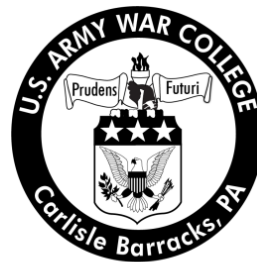


The Adjutant General's Corps as a Profession of Arms

by

Colonel Robert W. Bennett
United States Army



United States Army War College
Class of 2012

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In October of 2010, the Commander, Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) declared the Army a Profession of Arms after 10 years of what he termed, persistent conflict. General Martin E. Dempsey charged each Soldier to understand and draw upon the roots of the Army's history, and relate the past to its current profession, culture, ethic and experience to shape the future. This paper discusses the depth of the Adjutant General (AG) Corps as a Profession of Arms; the Corps' contribution to the Army Profession over time and how the Corps handles the challenges of persistent conflict today. It offers enhancements for the future of the Corps' members as Warfighters and Human Resource professionals, serving Army manpower at its best.

THE ADJUTANT GENERAL'S CORPS AS A PROFESSION OF ARMS

Sergeant Will Bury kissed his wife's cheek, brushing away her cuffed hair. Their son, Danny, tugged at his daddy's camouflaged pant-leg and stared at his tightly cinched bootstraps, without a word....this time. A whimper was all the grieving seven year old had left to match his tears. The day had come again, another trip to Andrews Air Force base to watch the Soldiers of 392nd Special Troops Battalion depart for Kabul, Afghanistan. Will's service this particular day marked the start of his fourth deployment to the theater in six years.

Specialist Miguel Enrique Rodriguez, native of Mexico and American citizen for a little over 5 years, arrived at the departure zone with one friend from the Community YMCA, a club he had volunteered at for the last 8 months. Miguel, like many single Soldiers around his age of 25, found worth and value extending himself beyond the unit's garrison social circle. Driven by a curious need to positively influence others, and a history of behavior that supports it, his motivation to join and remain in the Service mirrored that of many of his single, young adult, uniformed comrades.

Private First Class Ben Harris hugged his mother for the very last time before he escaped her clenched fingers wrapped around his collar. She begged him to be safe and write as much as he could, and reminded him, again, that she loved him. While he clearly saw her fear and anxiety over his first trip overseas, he also knew she had more pride for his courageous act of enlistment, than she had for so many others she had ever known. Despite the obvious threats of repeated overseas assignments in increasingly dangerous areas, Ben followed in the servicing footsteps of his father, Master Sergeant (Retired) Rodney Harris. A decorated war veteran of four years and

recipient of the Silver Star during the 1968 Tet Offensive in the Vietnam War, Ben's dad had echoed the voices of many when he urged his son to join the ranks of our Nation's honored forefathers. After his father's death, and with the strength of his mother's blessing, Ben raised his right hand and recited the oath that has united men and woman in service and sacrifice for over 200 years. As Ben took that last step onto the C17, he looked back to witness the graceful elegance of his experienced mom, and the jolting gratitude and inspiring hope of so many others. With somber half-lit smiles and American flags waving in the air, everyone present shared a sacred investment; a victory led by sequenced, stationed, unwavering resolve defined by U.S. Constitution, "for the people, by the people."

Captain Jessica Martin took command of the battalion's postal company during the height of its glory one year after returning from deployment, accepting the Meritorious Unit Citation for the company's performance two years prior in Operation Iraqi Freedom. Both Sergeant Bury and Specialist Rodriguez were proud participants of that previous, not so distant deployment attesting to the unit's exemplary service under grueling circumstances and conditions in theater. During the ceremony, they recalled the strenuous and austere duties as the citation, read allowed in the presence of God and Country, revisited the performance of their many comrades; that which made them all proudly deserving of such great recognition.

For extremely meritorious achievement while participating in Operation Iraqi Freedom providing timely postal services in a combat environment greatly contributing to the high morale and combat readiness of the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines assigned and attached to Multi-National Forces - Iraq. With a shortage of personnel and equipment, the postal company operated from three separate support bases covering a distance of over 800 kilometers and found innovative methods to

overcome all challenges resulting in an unparalleled level of postal service – the most critical AG wartime function.¹

What was not stated in the citation was the loss of four Soldiers due to two separate Improvised Explosive Device (IED) strikes during a postal mission. Captain Martin's predecessor, Captain Dillon admitted that his most difficult task included writing his personal letter of condolence to each next-of-kin describing the circumstances and conditions surrounding the death of their son or daughter. While recalling the truth leading up to the ultimate sacrifice was extremely difficult and painful, the care and compassion he exemplified in sharing that truth and honorable service and sacrifice with each loved one of each Soldier was not. Just as the American people expect and deserve, the Army Profession demands **trust** above all – a trust built upon essential characteristics of honorable service, military expertise, Espirit de Corps, and stewardship. Grounded in the moral and legal foundation of American values, the Constitution and Statutes, and ethics honeyed to each, Soldiers are obligated **and honored** to offer no less.²

While the familiarity of another daunting and risk-filled departure to South Asia brought different eyes to life for Sergeant Bury, Specialist Rodriguez, Private Harris, and Captain Martin, these four postal professionals' hearts remained united by a gripping and sacred identity: professionalism uniquely created and precisely groomed toward the greater, strategic contribution of the United States Army – the collaborative success of human expertise and high moral obligation designed to preserve peace, and protect and secure life in a seemingly over powering and vastly diverse multinational environment.

The United States Army is America's sons and daughters, men and women of courage and character, and leaders of consequence - bonded

together in a profession of Arms - organized, trained, and equipped to be the most decisive land force in the world. We are a clear symbol of national resolve and commitment. From start to finish, in the lead or in support, we remain ready to shape, influence, engage, deter, and prevail.³

Sergeant Bury, Specialist Rodriguez, Private Harris, and Captain Martin are of one family – the Army family. That family’s profession upholds tradition, lineage and honors, and a legacy of service and sacrifice dating back to its creation in 1775. What makes each of these Soldiers a professional is the same heart-felt loyalty that bonds them together as a profession, bared witness to by the American people over and over again. Today, after 10 years of persistent conflict, it’s time to ensure that our professional Army of officers and enlisted Soldiers, their family members, and civilians alike absorb and internalize the valued foundations upon which we are ALL called to duty and able to adapt, through practice, to the increasingly complex security challenges of the 21st century.

Through prospect and analysis, and with specific regard to the Adjutant General (AG) Corps, this paper showcases the Army’s newest Profession of Arms model revealed by the Commander, Training and Doctrine Command and offers that ultimately, the power and protection of our Nation will not survive without its foundation.⁴ Prescribed by The United States Constitution and recited through the Oath of Office and other insightful and supporting antidotes, each Soldier to Corps within our Army must see and experience itself as grounded by this foundation. In addition to promoting a united front of camaraderie, endurance, and inspiration from the endearing trust of the American people we serve, in so doing, living the Profession of Arms as ‘Army Strong’⁵ potentiates the Army’s contributions.

The reader should gain a sense of wealth and justice through the understanding and appreciation of the moral stamina and ethical vibrancy required by the Army's ability to embrace considerable odds and sacrifice abundantly for our America; many times experienced through multiple deployments and excessive separations from loved ones. The evolving commitment of the career Soldier to serve our Nation is a product of identification with, and loyalty to, the Profession of Arms. While the term may be new to many serving today or simply interested in the magnitude of military contributions, its concept has historically united Soldiers and Army units for over 200 years.

Despite the large scale of challenges the Professional Army, and specifically the AG Corps, faces in the wake of 10 years of persistent conflict in South Asia and other countries, our commitment and unity of effort will remain undaunted. Identifying and managing people and their appropriate skill sets, opportunities for assignments, and specialized training to get folks to the right place at the right time ALL matter. Like other military arts and sciences, the Army's human resource management doctrine acts as a guide to action rather than a fixed set of rules. Professional growth of the organization sprouts from how well leaders use doctrine to make organizational, training, personal development, and material decisions.

Finally, this article proposes the rebirth of lost but not forgotten philosophical enhancements to the way we lead and manage people. These proposals are not new and different, though they need to be revisited, revealed and absorbed. Meeting reality face-to-face, they potentially prompt improvements to the archaic, industrialized systems and thought processes of yester-year that keep Army AG professionals from

maximizing their knowledge-era profession of today and serving the Nation with Army manpower at its best.

Defining the Profession of Arms – the Model

Within the scope of difficulty and “wicked disruption” of 10 years of vicious, persistent conflict opined by great, current historians, the sense of professionalism as a whole prevails and is the means necessary for success; that is winning our Nation’s wars.⁶ Arming our National Power, and specifically land power, with military professionals, specifically Army professionals, is of the essence. Building a foundation for the future is absolutely necessary. Above all, and as history repeats itself, patterns of refinement, downsizing, and transformation in the areas of personnel, assignments, and equipment signifies an appetite for adaptation and change.

Professions produce uniquely expert work, not routine or repetitive work. Medicine, theology, law, and the military are “social trustee” forms of professions. Effectiveness, rather than pure efficiency, is the key to work of professionals—the sick want a cure, the sinner wants absolution, the accused want exoneration, and the defenseless seek security.⁷

Through years of study and experience (practice) professionals develop expert work. The society’s health, justice, and security depend on such servant-ship. Just as the American people hold doctors in the highest regard to heal the sick, and lawyers to bring justice from guilt-ridden conditions, military professionals and “the military profession, in particular, must provide the security which the society cannot provide itself, without such, the society cannot survive, and to use its expertise according to the values held by the Nation.”⁸ The best interest of society relies on each professional’s deep sense of moral obligation.

Professions earn the trust of their client through their Ethic which is the means of motivation and self control. The servant ethic of profession is characterized as cedat

emptor, “let the taker believe in us.”⁹ The U.S. Army’s professional Ethic is built on trust with the American people, as well as with civilian leaders and junior professionals within the ranks. That trust must be re-earned every day through living our Ethic. That Army Ethic is how we fight, why we fight, and based on values, our culture, and our climate. Because of this trust the American people grant significant autonomy to the Army to create expert knowledge and police the application of that knowledge by individual professionals. Non-professional occupations do not enjoy similar autonomy. A self-policing Ethic is an absolute necessity, especially for the Profession of Arms, given the lethality inherent to what the Army does.¹⁰

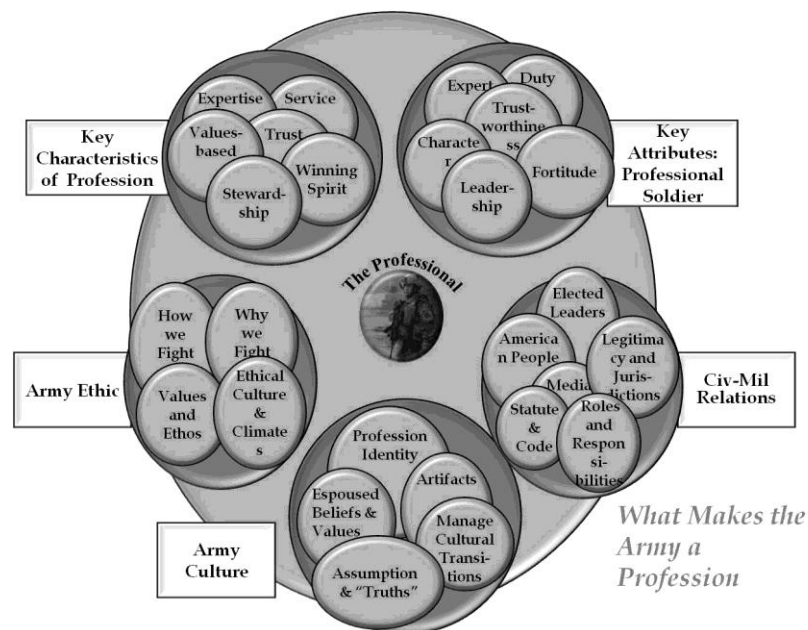


Figure 1. Profession of Arms Learning Concepts¹¹

Therefore, what illustrates the Army as a profession and the Profession of Arms model is based on several learning concepts targeting character, competency, and a mindset based on service and sacrifice. Key characteristics of the Profession, key attributes of the professional Soldier, the Army Ethic, the Army culture, and civil-military

relations are all concepts defined and necessary. What makes the Army a profession is so essential to its existence it must be picturesquely clear (refer to the model at Figure 1).

At the center of the model, as with any other life-generating cell, is the nucleus – the Professional; a bi-directionally influenced growth fed via the life-blood of five vibrantly sustaining influences: professional characteristics, attributes, an enunciated Ethic, culture, and a relationship so uniquely desired as intimate and essential – civil-military operations. The Army professional, the Army family, and the American public must understand, absorb, and internalize the dynamic presented. Key characteristics of the Army Profession are embedded in a moral and legal foundation of American values, the Constitution and Statutes that affects all. These standards and aspirations are trust, military expertise, *Espirit de Corps*, honorable service, and Stewardship of the Profession.¹²

These characteristics parallel key attributes of the Professional Soldier, who under moral and legal mandates of his/her oath, embodies expert knowledge of the profession. Duty is the Soldier's calling, motivation, and identification with that knowledge and its application to practices on behalf of the profession's client – the American people.¹³ Professional characteristics and attributes are ultimately validated by our client through civil-military relations and form the basis for trust between the Army as a profession and the society it serves. This trust supports the Army's autonomy to "establish and enforce its own professional ethics," and with maintenance, in turn, enhances trust. Effective and ethical application of expertise propel success of professional practice; a product of the Army culture of professional identity, beliefs and values cultivated since its creation two centuries ago.¹⁴

What motivates Soldiers, Department of the Army (DA) civilians and their families to commit ongoing years of service to our mission? The answers are vast, varied, and many. All are admirable. Countless active duty and retired Armed Forces service members have expressed their gratification through authoring and reciting “why I serve” novelties, many of which find their way into the hands and inspired hearts of those currently sacrificing in military theaters around the world. Air Force Staff Sgt Rodriguez shares his dedication:

I serve because I want to give back a small portion of what I have been given. I want my children to know what it means to live in the “land of the free” and the “home of the brave.” I want others to realize the tremendous honor they have to live in a country based on the highest ideals man has ever seen. It is my constant hope and desire that others will realize what a privilege it is to be an American and take steps to serve and protect the very freedoms upon which this nation was founded. There are men and women from every background and every walk of life who have had to make the ultimate sacrifice in service to this great nation. They knew the price of freedom was quite high and yet were willing to put their lives on the line for something that mattered more than self. That is the very essence of what makes us a great nation. As long as we have warriors ready to live and die for the ideals that America stands for, we will continue to be the greatest nation that has ever existed on this planet. I, for one, intend to honor the memory of those who have paid the ultimate price by doing everything I can to uphold the values and ideals we hold dear in this nation and to instill them in my children.¹⁵

For the most part, members of the military and their committed families are not primarily motivated by extrinsic factors such as salary and benefits. While those needs are necessary to live, they are not necessary to live a valued life, as echoed numerous times by answers to why Armed Forces members choose to serve. “Professions use inspirational, intrinsic factors like the life-long pursuit of expert knowledge, the privilege and honor of service, camaraderie, and the status of membership in an ancient, honorable and revered occupation.”¹⁶ This is the motivation of true professionals and the reason why the Army’s service as a profession is a calling and not a job.

The pre-eminent military task, and what separates the military profession from all other occupations, is that soldiers are routinely prepared to kill...in addition to killing and preparing to kill, the soldier has two other principal duties...soldiers die and , when they are not dying, they must be preparing to die.¹⁷

Developing the Army Profession – a Progressive History

What becomes important to understand is the connection to the evolving professionalism from era to era, also emphasized in Army War College studies. This evolution breeds wealth and justice. Wealth refers to the grand inheritance each Army member internalizes when he/she truly commits to the depth of the Army's Profession of Arms; building from its past, experiencing its presence today, and shaping its future. Justice is the fidelity to the demands of the human relationship that accompanies this commitment. Whether that faithful commitment is to brotherhood earned by trials of battle buddies, ideals inspired by great Army leaders, or an authentic desire to serve a proud Nation, its existence for any number of reasons supports a real and valued sacrifice by many who have either been 'in the line of fire' or have heard about it. That is our Army experience; a Profession of Arms with a sequential and progressive history of heraldry, weaponry, and camaraderie.

Carl von Clausewitz, early 19th century theorist and renowned writer on the "necessity of synergy between warriors and diplomats," spent his life in the profession of arms. A French Revolution enthusiast, interested in nationalism and the "epoch-destroying tides that washed over Europe," Clausewitz proposed that the professionalism of arms could "mitigate wanton behavior and unbridled destruction." Further, he suggested that through understanding and evoking what we know today as attributes and characteristics of the Army's profession, professional diplomats could

enforce their competency and satiate interstate rivalry in its “studied, stylized discourse.”¹⁸

To our current Army Chief of Staff’s credit and for the benefit of the American people, we are doing just that. The Army War College is one of many institutions of military learning advantaging the students it develops, inspires, and serves through certification on early theorists to its culminating Strategic Decision Making Exercise. Rigorous exercise and testing ensures members meet “high moral standards of the profession (both competence/expertise and morality/character) required to ethically apply land combat power” at each successive level prior to promotion.¹⁹

Bearing witness to breadth and depth of great leaders whose legacies empower the professional edge of aspiration, the War College’s current Commandant speaks highly of one in particular, General William Harding Carter (1851-1925). General Carter was a man of character and controversy during a grueling time of Army transformation that begged for his astute professionalism. The challenge mirrors what we encounter today. A U.S. Army Cavalry officer, historian, military biographer, and visionary, he served the Army for over 50 years during crusades such as the American Civil War, Spanish-American War, and World War I. Largely responsible for the modernization and organization of the United States Army along with his confidant, Secretary of War Root, General Carter distinctively played a major role in the development of the Army’s progressive system of professional schools, including the Army War College, and the creation of the Army General Staff. Recognized as a master of institutional progress, his wisdom, experience, and courage transformed a legion of citizen-soldiers into the modern professional force we know today. His educational emphasis and emulation of

leadership encouraged a vastly different, more complex, and distinctly more professional Army than the one into which he was commissioned a half century earlier.²⁰

General Carter's legacy promotes Army principals and supporting proponents by recognizing the necessity for professional grooming, anticipating it and seeking it in young unseasoned hopefuls. This has not always been evident. From its birth well into the 18th century, the Army struggled with balancing the relationship between the Army's culture and climate and its institutional practices. "How well this is aligned will influence the mindset of Army professionals, their commitment, satisfaction, and well-being."²¹ Commander, Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) reminds the Force that today's strategic leaders must manage institutional systems of the Army well as their every action influencing key attributes of the profession and expertise. This has near and long term effects on the culture and climate. Leaders' actions also "influence whether they are serving in a profession where individual merits of competence and character are the sole measures of certification or, instead, in an occupational or bureaucratic system where other measures only apply. Such actions determine whether Soldiers see themselves as professionals serving a calling or as time-servers filling a job."²²

Over the last two centuries the Army has developed its proponents that select, advance, and position personnel. It continues to build its ethic and culture while developing leaders' key attributes and characteristics and the personnel services to support them. Recognizing peoples' potential and capitalizing on their knowledge, skills, abilities and expertise has changed over time depending on conditions and circumstances of the day. Hence, the assignment process and manning the force has

changed to support it, yet in some cases not. The Revolutionary War presented a great need for accountability of personnel, much more than the appropriate placement of personnel. Most times the selection of leaders was based on personality vice holistic experience. For the lesser ranks, a 'come one come all' approach to recruitment satisfied mission requirements. While fighting the nation's wars was the fundamental purpose of the Army, in reality frontier protection and infrastructure building dominated its early years, and with limited incentives desertions and avoidance of the service became common. Even if testing and certification of competencies existed in the late 1700s and early 1800s, the lack of administrative developments and control lessened the degree of substantial value from which to promote members.²³

Still mirroring more of an occupation than a profession, the administratively underdeveloped Armies of the Civil War followed leaders who were either Soldiers with seniority, Mexican War veterans or brothers in arms from their military academy days. General George McClellan, Army of the Potomac, proved to be psychologically unprepared for leadership of a large Army. Chosen by President Abraham Lincoln for his organizational abilities, his difficulties attaining mission success were products of failing to execute and follow through with his plans. President Lincoln later relieved General McClellan when he questioned McClellan's leadership abilities. General Ulysses S. Grant of the Army of the Tennessee was selected due to his military successes and ability to carry out orders.²⁴

For the Confederate States of America, President Jefferson Davis almost always personally selected his leaders. His selections; based on friendship or social relations, did not ensure the best person for the position. One of President Jefferson's better

decisions was when he replaced General Joseph E. Johnston with General Robert E. Lee as Commander of the Army of Northern Virginia. It is interesting to note that today, after 10 years of 21st century conflict the Force still finds itself challenged with a subset of this allotment, now called By-Name Requests (BNR).²⁵

The early 1900s proved more adaptable to the suggestion that some form of civilian to military fidelity was important. Leadership selection and placement of people took a different turn. Even though the Army initially found itself with largely unfamiliar cultures and with a lack of political guidance from the Philippine Insurrection,²⁶ the heightened awareness to a jurisdictional claim of honorable service, self-discipline, and the introduction of leadership development promoted both a visible source to aide selection that developed through WWI.²⁷ With a unified sense of greater power and cause during WWII, General Douglas MacArthur later coined this greater purpose as “duty, honor, country” stating, “the code with which those words perpetuate embraces the highest moral laws and the will to stand the test of any ethics or philosophies ever promulgated for the uplift of mankind.”²⁸

During that same period President Roosevelt chose General George Marshall to be his Chief of Staff of the Army because of Marshall’s knowledge and persuasive ability to ensure both the War in Europe and the Far East had the leadership, manpower, and material needed to win. Marshall’s battle capability was a secondary consideration to his ability to coordinate with Congress to obtain resources. Understanding the essential need and limits of military, civilian, and congressional cooperation, Marshall was the right person, at the right place, at the right time to lead. This stroked the development of civil-military operations. As the Army Chief of Staff,

Marshall also retained the authority to make decisions on all major assignments, which is still the process our Army mirrors today with Colonel level and above assignments.

From the ashes of WWII came a new jurisdiction of forward presence, defending America and her allies with the strategy of containment. Post Cold War to present, the Army defends the nation's vital interests in situations where the political and military objectives are clear and there is an American public commitment to victory.²⁹ Operations Desert Shield/Storm, Joint Guardian in Kosovo, and Enduring Freedom are all products of this directive. Correctly conducting civil-military relations contributed to the Army's growth as a Profession. All three campaigns garnered the United Nations Security Council, America, and its allies' full endorsement in the use of force if required. Elected officials commenced with all necessary steps (i.e., negotiations and sanctions) responding to these preeminent consequences before utilizing force. For the most part, the world acted as one to protect each country's common security, unity, and international legitimacy.³⁰

History proposes that the nature of conflict and further – War, with many interfacing variables such as circumstance and conditions of the day, leadership of the time, and disparity of institutional systems enhancing both, guide the evolution of formerly ignorant Army amateurs to presently seasoned Army professionals. “Strategic leaders control personnel development, evaluation and certification, and assignment and utilization processes in ways that motivate aspiring professionals as they progress through years of service. Some of these systems are not unbalanced after 10 years of War, making current challenges even more urgent.”³¹ People have an inherent need to believe that their protection and national security is of the essence and legitimate, at the

forefront of minds and agenda's of elected American leaders, and that the systems that support this can be trusted. This trust is inherent in the collective character of the military itself.³² As the nature of War is fundamentally uncertain,³³ the *wealthy* nature of human existence breeds values that support wars that are *just*. The State exists to protect this.

Lessons Learned to Date

Why a citizen joins the Army is perhaps not the same reason why he/she stays and serves for many years. As people bond amidst atrocity they also heal from wounds of War in a unified manner. The reality of today is that the fantasies of warrior heroism and conspicuous gallantry in action that cause a new recruit to commit years of his life to the Service, hold a similar feeling for the seasoned veteran, yet takes on the different name of professionalism. Since people are the product of this, we all have the responsibility to grow our own professionals.

There-in-lies where the Army falls short; perhaps not in comparison to other professional organizations, but rather in comparison to the real and ideal Profession of Army learning concepts (Figure 1), and to a lesser extent the enforcement of standards that support them, upon which we as military professionals measure ourselves and our professional organization. Time is of the essence and is something we don't have much of. While high marks in leadership equate to mission accomplishment and taking care of Soldiers and family members, the circumstances and conditions allowing both to occur most of the time are anything but favorable today. In the last 10 years the Army has deployed more than one million Soldiers with one-third serving more than one deployment, and has sustained 4,591 fatalities in both theaters (Iraq and Afghanistan).

This alone strains the Army Culture; mainly relationships at the individual, organizational, and institutional level.

Recent Profession of Arms studies regarding professional concepts, certification, trust, leader development, cultural values, recapturing basic skills, and synchronizing human development suggest implications associated with low levels of trust and discipline along with misguided visions of leader development.³⁴ Trust among unit members remains strong, most likely evidenced from bonds created from repeated deployments, although trust of higher leadership expertise withers.³⁵ Those same deployments also contribute to indications of decline in the enforcement of standards, accountability and discipline. This is not a surprise to our current Army War College Class of 2012; one student's Strategic Research Paper (SRP) unveils the threads of an unraveling logistical crisis.

One area of concern to the Army leadership is property accountability – specifically, how we have lost our way in terms of stewardship of government property. The fact that we lost accountability for almost half a billion dollars' worth of equipment over the last five years should give us concern. Depending on how you look at the problem it could be a problem of organizational culture, that is to say we failed to focus on the process and proven methods, or a problem of velocity (too much, too fast), or both.³⁶

Another student speaks candidly in his SRP, on improving accountability for effective command climate. More than ever before, organizational (command) climate will become an increasingly significant prerequisite for unit effectiveness and combat readiness.

Cultural norms and counter-productive evaluation, leader development, and accountability systems are at the root of the U.S. Army's problems regarding organizational climate. Absent a shift in cultural emphasis and adjustment of systems to reinforce the change, command climate will continue to suffer and unit effectiveness, morale and trust, retention and commitment will continue to be significantly degraded.³⁷

Other challenges contribute to tarnishing the Army's reputation: company grade officers departing in high numbers due to the fierce Operational Tempo (OPTEMPO), high suicide rates, an increase in sexual harassment, hazing, and detainee abuse in theater. While OPTEMPO and Army Force Generation Cycles play valid roles contributing to skills nurtured from home station training, management, and leadership,³⁸ the truth remains – the latter severely impacts the solid foundation of our Army's Profession of Arms.

From this spawns even greater concern that the institutional tolerance that condones mediocrity to graduate from developmental schools and attain professional certifications allows some poor performers and poor leaders to advance. This relates mainly to the argument that the more schools a Soldier graduates from (to include on-line course certifications), the better Soldier he/she is, which is not always the case. In turn, this reduces the Army's professional identity and negatively impacts motivation.³⁹ The likelihood that the Army Culture feels the painful effect of this is clear: a fast paced OPTEMPO gives little time to practice interpersonal skills or much more than that, define and execute acceptable practices. Perceptions of displaced higher ranking personnel, lack of expertise, and a general disparity of trust point towards organizational dysfunction for the guardians of freedom and the American way of life. These concerns spark fierce interest in Army senior leaders. Hence, the Secretary of the Army and the Army Chief of Staff's charge to the Commander of TRADOC to lead a review of the Army Profession and determine how we as individual professionals are meeting the needs of our profession are of growing public debate.

The AG Corps as a Profession of Arms

Now, more than ever, getting Army manpower right matters. The manner in which Army Human Resource managers plan and execute decisions regarding the placement of its members (the Army Family), in the Continental United States and abroad is a beastly professional challenge. It **must** be done right. It is no doubt that the security and protection of our Nation, our Republic and the American way of life depends on it.

Our ground forces by all accounts are now, after a decade of war, utterly exhausted...It is not so clear...that the human fabric from which we have woven our professional forces into units of effective land power will be able to hold their professional edge amidst the near term reductions in funding and forces structure now envisioned by the Department of Defense.⁴⁰

Army Human Resource professionals face a unique challenge with the Army's 2012 downsizing propositions. The eminent five year, nearly 50,000-Soldier drawdown combination of accession cuts and involuntary separations includes a two-phased operation and targets two populations: the temporary 22,000 Soldier increase launched three years ago to support the Afghanistan surge, and the later 27,000 Soldier authorizations created during the Grow the Army program.⁴¹

The persevering direction supports a collaborative effort toward refining, building, molding, and empowering leader development, and managing resources and time during invariable transformation. The circumstances and conditions surrounding this are not unfamiliar to seasoned veterans, and others who have experienced or merely held interest in past draw-downs of Army personnel after previous Wars or conflicts. Don Snider, Professor Emeritus, USMA Senior Fellow, recalls the performance of Task Force Smith in Korea after WWII reductions, the "hollow army" of the 1970s after

Vietnam, and the post-Cold War reductions affecting the US Army in South West Asia during the 1990s.⁴² All resulted in gutting the force rather than helping it slim down. As history illustrates, it can take years to recover from such a misguided campaign. At the end of each grueling conflict, whether a crusade or quagmire, the Army must remain in a high state of readiness, and available to deploy on a moment's notice to fight and win the nation's wars; the tall and endearing promise built on the foundations of being a Profession of Arms.

How does the Army get from start to finish of a post-War personnel recovery effort without losing or simply even dulling its professional edge? The strategic applications and consequences are many. During the 2011 Association of the United States Army Annual Meeting and Exposition, Army leaders briefed Soldiers and civilians regarding what they can expect as the Service looks to 2020. The Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, Thomas Lamont, commented that the overall strategy is to transform the Army's management of manpower over the next nine years. The Army G1, LTG Thomas Bostick, stated that to achieve this goal the Army must maintain and manage the talent it has within the force. He added that, "the Army needs leaders who are adaptable, diversified, and can operate on many strategic levels."⁴³ Further, he reinforced the concerns of others surrounding the importance of civilian and military education affecting knowledge, skills and abilities that Army human resource managers need in order to be able to man the force in time of transformative need.⁴⁴

The Army's Adjutant General Corps has been, and is, still responsible for serving Army manpower at its best. Our Creed boldly emphasizes service to the commander,

providing Human Resource (HR) support during all phases of operations (peacetime and war), and support to the Army's most important asset – its Soldiers.

I am an Adjutant General's Corp's Soldier. I am loyal to my nation, my unit, and the Soldiers I serve. I will understand my unit's mission and my Commanders' intent. I will anticipate manpower needs and maintain the fighting strength of my Commander's force. I will strive to integrate personnel services that best support my Commander's operation at every stage of execution. I will provide continuous personnel service support operations during build-up, surge, and combat operations. I will provide rapid and responsive support in all situations. I will be innovative and resourceful. I will improvise new systems of support when standard systems fail.⁴⁵

The lineage of the Adjutant General's Corps dates back nearly as far as the Army which it has honorably served for over 200 years. On June 16, 1775, the Continental Congress appointed Horatio Gates, a former British Army major, as the first Adjutant General and commissioned him in the grade of Brigadier General. With that appointment, the second oldest existing branch of the Army received its birthright. National and international staff experience enabled the Adjutant General to provide the new Commander-in-Chief, General George Washington, with "strong administrative assistance;" truly an absolute personal and professional honor.⁴⁶

General Washington gave Gates a virtual free-hand in organizing the administration of the "grand army" while Washington concentrated on training and readiness issues. It is interesting to note that the first major difficulty Gates encountered as the AG was accounting for personnel and producing accurate strength reports. By trial and error and an enormous amount of administrative fortitude, Gates eventually introduced the first "printed forms and regularized procedures" used for accurate personnel accountability and strength reporting; no small task considering the majority of volunteers were illiterate. Gates was also instrumental in developing

numerous administrative and readiness reports that have far reaching effects on the Army's personnel management.⁴⁷ For more than 237 years the mission of the Adjutant General's Corps has remained constant and clear: to assist the commander in war and peace, and be the vanguard of personnel support to the Army.

This truth grounded the development of our AG Corps competencies which have evolved over time; the essence of which persuades our members to sacrifice long hours and extended separations from loved ones no matter where in the world they serve. While history illustrates that this will not change, the practices, policies, and even laws that support it will. Recovery breeds refinement and transition. At the very least AG leaders must anticipate and respect this...and they have. Despite challenges, the creation of past personnel developments during difficult periods measures the stewardship, expertise, and service of our Corps.

Manning the Force, providing HR services, plans, and operations, and coordinating personnel support are competencies that have developed our Corps from its creation to today. While the competencies are still absolutely essential for managing the Army's manpower today, the challenge centers on maintaining an appropriate balance between two tendencies: a profession of adaptation verses a "hierarchical bureaucracy focused on apparatchik-type work familiar in any large organization in the western world today."⁴⁸ The latter breeds "doing more with less," and appeals to an industrial age which continues to be problematic to our Corps' approach and initiative. Success of some systems and failure of others depend greatly, as most things do, on leadership choices regarding timing, expertise, and boundaries to flexibility which would influence unintended consequences aborting or abandoning the mission. All missions

at all levels include a Commander's purpose, vision, and intent; all best shared and not forgotten during plans and executions. The creations of Standard Installation Division Personnel System¹, 2, 2.75, and 3.0 (SIDPERS), Electronic Military Personnel Office (EMILPO), and Defense Integrated Military Human Resources System (DIMHRS) are products of professional Soldiers with wisdom, experience, and courage to improve personnel systems existing from reforms conducted in the early 1900s and laws passed 25 years ago.⁴⁹

The influence the Department of Defense has on the success of the Army personnel systems also places "major hurdles in the path of future innovation and adaptation."⁵⁰ While a reform may be obvious, actual plans and executions require "sustained efforts against deeply entrenched bureaucracies, sub-cultures within the military, and demands of the present."⁵¹ The effects keep personnel leaders from being heard and personnel systems stagnant. Not unique yet still grappling, exists a challenge of anticipating ever-changing personnel constraints and the timely application of policy and practice that might positively redirect consequences. Brigadier General (Promotable) Richard Mustion, Director Military Personnel Management, Army G1 speaks candidly about our Corps' expertise:

I measure expertise as a combination of confidence and competence in our area of concentration and ability to provide timely, accurate and relevant information to decision makers. There is no doubt that the mission is getting done and for the most part the Corps is displaying a reasonable level of expertise. I believe we are weak at both ends of the operational spectrum. At the tactical level, our forces understand the sand box in which they operate -- the lack of understanding of operational and strategic impacts leads to tactical leaders making uninformed decisions. At the operational and strategic level, we have the opposite problem -- many at the grade of LTC and above have become disconnected from the tactical Army and lack the expertise needed to inform leaders of impacts of policy. Finally, some in our community lack a firm understanding of

Army operations – FM 3-0 and unit operations on the battlefield. Our field is very broad and for some uncomfortable -- we must find a way to improve and fix this. We must be expert not only in HR operations, but also in how the Army is organized, how it fights and how it sustains.⁵²

DIMHRS was an enterprise program of the Business Transformation Agency's Defense Business Systems Acquisition Executive, within the United States Department of Defense (DoD). As the largest enterprise resource planning program ever implemented for human resources, DIMHRS was to subsume or replace over 90 legacy personnel and finance systems. As the U.S. military's test bed, the Army pledged its allegiance to the fantasy system first, and looked forward to its 2009 year of promise integrating all payroll and personnel functions into one web-based system. The 2009 Army Campaign Plan emphasized the system's criticality, and tasked the Army G1 to, "Implement enterprise network-centric HR system and revise supporting policies to deliver responsive personnel and pay service support."⁵³ Yet, after numerous delays, technical problems, and other issues spanning 12 years of hopeful endurance and fiscal spending of \$1 Billion, in February 2010 the DoD cancelled the program.⁵⁴

The demise of DIMHRS leaves the Army, Navy and Air Force still reliant on archaic, problem-plagued payroll and personnel systems.⁵⁵ It is as simple for the AG Corps to assume responsibility for the failure as easily as it is for others to question our Corp's competencies. This negatively influences the Corp's credibility as personnel managers and hence, distracts the Corps from gleaning positive wealth and valued justice from the profession. According to published military authors and senior Army and civilian leaders, "the Army's personnel system is still based on outdated concepts which now actually hinder a more flexible approach to personnel management."⁵⁶ The Army's AG senior leadership assists the transformation of this antiquated Cold War

system in order to set the Corps up for success to meet the deserving expectations of our Army's commanders and the Soldiers we support.

While facing failure hurts, and can be as painful as defeat, the strength of the profession demands never accepting defeat, and never quitting.

I am an American Soldier, I am a warrior and a member of a team, I serve the people of the United States, and live the Army values, I will always place the mission first, I will never accept defeat, I will never quit, I will never leave a fallen comrade,..... I am an expert and I am a professional...⁵⁷

The AG Corps' creation of Personnel Services Delivery Redesign (PSDR) in 2006, and its ongoing ability to transform itself recovers any sense of the Corps' somewhat displaced expertise. Consisting of the aforementioned four key and critical HR competencies (Manning the Force, Providing HR Services, Coordinating Personnel Support, and Conducting HR Planning and Operations), the Commander has the resources and flexibility to plan, provide, and coordinate the delivery of all HR support and services to all assigned and attached personnel within the brigade, subordinate battalions and companies. The PSDR enhanced the Battalion and Brigade S-1 capabilities to better serve and support our Soldiers and still does so today.⁵⁸

The strength of the AG Corps relies on its ability to recover and adapt to the growing, ever-changing environment we find ourselves in service to. Matching this environment, the unrelenting truth is that the Army demands highly competent, well versed, fully educated Human Resources experts'; tying well into the operational manifestation of command and staff, and a professionalism that supports both. The unique difference between an occupation of mediocrity and a profession of elite may be candid and reciprocal daily validation of command purpose, vision, and intent of the AG

Soldier as a Warfighter first, and an AG Soldier Second. Truly, after 10 years of persistent conflict, the Corps requires this more and more, and expects no less.

Brigadier General (Promotable) Thomas Seamands, Forces Command G1, enunciates the great importance of this concept. He attributes the Corps expertise to being technically competent; knowing the HR craft and doctrine, and proficiently performing technical skills while executing them at the tactical, operational, and strategic level. General Seamands attributes the Corps' reputation to their expertise and attests to how essential it is to be "known as a warrior first and then as an AG Officer." Confidence, 110% effort, and "being able to run, jump, and shoot with your counterparts," matter greatly to the total-Soldier concept.⁵⁹ Comments from the Army S1 Net (a portal supporting communication between HR members within the Army-wide Knowledge Management System) reflect understanding and agreement.

We are professional officers/NCOs who contribute to the profession of Arms like any other officer. I think we sell ourselves short when we focus too much on being only AG officers. At the field grade level; we must provide more than just AG insight and knowledge. You must become an invaluable part of the war fighter team. If you narrow your focus to AG "stuff" you have already fell behind.⁶⁰

Chief Warrant Officer Five (Retired) Raymond Lutz is a well-seasoned 41-year veteran of service as an AG Soldier. Having had the opportunity to work with the full spectrum of our military services, military departments, the Joint Staff, our Department of Defense Components, our Federal Executive Branch Departments and Agencies, and a variety of Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Multinational (JIIM) partners and coalitions, he shares his perspectives on our Corps' contribution to the Profession of Arms.

I am convinced that the role of an AG Soldier, Civilian, and contractor in full spectrum operations is as critical to our Army today as it ever was. I

submit that getting the right Soldier, with the right skills, to the right place, at the right time, for the right reason, with the right support isn't all that easy, particularly under conditions of persistent conflict. Recent Human Dimension studies indicate that the future operating environment will have 'no front lines, no sanctuary, and will be a 360-degree area of operations (AO),' and in this environment all Soldiers are at risk - albeit at different levels - the frequency and intensity of conflict will also differ among (and even within) units.⁶¹

While the clear recognition and serious, honest assessment as to what extent our Corps is meeting the needs of the Army is essential, the answer itself does not prove our Corps' contribution as members of the Profession of Arms. The question itself, its repetition, and the responses it invokes are influences of the depth and breadth of our professionalism. Again, the key characteristics of a profession – a values-based trust, winning spirit, and stewardship are hard to miss in several of the following comments from our field.

Colonel Robert L. Manning, Commandant of the Adjutant General School from 2008- to present, emphasizes the Corps' professionalism in the recently published *Journal of the Adjutant General Corps Regimental Association*, 1775.

The AG Corps has a long and distinguished history that predates the birth of the country and was one of the first branches established by the Army. The AG Corps has been remarkably agile, diversified and resilient throughout its history. Today, as the Army transformed to a brigade centric modular force, the AG Corps met this challenge through Personnel Services Delivery Redesign (PSDR) by building professional HR capabilities in formations across the force. The collective expectation of leaders is that there will be a ubiquitous professional AG/HR team ready to advise commanders with timely, accurate and relevant information so commanders can make informed decisions at decisive moments as they pertain to the human dimension of readiness. This is our charge as both AG warriors and HR Professionals.⁶²

Many others echo the Commandants' hails, and attest to the productive challenges and successes of the Corps. Lieutenant Colonel (Promotable) Thomas J.

Edwards, Army War College classmate of 2012, enthusiastically offers his remarkable experience as evidence to our AG Soldiers' display of character and fortitude.

The most memorable of these experiences for me was down-range in Iraq, although I've seen character and fortitude both overseas and stateside. In Iraq I witnessed Soldiers risking their lives to deliver mail and field new personnel accounting software. I've witnessed AG Soldiers within combat hospitals dealing with young combat wounded and dead to make sure sensitive information and accounting occurred. I witnessed AG Soldiers making sure MWR entertainers as well as equipment and services were provided despite dangerous combat conditions. In all of these cases, young AG/HR professionals put service before self, and other Soldiers' welfare first and foremost while having the intestinal fortitude to repetitively perform these actions over and over again despite dangers.⁶³

Enhancing Manpower at its Best

The triumphs and tribulations throughout history to present day yield a promising future for the AG Corps as a Profession of Arms. However, growth as a profession will not occur without serious critical, imaginative and progressive emphasis in four distinct areas of enhancement: education, emulation by leadership, engraining through mentorship, and empowerment through teamwork, anticipation, and initiative.

Education on the Profession of Arms model, is absolutely necessary to reinforce the overarching purpose that the nucleus from which the Army operates and strategizes, and Soldiers "be, know, and do," is the phenomenal center of influence for our Service. Further, that core of service is indeed worthy of sacrifice not because of its appearance of an aspiration by a few, but more than that, an identification and achievement of many (past and present) which is a power greater than self. From institutional learning at military schools, (including incorporation into doctrine) to word of mouth beginning with Commanders and ending with retirees, as well as the public itself, Profession of Arms needs to be a continuous household discussion of every military

family. Driven by programs enhancing familial resiliency during ongoing and future fiscal pressure, renewing Army families' commitment to the profession of Arms is equally essential to ensure the Army maintains the "best led and best trained force in the world..."⁶⁴ Many times the proponents monitoring family programs are AG-centric and human resource departments; a proud and honorable contribution to the sacrifices of loved ones and the American public.

The professional **emulation** by Army leadership is of utmost importance. In the words of Brigadier General (Retired) Rick Porter, Deputy Forces Command G1, "...the "Profession of Arms" consists of Warfighting and leader development or talent management. (The AG Corps) needs to sharpen our leader development skills; they are lacking."⁶⁵ Further conversation with General Porter reveals his scope and design for successfully developing HR leaders and the career paths of those assigned to Fort Bragg, North Carolina; a concept also applicable to brigade, divisional, and Corps commands. Gathering subordinate G1s to discuss leader development and career management of the officers assigned to Fort Bragg, Forces Command (FORSCOM) both mentors junior HR leaders and ensures each officer's career path parallels that of Army's intent for professional development. The command's trust in their AG leadership recognizes our FORSCOM Headquarters HR professionals' visible and forthright ability to "build a bench" promoting the benefits of officers, leaders, the command, and the Army all together.⁶⁶

Engraining the Profession of Arms through mentorship is a timely and challenging honor today more than ever. More than being an advisor or coach, Army leaders of all ranks are responsible for grooming and empowering the display of

character and fortitude of Soldiers. “Our (AG) company grade officers are hungry”⁶⁷ for wisdom and experience from which to build their courage; courage to continue to serve and sacrifice as they have both witnessed and embraced. These officers, currently serving as our S1s for combat arms and combat support units, and executing the HR tasks in an outstanding manner, are already setting precedence for others to follow.⁶⁸ Since the likelihood that their mentorship will come from the battalion and brigade commanders that they serve with, and not necessarily from the AG senior officer on post, AG leaders need to remain fully present and unyielding in finding innovative ways and means to professionally develop their unbridled and feverish young. With constant appropriate attention, enrolling our unseasoned HR hopefuls in AG-specific anticipatory and integrative personnel service approaches inspires manpower at its best.

Colonel T.J. Edwards shares similar valued insight:

Our Corps is experienced, and expert, however many professionals don't have the broader view of their roles as professionals in the AG/HR community. The deletion of SRC-12 structure (Personnel Groups, Personnel Support Battalions, etc) – has contributed to this lack of clarity on needed “expertise” and HR functions. AG/HR troopers today might spend their first 10-to-15 years of Army service in Brigade and below Army units and never work among more senior AG/HR personnel professionals (for mentorship and development). Our Corps' expertise then comes primarily from the operational forces our professionals are serving within, and those experiences are varied depending upon units and roles our HR leaders provide. If our leaders are being used for mission support, assistant S-3s, and other unit level functions, they are gaining Army expertise, but often outside the intellectual realm they might have developed in an AG/HR unit that was in support of providing personnel service support.⁶⁹

The same critical thinking, creativity and imagination needed to motivate the Army's younger generation as a Profession of Arms, AG or otherwise, is still required of peer-to-peer relationships which perhaps have wavered without intention during the Nation's last 10 years of persistent conflict. To continue to serve, sacrifice, and

empower the concepts of what makes the Army and specifically the AG Corps a profession, Soldiers (specifically mid-grade officers and NCOs) need to energize each other's initiative, determination, and resilience. This is the step beyond obvious education in a formal setting, clear emulation of the strengths of leadership, and the practice of definitive mentoring which engrains professionalism from a very personal and subjective influence.

There is absolutely no greater time than the present to maximize opportunities to enunciate and bear witness to the professionalism of cohorts and make it public in a very positive manner. Opportunities to bring Profession of Arms to life are abundant, yet transparent and sometimes missed. Albeit making it into a structured program, genuine interest and cooperative effort within peer groups to renew commitment to the Profession of Arms should prevail within and among the ranks. While there is evidence that perhaps it does (particularly at institutions of learning where there tends to be greater collections of similar year-groups in similar fields), the lack of consistency among our peer experiences question the solidity and passion for our profession that many have, yet others don't.

The responsibility to develop professionals, both leaders and followers, both uniformed and civilian is mutually shared between the institution and the individual.⁷⁰ That means everyone at all levels. With Profession of Arms *vertical* emphasis influencing all membership through education, emulation of leadership, and engraining mentorship, *lateral* influence flourishing among peers enhances the attributes, characteristics, public relations, Ethic, and culture that makes the Army a profession today. While the importance of this is best learned early in a Soldier's career, the fact

that it still matters is best emphasized at all levels. The anticipation and initiative to empower cohorts can never be overemphasized.

Now is the time for us to reflect, not just on the lessons of war, but on who we are and what we do. We are a Profession of Arms, guardians of the Constitution who reflect our Nation's ideals. We are military professionals—every officer, enlisted and civilian—not because we say so, but because of how we serve. Ours is an All-Volunteer Force. Americans take an oath—freely and without any mental reservation—to live a vocation for which they may die. They are not simply doing a job. They are answering a call to join an uncommon profession—The Armed Forces of the United States of America.⁷¹

Conclusion

Professionalism prevails today because those who commit choose to make it so. Gone are the days of the four year bail out after commissioning and college graduation. Dismissed is the way of thinking that the personal ride to fulfillment will only take one or two enlistment cycles. Abandoned is the daily denial of commitment that does not extend a sense of universal appreciation among many in light of National power and protection that requires more than job-centered individuals with ego-centric perspectives. Today, after 10 years of persistent conflict, the perseverance of peace -- *"Prudens Futuri" Wisdom and Strength for the Future*⁷² demands a focused, inherent, empowering loyalty to the Nation, and **the Army's service as a profession**. Appealing to a service committed, expertly made, career Soldier – **a Professional**, and a unified **sense of professionalism** among those who serve ultimately determines if our Nation's wars are won or lost.

AG Soldiers and HR Professionals are meeting challenges not unlike their predecessors over time and doing so in a most professional manner. The Corps is just as relevant today as ever thanks in large part to these dynamic professionals who not only know what it means to be an Army professional, but more specifically, an Army HR Professional.⁷³

Continuous hardship duty and promises of everlasting fiscal care certainly were not what attracted Sergeant Bury's family, Specialist Rodriguez and supporting friends, Private First Class Harris and his parents, and Captain Martin and her family to serve and sacrifice at great lengths for the United States of America. Rather, the likelihood and aspiration to remain members of an organization wherein people trust one another and the institution's ability to serve the nation while caring for its people influenced their service and sacrifices every day.⁷⁴

"Each of us, and all of us, are the stewards of this Profession of Arms."⁷⁵ In the expressions of our Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Martin E. Dempsey, the imperatives of rewarding vision, retaining leaders with essential expertise and proven potential, and recruiting and managing talent spurs from "innovative personnel policies that promote more of what we need....get(ing) the people 'right'."⁷⁶ The charge is for the AG Corps as a valued, trusted, expertly made, and service oriented corps "For the Commander," to educate, emulate, engrain, and empower professionalism **serving manpower at its best** in all we "be, know, and do," today **and** tomorrow.

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⁵⁸ Wark, *The Army G1: The Army's National Human Resource Provider*, 6.

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⁶³ LTC (Promotable) Thomas J. Edwards Jr., Student, Class 2012, Army War College, electronic mail interview by author, Carlisle Barracks, PA, February 1, 2012.

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⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

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⁷⁶ Ibid.

