current operations officer for weeks T-6 thru T+1, although he or she is fighting multiple close fights with current operations and the ever-changing environment that we operate in. This is what is asked of the officers in the S3 section while not deployed.

And to think this is just the tip of the iceberg for duties and responsibilities of the S3 section while not deployed. This does not talk to the multitude of systems that they have to be or quickly become familiar with in the section. The Digital Training Management System is where all of this information along with countless other data is plugged into in order for higher to track. All of the products, briefings, reporting systems, and basic know how is overwhelming. The “how-to” for all of this is just assumed that lieutenants and captains know how to do all that is required in an S3 section.

Yes, the S3 major is in charge and training, overseeing, and executing along with the captains and lieutenants, but this is a heavy burden to bear. This thesis could go on for literally pages upon pages describing what S3 sections do in a light infantry battalion while not deployed, but just the facts from above, give the reader a glimpse into the daily grind the S3 section goes through each and every day.

The deployed environment we will use will be a CTC rotation for a brigade. Once all of the planning has been done for the event, the unit is on ground starting their reception, staging, onward movement, and integration operations. This is preceded by advance parties arriving and setting the conditions for the main body to arrive. While the balancing act is going on of getting the unit ready to train with all of its men, weapons, and equipment, the unit is starting to plan for its scenario operations.

Now timelines are crunched. Decisions are being made rapidly. Less sleep is being had by all. More is being asked of all personnel in the unit on a much tighter timeline. Good units have done tons of training up to this point to prepare and be ready for this CTC rotation, but even the best are going to struggle with what is throw at them by the CTC. In the S3 section, there seems never enough brain power, enough time, and enough manpower, or enough understanding to execute in what is actually demanded out of the unit.

The planning, battle tracking, assessing, synchronization, integration and overall decision making within the S3 section, stresses all during their respective rotation.⁶⁴ All of this is happening in some form of command post at the platoon, company, battalion, and brigade levels. We will focus on the battalion level. “The main CP is the unit’s principal CP serving as the primary location for plans, analysis, sustainment coordination, and assessment. It includes representatives of all staff sections and a full suite of information systems to plan, prepare, execute, and assess operations.”⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Department of the Army, FM 3-0, *Operations*, 2-36.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

Even if you have a seasoned staff, which most do not, this is an extremely complex and trying environment. S3 majors change out every 12 months. Captains are usually in the queue to take a command so they can range anywhere from six to twelve months usually in the S3 section. Lieutenants come and go frequently either pre platoon leader time or post platoon leader time. Noncommissioned officers have slightly more continuity sometimes, but usually are in and out as well. Further analysis of this situation will come to light in chapter 4 of this thesis in some of the other literature written on this context from the actual observers at the CTCs.

Summary

The literature review is for the reader to gain an understanding of the three basic areas of importance identified in addressing the primary question to this thesis which are certain aspects of leadership, promotions and retention, and light infantry battalion S3 section operations. Understanding the latest Army doctrine in these areas along with pertinent outside literature gives the reader a base to understand what is potentially to come in the remaining chapters. This research is important because it highlights a gap in the Army's light infantry battalion S3 section. It is believed that there is a gap at each echelon as well, but the thesis will focus on the infantry battalion level only.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this thesis is to understand if there is need for a STOPSO in a light infantry battalion S3 operations section. Analyzing this potential gap in an operations section could contribute to the enhancement of the military art and science by way of expanding and discovering ways to improve a staff. This could also help the Army improve its effectiveness when it comes to staff manning, efficiency, and overall junior officer management. In order to find a conclusion to this question, it was decided that three fields would have to be studied: (1) Army leadership, (2) promotions and retentions, and (3) light infantry battalion S3 operations sections.

This chapter is organized into three parts: (1) the selection and understanding of the methodology chosen to conduct this research, (2) the steps taken to obtain information that relates to the primary and secondary research questions, and (3) why the questions were chosen. The chapter will then be summarized and concluded. This will enable the reader to understand how the journey through this thesis was conducted enabling further clarification of the ends, ways, and means used in this thesis.

Qualitative Methodology

For this thesis, the choice was to conduct qualitative analysis. The qualitative methodology allowed the author to understand, question, and break down pertinent information in regard to the subject. This enabled the travel along the spectrums of inductive, but more so, deductive reasoning when analyzing the literature. This

methodology was chosen because it allows the reader to explore the subject areas gaining a base understanding of each.

It also enabled the author to describe the facts of the literature as well as interpret those facts and findings. These facts and findings are the current realities in these areas of studies. Understanding how the Army operates in the three subject areas empowered the author to critique current practice, draw potential conclusions, and make recommendations.

The Process

Three hundred documents were initially identified. This list was refined to 50 documents, ranging from Army doctrine to other Master of Military Art and Science theses and School of Advanced Military Studies monographs, and other pertinent studies within the field being analyzed. This helped to further categorize the data, building overall situational awareness of how the approach to writing the Master of Military Art and Science was going to be formulated.

After analyzing these documents, relationships within the data started to become apparent. The sources were considered to be suitable and relevant to the primary and secondary questions due to their credibility and relevance to the subject matters at hand. A further discussion and refinement of the primary and secondary questions with the author's committee was conducted.

A detailed mind map was created which provided a solid guide into how the qualitative research would be presented for the thesis. In the mind maps, the subcategories of the secondary questions focused the author into certain literature that could facilitate possible answers supporting the secondary questions. This gave focus to

when aligned literature created pathways to understanding. A further breakdown of thought under those categories led to more literature to support those subcategories. Within each secondary question, there were two sub-levels of categories to support potential answers to the secondary question. Thus, literature was aligned to support, like a pyramid, all of the categories that align with the main secondary question. This process was furthered assisted by utilizing the Master of Military Art and Science outline format. At this point the conducted analysis on the studied literature was started.

The Questions

The questions were chosen for several reasons. At first the author knew he wanted to study in the field of leadership. The thoughts of the author kept going in the direction of junior officers and staff as well. The author wanted to understand how a staff could gain efficiency. The author wanted to know why a permanent position was not part of staffs in general. The primary question further focused on a light infantry battalion.

The author wanted to understand the basics of Army leadership and discover potential gaps and correlations. Understanding leadership from the Army's view enabled the author to make potential correlations to the primary question. The role of leadership and the decision-making process on how junior officers are managed and what leaders can do at the battalion and brigade level to influence those decisions seemed to have gaps. Figure 6 depicts the mind mapping for this aspect of study.

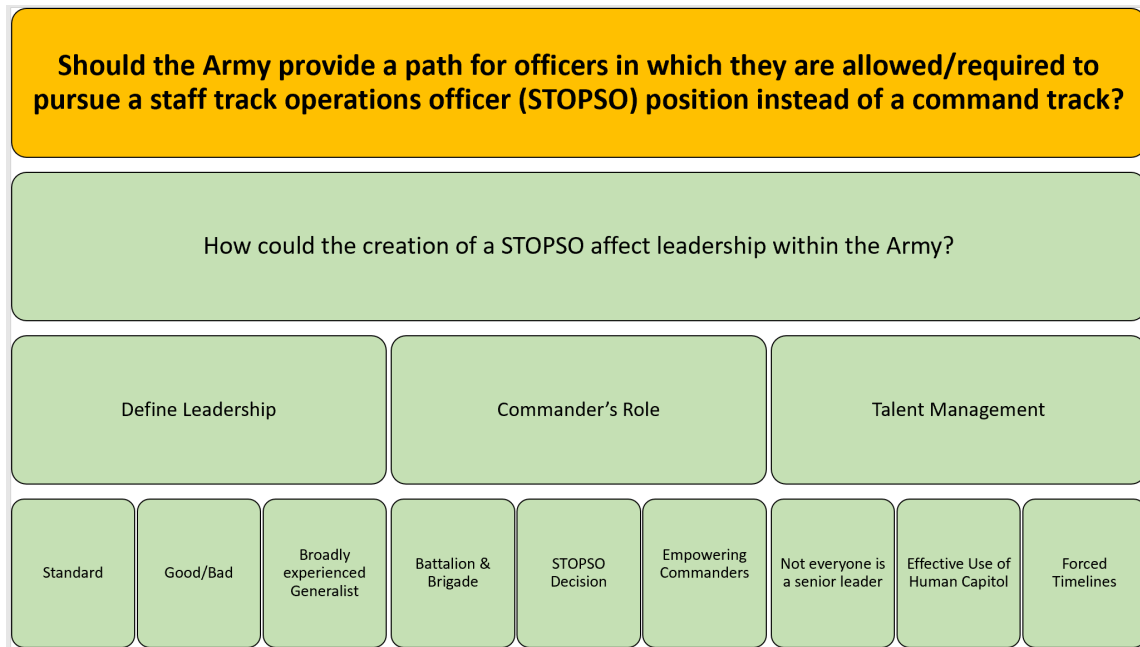


Figure 6. Leadership Mind Map

Source: Created by author.

The knowledge of promotions and retention of junior officers empowered the author to understand the basic information on how these actions were executed in accordance with Army regulations. The author also started to understand, potentially, why certain officers were leaving the force, what the Army was doing about it, and if leadership at the battalion and brigade levels were able to influence that process. Also, understanding what the Army's current vision of the process and where the Army was with that process enabled the author to potentially draw a more accurate recommendation for further action. Current policy on the matter played a big role in understanding the current operating environment with this area as well. Figure 7 depicts the mind mapping for this area of study.

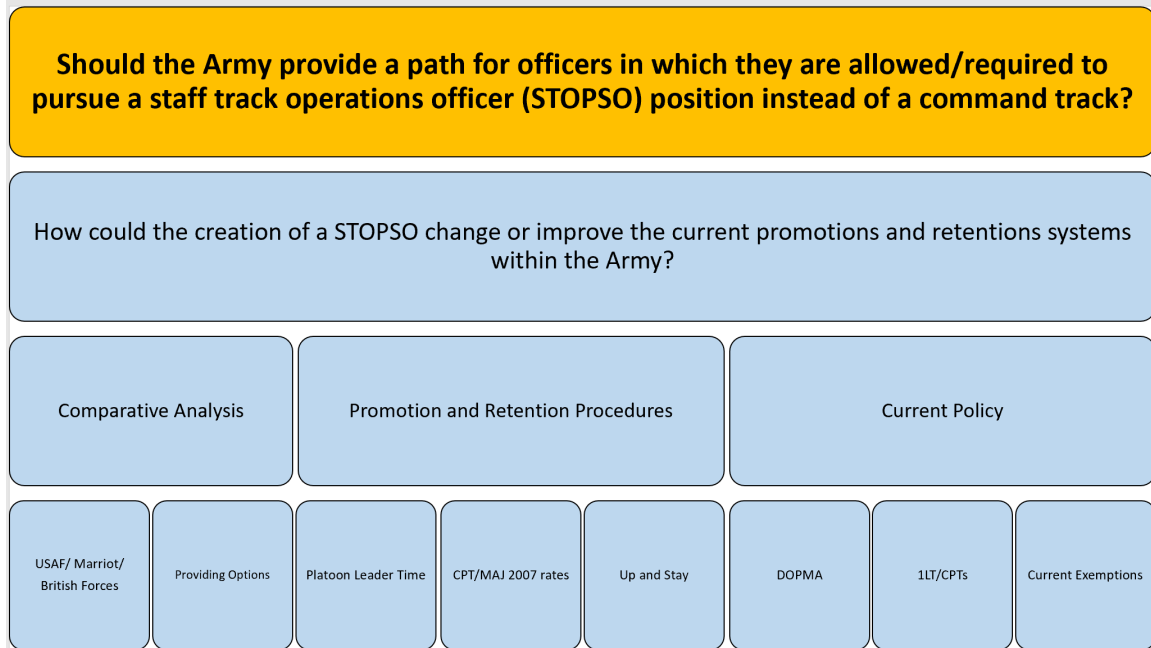


Figure 7. Promotions and Retention Mind Map

Source: Created by author.

Last, in order to fully understand the need, or the lack there of for a STOPSO at the light infantry battalion S3 operations section, the author had to fully understand the ins and outs of the S3 operations section within that organization. One aspect was how the section was manned with its officers. Another aspect was what the operations section did at home station and during deployments. This gave the author a fully vetted platform to understand the potential gaps.

By having firsthand knowledge as well as using Army doctrine to paint the picture, gaps were identified as well as where a STOPSO could or could not be useful for the Army. Figure 8 shows the mind mapping for this area studied.

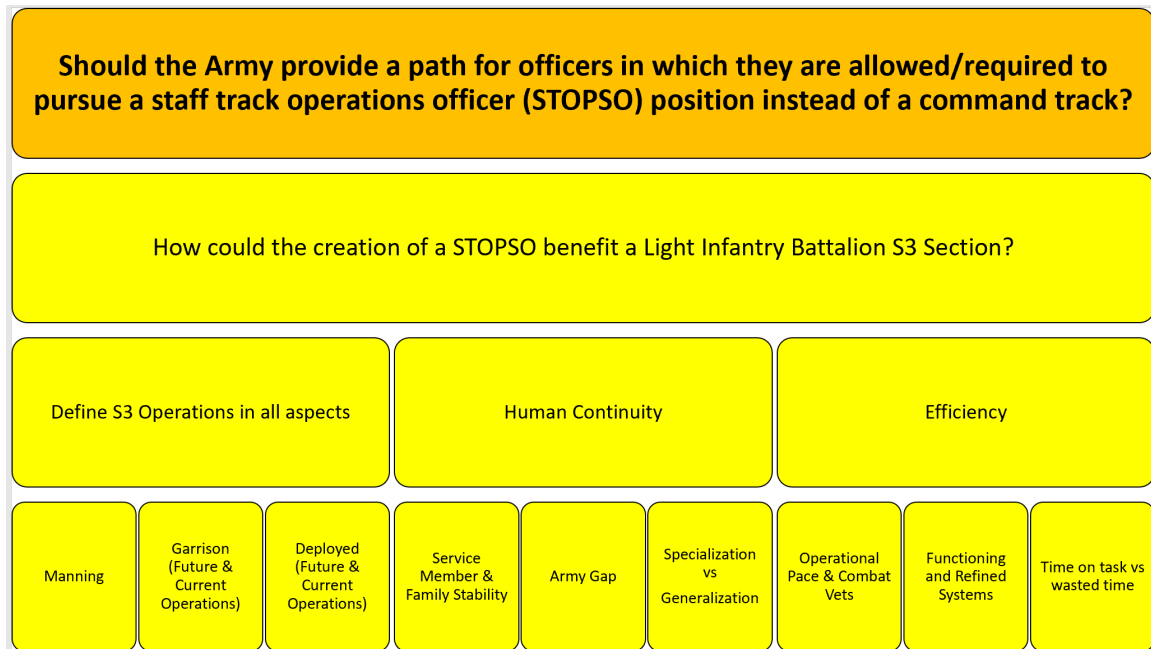


Figure 8. Light Infantry Battalion S3 Section Mind Map

Source: Created by author.

Conclusion

The qualitative methodology used enhanced the ability to conduct proper analysis. This was the best methodology for the study regarding the primary question, should the Army provide a path for officers in which they are allowed or required to pursue a STOPSO position instead of a command track. Even more focused, would it be beneficial to a light infantry battalion S3 operations section. By drawing resources from these various areas of leadership, promotions and retention, and S3 operations section, the author can now depict what his analysis was in regard to his thesis primary and secondary questions.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

The lesson for future operational commanders is that a competent staff must consistently train on the critical combat related functions that it will execute in war. Once it is trained the staff must stay together.

— Colonel Jeffrey R. Sanderson, “General George S. Patton, Jr, Master of Operational Battle Command: What Lasting Battle Command Lessons Can We Learn from Him?”

Introduction

The purpose of this research is to find out if the Army should provide a path for officers in which they are allowed or required to pursue a STOPSO position instead of a command track? The Army has 30 branches and 18 functional areas in its force.⁶⁶ Service members can conduct branch transfers as well as transfer into a functional area between their early captain to early major years (years four through ten). This flexibility gives the Army and its officers the opportunity to not only assign personnel into different branches, but to allow for talented officers to focus on a skill set within a functional area and still remain competitive for promotions. Functional areas have filled gaps within the Army’s structure in order to provide specialized skills in the areas in which they represent.

“Functional integrators effectively collaborate with all proponents to determine talent management requirements and capability gaps, then facilitate the integration of holistic DOTMLPF-P [Doctrine, Organization, Training, Material, Leadership and

⁶⁶ Department of the Army, “Smartbook DA PAM 611-21,” Chapter 3 Index, accessed April 21, 2019, <https://www.milsuite.mil/book/docs/DOC-153528>.

Education, Personnel, Facilities, and Policy] solutions to close those gaps.”⁶⁷ It was determined through research that there is a gap at the light infantry battalion S3 operations section. That gap is the need for a STOPSO. This chapter will directly discuss the three secondary questions and finish with answering the primary question.

Each answer to the questions has been drawn from the various sources covered in the literature review in their respective realms. The analysis chapter will focus on one or two of the strongest highlighted literature pieces that focus the reader on how and why the author answered the question in the manner he did.

Secondary Research Question #1

How could the creation of a STOPSO affect leadership within the Army?

This study found that the creation of a STOPSO could affect leadership within the Army in three ways: (1) it could empower battalion and brigade commanders to not only recommend but sign off on lateral movement of officers within their formation, (2) it could facilitate the decision-making process for commanders, and (3) it would lighten the heavy burden on the staff, thus gaining efficiency for the commander.

Right now, battalion and brigade commanders, more often than not, allow all lieutenants and captains to go into their respective roles as platoon leaders and company commanders. This study has concluded that this should be facilitated at the platoon leader level. There are not enough observable moments in the early career of a lieutenant by a local leader to deem them worthy or not to become a platoon leader. These rules out the

⁶⁷ Combined Arms Center, *Talent Management Concept of Operations for Force 2025 and Beyond*, 20.

possibility that a battalion or brigade commander could stop this from happening, unless there were some kind of major violation. This brings us to captains.

Captains have been evaluated. They have over four plus years in the service.

Right now, as has been previously stated in this thesis, 98 percent of all first lieutenants promoted to captain are going to command a company.⁶⁸ FM 6-22 states:

Supervising leaders should foster an attitude that leadership positions are not necessarily automatic appointments. It is a privilege, not an entitlement, to serve in a leadership position. Selections for key leadership positions require thorough consideration. Each step in the screening and selection process should narrow the field of acceptable candidates. For key leadership positions, a deliberate selection process should be followed.⁶⁹

If we are going to allow lieutenants to conduct their platoon leader time without some kind of vetting by local leaders, then that is understandable due to the lack of observable time. But if the Army continues to let 100 percent, or close to, of its captains command a company without any buy in from local commanders, then the Army is contradicting its own doctrine. Therefore, the Army should either adjust its doctrine, or actually empower the local leaders to make those trusted decisions for key leadership positions that company commanders hold.

This would do two things in regard to a STOPSO: (1) Leaders could identify that just because a captain is not worthy of command, he or she could still serve their country in a different manner such as a functional area, or, a STOPSO position. Battalion and Brigade commanders would then be empowered to make these decisions to either

⁶⁸ Human Resource Command, Human Resource Command Slide on Promotions, slide received by author from Human Resource Command, Fort Knox, KY.

⁶⁹ Department of The Army, FM 6-22, *Leader Development*, 3-30.

laterally transfer those individuals into a STOPSO position or some other functional area; (2) this would assist commanders in talent management ensuring that identified leaders are leading the Army's formations.

This study has found that creating a STOPSO position within a light battalion S3 operations section would facilitate the decision-making process for the commander.

Langston Turner talks a lot about General Depuy in his thesis, "Developing Army Leaders Through Increased Rigor In Professional Military Training and Education."

General Depuy was one of the TRADOC Commanders during the 1970s and is credited with shaping Army learning methodologies still used today.⁷⁰ In one part he talks about an old interview with General Depuy talking about his time as the G3 for training for V Corps in Europe.

I went through a little over 20 battalions each year. I watched people do it right, and I watched people do it wrong. I saw a lot more do it wrong than I saw do it right. I was struck by the fact that those who had commanded battalions in war were something like five times as good as those who hadn't. I blamed a little bit of that on Leavenworth, because the ones who hadn't commanded in war, more or less took a passive attitude, and waited for voluminous recommendations from their staff . . . Now, the guys who previously had commanded battalions, more or less made up their own minds, and the staff ran around behind them and made it work. They gave the troops plenty of time to move and to dig in, which made it a lot better.⁷¹

⁷⁰ William E. DePuy, Romie L. Brownlee, and William J. Mullen, *Changing an Army - An Oral History of General William E. DePuy, USA Retired* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Military History Institute and Washington, DC: US Army Center of Military History, 1988), quoted in Langston J. Turner, "Developing Army Leaders Through Increased Rigor In Professional Military Training and Education" (Master's Thesis, Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 2017), 14.

⁷¹ Ibid., 23.

If America is not back into a large-scale war again soon, which is a good thing, there will be fewer and fewer combat veterans as leaders in the Army. One way the Army can mitigate the loss of combat veteran officers as commanders is to give the commanders better staffs. Providing a STOPSO for each battalion will enable a faster and more responsive staff to the commander. Staffs have to train a lot together. Sometimes commanders start with brand-new staffs. There is no one there holding processes and systems all in place. This is where the STOPSO would come into play. Having that steady hand, that go to guy or gal, that human continuity, would facilitate a better decision-making process for the commander.

As discussed in chapter 2, the light infantry battalion is only made up of three designated officers for the roles of day-to-day and future operations. With the vast amounts of work that need to be done at home station and deployed, this study has found that adding a STOPSO to the equation would lessen the burden on those within the S3 section in three major ways.

First, a STOPSO would help manage systems and processes. Staffs continually are trying to codify who they are, how they operate, and what systems work and do not work for themselves and the commander. The role of the STOPSO would be a facilitator for the entire shop. The STOPSO would enable the current assigned officers. He or she would not become the de-facto S3, AS3, or any other role. They would be there to simply facilitate the section through providing that human continuity over time.

Second, the training of the staff on the military decision-making process could be done by the STOPSO. This would free up the S3 and the executive officer to conduct their business and prepare the staff for when it is time to train together. This could

potentially make more knowledgeable staff members as well as facilitate hasty understanding of the process when there are time crunches. This point is highlighted in a recent unit rotation at a CTC.

The staffs that struggle the most are those that arrive at the NTC with incomplete or untested battalion standard operating procedures. This does not facilitate effective planning. These battalion staffs work to create products rather than plans, which accounts for requirements given by higher headquarters, enemy actions, light and weather effects, operational/logistical requirements, and planning steps.⁷²

Another example from a CTC rotation is the one depicted next. Although it talks about an S4 shop, it clearly shows if a unit does not have an experienced or well-trained staff, they will suffer.

Often, the 1LT in the battalion S-4 slot is in his first staff position, is inexperienced in the military decision-making process, and does not understand the fundamentals of sustainment. This drives the maneuver battalion CDR directly to the FSC [Forward Support Company] CDR, who is the senior and most experienced logistician in the task force, which often marginalizes the effectiveness of the battalion S-4. This creates risk in sustainment execution by shifting staff duties to a CDR. The FSC CDR should focus on commanding the FSC and executing the support mission.⁷³

If a STOPSO were in position for this unit they could have potentially saw the weak link in the staff member, focused in on that S4's duties and responsibilities, and trained them up on time in order to free up the Forward Support Company CDR.

⁷² E. Jerome Hilliard, Steven W. Krippel, and Adam J. Moore, "Strategies for Effective Time Management During the Planning Process," in *Decisive Action Training Environment at the National Training Center, Volume IV*, ed. Center for Army Lessons Learned (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Center for Army Lessons Learned, 2016), 27.

⁷³ Brent Coryell and Christopher Devenport, "The Optimal Employment of the Forward Support Company in Decisive Action," in *Decisive Action Training Environment at the National Training Center, Volume IV*, ed. Center for Army Lessons Learned (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Center for Army Lessons Learned, 2016), 71.

By answering this question of how leadership would be affected by a STOPSO position, the author found that it would not only benefit commanders but benefit the units as well. It would empower commanders to make on the spot decisions about personnel. It would enhance the commander's decision-making processes. It would lighten the load carried by so many staffs out in the force, thus gaining efficiency for the commander.

Secondary Research Question #2

How could the creation of a STOPSO change or improve the current promotions and retention systems within the Armed forces?

This study found that the creation of a STOPSO could change or improve the current promotions and retention systems within the Army in three main ways. First, the Army would have to change the up or out policy. The policy could once again remain as the overarching policy for the force but would have to establish a major exemption for the STOPSO position. Second, the creation of a STOPSO position would provide officers with more career options, thus potentially retaining more quality officers. Third, it could possibly provide better duty assignment selection for officers as well as family stability that so many officers seek.⁷⁴

As discussed in chapter 2, the Army's main process for promotions is the up or out method that was born in the early 1900s.⁷⁵ This process has morphed overtime, but the overarching premises remains the same.

The military promotion system is also based on the principle of "up or out." Unlike the vast majority of workers in the private sector, military personnel are not permitted to stay in the same job or rank year after year—even if the position

⁷⁴ Riley et al., "2010 Center for Army Leadership Annual Survey of Army Leadership (CASAL)," 25.

⁷⁵ Linn, "Officer Development," 9.

may be one for which they are perfectly suited, by skill or disposition. They must continually compete for promotion and be selected for advancement in order to stay in the military.⁷⁶

The Army does grant exemptions to this policy, but these exemptions are just that, not the norm. In order to potentially gain that human continuity, the up or out system has to make another major exemption for STOPSOs. One area where the Army could test this new policy almost immediately, and where it would potentially pay great dividends would be in the Foreign Affairs Officer (FAO) career field.

Foreign Area Officers (FAOs) provide the Army with a unique combination of regional expertise, political knowledge, language skills, and military skills. The proposed FAO program would eliminate up-or-out across the entire community of about 1,000 officers. Officers would be promoted as needed, and continuation in the program would depend on continued employability tied to performance. A FAO beyond retirement eligibility could remain on active duty if a user agency commits to employing him or her; otherwise, the individual would be separated or retired. With continued employment commitments, the program would allow FAOs to serve up to the statutory retirement age, regardless of grade. The FAO community is an ideal test case for an up-or-stay demonstration project for several reasons. First, it has high mid-career training costs, which means longer careers provide a greater return on investment. Second, FAO expertise is hard to replace because it comes from people skills, tacit knowledge, and personal networks developed over time. Finally, extending the length of employment would give the FAO community the opportunity to explore different ways of managing officers' careers.⁷⁷

This parallels the idea of the recommendation of establishing human continuity within the S3 section.

⁷⁶ David Barno and Nora Bensahel, "Can the U.S. Military Halt Its Brain Drain?" *Atlantic*, November 5, 2015, accessed April 28, 2019, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/11/us-military-tries-halt-brain-drain/413965/>.

⁷⁷ RAND National Defense Research Institute, "Creating New Career Options for officers in the U.S. Military," 1-2.

Whether the STOPSO position was established for personnel coming into the Army or if it is a position that personnel can transfer into, regardless, it presents another option to officers. Retaining quality officers is the goal for the Army. This is just another way to prevent talented officers from leaving the force. “Reducing first term early attrition from 41% to 31% could save more than \$262M”⁷⁸ Providing more options and creating a STOPSO position could help in saving up to 262 million dollars.

Last issue is duty assignment and family stability. Creating a STOPSO position could help retain quality officers if officers had more predictability of where they and their families were stationed next or if they knew that they could be at one duty station for a longer time than is currently experienced by most officers. “Spouses of military personnel, especially officers, now often have careers of their own, and the military’s moving turbulence often makes such normal two career pursuits utterly unsustainable.”⁷⁹

Answering the question of how a STOPSO position would change or improve the current promotion and retention system showed three ways in which it might just do that. Current promotion and retention policies would have to change in some fashion or another. Officers would be exposed to more career options thus, the potential for more retainability of quality officers could potentially rise. Last, the creation of a STOPSO position could provide more assignment and location stability for officers and their families. Therefore, the Army would again, potentially be retaining more of its quality officers.

⁷⁸ Combined Arms Center, *Talent Management Concept of Operations for Force 2025 and Beyond*, 8.

⁷⁹ Barno and Bensahel, “Can the U.S. Military Halt Its Brain Drain?”

Secondary Research Question #3
How would the creation of a STOPSO benefit a
Light Infantry Battalion S3 Section?

This study found that the creation of a STOPSO could benefit a light infantry battalion S3 section in three main ways: (1) it would provide human continuity in a staff that constantly sees turnover within its ranks, (2) creating a STOPSO position would provide specialization to the commander when he or she needs it during operations, and (3) it would improve overall efficiency when needed the most.

Army officers rarely stay in a given position for more than a year or two. Every command at each echelon is usually set for up to two years. When an officer is a staff officer on a battalion staff, especially in an S3 section in a light infantry battalion, their time can range usually from six to twelve months. There are some officers that stay longer on those staffs. That being said, where is the continuity in that as an organization?

There is none. The closest thing you might get, if you are lucky, is a Tactical Standard Operating Procedure. Maybe a good left seat, right seat ride with your predecessor, but no true human continuity. Barno and Bensahel talk about this lack of continuity in their look into whether the Army has the ability to slow, what they call, the brain drain from the Army.

Perhaps the most damaging effect of this incessant turbulence is a continuous loss of continuity and expertise in key jobs. Even at the most senior ranks of general and admirals, jobs are often held for two years or less. It is viewed simply as the cost of doing business in a military still wedded to a Cold War personnel system of interchangeable parts.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ Barno and Bensahel, “Can the U.S. Military Halt Its Brain Drain?”

Creating a STOPSO for a light infantry battalion S3 section would finally establish the human continuity so needed in that section. Commanders are all going to add their own flavor to whatever formation they lead. What they do not have at the battalion level, is the organizational human continuity that is desperately needed. Having a STOPSO would create that organizational overlap in multiple aspects.

1. The STOPSO would understand the history and intricacies the unit better than all others. They would have that base knowledge of the unit's history and be able to help facilitate leverage for an S3 or commander when needed. They would understand the traditions of that unit and be able to advise the S3 and commander on historical atmospherics.
2. The knowledge management of the unit's information would now have an owner. The STOPSO would know where all aspects of the unit's operations and such could be found and how to properly and timely access those documents. No one would need to be trained up on this facet of operations, now it would be inherent in the job title.
3. The products and systems that would be established and in place would only need refinement based upon Commander's Intent. Staffs would not have to start from scratch and could assimilate a lot quicker with a subject matter expert enabling their actions within the S3 section. A lot of staffs' struggles are by building products that take more time away from actually planning and executing operations.

Another aspect the STOPSO would contribute to the improvement of the S3 section would be that they would finally provide specialization to a commander. So many

officers bounce from job to job. Now a commander would potentially have someone that has been in the position up to four years or so. This specialization not only is beneficial to the commander, but also the entire staff. This would provide a sounding board for so many on the staff.

The Army, as a whole, struggles with its generalist approach to raising its officers. One study by Arthur Coumbe looked at just that and gave an example. One officer told of the challenges faced by senior military officers in the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel (DCSPER) in the early 1960s. He told of the situation he encountered when he was assigned to that office. “Of the twenty-odd division chiefs in the office of the DCSPER,” he wrote;

only five or six had prior experience in personnel work. Yet, these officers occupied positions where they were required to review and defend a wide variety of complicated personnel directives and legislation. While possessing outstanding general background and intelligence, they were no match for the expert questioners in the Department of Defense, Bureau of the Budget and Congress. This is where the Army loses its shirt. In short, when one is faced with an expert, intuition and general background are not substitutes for knowledge.⁸¹

The generalist versus specialist argument shows its colors all the way up to generals as depicted in the piece above. Providing a specialist at the battalion level is a step in the right direction not only for the staff’s sake, but an invaluable asset to the commander.

Efficiency is what staffs work towards, not having to waste time and effort on things that should not garner such effort. All units train. It is what they do, not something they do. They are training to get better at the task they train for. The author has found

⁸¹ George W. Putnam, Jr., “Generalization versus Specialization in the US Army Officer Corps, Individual Study Paper” (Carlisle PA: US Army War College, 27 June, 1960 quoted in Coumbe, “Army Officer Employment,” 7.

through research that an S3 section could gain efficiency through the establishment of a STOPSO position.

A STOPSO would streamline efforts. Once again, it is not to take over the S3 or Assistant S3's job, but it is to empower them and help facilitate synching of operations across the battalion. This would be a huge help in garrison operations. The ability to have that subject matter expert for the installation would enhance planning for training as well as facilitating it as well.

All of that garrison's training comes into play when a unit either deploys to a real-world scenario or to a CTC. Whether it is to a combat zone or a CTC, gained efficiency would better the unit as a whole. "Observations derived from deployed units, as well as from trainers at Combat Training Centers (CTCs) over the past decade, indicate a significant loss of unit ability to conduct a detailed MDMP. This lack of planning expertise results in de-synchronized operations and could ultimately cost the lives of Soldiers."⁸² This is where the STOPSO come into play. The ability to train the staff and execute in a more rapid manner strengthens the unit's ability to gain the efficiency all units strive for during operations.

Primary Research Question

Should the Army provide a path for officers in which they are allowed or required to pursue a STOPSO position instead of a command track?

By answering the above secondary questions, it has been determined that the answer to the primary question: Should the Army provide a path for officers in which

⁸² Paul Reese, CALL Handbook, *MDMP: Lessons and Best Practices* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Center for Army Lessons Learned, 2015), iii.

they are allowed or required to pursue a STOPSO position instead of a command track, is a resounding yes. The author's research and analysis has concluded that the positives outweigh the negatives. By evidence displayed in Chapter 2, Literature Review, as well as the above detailed answers to the secondary questions, there should be further research into this area of study by future Master of Military Art and Science students.

Conclusion

The analysis conducted in this chapter revolved mainly around answering the secondary questions:

1. How could the creation of a STOPSO affect leadership within the Army?
2. How would the creation of a STOPSO change or improve the current promotions and retentions systems within the Army?
3. How could the creation of a STOPSO benefit a light infantry battalion S3 section?

Once the secondary questions were answered, it was determined that the answer to the primary questions was made clear. The Army should provide a path for officers in which they are allowed or required to pursue a STOPSO position instead of a command track. The recommendations how the Army goes about that process will be covered in chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The basis for this study is to answer the primary questions: should the Army provide a path for officers in which they are allowed or required to pursue a STOPSO position instead of a command track? In the analysis portion of this study, in chapter 4, all of the secondary questions were answered, thus, allowing the primary question to be answered. There are four overarching conclusions to this thesis.

1. Adding a STOPSO position could affect leaders in potentially three main ways as expanded upon in chapters 2 and 4: (1) commanders would potentially be given the ability to make personnel decisions at the lower levels directly affecting talent management within their organizations; (2) battalion commanders would have a staff that is trained with more proficiency, therefore enabling a better more responsive military decision-making process in garrison and in deployed environments; and (3) battalion commanders would gain efficiency through the lightening of the burden placed on the staff. This would facilitate a highly functioning staff enabled to perform its duties more efficiently for the commander.
2. Adding a STOPSO position could affect the way the Army promotes and retains its officers in potentially three main ways as expanded upon in chapters 2 and 4: (1) the up or our policy would have to be adapted to facilitate a STOPSO, (2) the creation of a STOPSO would create career options whether it be for an officer coming into the Army or an officer transitioning over to be a

STOPSO, potentially retaining those quality officers the Army desires to retain, and (3) the addition of a STOPSO could provide an officer and his or her family with more stability.

3. The creation of a STOPSO position could benefit a light infantry battalion S3 section in three main ways as expanded upon in chapters 2 and 4: (1) with the constant turnover of officers within the S3 section, adding a STOPSO would provide human continuity within that section, (2) adding a STOPSO would create a specialized understanding of that section enabling the commander and personnel within the S3 section to focus more on their duties, rather than the products, systems and training that take up a lot of their time, and (3) it would improve the overall efficiency of the section by having that person's experience to draw upon during all facets of operations.
4. The Army should create a STOPSO position. The literature review in chapter 2 gives plenty of examples to reaffirm this position. The same could be said for chapter 4. Further analysis was displayed in that chapter as well. Therefore, it is the author's belief from this study that the Army would benefit greatly by adding human continuity, a STOPSO, to the light infantry battalion's S3 section.

The four overarching conclusions the author came to are the pillars to this study. There is much more data analysis and collection that needs to be done with the creation of a STOPSO position. The following section will now dive into what are the recommended solutions for this subject of study as well as what future studies could be done to advance the conclusion that the Army would benefit from creating a STOPSO.

Recommendations

There are four recommendations based on time frames and future studies. The first recommendation is based on short-term solutions that will cover a zero to two years' time frame. The second will cover the mid-term solutions time frame from two to four years. Third, will cover the long-term solutions covering the four to six-year time period. The time periods were chosen based on the assumed time period it could possibly take to implement the changes within each timeframe. The last recommendations will focus on future studies that can be done in regard to creating a STOPSO position. The line of thoughts for each are depicted in figure 9 and are the last of the mind maps from the reference to the author's primary thesis question.

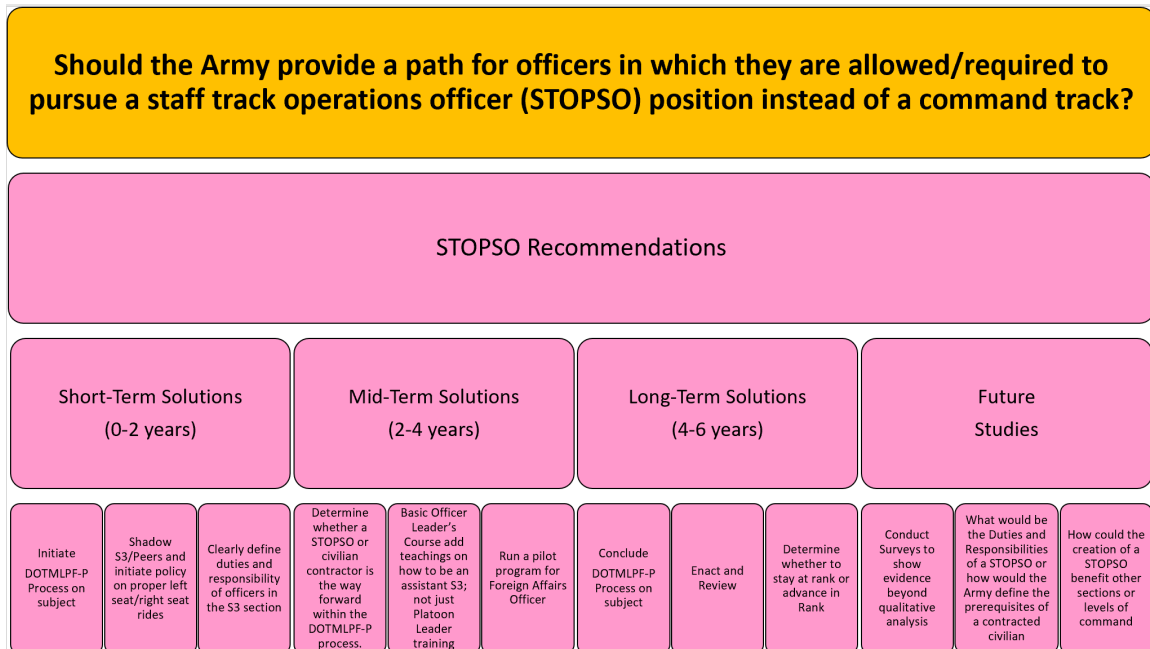


Figure 9. STOPSO Recommendations Mind Map

Source: Created by author.

Short-Term Solutions

The short-term solutions are comprised of three recommendations that could be executed or started within the zero to two years: (1) To initiate the DOTMLPF-P analysis process; (2) Institute a shadow program and or to codify left seat right seat rides in the Army. This phrase refers to the actions taken during a period of transition between two personnel or entities. For example, if a new commander is taking over an area of responsibility in a forward deployed area, the time period in which they are doing their transition is called a left seat right seat ride. At first the current commander of that area of responsibility is in the driver seat (left seat) and showing the incoming commander the lay of the land per say. After that is done the current commander transitions to observing the new commander taking charge (right seat). Thus, they have switched seats from driver to rider and vice versa; and (3) Clearly define duties and responsibilities of the Army's officers.

There are many avenues to take in regard to how the army conducts its capability development. One of those roads is DOTMLPF-P analysis process. Without getting into the vast dynamics of how that happens, what needs to be understood is that this process takes time and analysis. This is one of the most official ways to identifying a needs gap and conducting the required analysis to come to the end state of an STOPSO. There are second, third, fourth etc. order effects to implement such a bold idea. Anytime a new position is created in the Army it has an official process that it needs to undertake. Starting this process would enable not only potential short-term or mid-term results, but potentially long-term solutions as well.

Another short-term solution is twofold. One would be to initiate a shadow program for lieutenants and another in the same breath, would be to codify the left seat right seat policy for the Army. Research has shown that Soldiers value development from their leaders and peers. In the *2010 Center for Army Leadership Annual Survey of Army Leadership*, one of the main findings found that leaders find value in learning from their leaders and peers.⁸³

Other indicators of development suggest that leaders value learning from their superiors as well as their peers through informal methods:

- 64% of Army leaders rate ‘earning from my superiors (e.g., observing, job shadowing, receiving feedback)’ as having had a large or great positive impact on their development (21% believe this has had a moderate impact).
- 70% rate ‘learning from my peers (e.g., observing, collaborating, receiving feedback)’ as having had a large or great positive impact on their development (22% believe this has had a moderate impact).⁸⁴

If the Army does not move to a STOPSO position quickly, in the meantime they can enhance officers with the ability to shadow personnel in those positions that they will be taking over jobs for and even might enhance their capabilities once they arrive in that position. As previously stated, this is a positive way of learning and could pay dividends for the officer taking over a certain job within the S3 section.

Along that same line is the coveted left seat right seat ride of the Army. A lot of time in the Army, officers are not fortunate enough to have this happen with the jobs that they are thrust into. Once again, there are second and third order effects to mandating and or codifying such a policy that would ensure a proper left seat right seat ride within the

⁸³ Riley et al., “2010 Center for Army Leadership Annual Survey of Army Leadership (CASAL),” 49.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

S3 section. Although more research into these effects would need to be done, the power of having a few weeks to observe an individual within the S3 section on how he or she does what the officer is about to do is invaluable and would be value added in this area.

Last would be a full understanding by officers of what they are getting into when they go off to their first unit or transferring into the S3 section. A small read ahead of the duties and responsibilities of the position that they are going to take over would help paint the picture and facilitate success potentially, upon arrival. This might happen in certain units, but across the Army it is vaguely built into the position in which lieutenants and captains find themselves.

Mid-Term Solutions

This timeframe of solutions covers from two to four years. There are three main recommendations for this time period: (1) would be in-line with the previous stated solution in regard to DOTMLPF-P to determine whether a STOPSO or civilian contractor would be the best way forward, (2) would be to add training on how to function as an officer within an S3 section prior to arriving at your first unit, and (3) would be to run a pilot program with FAOs.

If the STOPSO is not the answer, then the Army should entertain a civilian contractor as the human continuity within the S3 section. The reason why this is put in the mid-term solutions is that this would probably be brought up during the DOTMLPF-P analysis process. This could be a decision point for the Army for approaching this gap down a different path. Instead of a STOPSO, the Army could start to study if a qualified civilian contractor could fill the gap identified.

Next the author would recommend that at Basic Officer Leader Courses, lieutenants start to understand what it takes to succeed in the S3 section as a lieutenant or a future captain. A lot of the focus is how to be a good platoon leader, and rightfully so. The point is that expectations of officers, especially infantry officers, is not properly managed at that level. As depicted in figure 10, the Army has some wide-ranging capabilities for infantry officers reporting to their first unit. In some cases, unrealistic capabilities are noted, i.e. free fall as one of the relevant certifications.⁸⁵ Some of these capabilities do not properly prepare lieutenants to go to their first unit. At some point, these new lieutenants will find themselves operating in an S3 section with tasks they are unfamiliar with executing.

⁸⁵ Colarusso et al., “Starting Strong,” 53.



Infantry



Year Group 2016

INTELLIGENCES: Bodily-Kinesthetic, Interpersonal, Spatial

SKILLS: Infantry Officers must be able to operate in some of the most politically, economically, and environmentally adverse situations while at different threat levels. In order to operate in such environments, Infantry Officers must possess the highest levels of mental toughness, problem solving ability, and physical fitness. Using creativity and sound judgment, they must have the ability to devise and prioritize solution sets rapidly, motivate and employ Soldiers, and have an innate ability to adapt to fluid situations when facing any enemy across the entire threat spectrum. Additionally, Infantry Officers must have the ability to discriminate an action out of the norm and respond with the appropriate level of action. They must also demonstrate consistent command of these skills over extended periods of time.

KNOWLEDGE: The Infantry branch desires officers with academic backgrounds that span the entire spectrum of disciplines and majors offered at our nation's undergraduate institutions. Broad individual experiences contribute to the success of the branch.

➤ **RELEVANT TRAINING / EXPERIENCE:** Leadership role in athletics / student government; Cadet Troop Leading Time / Leader Development Time (CTLT / CLDT) with Infantry units. Overseas Academic Enrichment Program. Prior enlisted service in a Maneuver Branch. Contact Sports / Ecothon / Ultra Marathon Competitor; Coaching / Mentoring Experience (not all inclusive).

➤ **RELEVANT CERTIFICATIONS / ACCREDITATIONS:** EMT / First Responder Training; Cross Fit Instructor; PADI Cert; Free Fall; highest level of scouting (not all inclusive).

BEHAVIORS: (In addition to foundational)

- | | | | |
|-------------|---------------------|--------------|--------------------|
| ➤ ADAPTABLE | ➤ DISCIPLINED | ➤ HONORABLE | ➤ MENTALLY AGILE |
| ➤ ASSERTIVE | ➤ DUTIFUL | ➤ INNOVATIVE | ➤ PERSONAL COURAGE |
| ➤ CONFIDENT | ➤ ETHICAL / MORAL | ➤ INTEGRITY | ➤ RESPECTFUL |
| ➤ DILIGENT | ➤ FIT (PHYS / MENT) | ➤ LOYAL | ➤ SELFLESS SERVICE |

TALENT PRIORITIES:

1. **MENTALLY TOUGH:** Stress tolerant and emotionally mature. Performs well even under extreme psychological duress.
2. **PROBLEM SOLVER:** Able to choose between best practices and unorthodox approaches to reach a solution. Accomplishes the task.
3. **PHYSICALLY FIT:** Physically tough, gritty, and tenacious. Performs well even under extreme physiological duress. Committed to a lifestyle of physical fitness.
4. **INNOVATIVE:** Creative, inquisitive, and insightful. Easily identifies new solutions and catalyzes change.
5. **MULTI-TASKER:** Rapidly processes and prioritizes multiple demands simultaneously. Takes appropriate action.
6. **BODILY-KINESTHETIC:** Coordinated, dexterous, hands-on person. Keen sense of body and sensory awareness. Learns through physical activity.

Figure 10. Normative Baseline for Infantry Officers

Source: Michael J. Colarusso, Kenneth G. Heckel, David S. Lyle, and William L. Skimmyhorn, “Starting Strong: Talent-Based Branching of Newly Commissioned U.S. Army Officers” (Officer Corps Strategy Monograph Series, Volume 9, US Army War College, Carlisle, PA, 2016), 53.

Last would be the pilot program of a FAO. As stated in chapter 4, this would be the easiest way to demonstrate a case study in support of a STOPSO in regard to specialization of an officer. Geographical commanders lose valuable relationships built by FAOS when they move them. They lose that specialization that the FAO built in that area of operations. This directly correlates to the loss of human continuity that happens all of the time in the S3 sections in light infantry battalions. The understanding that

specialization is needed and should be valued would help the promotion of the STOPSO position.

Long-Term Solutions

This time period covers the four to six-year time period. There are three main recommendations for this time period: (1) by this time, the conclusion of the previous four years of the findings could start to shape a STOPSO position from the in-depth analysis during the DOTMLPF-P analysis process, (2) the enactment and review of those findings could be going into effect, and (3) would be the understanding of the new policies and procedures for whether STOPSOs would have the opportunity to continue to advance in rank or stay the same rank and advance in pay.

The first recommendation is that the DOTMLPF-P analysis process be completed in whole, understanding that it could take up to six years if it is a deliberate process. This is not a new recommendation in this category, but the author recognizes that it could take this long for the results of the analysis to come back during this time frame. At this time the new position would be enacted, and further review and analysis would be conducted. The recommendation for this aspect is that the position is further analyzed for its positive or negative contributions to the S3 section at the light infantry battalion level of command.

Another possible determination during this time period of analysis could be whether or not a STOPSO maintains their rank of a lieutenant or captain on that staff or advances in rank. They could remain at the rank of captain and remain at the battalion level for the remainder of their career only advancing in smaller increments of pay, rather than the larger increments of pay other officers would be experiencing. The advantage to

that would be stabilization at that duty assignment and becoming a highly specialized individual for that unit.

The recommendation is that the STOPSO advance in rank as he progresses at echelon. Talking about the use of the STOPSO outside the light infantry battalion was one of the limitations to this study. The only branch the author would like to address is the recommendation to advance in rank as the STOPSO moves up among staffs at echelon. The recommended progression of a STOPSO is as follows:

1. Lieutenants or captains work at the battalion level S3 sections and either come directly into the Army trained (a new Basic Officer Leader Course for STOPSOs) in the ways of the S3 section, or transfer over as a lieutenant or captain. These STOPSOs spend their entire time at the duty station assigned until they are promoted to the next rank.
2. The Army provides a school for newly promoted captains that focus on S3 section at battalion or brigade levels.
3. Newly promoted majors, in addition to Command and General Staff College attendance, attend a school on the S3 section at brigade and division levels. After that school, they are assigned to a brigade or division staff where they spend the entire time they are a major at that assigned duty station until they are promoted to lieutenant colonel.
4. Newly promoted lieutenant colonels are sent to a school to be able to operate at the division or corps level. They spend their entire time as a lieutenant colonel at their assigned duty station either working at the division or corps level.

5. Last, once promoted to full bird colonel, that colonel will be assigned to a corps or Army level G3 sections.

Future Studies

Future studies could discuss all of the additional research to further advance the STOPSO position. There are three main areas in which future studies could contribute to a further understanding of this proposed human continuity gap in the S3 section:

(1) conduct surveys to show evidence beyond qualitative analysis conducted in this thesis, (2) define the duties and responsibilities of a STOPSO or the prerequisites needed of a contracted civilian that would provide that human continuity within the S3 section of a light infantry battalion, and (3) area for future study would be how the creation of a STOPSO position could benefit by creating the same position at other levels of command, or even within other sections of the staff.

One event not conducted in this study was a survey. The recommended survey would be given to battalion commanders in a light infantry battalion. One would have to identify all light infantry battalions in the Army and then email such survey. There are many different surveys one could create to produce data to confirm or deny the need for a STOPSO, but it is believed that this would provide for a good starting point in further research on the subject.

Another method to conduct future studies on the proposed creation of a STOPSO would be to further understand what the duties and responsibilities of such a position would have in the S3 section. The author believes that the S3 Major remains in charge, and the AS3 remains second in charge of the section. The role of the STOPSO is to advise the AS3, S3, and Commander and to teach coach and mentor those around him or

her in the section. That is the defining role, but still unanswered are the duties and responsibilities of such a position.

Last would be the research into how this newly created position could benefit other sections within a staff as well as the potential benefit that a STOPSO could provide at echelon. Each section within the staff could potentially benefit greatly. The same goes with at echelon. To have that specialization during brigade or division operations could prove to be extremely valuable.

Final Thoughts

In closing the author would like to talk to a quote from FM 6-0 that states, “As creative thinkers, staff officers look at different options to solve problems. They use adaptive approaches (drawing from previous similar circumstances) or innovative approaches (coming up with completely new ideas). In both instances, staff officers use creative thinking to apply imagination and depart from the old way of doing things.”⁸⁶ The Army cannot always do things the old way. It must strive for innovation to better itself on a daily basis and not get caught up in the bureaucratic red tape that seems to constantly engulf itself in, stifling advancement of ideas.

The primary question first asked was, should the Army provide a path for officers in which they are allowed or required to pursue a STOPSO position instead of a command track. It absolutely should. Although it goes against the old way of doing things, and does not fit into the current model, this thesis has hopefully shown, how it could benefit a light infantry battalion S3 section. Not only would it help in all of the

⁸⁶ Department of the Army, ADRP 6-0, *Mission Command*, 2-3.

facets discussed in this thesis, but ultimately help the commander and his or her formation close with and kill the enemies of the United States of America.

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