JUNIOR MILITARY OFFICER RETENTION:

Challenges & Opportunities

POLICY ANALYSIS EXERCISE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

How can the military identify and retain a greater percentage of its most talented young officers?

The United States is currently approaching its tenth year of continuous warfare in Iraq and Afghanistan, conflicts that have been labeled by Secretary of Defense Gates as "the captains' wars." By all accounts, the military has performed superbly, with much of that success attributable to its junior leadership. Yet even as the military finds itself with the most capable corps of junior officers in its history, it has also found that some of these young leaders are taking their hard-won experience elsewhere. To ensure that it is capable of meeting future threats, the U.S. military must retain its most talented leaders in the service – this is not simply a matter of quantity, but also a question of quality.

Junior Officers in Their Own Words. Amid all the concern for the health of the junior officer corps in recent years, very few have paused to ask the individuals concerned – the former officers themselves. In this report, we survey nearly 250 former junior military officers who left the service between 2001-2010 about their experiences and the reasons driving their decisions to leave. 75% of the officers we spoke to said that this was their first opportunity to provide feedback to the military after leaving the service. By and large, these individuals remain dedicated to public service and proud of their military experiences. Their responses and recommendations were poignant, thoughtful, and constructive; here, we attempt to give them voice.

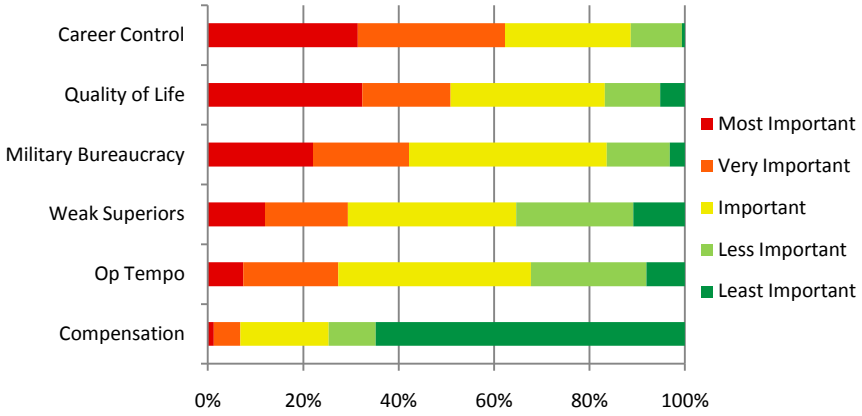
Fully 80% of our respondents reported that the best officers they knew had left the military before serving a full career. Yet some factors widely portrayed as driving young officers from service were less important to our junior officer cohort than we anticipated. For instance, only 9% of respondents indicated that deployment cycles and operational tempo were their most important reason for leaving. In the same vein, nearly 75% ranked compensation and financial reasons as their least important consideration.

What *does* matter? Two factors emerged as areas of surprising consensus among former officers: organizational inflexibility, primarily manifested in the personnel system, and a lack of commitment to innovation within the military services.

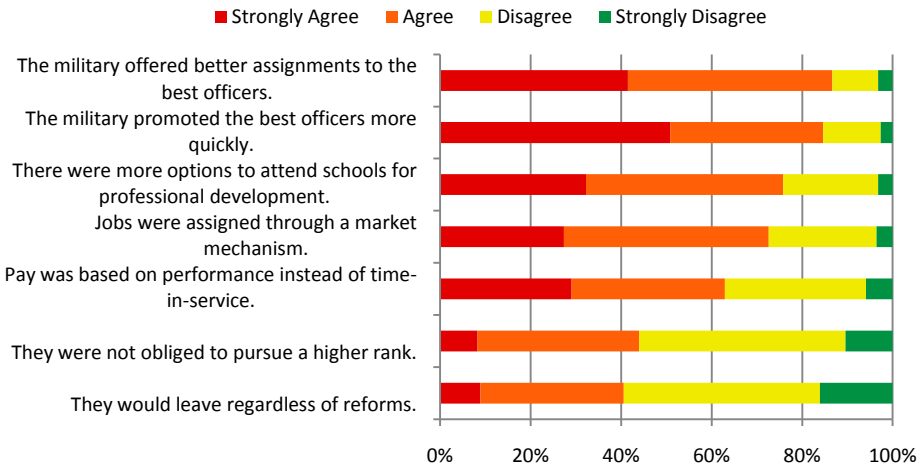
- Organizational Flexibility. The number one reported reason for separation among our respondents was limited ability to control their own careers. Frustration with a one-size-fits-all system was by far the most common complaint, with emphasis on bureaucratic personnel processes that respondents called "broken," "archaic," and "dysfunctional."

Rate the following factors in terms of their importance in your decision to leave the military.

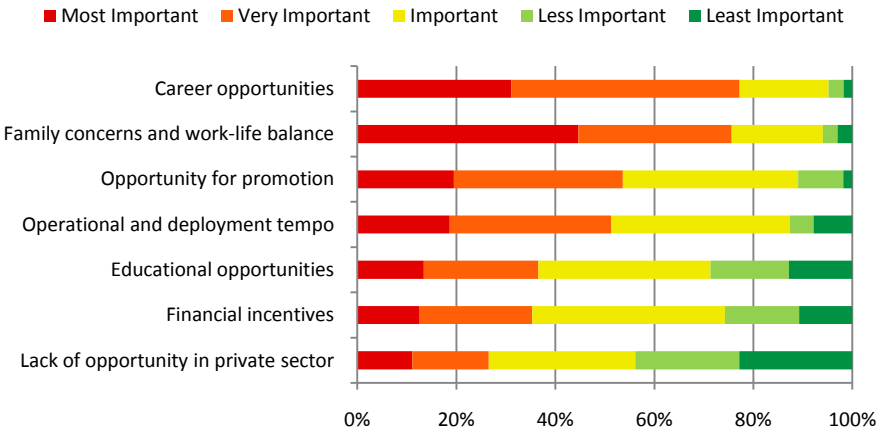
(Note: question employed forced ranking of the importance of each factor.)



Many of the best officers would stay if …



What factors would be most important to you in returning to active duty?



- Commitment to Innovation. In second place, 41% of respondents ranked frustration with military bureaucracy as the most or a very important factor in their decision to leave. Nearly half felt the military did a poor job at identifying and rewarding traits such as creativity, as opposed to qualities such as endurance or ability to follow orders.

The Active Duty Perspective. Previous surveys of junior officers who have left the military have often been criticized for two reasons: (1) that such individuals are biased against the military (or as one active duty officer put it, "quitters shouldn't get a vote"); or (2) that all junior officers have complaints, and those who leave are not particularly more discouraged than those who choose to stay. To address these concerns, we additionally surveyed 30 active duty respondents with similar rank and demographic characteristics as a reality check on our results. We refer to this active duty cohort throughout this report to provide a counterpoint for our survey results. Members of our active duty cohort have had successful military careers to date and were generally positive about their military experience – two-thirds intend to stay in the service until eligible for retirement. Nevertheless, they echoed many of the concerns voiced by our target sample.

Recommendations. The U.S. military is among our most effective and respected national institutions – it does many things right. But even great organizations have room for improvement. In this report, we propose some low-cost, high-return reforms with a goal to introduce greater efficiency and flexibility, which in turn may help to retain more of our nation's most qualified young military leaders. Our recommendations are largely synergistic, and we have grouped them broadly into six categories:

- Know who you have. You can only target your best employees for retention if you can identify them. High-performing organizations regularly grade personnel using a wide variety of quantitative and qualitative indicators, with a focus on identifying the top and bottom performers. We recommend that the military update its officer evaluation processes to provide a more rigorous and comprehensive evaluation system.

- Reward top performers. Successful organizations integrate evaluation metrics that reflect institutional goals and explicitly reward the individuals who best reflect those values. In the military, a comprehensive rewards system should also include incentives such as new opportunities for assignments outside the military and mentorships with senior officers.

- Give your people a say in their own careers. High-performing organizations offer flexible opportunities for employees to pursue their interests while maintaining a work-life balance. Although there is little to be done about current op tempos, we believe the military should consider a market-based system that better matches available assignments with an officer's aptitude, interests, and career goals.

- Promote innovation. Senior leaders in successful organizations encourage and formalize systems that promote creativity and innovation. In the military, this should be reflected in revised officer evaluation reports that identify not only past performance but future potential in order to create a clearer impression of a military officer's true aptitude.

- Be open to feedback. Studies demonstrate that high-performing organizations seek feedback at all levels, including from those who leave the organization. Junior officers who leave the service should participate in a formalized lessons-learned system that includes exit interviews and aggregates suggestions and recommendations for review by senior officers.

- Continue to recruit. Junior officers value their own experiences but see few opportunities for challenge or professional development during the middle portion of their careers. Senior leaders should continue to "recruit" these officers even after commissioning through improved mentorship and by highlighting opportunities for interesting or unique careers.

We do not mean to say here that we have cracked the code on officer attrition – nor do we claim to identify causal relationships between officer concerns and retention. But we do believe we have highlighted areas for the Department of Defense and the military services to scrutinize more closely. In fact, much of what we report is intuitive – arduous deployment timelines, quality of life concerns, ineffective superior officers, and insufficient financial compensation are all reasons why officers claim to leave the service. Yet our most important message is perhaps this: many young officers say they leave simply because they do not believe their skills and talents will continue to be rewarded with increased responsibility and freedom of action as they progress.

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INTRODUCTION

Today's junior officers represent the future of the institution – among them may be the next Eisenhower, Black Jack Pershing, or Billy Mitchell. At the same time, the Department of Defense is undergoing perhaps its most significant transformation in the history of the modern force. This change, combined with a decade of near-constant use, has given rise to anxiety about retention within the junior officer corps, long a proverbial "canary in a coal mine" for the military's organizational health. Some theorize that the strain of repeated deployments is causing junior officers to flee the service; others insist that the personnel management and compensation systems are broken; while still others believe that the problem is simply exaggerated. The true impact, if there is one, may not be known for years. Yet as important as the overall attrition statistics are, this ongoing debate misses a more subtle point: it is not simply the quantity but also the *quality* of the officers retained that matters. Will the Army have its next George Marshall to call upon in a time of national need? The military, like any other institution, must not only be concerned with simply maintaining *enough* personnel, but also with retaining its best and most talented.

Yet interestingly, amid all the concern for the health of the junior officer corps, very few have paused to ask the individuals concerned – the former officers themselves. We interviewed 242 former military officers drawn from all four services about their experiences in the military and their reasons for leaving. We were surprised to discover that 75% of those we surveyed had no opportunity to provide feedback to the military after separation. What came through loud and clear in their responses was that the loss of junior military talent is not the problem; rather, it is a *symptom* of larger underlying institutional challenges. In this report, we attempt to place these junior officers' thoughtful and often thought-provoking observations in the context of the literature on military adaptation, human capital management, and organizational change. We then propose several ways in which the military might adapt to better retain its most talented junior officers in the future.

Throughout this report we refer in particular to challenges faced by the Army, and we wish to make clear that we are not singling out the Army for criticism. Rather, as the largest force and the service at highest risk of retention issues as a result of the ongoing conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Army's attempts to adapt serve as a useful proxy by which to examine the retention challenges facing all four military services.

The Making of the Junior Officer Corps

Service end-strength requirements are set by Congress and revised annually, to include multiple increases throughout the last decade for both the Army and the Marine Corps.[1] End-strength by rank is also regularly scrutinized by Congress and civilian policymakers; the current numbers for company-grade officers are indicated below:[2]

	Army	Air Force	Navy	Marine Corps
Total Officers	90,795	65,496	52,031	20,709
0-2	11,304	7,009	6,504	3,654
0-3	27,585	22,486	16,550	6,225
0-4	17,010	14,625	10,268	3,910

In 1980, Congress passed the Defense Officer Personnel Management Act, which mandated percentage promotion goals for Department of Defense uniformed personnel, in an attempt to centralize and standardize the different methods used by each service to promote officers. In combination with total officer end-strength requirements, DOPMA standards provide a two-part rubric for each service to determine its total officer make-up:

TABLE 2.
DOPMA GUIDELINES FOR THE OFFICER PROMOTION SYSTEM

Officer Pay Grade	Opportunity for Promotion (Percentage promoted to grade)	Timing of Promotion (Years of service)
O-1 and O-2	100 if Fully Qualified	1.5
O-3	95	3.5 to 4
O-4	80	10 ± 1
O-5	70	16 ± 1
O-6	50	22 ± 1

SOURCE: Congressional Budget Office using data from the Defense Officer Personnel Management Act of 1980, 10 U.S.C. 513, 94 Stat. 2835.

NOTE: DOPMA = Defense Officer Personnel Management Act.

3

As this chart demonstrates, developing military leaders is a long, arduous, and resource-intensive process. A captain cannot simply be created -- in the military's rigid hierarchy, all officers begin as lieutenants and must proceed through an "up or out" promotion process. Creating an additional class of majors can take up to 10 years; lieutenant colonels can take close to 20. The military typically accesses officers through three different programs: the service academies, Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) at civilian institutions, and Officer Candidate School (OCS). After accession, officers are required to complete active duty service obligation (ADSO) commensurate with their accession route – typically between 3-5 years of service. Historically, many officers leave at the end of the ADSO period. After this

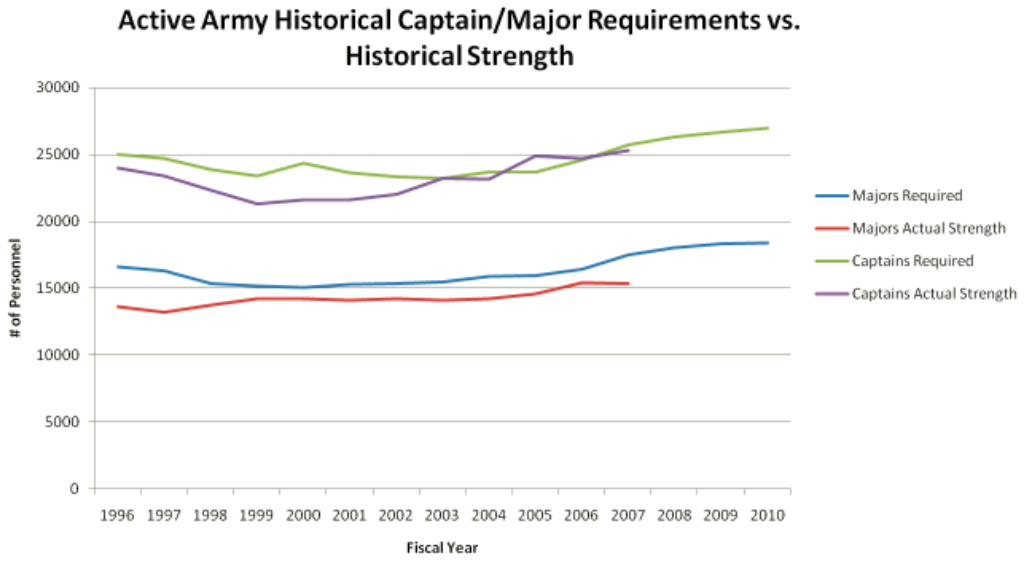
point, the military must compete with other potential employers in order to retain young officers.

Junior Officer Attrition: A Real Problem?

Secretary Gates has repeatedly referred to the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan as the "captains' wars." In February 2011, he elaborated on this premise in a speech to cadets at West Point:

> "Junior leaders are given extraordinary opportunities to be innovative, take risks, and be responsible and recognized for the consequences….[They are] men and women in the prime of their professional lives, who may have been responsible for the lives of scores or hundreds of troops, or millions of dollars in assistance, or engaging in reconciling warring tribes..."[4]

Today's junior officer corps is under more pressure than ever before. This is most evident in the ground forces, which have borne much of the brunt of recent conflicts. Army officer retention spiked strongly in 2003, but fell in 2004. By 2005, as the first class of post-9/11 post-OIF officers completed their ADSO period, junior officer retention plummeted to near-critical levels.



[5]

One internal Army memo cited by multiple news sources indicated that the Army was concerned with a "disproportionate loss of high-potential, high-performance junior leaders."[6] Other reports indicated that more than one-third of West Point's Class of 2000

left the service as soon as their initial obligation was up.[7] Although this was largely in line with historical Army trends, some began to predict a crisis.[8] By 2007, the Army was predicting a total shortfall of over 3,000 officers, particularly in the crucial senior captain and major range – those who have stayed on past their initial required tour but who are not yet close to retirement.[9] These statistics prompted the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to conclude that the Army "faces many retention challenges … [and] does not have an integrated strategic plan to address its retention shortfalls."[10]

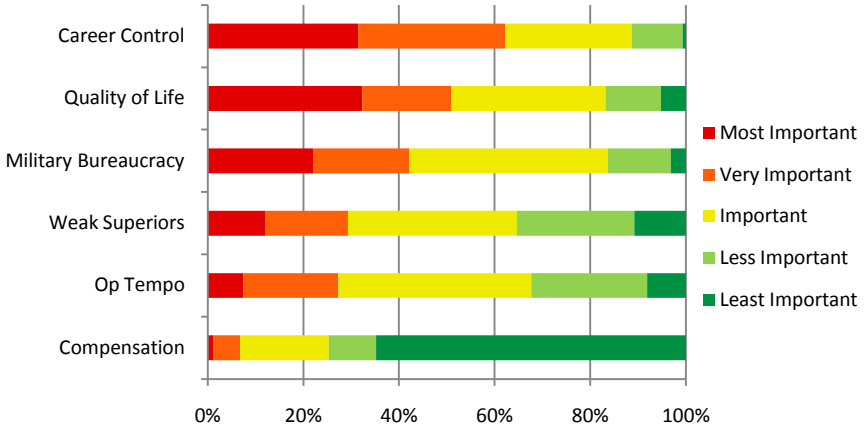
Having the right number of officers is a necessary but not sufficient condition: the *quality* of officers retained must also be a benchmark.

Although it now appears as if the Army has righted its ship when it comes to retaining the right number of officers, it did so largely by filling shortages via across-the-board promotions to field-grade officer rank. Less than 85% of available billets at those ranks were filled by officers with the requisite rank and time in service – a critical shortfall, by the Army's own definition[11] -- and today's senior lieutenants and junior captains spend less time than ever before in critical development positions such as company command.[12] Furthermore, the Army does not conduct forced rankings of officers against their peers until they have reached field-grade level, nearly ten years into their service commitment.[13] In short, the Army's policy ignores a crucial distinction, which is that having the right number of officers is a necessary but not sufficient condition: the *quality* of officers retained must also be a benchmark for evaluating the impact of any military retention policy. Even as far back as 2007, Secretary Gates identified the critical importance of retention, saying "These men and women need to be retained, and the best and brightest advanced to the point that they can use their experience to shape the institution to which they have given so much."[14]

More than three years later, it is still not clear that the military services are effectively executing the Secretary's bidding. Although such conclusions are often hotly disputed, surveys of junior officers continue to suggest that those most capable are leaving the service. For instance, a 2008 survey of 100 active-duty officers indicated that 62% of them thought the 'best and brightest' captains were leaving active-duty service.[15] More recently, Tim Kane reported in *The Atlantic* that "an astonishing 93 percent" of active and recently-active junior officers thought that most or all of the best officers were leaving the service before completing their careers.[16] The dispute about who leaves and why rages on largely because the military's ability to track and target top young officers is limited – there are simply no available objective metrics on what the "best" officers look like.

In recent years, researchers have examined a number of factors that influence attrition. We asked our survey respondents to force rank the issues most important to them – in other words, only one factor could be most important.

Rate the following factors in terms of their importance in your decision to leave the military.



Based on these results, in this report we consider four factors in detail:

- Operational tempo and deployment timelines. In a 2008 survey, almost 40% of officers ranked operational tempo as the most important reason why they would leave service; it was first among all other reasons. In the words of one of our survey respondents, the pace of deployments was simply "exhausting."

- Frustration with military bureaucracy. In another 2010 survey, 82% of respondents agreed that frustration with the bureaucracy was one of their reasons for leaving. In our survey, we found that dissatisfaction with the personnel management system was particularly important in this regard.

- Institutional innovation and flexibility. The generation currently working its way through the officer ranks has grown up with vastly expanded notions of information filtering and accessibility. We found that young officers with significant on-the-ground experience were frustrated that their proposals for innovation and change were largely perceived as irrelevant to the institution.

- Financial compensation. Financial compensation is among the Department's most responsive tools for fine-tuning retention incentives, and has been the focus of numerous studies. In recent years, the services have implemented officer retention bonuses in an effort to induce their best officers to stay. However, our results indicate that such incentives have little influence on the officers who took our survey.

Among our active duty survey cohort, quality of life was the most important concern (57.7%), followed by career control (26%) and operational tempo (10%). The active duty sample largely agreed with our target out-of-service sample that compensation (38.5%) and weak superior officers (28%) were less of a problem for today's officer corps. Additionally, several commented that they chose to stay in the military out of a sense of obligation and duty to country.

Perhaps most importantly for purposes of this analysis, a majority of the active duty cohort disagreed with the statement that junior officers would leave regardless of changes to the personnel system, lending credence to the idea that small improvements can indeed have an outsize impact on the population in question. Specific breakdowns of the comparison between active duty and out-of-service samples are contained in Appendix D of this report.

Who We Surveyed

To assess the opinions of former military officers, we conducted a cross-sectional survey of 242 junior military officers ranging in rank from O-2 to O-5 and who served between 2001 and 2010. The break-down in ranks and services of respondents is detailed below.

Rank and Service of Survey Respondents.

	USA	USMC	USN	USAF
O-2	2	5	2	1
O-3	82	25	44	6
O-4	5	1	8	1
O-5	3	0	0	0

We discuss the methodological limitations of our survey approach later in this report, so here we simply note that our sample is not entirely representative of the overall population of military officers, or even of former officers. The officers we surveyed were more likely to be white and less likely to be married than the average officer. Our respondents were more likely to have graduated from one of the highly competitive military academies and to report that they graduated in the top quintile of their basic officer training class. They were more likely to have experienced combat, and also more likely to have obtained or are currently obtaining a graduate degree.

We readily acknowledge that in some ways, these demographics bias our results. Yet if these are indicators of talent, then our work is an initial (albeit highly subjective) effort to identify, track, and gather feedback from high-quality officers who recently left the service. While we do not claim to have identified the "best officers," we do believe our sample

effectively captures the opinions of a large number of talented officers who would have made a positive contribution to the military had they continued to serve.

[1]See, for example, P.L. 111-383, *The Ike Skelton National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011*. December 2010.

[2]"Department of Defense Active Duty Military Personnel by Rank/Grade." Defense Manpower Data Center, Statistical Information Analysis Division. 31 January 2011. Available at: http://tinyurl.com/4he93tw.

[3]Marvin M. Smith. "The Military Officer Personnel System and the Services' Plans for Downsizing." *The Drawdown of the Military Officer Corps.* November 1999. Available at: http://tinyurl.com/6cjrw66.

[4]Robert M. Gates. "Remarks by the Secretary of Defense at United States Military Academy (West Point, NY)." 25 February 2011. Available at: http://tinyurl.com/4qze7eh.

[5]Jaron Wharton. "Anecdotal Evidence of a Hollowing Force? A Closer Look at Junior Officer Retention." *Center for a New American Security Working Paper.* May 2008. Available at: http://tinyurl.com/6kqjlgx.

[6]Andrew Tilghman. "The Army's Other Crisis: Why the best and brightest young officers are leaving." *Washington Monthly.* December 2007. Available at: http://tinyurl.com/2njyck.

[7]Thom Shanker. "Young Officers Leaving Army at a High Rate." *The New York Times*. 10 April 2006. Available at: http://tinyurl.com/4mq5keh. The number of junior officers who left rose from about 6% in 2001 to over 8% in 2006 (the Army expects to commission between 3,000 and 4,000 new officers every year).

[8]The idea that today's military was at risk reached its peak in 2007, when Colin Powell described the Army as "about broken" while Lawrence Korb told Congress it was "stretched to [the] breaking point" and General Barry McCaffrey put it in his typically blunt manner, "the U.S. Army is starting to unravel."

[9]Charles A. Henning. "Army Officer Shortages: Background and Issues for Congress." Congressional Research Service, U.S. Library of Congress. 5 July 2006. Available at: http://tinyurl.com/38lcmq.

[10]U.S. Government Accountability Office. "Military Personnel: Strategic Plan Needed to Address Army's Emerging Officer Accession and Retention Challenges." Report to the Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives. January 2007. Available at: http://tinyurl.com/4u53al3.

[11] Henning, "Army Officer Shortages: Background and Issues for Congress."

[12]Casey Wardynski, David Lyle, and Michael Colarusso. "Towards a U.S. Army Officer Corps Strategy for Success: Retaining Talent." U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute. May 2010. 6.

[13]Interview with Major Carl J. Wojtaszek, Assistant Professor of Economics, Office of Economic and Manpower Analysis, United States Military Academy. 9 February 2011.

[14] Robert M. Gates. "Remarks by the Secretary of Defense at Association of the United States Army (Washington, DC)." 10 October 2007. Available at: http://tinyurl.com/6g33ncd.

[15]Wharton, "Anecdotal Evidence of a Hollowing Force? A Closer Look at Junior Officer Retention."

[16]Tim J. Kane. "Why Our Best Officers Are Leaving." *The Atlantic.* January/February 2011. Available at: http://tinyurl.com/27r755a.

PART I: AREAS FOR CHANGE

Organizational Flexibility and Innovation

ORGANIZATIONAL FLEXIBILITY AND PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

"There is no type of human endeavor where it is so important that the leader understands all phases of his job as that of the profession of arms."

\- Major General James Fry

Background

Known as Millenials, the current generation of America's young workers is self-directed, networked and highly mobile; rather than building a career within one company or organization, they are more likely to view their work life as a progression of discrete and increasingly-challenging jobs. This population seeks rapid career advancement while simultaneously placing a high emphasis on maintaining a meaningful life outside of work.[17] Studies have demonstrated that Millennials are typically less motivated by guarantees of job security, and have less faith in the promise of employer-provided benefits than preceding generations.[18] Recognizing this generational shift, many top corporations are altering employment and retention practices to accommodate the Millennials' preferences. As a result, today's "hottest" companies emphasize opportunities for collaboration, embrace technology, highlight mentorship programs, and create chances for employees to engage in personally fulfilling work.[19]

With an average age of 32.2, the majority of our survey respondents fall clearly within the Millennial generation. Personnel management issues were clearly the largest reason why junior officers in our survey claimed they left active-duty service, as almost 57% of respondents said the limited ability to control their own careers was the first- or second-most important reason for leaving. 74% agreed that the military should expand early promotion abilities, and only 23% felt that talented officers were promoted more quickly than below-average officers. Tellingly, our active duty respondents also criticized the personnel system, and only 25% said they believe the military does a good job matching talent to jobs. In fact, when we asked both our out-of-service and active duty cohorts what word or words came to mind when they thought about the personnel system, the answers were resoundingly negative, and sometimes unprintable (see chart, next page).

In its function as an employer, the Department of Defense must compete against private sector corporations in the U.S. labor market for access to the best talent.[20] Yet the military is limited by certain constraints unique to the profession of arms. As large bureaucratic organizations with wide-ranging responsibilities, the services must rely upon rules and

standard operating procedures out of necessity. Furthermore, the deadly nature of the military requires a substantial investment not only in functional combat skills but also in a

What word comes to mind when you think about the military personnel system?

"warrior ethos" developed through years of progressive indoctrination and command responsibility.[21] As a result, while mid-career military officers often have little problem transitioning into middle management in corporate America, the converse is far less true. Options for lateral entry into the military are necessarily limited, and the most critical positions cannot be filled with just-in-time accessions; military officers must be grown from the bottom up.

This system is fundamentally sound – experience at lower ranks should be a requirement for top leadership. Even acknowledging these constraints, however, the military's programs for personnel tracking, assignment, and promotion are ossified. We believe there are significant dividends to be gained among young officers by incorporating some best practice reforms into the military human capital management system. The Pentagon has struggled for decades with this challenge, producing numerous iterative personnel management strategies and investing significant amounts of money in retention. As just one example, the recent Army Critical Skills Retention Bonus (CSRB) policy offered a bonus of up to $35,000 for an additional three years of service. Unfortunately, most compensation-based initiatives are insufficient strategies on their own. The Army's own survey data showed that many officers who accepted the bonus planned to extend their service independent of the monetary incentive. Without an emphasis on quality of officers retained or on retaining specific skill-sets, the returns on this policy implementation were quite low.[22]

The failures of the personnel system can be roughly divided into two areas of concern. The first is the failure to identify and reward top performers. Pay for performance is considered basic practice in corporate America - but with rare exceptions, a military officer's rank and paycheck are determined by number of years in service, rather than talent or military occupation. Exacerbating this disparity, President Bush in 2004 waived a legislative requirement for forced-distribution ratings that operated much like an academic curve to identify the best and worst performing officers.[23] Perhaps unsurprisingly, the result has been inflation in officer evaluations. Company-grade officers receive "virtually no performance ranking at all," and the Army today promotes more than 90% of its officers through the rank of lieutenant colonel.[24] The problems are not limited to ground forces, however – the Air Force promotes more than 90% of its officers to major and more than 75% to lieutenant colonel; the Navy promotes 84% to major and 79% to lieutenant colonel. This occurs despite legislation establishing promotion guidelines as 80% to major, 70% to lieutenant colonel, and 50% to colonel. Although it is impossible to determine whether the quality of these officers is higher or lower than the cadres before them, the perception that officers are promoted regardless of talent and capability is rampant. Or, as one respondent put it, "Anyone can become a Lieutenant Colonel in charge of 800 Soldiers merely by converting oxygen to carbon dioxide for 20 years and being automatically promoted 4 times."

Table 1: Recent Line Officer Promotion Rates

	All Officers: Average Promotion Rates (%)				
Pay grade	Navy	Air Force	Army	Marine Corps	Coast Guard
O-4	84	90	94	87	82
O-5	79	76	90	69	73
O-6	55	45	57	52	58

NOTE: Navy and Coast Guard averages are based on data from FY07-FY10; Army and Air Force averages are based on data from FY07-FY09, and Marine Corps averages are based on data from FY08-FY10.

Average promotion rates of officers by service. DOPMA legislation sets promotion goals as 80% for O-4, 70% for O-5, and 50% for O-6.

If you were the chief of staff for your Service, what would you do to ensure the best and the brightest stay in the service?

"Encourage more active mentoring."

"Flexible assignments and billets in more desirable locations."

"Be willing to fire people for poor performance (not just send them to another unit or higher echelon where they will do less work, which actually exacerbates the problem by giving them a more impressive resume)."

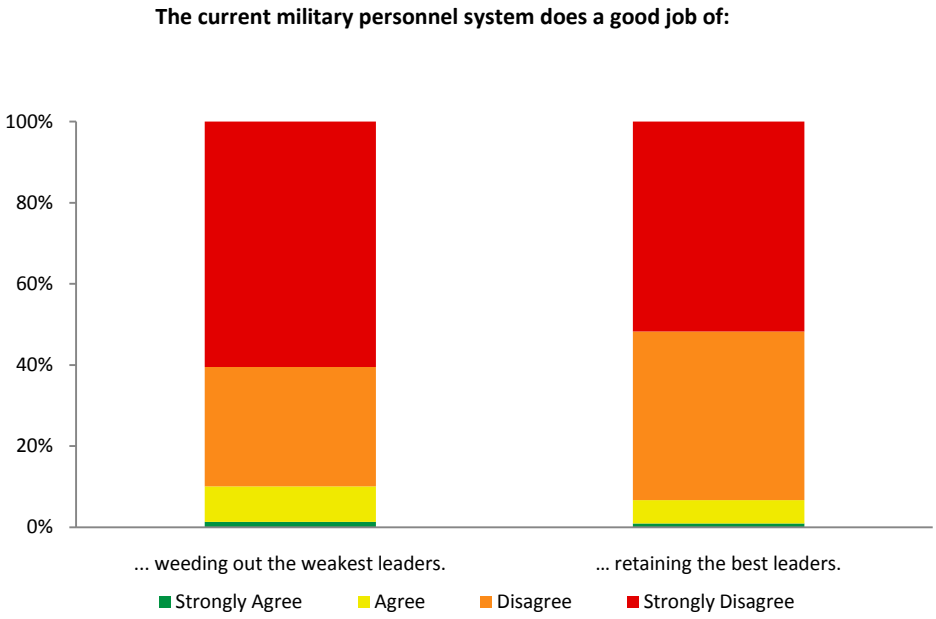
"Allow talented officers and soldiers who are happy with their current jobs to remain in those positions."

"Not have such a rigid career path. We shouldn't force people to be S-1s or S-4s just because everyone else has followed that path."

"Allow them to leave for a year or two without being separated. Think of it as a sabbatical."

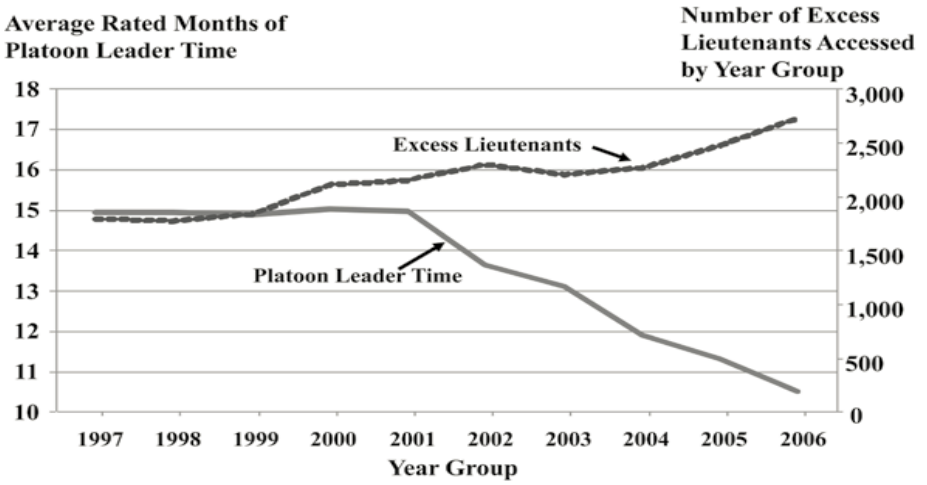
"I would institute an accelerated merit promotion system where true achievers could stand out and be rewarded for their intellect and efforts."

High promotion rates and a lack of distinction between officers lead to frustration among high-achieving young officers who see little opportunity to distinguish themselves through military service.[25] 29% of respondents indicated that troubles with superior officers were one of the top two reasons for leaving service. More than 92% of officers disagreed with the statement that the current system does a good job retaining the strongest officers; 89% similarly disagreed that the current system does a good job of weeding out the weakest.

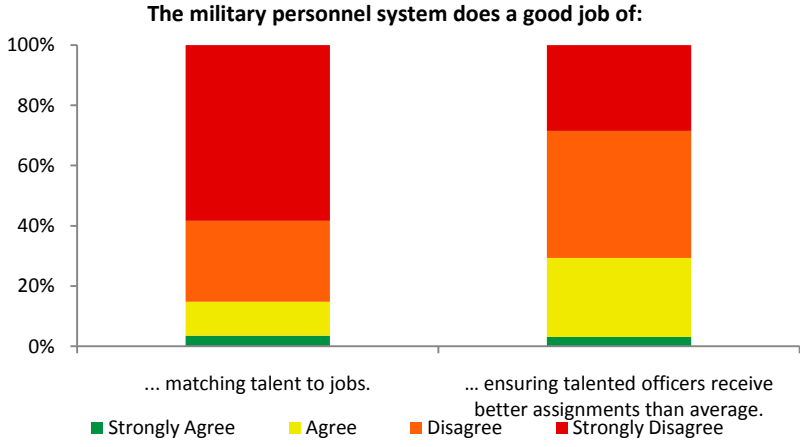


A second but related issue is the failure to allow officers the command time they need to learn effectively, particularly in the ground services**.** For instance, the Army's response to a shortfall in captains has been to access additional lieutenants. This action increased raw numbers but also created a series of unintended consequences: increased waiting times for essential schools and training opportunities, more make-work duties, and less time spent in critical early command positions.[26] As a result, today's captains have less overall experience, forcing commanders to assign much of the "captain-level" work instead to officers at the rank of major. The result is job dissatisfaction at all levels, as officers complain that the lack of quality developmental experiences leaves them unprepared to lead in full-spectrum operations.[27] The graph on the following page shows the relationship between increased lieutenant accessions and decreased platoon command time within the Army.

Impact of Over-Accession on Developmental Opportunities for Lieutenants in the Army[28]

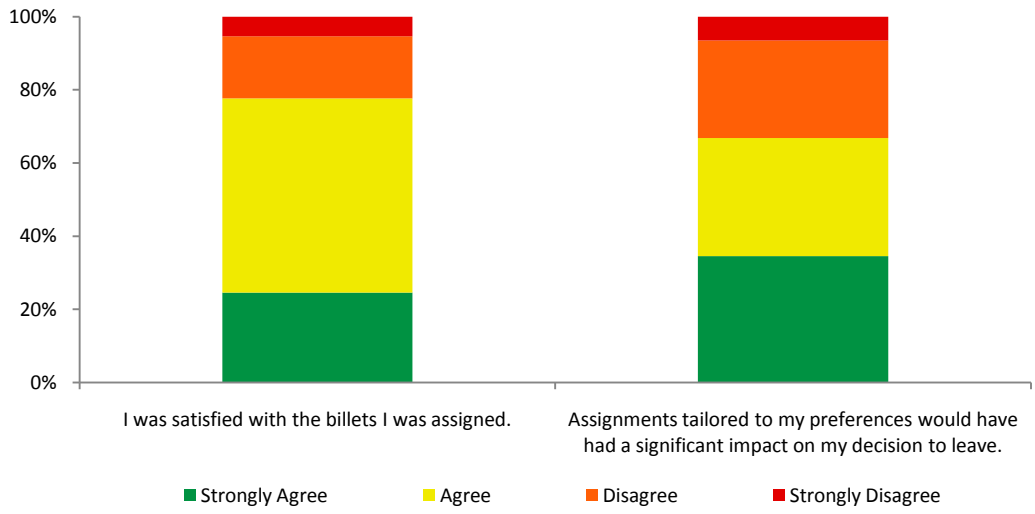


Lastly, all four services largely fail to distinguish between officers with unique skill-sets or who have chosen non-traditional career paths in assignments and performance evaluations. Although certain skills are better suited to specific types of billets, the current officer evaluation system "provide[s] no unique or distinguishing information about its officers," meaning the military is selecting officers for specific billets nearly blindly, without regard for their unique skills or inclinations.[29] Nearly 83% of our respondents disagreed with the statement that the military does a good job of matching talent to jobs; 70% disagreed with the statement that talented officers received better jobs than average. For example, the Army relies heavily on the Officer Effectiveness Report (OER) – a standardized form that emphasizes command ability -- for promotions, despite the fact that only 12% of senior military billets are command positions.[30] As a result, service members with specific technical skills are often underpaid and underutilized in the military – leading many to seek opportunities to use their talents elsewhere.[31]



The paramount importance of reforms to the officer personnel system are identified by the following statistics: 22% of those surveyed felt dissatisfied with the billets they were assigned; 64% felt that having assignments more tailored to their personal preferences would have had a significant impact on their decision to leave active duty. The officers we surveyed told us that not only is the personnel system an identified weakness, but that reforms to it would have immediate and significant effects.

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.



The Active Duty Perspective

Our active duty cohort was generally more forgiving of the military services than the out-of-service officers, but also agreed that the military personnel system was in need of reform. In fact, when asked what word or words came to mind when they thought about the military personnel system, the active duty cohort replied with universally (100%) negative terms. Only 18% of active duty respondents believed that the current system does a good job of weeding out the weakest leaders; a similar number believed it does a good job of retaining the best leaders.

Only 25% of active duty respondents believed their service personnel system does a good job of matching talent to jobs, although most said they are personally generally satisfied with the assignments they have received over the course of their careers.

Our active duty cohort diverged most significantly from the out-of-service cohort on the question of whether to expand early promotions. Both groups are relatively split on the question, but the active duty cohort tended to believe that military promotions should not be accelerated, because it takes longer to gain experience to command at a senior level in

the military. Looking forward at their futures, young officers desire faster promotions; looking back on their careers, more senior officers believe the pace was appropriate. As a result, the military should carefully tailor any new initiatives concerning early promotion to ensure that only those capable of such increased responsibility receive it. Specific breakdowns of the comparison between active duty and out-of-service samples are contained in Appendix D.

Summary

More so than any other factor, our officers believed that improvements to the personnel system had the most potential to positively impact retention. As one respondent noted, "Officers are not afforded the opportunity to do jobs they love." Today's captains are the generals of the next generation; the inability to weed out the worst leaders and promote the best is a critical vulnerability. Small improvements to the personnel system to better capture and track the performance of officers will, we believe, produce outsize results. Our recommendations for how best to do so are described in greater detail later in this report.

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High promotion rates and a lack of distinction between officers lead to frustration among high-achieving young officers who see little opportunity to distinguish themselves through military service.

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[17]Eddy Ng, Linda Schweitzer, and Sean Lyons. "New Generation, Great Expectations: A Field Study of the Millennial Generation." *Journal of Business & Psychology.* Vol. 25, Issue2. June 2010.
[18]"Millenials: A Portrait of Generation Next." Pew Research Center. February 2010. Available at: http://tinyurl.com/4a8oc77.
[19]Jean Ferri-Read. "The Keys to Engaging Millennials." *Journal for Quality & Participation.* Vol. 33, Issue 1. April 2010. Jeanne C. Meister and Karie Willyerd. "Mentoring Millennials." *Harvard Business Review.* Vol. 88, Issue 5. May 2010.
[20]Carolyn Kleiner and Andrew Vliet. "Enter the Era of Persistent Competition for Talent." Strategic Studies Institute. July 2010.
[21] Wardynski, Lyle, Colarusso, "Towards a U.S. Army Officer Corps Strategy for Success: Retaining Talent." 3.
[22]*Ibid.* 25-27.
[23]*Ibid.* 18.
[24]Casey Wardynski, David S. Lyle, Michael J. Colarusso. "Towards a U.S. Army Officer Corps Strategy for Success: Evaluating Talent." U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute. January 2010. This

is in contrast to previous decades, when the rank of major was used as a point to separate talented officers for continued promotion.

[25]"Recent Officer Promotion Rates by Race, Ethnicity, and Gender." Military Diversity Leadership Commission Issue Paper #45. June 2010. Available at: http://tinyurl.com/4s9rnc5.

[26]Wardynski, Lyle, Colarusso, "Towards a U.S. Army Officer Corps Strategy for Success: Retaining Talent."

[27]U.S. Army Training and Leader Development Panel. "The Army Training and Leader Development Panel Officer Study: Report to the Army." 2003. Available at: http://tinyurl.com/6fq295d.

[28]Wardynski, Lyle, Colarusso, "Towards a U.S. Army Officer Corps Strategy for Success: Retaining Talent." 6.

[29]*Ibid.*

[30]*Ibid.* 9.

[31]Cindy Williams. "Advice + Dissent: Forget the Draft." *Government Executive.* 15 September 2004. Available at: http://tinyurl.com/6dqooey.

ORGANIZATIONAL INNOVATION AND IMPROVEMENT

"[The future of conflict] is about leaders. We're going to need people who can think differently."

\- General Raymond Odierno (USA)
Commander, Joint Forces Command

Background

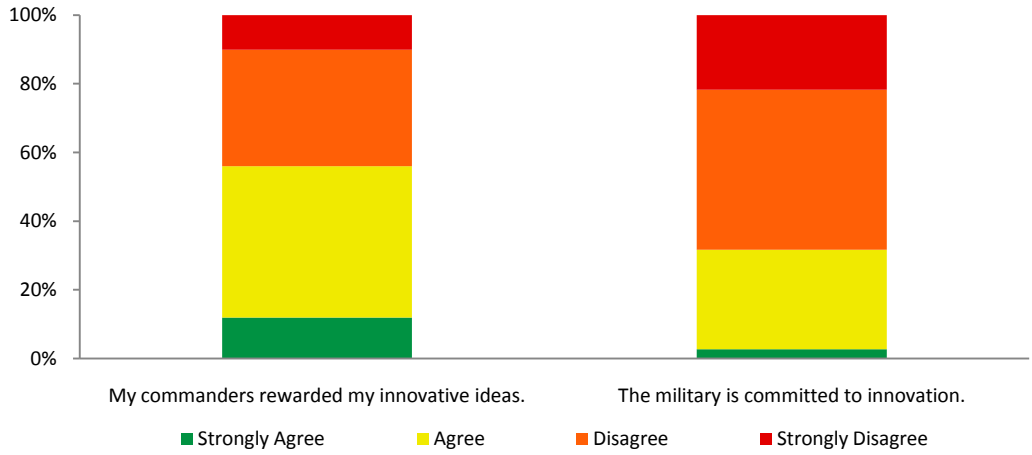
The academic literature continues to demonstrate that creativity and innovation are essential elements of organizational success in the twenty-first century. Here we consider innovation to mean the introduction of new methods or products and creativity as the ability to conceive of new processes. In other words, the first is the output; the second is the process. They are similar but distinct; the military produces innovative new technologies all the time through established rules and procedures of equipment purchasing. In this sense, then, being innovative does not go far enough – we must include creativity in order to capture the essential element of 'newness' in both the approach and solution to a problem. Or, as one expert put it, creativity is "novelty that works."[32]

Such creativity and innovation are essential to the military's operations, where conventional wisdom proclaims that "victory goes to the most flexible command structure."[33] While the American military has historically excelled at creativity and adaptation on the battlefield, it has struggled recently to replicate these results within its institutional framework. Changes in the institution have been precluded by changes in the doctrine – that is, figuring out how to fight has denied leaders the time to figure out how to update and reorganize once the fight is over. Put simply, despite a decade of combat that has challenged the military's operating procedures, the military services "… have changed almost nothing about the way their promotional systems and their entire bureaucracies operate."[34]

Currently, there are few formal incentives to be innovative. As one of our respondents put it, "What is most often rewarded is the officer that is not willing to 'rock the boat.'" Although about half of our respondents thought that their unit commander rewarded their innovative ideas, only 31% thought the military as a whole was committed to innovation; this is in marked contrast to our active duty cohort, where 50% believe the military is committed to innovation. The problem is structural rather than personal – that is, officers who left personally recognized the value of being innovative but were continually frustrated with the institution's lack of flexibility. As one officer said in the survey, "At the

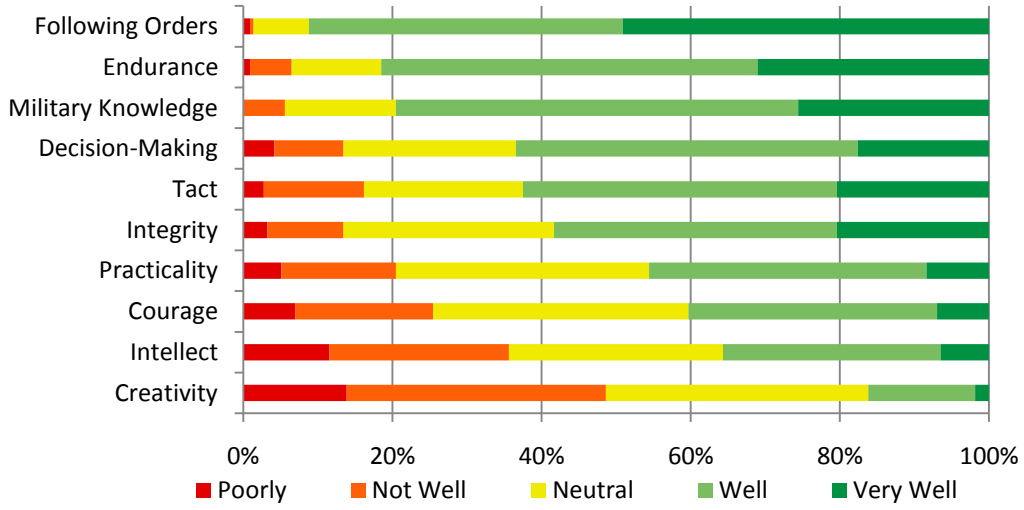
unit level individuals are identified, assigned, and rewarded effectively to the extent possible. The problem is that big Army is incapable of doing this."

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.



Among junior officers the recent experience of the military's most visible innovators – individuals like H.R. McMaster, John Nagl, and Paul Yingling – are often parsed for meaning and to glean career direction. When McMaster was originally passed over for promotion to general officer, Fred Kaplan wrote, "every officer I spoke with knew about it and had pondered its implications."[35] Or, as Lieutenant General Barno so bluntly put it, "Bad generals – dumb generals – kill off innovation and risk-taking, poison the well of future talent, and leave a legacy of 'ducks picking ducks' in their wake." [36] Our respondents generally appeared to agree, ranking creativity as the military's lowest-valued skill out of 10 characteristics, just behind intelligence.

How well does the military do at identifying and rewarding the following professional traits?



A second issue is a continued lack of broadening experiences. The evidence shows that thinking creatively is helped considerably by exposure to novel concepts and environments.[37] As then-Lieutenant Colonel Paul Yingling wrote in his scathing critique of the general officer corps, "It is unreasonable to expect that an officer who spends 25 years conforming to institutional expectations will emerge as an innovator in his late 40s."[38] The current military processes do little to encourage officers to try new experiences. Officers are not permitted to switch back and forth between military specialties. While 37% of officers have graduate degrees[39], far fewer obtain these degrees through civilian graduate schools while on active duty, despite a growing recognition that such experiences can be valuable at the senior level.[40] Officers often express concern about what the impact of taking a non-traditional assignment, such as serving on a Military Transition or Provincial Reconstruction Team, will do for their career prospects. As a result, some officers leave the service to seek greater diversity of experience elsewhere.

Our respondents reported mixed experiences with superior officers, but agreed that their influence can have an outsize influence on a young officer's experience – when this relationship works, they reported that it was one of the most rewarding parts of their military experience, but as one young officer told us, "the problem is one bad commander can waste an entire duty station assignment for a junior officer." Still, the results are not all bad. A majority of respondents were comfortable expressing their career ambitions to senior officers and thought that they took an active interest in their careers; such linkages are important to preventing what one author called "a brewing conflict between the Army's junior and senior officer corps." [41] If the military does not maintain the flexibility to bridge the divide between junior and senior leadership, some young officers may choose to leave the military and find a profession where such mentorship does occur.

As one of our respondents put it, "What is most often rewarded is the officer that is not willing to 'rock the boat.'".

Innovation and creativity come from being exposed to new experiences and new ideas. Currently, professional military schools are an almost mandatory requirement for promotion, but more than 76% of the officers in our survey believed that the best officers they knew would have stayed in the service if there were a greater variety of educational options, including at civilian institutions; 71% of our active duty cohort agreed. 40% of our respondents believe their current employer does a better job of informing them of opportunities for professional development and promotion than the military did. Such evidence lends support to the premise that much can be done to improve the military's ability to identify, evaluate, and reward innovation and creativity.

The Active Duty Perspective

The active duty cohort diverged sharply from the out-of-service sample on the question of military innovation and the role for entrepreneurial spirit within the services. Half of the active duty sample said that the military was committed to innovation, and more than two-thirds said their personal entrepreneurial behavior has been rewarded by senior officers.

That being said, active duty officers also rated creativity low on the scale of behaviors that the military rewards – zero believed the military identifies and rewards creativity very well, and only 18% believe it does so well. However, the active duty officers believe the military does reward intellect – 73% say well or very well – which may be a proxy for insightful behavior. Still, as with the out-of-service cohort, the behaviors that scored most highly on the "identify-and-reward" scale included following orders (89%), decision-making (82%), endurance (73%), and military knowledge (70%). Specific breakdowns of the comparison between active duty and out-of-service samples are contained in Appendix D.

Summary

Although the veterans we surveyed did not believe that the military as an institution valued creativity and innovation, they did think that senior officers took an interest in their careers and that their unit commanders valued their innovative ideas. Still, as one of our respondents said, "Some of the best officers are not seen as the best officers because often times these officers go against the grain." Our survey results provide evidence that the military could do more to formally encourage innovation and creativity in its junior officer corps, and this would increase the likelihood that they continue to serve.

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[32]Interview with Teresa Amabile, Edsel Bryant Ford Professor of Business Administration, Harvard Business School. 10 March 2011.
[33]Barry R. Posen. *The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain and Germany Between the World Wars*. Ithaca: Cornell Studies in Security Affairs. 1986. 48.
[34]Fred Kaplan. "Challenging the Generals." *The New York Times Magazine.* 26 August 2007. Available at: http://tinyurl.com/69qxr53.
[35] Kaplan, "Challenging the Generals."
[36]David Barno. "Dave Barno's top 10 tasks for General Dempsey, the new Army chief of staff." *The Best Defense.* 21 January 2011. Available at: http://tinyurl.com/6db5zed.
[37]Amabile interview, 10 March 2011.
[38]Paul Yingling. "A failure in generalship." *Armed Forces Journal.* 27 April 2007. Available at: http://tinyurl.com/2dqqav.
[39]"Population Representation in the Military Services 2008." Department of Defense, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense, Personnel and Readiness. Appendix B, Table 26. Available at: http://tinyurl.com/4d89ra5.
[40]See, for example, David Petraeus. "Beyond the Cloister." *The American Interest.* July/August 2007.
[41]Kaplan, "Challenging the Generals."

PART II: OTHER ISSUES OF CONCERN

Op Tempo & Compensation

OPERATIONAL TEMPO AND QUALITY OF LIFE

"Trends in retention are what the experts call 'trailing indicators.' In other words, the first time you know soldiers or officers might be leaving is when they have gone."

\- Brigadier General Kevin Ryan (USA, Ret.)
Executive Director, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs

Although the extent to which deployments drive attrition is debated, the increased operational tempo of recent years undoubtedly explains the decision by at least some military officers to leave the service. The current wars place an enormous burden on company-grade leaders, with counterinsurgency doctrine devolving incredible levels of responsibility to the small-unit level. Today's young officers have endured repeated back-to-back deployments; many have lost friends and colleagues in combat. Time spent at home is no less stressful, as units face high training demands conducted on deployment schedules and at deployment intensity.

Deployment and Attrition

The problem of officer attrition as a result of deployment is not new to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, but has gathered top-level attention in recent years. In 2005, the Army's own internal concerns about losing its "best and brightest" were widely reported when a leaked memo warned of a crisis in junior officer retention.[42] Recent research has attempted to measure the effect of deployment tempo on military personnel, and to quantify its overall impact on retention. Interestingly, although service members continue to rate pace of deployment as a primary reason for intending to leave active duty, their observed behavior, as measured by reenlistment statistics, belies this claim.[43] Nevertheless, the military has invested significant time and effort into determining the impact of deployment on uniformed personnel.

96% of our survey respondents reported deploying during the course of their military career; 81% reported deployments to Iraq or Afghanistan. We asked respondents to identify the word or words that came to mind when they considered their deployment experience. Roughly 57% of those surveyed associated deployment with words with a negative connotation, while 28% reported words with a positive connotation (the remainder recorded value-neutral words, such as "individual augmentee" or "life experience").

What word or words come to mind when you think about your deployment?

Yet our survey data indicates that, of those individuals who chose to leave active duty, deployment was not the primary driver for leaving. In fact, only 9% rated it as the most important reason; in contrast, 33% said it was less or least important. Our active duty sample generally agreed, with 10% putting it as the first and 25% the second reason why they might leave in the future. We hypothesize that the disparity between the active duty and out-of-service cohorts is related to demographic differences – our active duty cohort was slightly older and more likely to be married, which may explain why deployment had a greater effect on their overall quality of life.

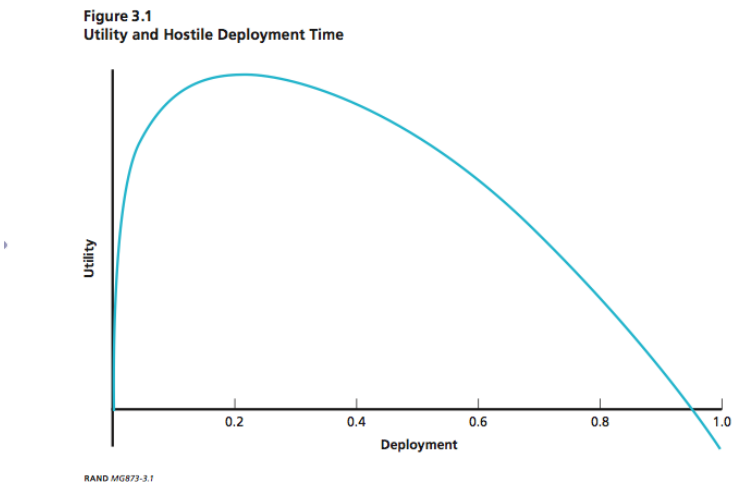
Deployment Characteristics

There is evidence to indicate that some amount of deployment experience actually has a *positive* effect on reenlistment.[44] This may be due to the fact that deployment allows service members to use their skills; similar to police officers or firefighters responding to emergency calls, deployments are the proving ground that validates their training. However, the positive effect of deployment diminishes and eventually becomes negative as months deployed increase.[45]

The length and type of deployment play a significant role in its subsequent psychological and emotional impact. A 2000 RAND report distinguished between hostile and non-hostile deployments – perhaps unsurprisingly, while individuals who experienced non-hostile deployments were more likely to reenlist, hostile deployments mitigated this overall positive effect (though did not entirely erase it).[46] Expectation also plays a role. When matched by reality, deployment time had little impact on retention; in contrast, those who spent more time away from home than anticipated were less likely to reenlist.[47] In the

RAND model, military personnel maximize the value of their deployments when they are deployed in hostile situations approximately 22% of the time.

Utility of Deployment as a Function of Percentage of Total Time Spent Deployed[48]



With many Army and Marine Corps units operating on nearly 1:1 dwell-time ratio, expected utility is likely much lower. Although Army Chief of Staff General George Casey recently promised Congress to achieve a two-year dwell time by October 2011, the Army remains far from this goal.[49] Furthermore, little is known about the impact of combat on reenlistment over time.

Nearly 50% of our survey sample reported personally engaging in combat. Of this group, less than 7% indicated that deployment strain was their most important reason for leaving. This tends to reinforce the argument that deployment, even with combat, is not a primary driver of attrition among junior officers. Nearly three-fourths of the junior officers we surveyed commissioned during or after 2001, suggesting that not only did they understand they would deploy and see combat, but in fact that was precisely *why* they joined.

Neither returning to a 1:2 deployment-to-dwell ratio nor shorter deployment levels would have had induced most officers in our survey to remain in the service; the same held true among our active duty cohort as well. Such evidence supports other findings in this study – namely, that the officers concerned are less

How would you change the training system?

"Have officers and SNCOs specialize in certain regions of the world in order to become subject matter experts in the history, culture, geo-political dynamics, and languages of that region so as to enable them to operate more effectively over the course of their careers."

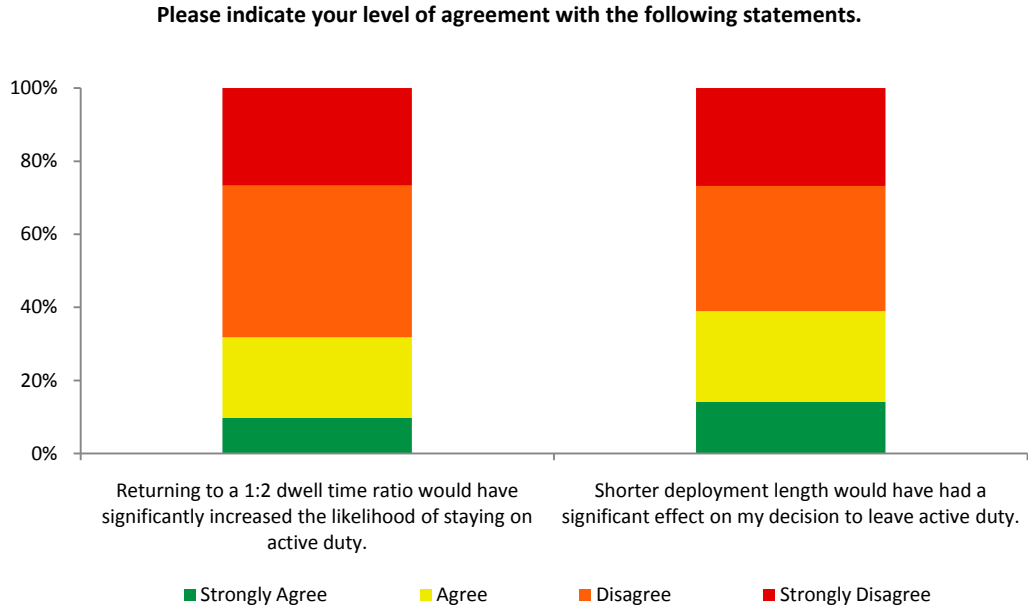
"There was no mechanism in place to capture the everyday tactics and techniques we developed during a long deployment … A two-week turnover was insufficient to capture of the all nuance of 13 months of combat work. Every time one of my units deployed it was like starting over from scratch."

"Opportunities to pursue language and other unique skills training without derailing your career."

"Teach how to think and plan - give open ended field problems. The training I received was great...if that is what my job required. I did not encounter a single mission remotely like my training."

"Officers should be encouraged to think on their feet and make mistakes. … When a real world scenario occurs, [officers] have little experience in reacting with critical thinking."

dissatisfied with rapid deployments and time overseas as they are with other aspects of their service.

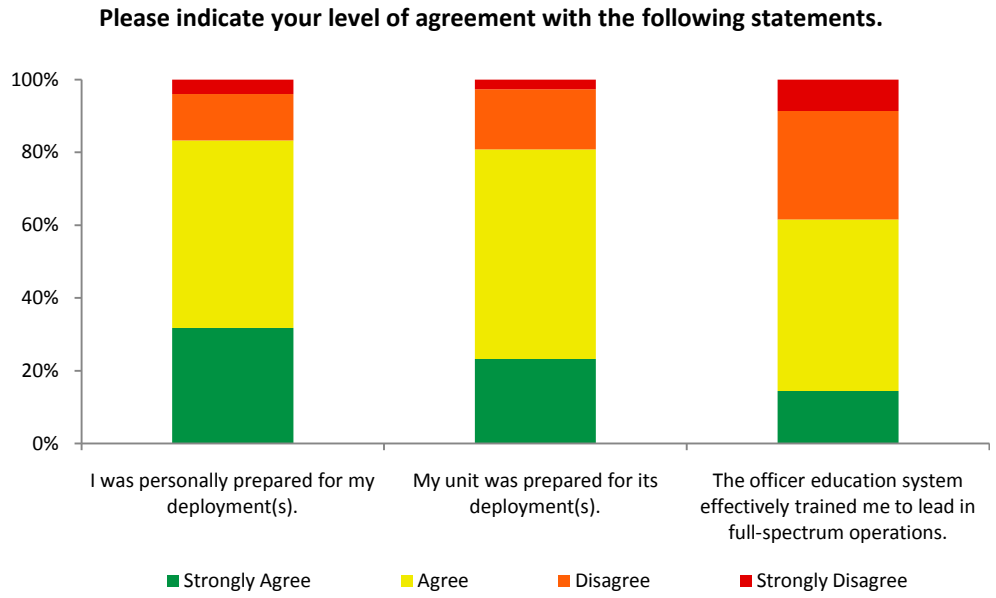


Training

The combination of repeated deployments and immediate training cycles clearly took a toll on the officers who responded to our survey, a concern that has been echoed by other research, including by the services themselves. In fact, a 2003 Army report warned:

> "There is an undisciplined operational pace that affects every facet of Army life. Officers characterize it as too many short-term, back-to-back deployments and exercises. … Excessive operational pace is … detrimental to readiness, leader development, and officer job satisfaction; leads to micromanagement; and is a major reason for attrition among all cohorts."[50]

Still, our survey data indicated that the military has regained its effectiveness in personnel and unit training despite the rapid pace of deployments. This is no simple feat and should be regarded as an accomplishment – even officers who choose to leave are not doing so because they believe the institution is incapable of accomplishing its mission. Survey respondents indicated satisfaction with military capability at a variety of levels and over various periods – from a single training cycle to the entire post-September 11th era, and from the individual up through deploying-unit levels.



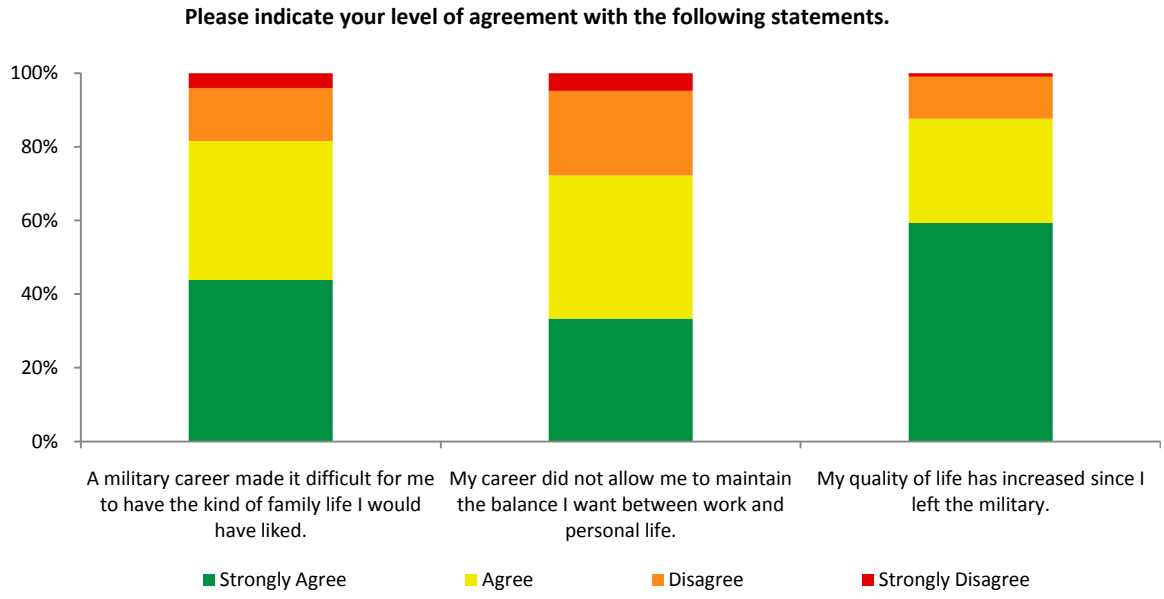
Approximately 61% of the officers we surveyed believed the military has adapted well to operational changes stemming from the current wars; slightly more than half thought the military effectively incorporated OIF- or OEF-specific skills into their training. Officers overwhelmingly indicated they were prepared for their deployments. 79% indicated they were personally prepared, and 76% were similarly satisfied with their unit preparation -- these numbers were broadly true for our active duty sample as well. Such a finding only reinforces the reforms needed in areas outside of warfighting capability – the American military remains fully capable of preparing itself for war; it is concerns in other areas that drive officers away.

Quality of Life

An increasing number of officers list family separations as the reason driving their decision to leave active duty in the post-September 11th era. As one of our respondents said, "The military did not prevent me and my wife from having children, but the specter of another deployment looming ahead unknown in the distance definitely gave us pause about starting a family." Studies conducted over the last decade place the percentage of officers who leave for family reasons between 23% and 48%.[51] DOD senior leadership clearly recognizes the unique strain deployment tempo places on service members with spouses or children. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Admiral Mike Mullen regularly speaks with junior officers, while First Lady Michelle Obama has made improving the lives of military families a highlighted initiative, and the Pentagon has taken many concrete steps to alleviate family stress in recent years.[52] These efforts appear to be bearing fruit. For instance, the Army's most recent family survey indicated that concerns by Army spouses have dropped from

their historical highs – in fact, 57% say they are now "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the Army way of life.[53] (This may be because of the Army's changes, or simply because dissatisfied families have since left the service and others have readjusted their expectations of operational tempo.) Nevertheless, concerns about marital stress remain, as 14% of Army spouses reported marital problems in the last six months, an increase of four percentage points since 2005, and 56% reported using personal counseling during deployments, up from 49% in 2005.[54]

Although deployments largely did not drive our respondents to leave the military, our survey results do confirm what many civilian and military leaders already know: officers are unhappy with the pace of their deployments. Family and quality of life emerged as one of the three largest issues in our survey – 34% of our respondents said it was their most important reason for leaving. 79% of officers agreed that the demands of a military career made it difficult for them to have the family life they wanted. One commented, "I traded practically everything in my personal life for my military career." Only 11% of officers believed their quality of life was better in the military than out. One survey respondent even described post-military life as "glorious," writing, "It has exceeded my expectations."



Improving quality of life is understandably difficult. For example, one survey respondent told us, "The inability to choose where I lived was most detrimental to my quality of life," yet military bases are often located in areas isolated from major population and cultural centers for a reason. Likewise, the pace of operations is largely out of the hands of those who serve. Deployment tempo is driven by decisions made by political leaders to enter into conflict, and the decision to go to war is driven by factors which generally overwhelm

concerns about junior officer retention. Civilian policy-makers should understand the effect their decisions have on military personnel, but those effects must be placed within a larger context of national interests.

"The specter of another deployment looming ahead unknown in the distance definitely gave us pause about starting a family."

The Active Duty Perspective

Surprisingly, the out-of-service cohort appeared to be less affected by operational tempo than our active duty respondents, perhaps lending support to the theory that deployment pace is not a primary cause for separation from service. Alternatively, the difference may be explained by the fact that the active duty cohort is slightly older – they have on average four more years in service – and slightly more likely to be married, both of which may play a role when considering the impact of deployments on quality of life. Nearly half of our active duty respondents said that shorter deployments or returning to a 1:2 dwell-time ratio would have a significant impact on their decision to remain on active duty in the future, a significantly higher number than the 28% of veterans who agreed. Family appeared to be the driving concern, with one active duty officer remarking "I feel that in order to assuage any family issues I may face in the future, I'd have to significantly lower my operational tempo."

The active duty and out-of-service cohorts were largely in agreement when it came to praising the training they had received. Among the active duty officers, 75% believed they were personally prepared for deployment, and 72% believe their unit was also prepared. Specific breakdowns of the comparison between active duty and out-of-service samples are contained in Appendix D.

Summary

Overall, the evidence regarding junior officer retention and pace of deployments indicates that deployment schedules associated with recent conflicts have not had a major impact on retention. Generally speaking, the evidence supports a theory that military officers value the opportunity to use their skills in accomplishing a mission, as they originally anticipated when joining the military. They continue to find excellence throughout the training cycle and express satisfaction with how the military prepares them for war. However, the pace of deployments does have a significant impact on many officers, among both those who leave and those who stay. Returning to a more sustainable deployment pace and continuing to implement the many quality of life programs underway will undoubtedly ease the burden on the military's junior leadership.

[42]See, for example, Andrew Tilghman *Washington Monthly* piece.
[43]James Hosek and Francisco Martorell. "How Have Deployments During the War on Terrorism Affected Reenlistment?" RAND National Defense Research Institute. 2009. 14. The Hosek and Martorell study provides among the only publicly-available information on the relationship between deployment and attrition, although it considers only enlisted personnel.
[44]*Ibid.*
[45]*Ibid.*
[46]*Ibid.*
[47]James Hosek, Jennifer Erin Kavanagh, and Laura L. Miller. "How Deployments Affect Service Members." RAND National Defense Research Institute. 2006. Includes an analysis of Status of Forces survey data for active-duty personnel surveyed in March and July 2003.
[48]Hosek and Martorell, "How Have Deployments During the War on Terrorism Affected Reenlistment?" 21.
[49]Leo Shane III. "Casey: Two-year dwell time will be reality by October." *Stars and Stripes.* 2 March 2011. Available at: http://tinyurl.com/6ey5b25.
[50]U.S. Army Training and Leader Development Panel. "The Army Training and Leader Development Panel Officer Study: Report to the Army."
[51]Ronald D. Fricker. "The Effects of Perstempo on Officer Retention in the U.S. Military." RAND National Defense Research Institute. 2002. See also Henning, "Army Officer Shortages: Background and Issues for Congress."
[52]See, for example, Joseph L. Galloway. "Asking Too Much of Too Few." *McClatchy Newspapers.* 24 October 2007. Available at: http://tinyurl.com/6jmb5dw.
[53]Karen Jowers. "Survey: More spouses satisfied with Army life." *Army Times.* 7 March 2011. Available at: http://tinyurl.com/5wvqame.
[54]*Ibid.*

COMPENSATION

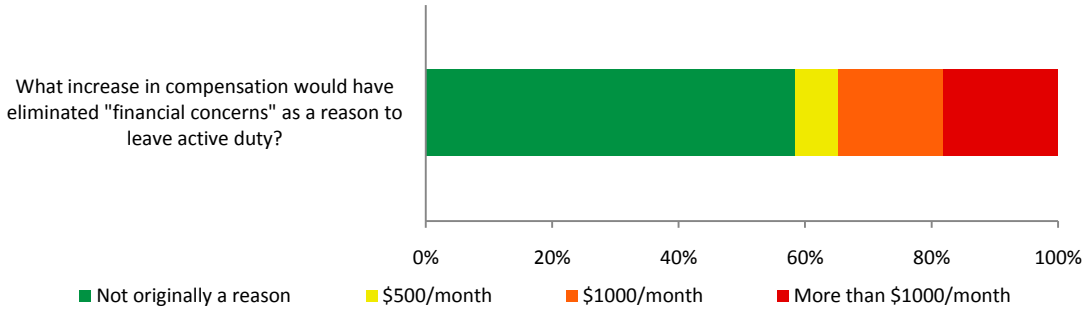
The "pay gap" between the military and civilian professions has been an area of focus for policymakers in the past.[55] Some officers still leave for purely financial reasons. However, any pay disparity has all but disappeared after new incentives, pay structure updates, and deferred benefits such as the G.I. Bill and retirement plans were updated in the past decade.[56] In recent comprehensive reports on officer pay by the Center for Naval Analysis and the Government Accountability Office, total compensation for officers was estimated to be $50,000 in the first year of service and $140,000 at 20 years.[57] On average, CNA found that officers make $11,500 more than their civilian counterparts when only basic pay is compared; when healthcare, retirement, and tax preferences are included, the premium rises to $24,870 more per year. When measured on basic pay alone, military officers on average fall within the 70th percentile of civilian pay – that is, 70% of comparable civilians make less than they do, while 30% make more.[58] Still, we posited that perhaps the most talented officers look up toward the 90th percentile rather than down at the 50th, especially as they advance in rank and capability. As one respondent put it, "If you are capable, and with the skills given to you by the military, you can expect to garner a lot more in the private sector."

However, our junior officers clearly indicated that financial compensation was the least significant reason for leaving, with over 73% reporting it was the least important factor and only 3% listing it as the most important reason. Active duty officers gave similar responses. This finding comes despite the fact that our respondents were skewed towards military academies, post-graduate education, and self-reported high basic training performance – all indicators which would point towards a highly-talented survey group.

One officer said simply, "This is not a job that you do for the pay."

In a follow-up question designed to test what amount of pay increase would make a difference, most officers reported that it was of so little concern that they would not have reconsidered for any amount of money; the second-largest group demanded a raise of $1,000 or more per month, likely implausible in the current budget environment.

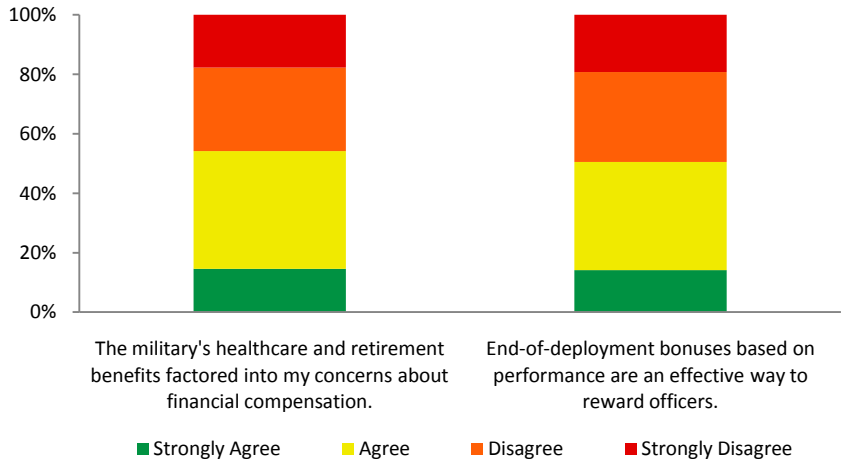
What increase in compensation would have eliminated "financial reasons" as a reason to leave?



This was true even when additional benefits such as pensions and health care access were considered. A little more than half of our respondents reported that they included these factors in their evaluation, indicating that most officers were considering the benefits of a military career comprehensively, and not just on basic pay alone.

Of course, the favorable comparison between officer and civilian pay is mitigated somewhat by the unique demands of the military – long hours, frequent moves, and rapid deployment tempo. Last but certainly not least, military officers must confront the likelihood of injury or death in combat, a consideration that is difficult to quantify or monetize. As one officer surveyed bluntly put it, "What salary would you be happy with if I told you to sit in a chair and have me fire rounds into the wall next to your head for 200 days straight?"[59] Many officers said they would have found it beneficial to reward deployment performance with financial bonuses – a key indication that junior officers remain sensitive to their remuneration levels even as they discount compensation as a reason for staying or leaving.

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.



The Active Duty Perspective

As might be expected, the active duty cohort placed more emphasis on the comparatively robust military benefits package than did the out-of-service respondents; 78% of active duty respondents said that healthcare and retirement benefits played a significant role in their decision to remain on active duty. Military retirement vests at 20 years, and uniformed personnel understandably place a correspondingly greater emphasis on staying to retirement the closer they get to this mark. However, the active duty officers surveyed continued to insist that compensation was largely a marginal issue. We hypothesize that compensation acts as a background ameliorator. That is, those who choose to stay may do not do so because they perceive the benefits as better, but given that they stay, they value those benefits more. Unfortunately, our survey methods do not allow us to test this supposition statistically.

44% of active duty respondents said that an additional $1,000 or more per month in base pay would significantly impact their future calculations, but 41% also said that financial compensation is not a deciding factor for them. As with non-pay benefits, we believe this is an issue that may only influence the decision to leave in conjunction with other reasons. Concerns about compensation placed the lowest for both active duty and out-of-service respondents when they were forced to rank the issues they cared about most. In short, as one active duty respondent put it succinctly, "Military officers are not underpaid." Specific breakdowns of the comparison between active duty and out-of-service samples are contained in Appendix D.

Summary

Financial compensation was the least relevant reason for junior officers who participated in our survey to leave the military. This finding comes despite the fact that our respondents were skewed towards indicators that point towards a highly-talented survey group that would expect to be highly rewarded for their performance. As one officer put it simply, "This is not a job you do for the pay." Nearly three-fourths of our respondents commissioned after September 11th, and their reasons were clearly not financial. Past efforts to maintain compensation at a level equivalent to the private sector seem to have succeeded, as our survey respondents simply did not view increases in compensation as a relevant consideration.

[55]For instance, President Carter set up a Presidential Commission on Military Compensation in 1977, and the Department of Defense continues to track compensation closely. (See: http://militarypay.defense.gov/)

[56]James E. Grefer. “Comparing Military and Civilian Compensation Packages.” Alexandria, VA: Center for Naval Analyses. March 2008.
[57]U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO). “Military Personnel: Military and Civilian Pay Comparisons Present Challenges and Are One of Many Tools in Assessing Compensation.” GAO-10-561R. 1 April 2010. 12.
[58]*Ibid.*
[59]Confidential interview with USMC Major. 24 January 2011.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Any recommendations to improve retention must be considered in the context of two ongoing wars, a continuing economic recession, and forecasted reductions in the Department of Defense budget. With this in mind, we evaluated potential recommendations using the following criteria:

- Broad. The Department of Defense is a vast organization, and its programs varied and wide-ranging. Rather than propose specific or limited fixes, we seek instead to articulate general principles for institutional reform.
- Flexible. Each service has its own processes for managing personnel and procurement, its own way of fighting wars, and a history and set of traditions that make it unique. Any "one size fits all" recommendation must allow for an appropriate amount of flexibility to adapt to these diverse service-specific cultures.
- Measurable. There must be a way to judge the effect of any proposed policy recommendation. The impact of our proposed improvements can be measured using easily available and inexpensive metrics.
- Low-Cost. Given the current political, operating and budgetary environment, the need to maximize cost efficiency is paramount. Although we do not create detailed financial models here, we do attempt to propose recommendations that may be implemented at low cost, but which have high returns.

Keeping in mind these criteria, we group our recommendations into the following six broad-based categories:

- Know who you have.
- Reward your top performers.
- Give your people a say in their own careers.
- Promote innovation.
- Be open to feedback.
- Talk to your people.

Know who you have.

The military collects a significant amount of personnel data, and each service administers a relatively robust annual performance evaluation process. However, in recent years the military has largely shied away from assigning a value or ranking for officers. For instance, the Army in 2004 requested and received a waiver to eliminate forced distribution ratings for lieutenants and captains, and neither the Navy nor the Air Force currently requires forced rankings.[60]

The services' inability to identify their top and bottom performers makes it much more difficult to tailor personnel policies to retain them. Leading private sector companies invest heavily in developing and refining performance management systems, and we recommend the military do the same. The elements of a successful rating system include:

- Guard against inflation. The current officer evaluation system is a cornucopia of different rating systems – for instance, the Air Force and Army only have two categories, while the Marine Corps has eight. To avoid what one expert calls the "B+ Problem" – demoralizing the average performers that an organization needs in order to function – rankings for all four services should focus only on identifying the top and bottom 10%, and group the remaining 80% into a middle bracket. This would allow better clarity in determining who should be transitioned out or offered remedial assistance and who should be offered greater opportunities. The 'word picture' is a valuable aspect of the system and should be retained, but focusing on the top and bottom performers would create better assessment of talent and fit well within the constraints of the military's vast size.
- Implement 360-degree performance reviews. Promotion boards should also receive input about officers from their peers and subordinates. We believe a new system that includes such input would provide a more accurate picture of an officer – there is very little one can do to hide bad leadership from subordinates. The process for doing so must be carefully weighed to ensure officers are not punished for leading units through necessary transitions or difficult assignments; some proposed evaluation systems incorporate such necessary safeguards.
- Allow for growing pains. Consider beginning forced distribution rankings at the O-2 rank to allow time for young officers to acclimate and adjust to military culture. Additionally, rank not only current performance but also potential to perform in the future, so that even officers who may not have skill-sets well-matched with their current positions are not weeded out unnecessarily.

Reward your top performers.

After identifying the set of officers with the greatest potential, the military must proactively target these individuals. One way of doing so (preferred by the majority of officers we surveyed) is to offer early or "below-the-zone" promotions. If legislative or operational demands make this difficult, the services should consider financial or other incentives to induce talented officers to remain in the service.

- Broaden experiences. Consider offering coveted non-monetary incentives, such as preference in choosing future assignments or locations to those who demonstrate exceptional performance and potential. Additional billets outside of DOD –

GENERAL ELECTRIC: A REPUTATION FOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

With nearly 350,000 employees and operations in over 100 countries, General Electric is one of America's largest and most respected corporations. Under the leadership of Jack Welch and now Jeff Immelt, GE has for decades maintained a reputation as an incubator for talent and management innovation, and a training ground for future CEOs. GE's leadership development processes are world-renown -- in fact, GE develops more talent than it can use, and encourages those not selected for the highest leadership positions within the company to seek out CEO positions with other corporations.[1] Studies have demonstrated that firms who hire senior GE executives, as opposed to CEOs from other organization, are more likely to experience a sustained increase in their stock market valuation.[2]

How does GE continually produce such high-performing corporate executives? It does so via candid and rigorous talent identification mechanisms, and uses this data to reward top performers with increased attention, opportunities, and personalized development plans:

Talent Identification. GE has long promoted intense annual reviews. In an exhaustive process known internally as "Session C," GE's main businesses conduct multi-level reviews that begin with the CEO himself and cascade through all 350,000 employees over a period of months.[3] GE's performance appraisal documents have a forced ranking component, and every employee has the opportunity to personally discuss their placement with a supervisor -- Immelt, the CEO, personally reviews the company's top 625 executives.[4] By the end, every individual employee exactly where he stands within the corporate structure, and what to do to improve his ranking.

Talent Development. All rising executives at GE have a performance package that follows them and identifies their goals, strengths and weaknesses, and developmental needs. This package, updated annually, is scrutinized closely by senior leadership. The most successful junior executives receive a highly coveted invitation to attend GE's three-week professional development and training program in Crotonville, NY. At Crotonville, up-and-coming executives are exposed to the organization's senior leadership as well as top outside executives and business thinkers. In addition to the learning and cross-functional networking that occurs, the signaling effect is tremendous -- "being tapped to spend weeks in training at the leafy corporate campus is a sure sign you're viewed as a potential leader."[5] Such rewards are also extended to the company's senior leadership, as well -- every January, the organization's top officers gather in Boca Raton to plot the upcoming year's business strategy.[6] *BusinessWeek* described an invitation to the annual leadership retreat, typically given to the company's top 500 executives, as "like winning an Olympic medal in GE's intense locker-room culture."[7]

[1] W. Glenn Rowe, Roderick E. White, Derek Lehmberg, John R. Phillips. "General Electric: An Outlier in CEO Talent Development." *Ivey Business Review.* Jan/Feb 2009. Vol. 73, Issue 1.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] Thomas D. Cairns. "Talent Management at Homeland Security: A Corporate Model Suggests a Recipe for Success." *Employment Relations Today.* September 1, 2009.
[4] "GE's Talent Tool Kit." *BusinessWeek*. April 25, 2010. Issue 4175.
[5] *Ibid.*
[6] Cairns, "Talent Management at Homeland Security: A Corporate Model Suggests a Recipe for Success."
[7] "How Jack Welch Runs GE." *BusinessWeek.* 8 June 1998.

including in think-tanks, other executive branch agencies, or at multilateral institutions – would allow officers to expand their experiences, learn new techniques, and likely reinforce their satisfaction with their current careers.

- Establish mentorships. Top junior officers could be selected for professional one-on-one mentorships with high-ranking officers within their own service. The purpose of these high-to-low linkages would allow information about non-operational issues to flow more easily in both directions -- senior officers become more attuned to issues in the officer corps, and junior officers have an opportunity to learn and be heard. Lastly, such mentorship could leverage these personal relationships to encourage continued service as junior officers reach critical decision-points in their military careers. As with 360 evaluations, safeguards would be necessary to prevent senior officers from hand-picking their preferred subordinates.

Give your people a say in their own careers.

A desire for greater input into billeting and assignments is a consistent theme that emerged throughout our survey. The military should consider implementing a market-based system that matches the supply of officers looking for new jobs with the demand of organizations and units that need to fill billets. This need not require significant time and personnel; an IT system can be a key human resources enabler, with some pilot programs already occurring throughout the military.[61] The key characteristics of such a system should include:

- Searchable by applicants. Officers should be able to search open positions by a range of criteria, including but not limited to: geographic location, unit type, billet description, minimum and maximum time-in-service and time-in-grade requirements, and length of assignment.
- Searchable by commanders. At the same time, a unit commander with an opening should be able to search for a specific officer profile using a range of criteria, including but not limited to: MOS or equivalent, rank, availability, current duty station, previous assignments, special skills, and Fitness Report "highlights."
- Personalized. Officers should have access only to appropriate job openings. For instance, an O-3 might be able to view billets at the O-3 and O-4 levels but not above.
- Enhanced connections. Upgrade the matching process to the 21st century by encouraging commanders and subordinate officers to connect electronically or in person before assignment and arrival. Consider giving unit commanders the opportunity to highlight or request specific officers for consideration by the duty assignment boards. For key positions, allow interviews between commanders and subordinates before final assignments are made.

Promote innovation.

Under the maxim that what you measure is what you get, the current officer personnel report process fails to adequately incorporate measures of creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurial talent correlated with the services' strategic goals. A recent internal Army study called the Army OER "an increasingly toothless instrument" that fails to "fully inventory those talents required for success in demanding assignments" and actually "*hides* talent from the Army."[62] Personnel reforms that would encourage greater creativity and innovation would incorporate the following principles:

- Reduce risk-aversion where appropriate. Identify more clearly areas that must have a zero-defect mentality – ethical decisions, complicated machinery and weaponry – and areas where officers should feel free to try novel approaches even if a current solution already exists. Much like leading-edge technology companies, high-performing officers who request additional time to work on professionally-related individual projects while in non-deployable billets should be given the opportunity to do so.

- Enhance the diversity of experiences. Giving high-performing officers the opportunity to attend non-military professional education or attempt non-military foreign policy positions exposes them to best practices and 'doctrine' of other organizations that they could then bring back to their own units. Such opportunities might include time at civilian graduate schools, think tanks, multi-lateral organizations, or civilian agencies. This suggestion is related to the much-discussed concept of a Goldwater-Nichols for the interagency in the sense that it would encourage jointness and interoperability outside of the Department of Defense.
- No penalty for non-command track. We believe the military should be more flexible in allowing opportunities for officers to pursue their interests. Only 12% of billets at the highest levels are command opportunities;[63] the military should emphasize non-command career tracks that provide needed skill-sets within the services at an equivalent level. Allowing an officer with a unique or specific skill-set the opportunity to succeed in his chosen track without penalty means a greater chance of retaining that officer for when his skills are needed.

Be open to feedback.

Counterintuitively, a continuous relationship begins at the point of separation. In the private sector, exiting employees often serve as sources of referral, financing, and intellectual capital. This is no less true in the military, but 74% of our survey respondents report having minimal contact with the military post-separation beyond obligatory contact information for the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR). In failing to seek feedback from the

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE – AN INNOVATIVE ASSIGNMENT MATCHING PROCESS

The nation's several thousand Foreign Service Officers (FSOs) work closely with their uniformed counterparts and have much in common with the military services. Like military officers, FSOs must be "worldwide available" to deploy in over 265 countries, and Departmental needs are often prioritized above those of the individual officer. Yet FSOs are placed through a unique assignment process that is tasked with matching vacancies to personnel in a manner that is transparent, equitable, and benefits both the receiving post and the individual.

A junior FSO's first two postings are made via "directed assignment" by the Department – although officers have an opportunity to state a preference, these assignments are largely out of their hands. After the first two tours, however, assignments are organized through a preferential "bidding" process, in which FSOs compete with their peer group for upcoming open assignments via three steps:

- The "Bid List". An annual "bid list" of all available assignments is published and distributed to all FSOs eligible for reassignment in an upcoming year. The bid list includes information such as post location, cone, level, expected start date, and any requisite language or technical skills. Some positions are advertised early to include time for training – for example, an FSO might require 6-12 months of Lithuanian language training before heading to Vilnius. Officers rank their personal preferences based on both professional development needs and personal considerations. For instance, one FSO may be seeking a position with job opportunities for a trailing spouse, whereas another may prioritize language learning.
- The "Handshake". After officers submit their "bids" indicating where they would like to serve (or would be willing to go), the gaining post reviews applications and resumes. At this point, the post may conduct telephone interviews, contact an officer's current supervisor, or otherwise investigate a prospective applicant. Likewise, FSOs often informally lobby and network to obtain their preferred posting at this time. When the gaining post makes its selection, the chosen applicant is offered an electronic "handshake" -- essentially an unofficial agreement between post and officer, approved by the regional or functional Bureau in Washington DC.
- The Panel. After an unofficial agreement is recorded, the match is submitted for review by the Department's Bureau of Human Resources. An officer is "paneled" or officially assigned to a posting only after a review of his record against post requirements by a panel in Washington, DC.

The State Department assignment system is highly competitive and rewards high-performing FSOs who have experience in "hardship" locations or strong recommendations in their current posts. Yet at the same time, officers have access to resources for assistance and support, including career development counselors, and can appeal an unjust decision. Of course, there are drawbacks to any system – FSOs complain about "conal bias" or occasional forced assignment to "hard to fill" postings – but generally, most agree that the system is an efficient way to move individuals around the world on a regular basis.[1]

[1]For information about the open assignment process, see *U.S. Department of State Foreign Affairs Manual Volume 3 Handbook 1 – Personnel Operations* (3 FAH-1 H-2420).

population of young officers who choose voluntarily to leave the service, the services are giving up a vast source of institutional knowledge and information unbiased by command influence. The military services should institute a more comprehensive exit interview process with the following characteristics:

- Consistency. Exit interviews should be conducted regularly, randomly, and with a consistent format. They should focus on three aspects of an officer's career: their personal experience, their recommendations for how to improve various aspects of the military, and their reasons for leaving.
- Neutrality. For open and honest feedback, exit interviews should be conducted by a neutral administrator and never by the departing officer's immediate superior or any senior officer in that individual's chain of command.
- Confidentiality. Although they are separating from the military, officers may be reluctant to provide negative feedback about superiors. The military should emphasize that all information obtained in an exit interview will be treated as confidential.
- Continuous. Data obtained from exit interviews should be aggregated for analysis at the Personnel- and Service-Chief level on an annual or semi-annual basis and form a continuous feedback loop. The services should use the information obtained to identify areas for improvement.
- Supported by chain of command. Unit commanders should encourage their subordinates to be frank and fair in their interviews. The vast majority of our respondents indicated in some way that they continue to believe deeply in the military and its positive role in their lives; framing exit interviews as a "lessons-learned" moment for the military can encourage constructive criticism.

Talk to your people.

Whether or not the perception is worse than the reality, there was a sense among the junior officers that we interviewed that innovation is not valued or rewarded by the Department of Defense. DOD is an enormous and complex bureaucracy – 50% larger than the largest private company in the world[64] – and such size requires bureaucratic rules and standard operating procedures in order to accomplish tasks. However, a continuing and personalized 'recruitment' process for the best officers already in service should be a focus of the services' personnel offices. This effort should focus on two key areas:

- Highlight interesting careers. Many of the officers we interviewed reported relying upon gossip about "how bad life is as a major" when considering their next assignment. The services should implement internal recruiting efforts to demonstrate unique and interesting career paths. Officers should learn not only

that the generals of the past were able to have interesting and fulfilling careers, but also that their current flag and general officers have led unusual, unique, and fascinating service careers. If the Department does not identify and deliver this positive message, it is all too easy for rumor ungrounded in the facts to take its place.

- Be realistic about the downsides. Our officers often saw their command or deployment billets as opportunities to flex their intelligence, will, and creativity in novel environments. They reported that when they return to institutional assignments, they must put this aside and become a cog in the machine. Senior leaders should be realistic about the necessities of working in a large bureaucracy but also reinforce the notion that intelligence, ethical behavior, and a strong will are just as highly valued in a non-deployable billet as they are while in command – and back it up by giving officers the ability to attack old problems in new ways.

Implementation.

Policy analysis literature offers a wide variety of techniques through which the efficacy of a new program may be judged – everything from randomized controlled trials, analysis of historical data trends, comparative studies, and exploiting naturally-occurring experiments.[65]

We recommend the use of pilot studies as the best method available for testing out new programs. Given the comprehensive impact of many military systems on the lives of service members, randomized controlled trials increase the risk of negative outcomes that would have long-lasting effects on the officer corps. Unlike medicinal trials, where new drugs are often tested on diseases which currently have an inadequate or no cure, new military policies would replace ones that are, for the most part, fairly effective.

Instead of running the risk that forced and randomized inclusion into a new system might have major detrimental effects on the lives of officers, the military should use small pilot studies that rely on officers who feel comfortable volunteering for participation. This will require greater understanding of the demographic and other underlying factors differentiating a pilot study group from the general population, but pilot testing is the best way the military can test out new programs without unnecessarily hurting officers' careers.

Although financially modeling the effects of our proposed recommendations is beyond the scope of this report, we believe that our recommendations are broad and flexible enough to be implemented at low or neutral cost. Given the size of military programs such as healthcare, capital purchases, and overseas deployments, implementing reforms to the personnel system would have relatively low costs and would likely have very high returns. Many of the recommendations in this section are self-reinforcing – improving

comprehensive rewards will have best effects if those rewards are applied to the right officers, who will be better identified under a new personnel evaluation system. Implementation of these recommendations will be a slow process, but we believe it is absolutely essential that it begin right now, before so much of the experience and wisdom of today's young leaders are lost.

[60]We base this conclusion on an examination of the officer evaluation forms for each service (Air Force Form 707, Navy NAVPERS 1610/2, NAVMC 10835A, Army DA Form 67-9) and from interviews with current active-duty officers, some of whom have worked extensively on personnel issues.

[61]Interview with Cindy Williams, Principal Research Scientist, MIT Security Studies Program. 7 March 2011. One proposed system comes from the Army's engineer units, which use a platform that shows in greater detail the skill requirements needed for incoming officers – a discussion of it is found within the Strategic Studies Institute's recent discussion of Army personnel issues. The Navy also runs a limited form of a reverse auction, where the size of the bonus for certain geographical billet locations is determined by how many officers select it as a preference.

[62]Wardynski, Lyle, Colarusso, "Towards a U.S. Army Officer Corps Strategy for Success: Evaluating Talent." 9.

[63]*Ibid.*.

[64]W. Scott Gould, Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs. "Budget Presentation to Harvard Kennedy School." 8 March 2011.

[65]Diana Lien and Aline O. Quester. "Developing Tools to Assess Future Choices." In *Filling the Ranks*. Cindy Williams, Ed. Cambridge: MIT Press. 2004. 239-264.

METHODOLOGY

Survey Process

We designed our survey questions with input and assistance from many individuals, including Tim Kane, Julie Boatright Wilson, Josh Goodman, Jerry Carter, Victor DiTommaso, and Kate Glynn. The survey was conducted between February 1 – March 1, 2011 using an online survey tool. The survey is available for review at the following location: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/PJXGM9K.[66] A list of survey questions can be found in this report at Appendix C. In recognition of privacy considerations and university standards for research involving human subjects, all respondents were granted anonymity and we avoided any questions and quotations that would cause a respondent's identity to be compromised.

Methodological Limitations

Although we believe our data will be highly useful for policymakers, we acknowledge the limitations of our results, particularly with regard to sample size and collection methods. Below, we identify some specific concerns that limit the conclusions we are able to draw from our survey data:

- Random Selection. Our response generation was a non-random process, due in large part to our inability to access and sample from the entire population of recently-active junior military officers. Instead, we reached out to survey respondents through personal networks, graduate school organizations, ethnically- and geographically-based veterans groups, social networking sites, and ROTC alumni organizations. A list of the organizations we approached to identify potential survey respondents can be found in Appendix B. While we made every attempt to ensure diversity, as a result, the officers we surveyed were on average more highly educated, from higher socioeconomic backgrounds, and higher performers (as self-reported) than the average U.S. military officer. Although this was generally a weakness of the survey, it is also in some ways a strength -- for example, the skew towards combat arms officers with personal combat experience may mean our survey captured personnel most likely at highest risk of leaving as a result of deployment and training stress.
- Self-Reporting Bias. All information was self-reported by respondents after leaving the service, meaning that it may be biased by individual perceptions and recollections. Compounding this factor is the lack of objective quality indicators, as we discuss throughout the report – a key example of this is the fact that 71% of our

respondents report graduating in the top quintile from basic training. While it is possible that our sample is indeed more talented than the population of junior officers as a whole (as evidenced by the number of respondents who have since gone on to graduate programs or other comparatively prestigious opportunities), it is equally likely that some of this self-reporting has been inflated. Although we took self-reported data from the officers we surveyed as truthful, further research would be useful to more precisely evaluate officer ability.

- External Validity. Our sample is not fully representative of the population of interest. For instance, our data generally underreports the Air Force – Air Force officers make up approximately 25% of the overall military officer population, but only 4% of our sample. Recognizing that the ground forces (Army and Marine Corps) have been more significantly involved in combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan than the other services, this may color our survey responses. We additionally lack representation from certain minority groups and individuals commissioned via Officer Candidate School. (A comparison between our sample demographics and the overall military officer population can be found in Appendix A.) Future analysis of our data (or a similar sample) might control for service orientation or demographic characteristics in order to mitigate such biases.
- Non-Response Bias. We have no effective way of identifying the population of former officers who received our survey prompt but chose not to respond, nor can we determine their reasons for abstention. If this population differs significantly from our respondent sample, our survey may be vulnerable to non-response bias. Unfortunately, we have no way of profiling the demographics of non-responders. Research indicates that non-response bias is typically associated with lower levels of education; however, given that our population of interest consists entirely of military officers (who by definition have at least a secondary degree) this is unlikely to be driving our non-responders. In our case, we hypothesize that non-response bias may be caused by a variety of factors, such as lack of interest in the subject matter or limited time to respond. This may have impacted our results.
- Internal validity. Last but not least, it is important to note that this work is an observational study. We did not conduct a randomized controlled trial that meets the standards of statistical rigor required for quantitatively-based social science research. There could easily have been other reasons why junior officers leave that we did not include in our survey; there could also have been interactions between reasons, or between demographic characteristics, that require more complex statistical analysis to seek out.

Active Duty Survey

The demographic differences between the active duty and out-of-service cohorts are described in more detail in Appendix A. Our active duty sample was relatively small (N=30); as a result, we did not attempt to analyze statistically the differences between the two samples in this survey. Rather, we use the active duty survey as a check on our results, to indicate areas of significant disagreement between the two populations for future thought and analysis. Although the active duty cohort generally substantiated the results obtained in the out-of-service survey, there were some noteworthy areas of disagreement. We did not conduct regressions to determine the statistical significance of these differences because of the small size and non-random make-up of our samples, but this is certainly an area for future research. Having large, randomly-selected samples from each cohort would enable us to determine if a variable was merely correlated or was a causal factor for separation from service. If the officers who stay have very different concerns about their professional life than those who leave, for example, the problem becomes more complex – should the military be focusing on appeasing officers who stay or focus on preventing those who would otherwise leave? We believe the services could accomplish similar analysis themselves, if they undertook a more extensive and rigorous exit interview process.

Other Interviews

We additionally conducted interviews with experts in organizational change, human resources, military history, and bureaucratic management. The table on the following page summarizes these interviews. We thank these individuals for their guidance and advice; all recommendations (and any mistakes contained therein) are our own.

Name of Expert	Organization
Linda Bilmes	Daniel Patrick Moynihan Senior Lecturer in Public Policy, Harvard Kennedy School
Teresa Amabile	Edsel Bryant Ford Professor of Business Administration, Harvard Business School
Cyndi Williams	Principal Research Scientist, MIT Security Studies Program
COL Scott A. Snook (Ret.)	Senior Lecturer of Business Administration, Harvard Business School
Stephen Rosen	Beton Michael Kaneb Professor of National Security and Military Affairs, Harvard University
John P. White	Deputy Secretary of Defense (1995-1997)
Andrew Hill	Candidate, Doctor of Business Administration, Harvard Business School
Congressional Staffer	(anonymous at request of individual)
MAJ Carl Wojtaszek	U.S. Army, Office of Economic and Manpower Analysis
James Hosek	Senior Economist, RAND
BG Kevin Ryan (Ret.)	Executive Director for Research, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs
LtGen Tad Oelstrom (Ret.)	Director, National Security Program, Harvard Kennedy School
Malcolm Sparrow	Professor of the Practice of Public Management, Harvard Kennedy School
MAJ Jaron Wharton	Author of CNAS white paper on military retention
Master Chief Steve Haydn	Military Diversity Leadership Commission
Josh Goodman	Assistant Professor of Public Policy, Harvard Kennedy School
LtCol Jerry Carter	U.S. Marine Corps National Security Fellow, Harvard Kennedy School
Albert Pierce	Director, Institute for National Security Ethics and Leadership, National Defense University
Tim Kane	Author of *Atlantic Monthly* article on military retention
Julie Boatright Wilson	Director, Malcolm Wiener Center for Social Policy, Harvard Kennedy School
LTC Timothy Watson	U.S. Army National Security Fellow, Harvard Kennedy School
LtCol Mark Ciero	U.S. Air Force National Security Fellow, Harvard Kennedy School
	Defense Manpower Data Center
Andrew Tilghman	Former *Washington Monthly* journalist, now staff writer at the *Military Times*
COL Walter Herd (Ret.)	Director, Army Career and Alumni Program and Transition, Human Resources Command, Fort Knox, Kentucky

[66]We chose this online system after it was recommended by a number of professors with experience using survey tools. It is additionally used by a range of leading companies and organizations, ranging from Facebook to Lehigh University.

CONCLUSION

"It must be considered that there is nothing more difficult to carry out, nor more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to handle, than to initiate a new order of things."

-- - Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*

The events of September 11th initiated a decade of war in which the military has been hard-pressed to evolve tactics and doctrine to adapt to those of the insurgent groups they have been fighting. Yet the American military has a storied history of reaction and adaption to changing domestic environments, battlefield advances, and foreign policy shifts. From President Truman's desegregation of the military in 1948, to the post-Vietnam shift to an All-Volunteer Force, to passage of the Goldwater-Nichols Act, to the Revolution in Military Affairs, the Department of Defense has consistently maintained superior warfighting capability while at the forefront of massive institutional change.

Those changes were not easy; nor will future changes be. Individuals often resist changing existing behavior because they value consistency and economy of effort[lxvii] or because they misunderstand the purpose of change or assess the proposed change as lacking value.[lxviii] Organizations tend to compound that resistance, as members often have a stake in the status quo ante.[lxix] Organizational change can be expensive and disruptive, and tacit or implicit knowledge is often lost in the process.[lxx] Change is often hardest at the very moment when the stakes are highest; never is that more true than with the military, where life, death, and the very survival of the state may be on the line. As a result, defense organizations in particular tend to fear uncertainty and resist change – indeed, as Barry Posen suggests, military organizations are likely to innovate only when they have failed or when civilians intervene to force change.[lxxi] Nevertheless, in the words of Harvey Sapolsky, "America's sustained ability to meet all types of challenges and to generate some surprises of its own was obviously important to its … triumph."[lxxii] Indeed, few today would dispute that each of the changes we list above improved military cohesiveness, force readiness, and combat capacity over the long term.

• • •

The value of this report comes only if the military believes the type of individuals who took our survey are worth retaining.

• • •

The vital importance of leadership and the difficulty of developing junior military leaders underscore the consequences of failing to retain the best company-grade officers. Such a failure is typically most associated with the period following the Vietnam War, but the current era poses its own challenges, as the United States has been at war for the longest period of time since its founding. As a result, failure to appropriately manage today's junior officer talent may have major implications both for the military's current operations and its future capabilities.

It may be too soon to know just how problematic the current retention trends are, but there is certainly ample anecdotal evidence for concern. As we have stated repeatedly, however, this concern should not simply be for quantity: the *quality* of officers retained must also be a benchmark for evaluating the impact of any military retention policy. We have undertaken to examine current policy by interviewing young men and women with experience in the ranks of the post-9/11 military. Many of them are recent graduates or are currently attending graduate schools. Others are pursuing careers as diverse as firefighters, construction managers, shipping experts, and office managers. Still others are unemployed. In all, they represent, we believe, a group of highly-capable officers who have recently left active-duty service. Still, it is important to state clearly what we have done – the value of this report comes only if the military believes the type of individuals who took our survey are worth retaining.

As we have demonstrated here, areas of concern among officers include pace of deployment, inability to start or raise a family, and lack of control over career choices. Some of these factors are largely out of the services' control, subordinate as they are to civilian policymakers who decide when to go to war and how. However, other factors, including career control and openness to innovation, are areas where the military can certainly make headway, either by itself or in conjunction with legislative leaders. The American military continues to demonstrate its superiority in battle with each passing week; it may very well be that it has all of the talented officers it needs. Yet the demands of the current war are high; young men and women continue to sacrifice their lives on foreign battlefields. These young officers represent both the nation's newest investment in its own security and the seeds from which will grow our future institutional leaders. If small changes in the institution can lead to better retention of these officers, then we believe such changes should be made – starting now.

[lxvii] John P. Kotter and Leonard A. Schlesinger. "Choosing Strategies for Change." *Harvard Business Review.* Vol. 86, Issue 7/8. July/August 2008.

[lxviii] Steve Kelman. *Unleashing Change: A Story of Organizational Renewal in Government.* Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press. 2005. 22-30.

[lxix] Kotter and Schlesinger, "Choosing Strategies for Change."

[lxx] Robert S. Kaplan and David P. Norton. "How to Implement a New Strategy Without Disrupting Your Organization." *Harvard Business Review.* Vol. 84, Issue 3. March 2006.

[lxxi] Barry R. Posen. *The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain and Germany Between the World Wars*. Ithaca: Cornell Studies in Security Affairs. 1986. Posen argues that the Prussians in 1806, French in 1940, and Russians in 1941 were defeated because they were attacked during a time of doctrinal transition.

[lxxii] Harvey M. Sapolsky, Eugene Gholz, and Allen Kaufman. "Security Lessons from the Cold War." *Foreign Affairs*. Vol. 78, Issue 4. July/August 1999.

APPENDIX A: SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS

	Out-of-Service Sample	Active Duty Sample	Overall Military Population[73]
Average Age:	32.2	33.8	34.3[74]
Average Years Served:	6.4	10.8	
Gender:			
Male	86%	80%	84%[75]
Female	14%	20%	16%
Race/Ethnicity:			
White	82%	76%	76%[76]
Black	2%	12%	9%
Hispanic	3%	0%	5%
Asian	4%	0%	3%
Pacific Islander	1%	0%	0%
American Indian	2%	0%	0%
Other	6%	12%	1%
Marital Status:			
Married	60%	72%	68%
Unmarried	39%	28%	32%
Branch:			
Army	49%	52%	40%
Navy	29%	13%	23%
Marine Corps	17%	13%	14%
Air Force	5%	21%	23%
Rank:			
O-2	5%	4%	16%
O-3	85%	16%	41%
O-4	8%	44%	26%
O-5	2%	24%	16%
Commissioning Source:			
ROTC	39%	28%	37%[77]
Service Academy	42%	56%	18%
OCS	18%	16%	23%

	Out-of-Service Sample	Active Duty Sample	Overall Military Population
Deployment History:			
Iraq	76%	64%	N/A
Afghanistan	24%	24%	N/A
Other	35%	28%	N/A
Never deployed	4%	16%	N/A
Mother's Education Level:			
High School Diploma	12%	4%	N/A
Some College	7%	12%	N/A
Associate Degree	9%	12%	N/A
Bachelor Degree	34%	28%	N/A
Graduate Degree	39%	44%	N/A
Post-Military Employment:			
Unemployed	15%	N/A	N/A
Self-Employed	8%	N/A	N/A
Private Sector	39%	N/A	N/A
Public Sector Civilian	8%	N/A	N/A
Full-Time Student	70%	N/A	N/A
Disability	1%	N/A	N/A
Other	11%	N/A	N/A
Have you ever had an opportunity to provide feedback to the military about your experience?			
Yes	26%	N/A	N/A
No	71%	N/A	N/A

[73]These means were calculated to include only the military population of officers ranked O-2-O-5. Where this was not possible, we indicate the included population in a footnote.
[74] This number is an approximation and includes all ranks (including general and flag officers.)
[75]Data on overall military population branch, rank, and gender is taken from the Defense Manpower Data Center Personnel Reports. Branch and rank data is from January 2011; gender data is from September 2010.
[76] Data on overall military population race/ethnicity, marital status, commissioning source, and age is taken from the FY2009 "Population Representation in the Military Services" report, cited previously in this report.
[77]These statistics represent the mean for all ranks (including general and flag officers.)

APPENDIX B: ORGANIZATIONS CONTACTED

AMVETS
American Legion
Air Force Association
Booth Armed Forces Group
Citadel Alumni Association
City College of New York ROTC Alumni Group
Columbia Law School Military Association
Darden Military Alumni
Fisher Veterans Association
Georgetown University Military Association
Haas Veterans Club
Harvard Business School Armed Forces Alumni Association
Harvard Kennedy School Armed Forces Committee
Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America
Johnson School Veterans Group
Kellogg Veterans Association
Kenan-Flagler Veterans Club
Marine Corps Association
Marine Corps League
McCombs Armed Forces Alumni Association
McDonough Military Association
Miami University Naval ROTC Alumni
Military Officers Association of America
Military Order of the Purple Heart
National Association for Black Veterans
Northwestern Law Veterans Association
Norwich University Alumni Association
Penn State Army ROTC Alumni
Ross Armed Forces Association
Sloan Veterans Association
Society of Hispanic Veterans
Stanford GSB and Law Veterans Clubs
Stern Military Veterans Club
Student Veterans Association at Duke University
Tepper Military Veterans Association
Texas A & M Corps of Cadets Alumni Association
Tuck Armed Forces Alumni Association
UCLA Law Veterans Society
USC Veterans Association
Virginia Law Veterans
Virginia Military Institute Alumni Agencies
Virginia Tech Army Alumni
Veterans Campaign
Wharton Veterans Club
West Point Association of Chicago

APPENDIX C: SURVEY STRUCTURE

The following is a complete text of the survey as given to the veteran officers which were the focus of our study. The questions given to the active-duty sample were slightly altered to make grammatical sense.

The purpose of this survey is to solicit opinions from former military officers like you on a variety of topics.

We are graduate students at the Harvard Kennedy School conducting research on junior officers in the U.S. military for our master's thesis. You will be asked general questions about your time in the military (including training and deployments), your reasons for leaving the military, as well as some basic demographic questions. Your answers will be kept confidential and will never be used in any way that would identify you – our data is aggregated and we will not quote you by name without your permission.

This interview is voluntary. If we come to any question which you do not want to answer, you may skip it and move on to the next one.

You should only take this survey if you have left active service after 2001.

General Questions

1. Please rate the following factors in terms of their importance in your decision to leave the military. *(Force ranked; an unchecked row means that you did not consider it a factor at all).*

- Operational and deployment tempo
- Limited ability to control my own career
- Family and quality of life concerns
- Frustration with military bureaucracy
- Weak superior officers
- Financial reasons
- Other reasons (please specify)

2. Many of the best officers who leave the service would stay... *(Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree, N/A)*

- if the military offered better assignments to the best officers.
- if the military promoted the best officers more quickly.
- if they were not obliged to pursue a higher rank.
- if the pay was based on performance instead of time-in-service.
- if jobs were assigned through a market mechanism.
- if there were more options for schools to attend for professional development.
- They would leave regardless of reforms to the personnel system.

3. If you were the chief of staff for your Service, what would you do to ensure the best and the brightest stay in the service? *(Free response)*

4. What factors would be most important to you in determining whether you would consider returning to active service? *(Force ranked; an unchecked row means that you did not consider it a factor at all).*

- Operational and deployment tempo
- Career opportunities
- Family concerns and work-life balance

- Opportunity for promotion
- Financial incentives
- Educational opportunities
- Lack of opportunity in private sector

5. Would you advise your own children to enter the service? Why or why not? *(Free response)*

Training and Deployment

6. What is the first word or words that come to mind when you think of your deployment(s)? *(Free response)*

7. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. *(Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree, N/A)*

- The military has adapted well to changes in the operational environment stemming from the current wars.
- The military did a good job of incorporating OIF/OEF-specific skills into my training.
- I was personally prepared for my deployment(s).
- My unit was prepared for its deployment(s).
- The officer education system did an effective job of training me to lead my unit in full-spectrum operations.
- Returning to a 1:2 deployment-to-dwell-time ratio would have significantly increased the likelihood of staying on active duty.
- Shorter deployment length would have had a significant effect on my decision to leave active duty.

8. If you were the chief of staff of your military service, what changes would you make to the training system? *(Free response)*

Family and Quality of Life

9. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. *(Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree, N/A)*

- The demands of a military career made it difficult for me to have the kind of family life I would have liked.
- A military career did not allow me to maintain the kind of balance I want between my work and personal life.
- My quality of life has increased since I left the military.

Personnel System

10. What is the first word or words that come to mind when you think about the military's personnel system? *(Free response)*

11. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. *(Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree, N/A)*

- The current military personnel system does a good job of weeding out the weakest leaders.
- The current military personnel system does a good job retaining the best leaders.
- The rate of military promotions should not be accelerated because it takes longer to gain experience to command at a senior level in the military.
- The military should expand early promotion opportunities.

- In general, talented and capable officers advanced more quickly than average or below-average officers.
- In general, talented and capable officers received better assignments than average or below-average officers.
- The best officers I knew left the military before serving a full career.
- In general, I was satisfied with the rate at which I was promoted.
- In general, I was satisfied with the billets that I was assigned.
- I was informed of the opportunities available to me for my next billet assignment.
- Billet assignments more tailored to my personal preferences would have had a significant impact on my decision to leave active duty.
- The current military personnel system does a good job matching talent to jobs.
- The military should allow former officers to rejoin the service (lateral entry).

Innovation

12. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. *(Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree, N/A)*

- The military is focused on process more than product.
- Military leaders are willing to ignore conventional wisdom when necessary.
- The military is committed to innovation.
- The military valued my contributions.
- Better use of new technology would have made me more effective at my job.
- Better use of new technology would have made my unit more effective while deployed.

13. If you used social media applications while you were in the military, how often, on average, did you use them? How often did your superior officers use them? Your subordinates? *(Once a day, Once a week, Once a month, Less often than once a month, never, N/A)*

14. How well does the military do at identifying and rewarding the following personal and professional traits? *(Very Well, Well, Neutral, Not Well, Poorly)*

- Intellect
- Creativity
- Tact
- Endurance
- Following orders
- Courage
- Integrity
- Practicality
- Military knowledge and education
- Decision-making

Senior Officers

15. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. *(Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree, N/A)*

- I felt that senior officers took an active interest in my career.
- I was comfortable expressing my career ambitions with my superior officers.
- My commanders rewarded my innovative ideas.
- The military made the best use of my personal talents during my time on active duty.

Compensation

16. The average active-duty Army captain with 4-6 years of service has monthly basic pay of approximately $5,000. What increase in compensation would have eliminated "financial reasons" as a reason to leave active duty? *(Multiple choice, single answer)*

- Not originally a reason (0%)
- $250 more a month ($3,000 annually)
- $500 more a month ($6,000 annually)
- $1,000 more a month ($12,000 annually)
- More than $1,000 a month

17. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. *(Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree, N/A)*

- The military's healthcare and non-financial retirement benefits factored into my concerns about financial compensation.
- End-of-deployment bonuses based on deployment performance is an effective way to reward officers.

After Service

18. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. *(Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree, N/A)*

- My current employer has more flexible personnel and promotion policies than the military.
- My current employer does a better job of evaluating and rewarding talent and potential than the military.
- My current employer does a better job of informing me of educational opportunities for professional development and promotion than the military.

19. What factors would be most important to you in determining whether you would consider returning to active service? *(Force ranked; an unchecked row means that you did not consider it a factor at all).*

- Operational and deployment tempo
- Career opportunities
- Family concerns and work-life balance
- Opportunity for promotion
- Financial incentives
- Educational opportunities
- Lack of opportunity in private sector

20. Would you advise your own children to enter the service? Why or why not? *(Free response)*

Demographics

21. In what year were you born? *(Drop-down menu)*

22. What is your gender? *(multiple choice, single answer)*

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to answer/other

23. What is your race/ethnicity? *(multiple choice, single answer)*

- American Indian or Alaska Native

- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White
- Other/Prefer not to answer

24. What is your marital status? *(multiple choice, single answer)*

- Never married
- Married
- Widowed
- Divorced or Separated
- Other/Prefer not to answer

25. What was the highest level of education that your mother completed? *(multiple choice, single answer)*

- Less than high school
- High school diploma
- Some college
- Associate degree (2 year college)
- Bachelor degree (4 year college)
- Graduate or advanced degree

26. In what branch of the armed forces did you serve? *(multiple choice, single answer)*

- Coast Guard
- Marine Corps
- Navy
- Army
- Air Force

27. In what year were you commissioned? *(drop-down menu)*

28. How were you commissioned? *(multiple choice, single answer)*

- Service Academy
- ROTC
- Officer Candidate School
- Other

29. Did you have a combat arms MOS/AFSC/warfare specialty naval designation? *(Yes, No)*

30. In what quintile did you graduate from basic training? *(multiple choice, single answer)*

- Top 20%
- Second 20%
- Third 20%
- Fourth 20%
- Fifth 20%

31. If you deployed to any of the following locations, please enter the year(s) of your deployment. *(free response)*

- Iraq
- Afghanistan
- Other (please specify)

- Did not deploy

32. Did you personally engage in combat? *(Yes, No)*

33. Were you wounded in action? *(Yes, No)*

34. What was the highest rank you held as an active duty officer? *(multiple choice, single answer)*

- O-1 (Second Lieutenant or Ensign)
- O-2 (First Lieutenant or Lieutenant Junior Grade)
- O-3 (Captain or Lieutenant)
- O-4 (Major or Lieutenant Commander)
- O-5 (Lieutenant Colonel or Commander)

35. In what year did you leave the military? *(drop-down menu)*

36. Since leaving active duty, please check the employment status or statuses you have held. *(multiple choice, multiple answer)*

- Unemployed
- Self-employed
- Employed as a civilian by the U.S. government
- Employed in the private sector
- On sick, disability, or personal leave from a job
- Full-time student

37. Have you provided feedback to the military regarding your experience since leaving active duty? *(Yes, No)*

38. Is there anything else that you would like to share with us? *(free response)*

APPENDIX D: SAMPLE RESULTS COMPARISON

TOPIC	% Respondents Agree		
	OOS (N=242	AD (N=30)	Δ
MORE OF THE BEST YOUNG OFFICERS WOULD STAY IF …			
The military offered better assignments to the best officers.	85%	71%	14%
The military promoted the best officers more quickly.	83%	52%	31%
They were not obliged to pursue a higher rank.	41%	25%	16%
The pay was based on performance instead of time-in-service.	62%	57%	5%
Jobs were assigned through a market mechanism.	67%	63%	4%
There were more options to attend schools for professional development.	76%	71%	5%
They would leave regardless of reforms to the personnel system.	38%	29%	9%
PERSONNEL			
The military personnel system does a good job of weeding out weak leaders.	10%	18%	8%
The military personnel system does a good job of retaining the best leaders.	7%	18%	11%
The military personnel system does a good job of matching talent to jobs.	14%	25%	11%
Talented officers receive better assignments than average.	29%	43%	14%
I was satisfied with the billets that I was assigned.	76%	86%	10%
The military should expand early promotions.	74%	61%	13%
The rate of military promotions should not be accelerated.	42%	54%	12%
INNOVATION			
The military is committed to innovation.	50%	31%	19%
My commanders reward(ed) my innovative ideas.	68%	54%	14%
OP TEMPO AND QUALITY OF LIFE			
Returning to 1:2 dwell-time ratio would have a significant impact on my likelihood of staying on active duty.	26%	41%	15%
Shorter deployment length would have had a significant effect on my decision to leave active duty.	35%	45%	10%
I was personally prepared for my deployment(s).	79%	76%	3%
My unit was prepared for its deployment(s).	76%	72%	4%
The officer education system did an effective job of training me to lead my unit in full-spectrum operations.	57%	50%	7%
COMPENSATION			
The military's healthcare and non-financial retirement benefits factored into my concerns about financial compensation.	49%	78%	29%
End-of-deployment bonuses based on deployment performance is an effective way to reward officers.	47%	33%	14%

APPENDIX E: SERVICE OFFICER FITNESS REPORTS

OFFICER EVALUATION REPORT
For use of this form, see AR 623-3; the proponent agency is DCS, G-1.

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY (FOUO)
SEE PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT IN AR 623-3.

PART I - ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

a. NAME *(Last, First, Middle Initial)* | b. SSN | c. RANK | d. DATE OF RANK | e. BRANCH | f. *DESIGNATED SPECIALTIES / PMOS (MI)*

g. 1. UNIT, ORG., STATION, ZIP CODE OR APO, MAJOR COMMAND | g.2. STATUS CODE | h. REASON FOR SUBMISSION

i. PERIOD COVERED FROM *(YYYYMMDD)* THRU *(YYYYMMDD)* | j. RATED MONTHS | k. NONRATED CODES | l. NO. OF ENCL | m. RATED OFFICER'S AKO EMAIL ADDRESS *(.gov or .mil)* | n. UIC | o. CMD CODE | p. PSB CODE

PART II - AUTHENTICATION *(Rated officer's signature verifies officer has seen completed OER Parts I-VII and the admin data is correct)*

a. NAME OF RATER *(Last, First, MI)* | SSN | RANK | POSITION | SIGNATURE | DATE *(YYYYMMDD)*

b. NAME OF INTERMEDIATE RATER *(Last, First, MI)* | SSN | RANK | POSITION | SIGNATURE | DATE *(YYYYMMDD)*

c. NAME OF SENIOR RATER *(Last, First, MI)* | SSN | RANK | POSITION | SIGNATURE | DATE *(YYYYMMDD)*

SENIOR RATER'S ORGANIZATION | BRANCH | SENIOR RATER TELEPHONE NUMBER | E-MAIL ADDRESS *(.gov or .mil)*

d. This is a referred report, do you wish to make comments? ☐ Yes, comments are attached ☐ No | e. SIGNATURE OF RATED OFFICER | DATE *(YYYYMMDD)*

PART III - DUTY DESCRIPTION

a. PRINCIPAL DUTY TITLE | b. POSITION AOC/BR

c. SIGNIFICANT DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES. REFER TO PART IVa, DA FORM 67-9-1.

PART IV - PERFORMANCE EVALUATION - PROFESSIONALISM *(Rater)*

CHARACTER Disposition of the leader: combination of values, attributes, and skills affecting leader actions

a. ARMY VALUES *(Comments mandatory for all "NO" entries. Use PART Vb.)*	Yes	No		Yes	No
1. HONOR: Adherence to the Army's publicly declared code of values			5. RESPECT: Promotes dignity, consideration, fairness, & EO		
2. INTEGRITY: Possesses high personal moral standards; honest in word and deed			6. SELFLESS-SERVICE: Places Army priorities before self		
3. COURAGE: Manifests physical and moral bravery			7. DUTY: Fulfills professional, legal, and moral obligations		
4. LOYALTY: Bears true faith and allegiance to the U.S. Constitution, the Army, the unit, and the soldier					

b. LEADER ATTRIBUTES / SKILLS / ACTIONS: First, mark "YES" or "NO" for each block. Second, choose a total of six that best describe the rated officer. Select one from ATTRIBUTES, two from SKILLS (Competence), and three from ACTIONS (LEADERSHIP). Place an "X" in the appropriate numbered box with optional comments in PART Vb. **Comments are mandatory in Part Vb for all "No" entries.**

b.1. *ATTRIBUTES (Select 1)*	1. **MENTAL** YES NO	2. **PHYSICAL** YES NO	3. **EMOTIONAL** YES NO	
Fundamental qualities and characteristics	Possesses desire, will, initiative, and discipline	Maintains appropriate level of physical fitness and military bearing	Displays self-control; calm under pressure	
b.2 *SKILLS (Competence)* *(Select 2)*	1. **CONCEPTUAL** YES NO	2. **INTERPERSONAL** YES NO	3. **TECHNICAL** YES NO	
Skill development is part of self-development; prerequisite to action	Demonstrates sound judgment, critical/creative thinking, moral reasoning	Shows skill with people: coaching, teaching, counseling, motivating and empowering	Possesses the necessary expertise to accomplish all tasks and functions	
	4. **TACTICAL** Demonstrates proficiency in required professional knowledge, judgment, and warfighting			YES NO
b.3. *ACTIONS (LEADERSHIP) (Select 3) Major activities leaders perform: influencing, operating, and improving*				
INFLUENCING	1. **COMMUNICATING** YES NO	2. **DECISION-MAKING** YES NO	3. **MOTIVATING** YES NO	
Method of reaching goals while operating / improving	Displays good oral, written, and listening skills for individuals / groups	Employs sound judgment, logical reasoning and uses resources wisely	Inspires, motivates, and guides others toward mission accomplishment	
OPERATING	4. **PLANNING** YES NO	5. **EXECUTING** YES NO	6. **ASSESSING** YES NO	
Short-term mission accomplishment	Develops detailed, executable plans that are feasible, acceptable, and suitable	Shows tactical proficiency, meets mission standards, and takes care of people/resources	Uses after-action and evaluation tools to facilitate consistent improvement	
IMPROVING	7. **DEVELOPING** YES NO	8. **BUILDING** YES NO	9. **LEARNING** YES NO	
Long-term improvement in the Army its people and organizations	Invests adequate time and effort to develop individual subordinates as leaders	Spends time and resources improving teams, groups and units; fosters ethical climate	Seeks self-improvement and organizational growth; envisioning, adapting and leading change	

c. APFT: DATE: HEIGHT: WEIGHT:

d. OFFICER DEVELOPMENT - *MANDATORY YES OR NO ENTRY FOR RATERS OF CPTs, LTs, CW2s, AND WO1s.*
WERE DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS RECORDED ON DA FORM 67-9-1a AND QUARTERLY FOLLOW-UP COUNSELINGS CONDUCTED? YES NO NA

DA FORM 67-9, MAR 2006 PREVIOUS EDITIONS ARE OBSOLETE. Page 1 of 2
APD v2.01

NAME | SSN | PERIOD COVERED – –

PART V - PERFORMANCE AND POTENTIAL EVALUATION *(Rater)*

a. EVALUATE THE RATED OFFICER'S PERFORMANCE DURING THE RATING PERIOD AND HIS/HER POTENTIAL FOR PROMOTION

☐ **OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE, MUST PROMOTE** ☐ **SATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE, PROMOTE** ☐ **UNSATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE, DO NOT PROMOTE** ☐ **OTHER** *(Explain)*

b. COMMENT ON SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PERFORMANCE, REFER TO PART III, DA FORM 67-9 AND PART IVa, b, AND PART Vb, DA FORM 67-9-1.

c. COMMENT ON POTENTIAL FOR PROMOTION.

d. IDENTIFY ANY UNIQUE PROFESSIONAL SKILLS OR AREAS OF EXPERTISE OF VALUE TO THE ARMY THAT THIS OFFICER POSSESSES. FOR ARMY COMPETITIVE CATEGORY CPT ALSO INDICATE A POTENTIAL CAREER FIELD FOR FUTURE SERVICE.

PART VI - INTERMEDIATE RATER

PART VII -SENIOR RATER

a. EVALUATE THE RATED OFFICER'S PROMOTION POTENTIAL TO THE NEXT HIGHER GRADE

☐ **BEST QUALIFIED** ☐ **FULLY QUALIFIED** ☐ **DO NOT PROMOTE** ☐ **OTHER** *(Explain below)*

I currently senior rate _____ officer(s) in this grade
A completed DA Form 67-9-1 was received with this report and considered in my evaluation and review ☐ YES ☐ NO *(Explain in c)*

b. POTENTIAL COMPARED WITH OFFICERS SENIOR RATED IN SAME GRADE (OVERPRINTED BY DA)

☐ ABOVE CENTER OF MASS
(Less than 50% in top box; Center of Mass if 50% or more in top box)

☐ CENTER OF MASS

☐ BELOW CENTER OF MASS RETAIN

☐ BELOW CENTER OF MASS DO NOT RETAIN

c. COMMENT ON PERFORMANCE/POTENTIAL

d. LIST THREE FUTURE ASSIGNMENTS FOR WHICH THIS OFFICER IS BEST SUITED.
FOR ARMY COMPETITIVE CATEGORY CPT, ALSO INDICATE A POTENTIAL CAREER FIELD FOR FUTURE SERVICE.

OFFICER PERFORMANCE REPORT *(Lt thru Col)*

I. RATEE IDENTIFICATION DATA *(Read AFI 36-2406 carefully before filling in any item)*

1. NAME *(Last, First, Middle Initial)*	2. SSN	3. GRADE	4. DAFSC	5. REASON FOR REPORT	6. PAS CODE

7. ORGANIZATION, COMMAND, LOCATION, AND COMPONENT	8. PERIOD OF REPORT THRU	9. NO. DAYS SUPV.

II. JOB DESCRIPTION *(Limit text to 4 lines)*

DUTY TITLE	10. SRID

III. PERFORMANCE FACTORS

	DOES NOT MEET STANDARDS	MEETS STANDARDS	FITNESS EXEMPTION
Job Knowledge, Leadership Skills, Professional Qualities, Organizational Skills, Judgment and Decisions, Communication Skills, and Physical Fitness *(see reverse if marked Does Not Meet Standards)*	☐	☐	☐

IV. RATER OVERALL ASSESSMENT *(Limit text to 6 lines)*

Last performance feedback was accomplished on: _____ (IAW AFI 36-2406) (If not accomplished, state the reason)

NAME, GRADE, BR OF SVC, ORGN, COMMAND & LOCATION	DUTY TITLE	DATE
	SSN / SIGNATURE	

V. ADDITIONAL RATER OVERALL ASSESSMENT *(Limit text to 4 lines)* ☐ CONCUR ☐ NON-CONCUR

NAME, GRADE, BR OF SVC, ORGN, COMMAND & LOCATION	DUTY TITLE	DATE
	SSN / SIGNATURE	

VI. REVIEWER *(If required, limit text to 4 lines)* ☐ CONCUR ☐ NON-CONCUR

NAME, GRADE, BR OF SVC, ORGN, COMMAND & LOCATION	DUTY TITLE	DATE
	SSN / SIGNATURE	

VII. FUNCTIONAL EXAMINER/AIR FORCE ADVISOR *(Indicate applicable review by marking the appropriate box)* ☐ FUNCTIONAL EXAMINER ☐ AIR FORCE ADVISOR

NAME, GRADE, BR OF SVC, ORGN, COMMAND & LOCATION	DUTY TITLE	DATE
	SSN / SIGNATURE	

VIII. RATEE'S ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I understand my signature does not constitute agreement or disagreement. I acknowledge all required feedback was accomplished during the reporting period and upon receipt of this report. Yes ☐ No ☐	SIGNATURE	DATE

AF FORM 707, 20080618 PREVIOUS EDITIONS ARE OBSOLETE (707A and 707B)

PRIVACY ACT INFORMATION: The information in this form is FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY. Protect IAW the Privacy Act of 1974.

RATEE NAME:

IX. PERFORMANCE FACTORS (If Section III is marked Does Not Meet Standards, fill in applicable block[s])

	DOES NOT MEET STANDARDS
1. Job Knowledge. Has knowledge required to perform duties effectively. Strives to improve knowledge. Applies knowledge to handle non-routine situations.	☐
2. Leadership Skills. Sets and enforces standards. Works well with others. Fosters teamwork. Displays initiative. Self-confident. Motivates subordinates. Has respect and confidence of subordinates. Fair and consistent in evaluation of subordinates.	☐
3. Professional Qualities. Exhibits loyalty, discipline, dedication, integrity, honesty, and officership. Adheres to Air Force standards. Accepts personal responsibility. Is fair and objective.	☐
4. Organizational Skills. Plans, coordinates, schedules and uses resources effectively. Meets suspenses. Schedules work for self and others equitably and effectively. Anticipates and solves problems.	☐
5. Judgment and Decisions. Makes timely and accurate decisions. Emphasizes logic in decision making. Retains composure in stressful situations. Recognizes opportunities. Adheres to safety and occupational health requirements. Acts to take advantage of opportunities.	☐
6. Communication Skills. Listens, speaks, and writes effectively.	☐
7. Physical Fitness. Maintains Air Force physical fitness standards.	☐

X. REMARKS *(use this section to spell out acronyms from the front)*

XI. REFERRAL REPORT *(Complete only if report contains referral comments or the overall standards block is marked as does not meet standards)*

I am referring this OPR to you according to AFI 36-2406, para 3.9. It contains comment(s)/rating(s) that make(s) the report a referral as defined in AFI 36-2406, para, 3.9. Specifically,

Acknowledge receipt by signing and dating below. Your signature merely acknowledges that a referral report has been rendered; it does not imply acceptance of or agreement with the ratings or comments on the report. Once signed, you are entitled to a copy of this memo. You may submit rebuttal comments. Send your written comments to:

not later than 10 calendar days (30 for non-EAD members) from your date below. If you need additional time, you may request an extension from the individual named above. You may submit attachments (limit to 10 pages), but they must directly relate to the reason this report was referred. Pertinent attachments not maintained elsewhere will remain attached to the report for file in your personnel record. Copies of previous reports, etc. submitted as attachments will be removed from your rebuttal package prior to filing since these documents are already filed in your records. Your rebuttal comments/attachments may not contain any reflection on the character, conduct, integrity, or motives of the evaluator unless you can fully substantiate and document them. Contact the MPF career enhancement section, or the AF Contact Center if you require any assistance in preparing your reply to the referral report. It is important for you to be aware that receiving a referral report may affect your eligibility for other personnel related actions (e.g. assignments, promotions, etc.). You may consult your commander and/or MPF or Air Force Contact Center if you desire more information on this subject. If you believe this report is inaccurate, unjust, or unfairly prejudicial to your career, you may apply for a review of the report under AFI 36-2401, Correction of Officer and Enlisted Evaluation Reports, once the report becomes a matter of record as defined in AFI 36-2406, Attachment 1.

NAME, GRADE, BR OF SVC OF REFERRING EVALUATOR	DUTY TITLE	DATE
	SIGNATURE	

SIGNATURE OF RATEE	DATE

INSTRUCTIONS

ALL: Recommendations must be based on performance and the potential based on that performance. Promotion recommendations are prohibited. Do not comment on completion of or enrollment in Developmental Education, advanced education, previous or anticipated promotion recommendations on AF Form 709, OPR endorsement levels, family activities, marital status, race, sex, ethnic origin, age, or religion. Evaluators enter only the last four numbers of SSN.

RATER: Focus your evaluation in Section IV on what the officer did, how well he or she did it, and how the officer contributed to mission accomplishment. Write in concise "bullet" format. Your comments in Section IV may include recommendations for assignment. Provide a copy of the report to the ratee prior to the report becoming a matter of record and provide follow-up feedback to let the ratee know how their performance resulted in this final product.

ADDITIONAL RATER: Carefully review the rater's evaluation to ensure it is accurate, unbiased and uninflated. If you disagree, you may ask the rater to review his or her evaluation. You may not direct a change in the evaluation. If you still disagree with the rater, mark "NON-CONCUR" and explain. You may include recommendations for assignment.

REVIEWER: Carefully review the rater's and additional rater's ratings and comments. If their evaluations are accurate, unbiased and uninflated, mark "CONCUR" and sign the form. If you disagree with previous evaluators, you may ask them to review their evaluations. You may not direct them to change their appraisals. If you still disagree with the additional rater, mark "NON-CONCUR" and explain in Section VI. Do not use "NON-CONCUR" simply to provide comments on the report.

RATEE: Your signature is merely an acknowledgement of receipt of this report. It does not constitute concurrence. If you disagree with the content, you may file an evaluation appeal through the Evaluation Reports Appeals Board IAW AFI 36-2401 (Correcting Officer and Enlisted Evaluation Reports), or through the Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records IAW AFI 36-2603 (Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records) and AFPAM 36-2607 (Applicants' Guide to the Air Force Board for Correction of Military Records (AFBCMR).

PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT

AUTHORITY: Title 10 United States Code, Section 8013 and Executive Order 9397, 22 November 1943.

PURPOSE: Information is needed for verification of the individual's name and Social Security Number (SSN) as captured on the form at the time of rating.

ROUTINE USES: May specifically be disclosed outside the DoD as a routine use pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552a(b)(3).

DISCLOSURE: Disclosure is mandatory; SSN is used for positive identification.

FITNESS REPORT & COUNSELING RECORD (E7 - O6)

RCS BUPERS 1610-1

1. Name (Last, First MI Suffix)	2. Grade/Rate	3. Desig	4. SSN

5. ACT ☐ TAR ☐ INACT ☐ AT/ADSW/265 ☐	6. UIC	7. Ship/Station	8. Promotion Status	9. Date Reported

Occasion for Report					Period of Report	
10. Periodic ☐	11. Detachment of Individual ☐	12. Detachment of Reporting Senior ☐	13. Special ☐		14. From:	15. To:

16. Not Observed Report ☐	Type of Report				20. Physical Readiness	21. Billet Subcategory (if any)
	17. Regular ☐	18. Concurrent ☐	19. Ops Cdr ☐			

22. Reporting Senior (Last, FI MI)	23. Grade	24. Desig	25. Title	26. UIC	27. SSN

28. Command employment and command achievements.

29. Primary/Collateral/Watchstanding duties. (Enter primary duty abbreviation in box.)

For Mid-term Counseling Use. (When completing FITREP enter 30 and 31 from counseling worksheet sign 32.)	30. Date Counseled	31. Counselor	32. Signature of Individual Counseled

PERFORMANCE TRAITS: 1.0 - Below standards/not progressing or UNSAT in any one standard; 2.0 - Does not yet meet all 3.0 standards; 3.0 - Meets all 3.0 standards; 4.0 - Exceeds most 3.0 standards; 5.0 - Meets overall criteria and most of the specific standards for 5.0. Standards are not all inclusive.

PERFORMANCE TRAITS	1.0* Below Standards	2.0 Pro-gressing	3.0 Meets Standards	4.0 Above Standards	5.0 Greatly Exceeds Standards
33. **PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE:** Professional knowledge, proficiency, and qualifications. NOB ☐	- Lacks basic professional knowledge to perform effectively. - Cannot apply basic skills. - Fails to develop professionally or achieve timely qualifications.	-	- Has thorough professional knowledge. - Competently performs both routine and new tasks. - Steadily improves skills, achieves timely qualifications.	-	- Recognized expert, sought after to solve difficult problems. - Exceptionally skilled, develops and executes innovative ideas. - Achieves early/highly advanced qualifications.
34. **COMMAND OR ORGANIZATIONAL CLIMATE/EQUAL OPPORTUNITY:** Contributing to growth and development, human worth, community. NOB ☐	- Actions counter to Navy's retention/reenlistment goals. - Uninvolved with mentoring or professional development of subordinates. - Actions counter to good order and discipline and negatively affect Command/Organizational climate. - Demonstrates exclusionary behavior. Fails to value differences from cultural diversity.	-	- Positive leadership supports Navy's increased retention goals. Active in decreasing attrition. - Actions adequately encourage/support subordinates' personal/professional growth. - Demonstrates appreciation for contributions of Navy personnel. Positive influence on Command climate. - Values differences as strengths. Fosters atmosphere of acceptance/inclusion per EO/EEO policy.	-	- Measurably contributes to Navy's increased retention and reduced attrition objectives. - Proactive leader/exemplary mentor. Involved in subordinates' personal development leading to professional growth/sustained commitment. - Initiates support programs for military, civilian, and families to achieve exceptional Command and Organizational climate. - The model of achievement. Develops unit cohesion by valuing differences as strengths.
35. **MILITARY BEARING/ CHARACTER:** Appearance, conduct, physical fitness, adherence to Navy Core Values. NOB ☐	- Consistently unsatisfactory appearance. - Unsatisfactory demeanor or conduct. - Unable to meet one or more physical readiness standards. - Fails to live up to one or more Navy Core Values: HONOR, COURAGE, COMMITMENT.	-	- Excellent personal appearance. - Excellent demeanor or conduct. - Complies with physical readiness program. - Always lives up to Navy Core Values: HONOR, COURAGE, COMMITMENT.	-	- Exemplary personal appearance. - Exemplary representative of Navy. - A leader in physical readiness. - Exemplifies Navy Core Values: HONOR, COURAGE, COMMITMENT.
36. **TEAMWORK:** Contributions towards team building and team results. NOB ☐	- Creates conflict, unwilling to work with others, puts self above team. - Fails to understand team goals or teamwork techniques. - Does not take direction well.	-	- Reinforces others' efforts, meets personal commitments to team. - Understands team goals, employs good teamwork techniques. - Accepts and offers team direction.	-	- Team builder, inspires cooperation and progress. - Talented mentor, focuses goals and techniques for team. - The best at accepting and offering team direction.
37. **MISSION ACCOMPLISHMENT AND INITIATIVE:** Taking initiative, planning/prioritizing, achieving mission. NOB ☐	- Lacks initiative. - Unable to plan or prioritize. - Does not maintain readiness. - Fails to get the job done.	-	- Takes initiative to meet goals. - Plans/prioritizes effectively. - Maintains high state of readiness. - Always gets the job done.	-	- Develops innovative ways to accomplish mission. - Plans/prioritizes with exceptional skill and foresight. - Maintains superior readiness, even with limited resources. - Gets jobs done earlier and far better than expected.

NAVPERS 1610/2 (Rev. 3-02)

FITNESS REPORT & COUNSELING RECORD (E7 - O6) (cont'd)

RCS BUPERS 1610-1

1. Name (Last, First MI Suffix)	2. Grade/Rate	3. Desig	4. SSN

PERFORMANCE TRAITS	1.0* Below Standards	2.0 Pro-gressing	3.0 Meets Standards	4.0 Above Standards	5.0 Greatly Exceeds Standards
38. **LEADERSHIP:** Organizing, motivating and developing others to accomplish goals. NOB ☐	- Neglects growth/development or welfare of subordinates. - Fails to organize, creates problems for subordinates. - Does not set or achieve goals relevant to command mission and vision. - Lacks ability to cope with or tolerate stress. - Inadequate communicator. - Tolerates hazards or unsafe practices.	-	- Effectively stimulates growth/development in subordinates. - Organizes successfully,implementing process improvements and efficiencies. - Sets/achieves useful, realistic goals that support command mission. - Performs well in stressful situations. - Clear, timely communicator. - Ensures safety of personnel and equipment.	-	- Inspiring motivator and trainer, subordinates reach highest level of growth and development. - Superb organizer, great foresight, develops process improvements and efficiencies. - Leadership achievements dramatically further command mission and vision. - Perseveres through the toughest challenges and inspires others. - Exceptional communicator. - Makes subordinates safety-conscious, maintains top safety record. - Constantly improves the personal and professional lives of others.
39. **TACTICAL PERFORMANCE:** (Warfare qualified officers only) Basic and tactical employment of weapons systems. NOB ☐	- Has difficulty attaining qualifications expected for rank and experience. - Has difficulty in ship(s), aircraft or weapons systems employment. Below others in knowledge and employment. - Warfare skills in specialty are below standards compared to others of same rank and experience.	-	- Attains qualifications as required and expected. - Capably employs ship(s), aircraft, or weapons systems. Equal to others in warfare knowledge and employment. - Warfare skills in specialty equal to others of same rank and experience.	-	- Fully qualified at appropriate level for rank and experience. - Innovatively employs ship(s), aircraft, or weapons systems. Well above others in warfare knowledge and employment. - Warfare skills in specialty exceed others of same rank and experience.

40. I recommend screening this individual for next career milestone(s) as follows: (maximum of two)
Recommendations may be for competitive schools or duty assignments such as: LCPO, DEPT CPO, SEA, CMC, CWO, LDO, Dept Head, XO, OIC, CO, Major Command, War College, PG School.

41. COMMENTS ON PERFORMANCE. * All 1.0 marks , three 2.0 marks, and 2.0 marks in Block 34 must be specifically substantiated in comments. Comments must be verifiable. Font must be 10 or 12 pitch (10 to 12 point) only. Use upper and lower case.

Promotion Recommendation	NOB	Significant Problems	Progressing	Promotable	Must Promote	Early Promote	44. Reporting Senior Address
42. INDIVIDUAL							
43. SUMMARY	X						

45. Signature of Reporting Senior Date:

Member Trait Average: Summary Group Average:

46. Signature of individual evaluated. " I have seen this report, been apprised of my performance, and understand my right to make a statement."
I intend to submit a statement ☐ do not intend to submit a statement ☐
Date:

47. Typed name, grade, command, UIC, and signature of Regular Reporting Senior on Concurrent Report

Date:

NAVPERS 1610/2 (Rev. 3-02)

USMC FITNESS REPORT (1610)
NAVMC 10835A (Rev. 1-01) (WN 3.0)
PREVIOUS EDITIONS WILL NOT BE USED

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DO NOT STAPLE THIS FORM

COMMANDANT'S GUIDANCE

The completed fitness report is the most important information component in manpower management. It is the primary means of evaluating a Marine's performance and is the Commandant's primary tool for the selection of personnel for promotion, augmentation, resident schooling, command, and duty assignments. Therefore, the completion of this report is one of an officer's most critical responsibilities. Inherent in this duty is the commitment of each Reporting Senior and Reviewing Officer to ensure the integrity of the system by giving close attention to accurate marking and timely reporting. Every officer serves a role in the scrupulous maintenance of this evaluation system, ultimately important to both the individual and the Marine Corps. Inflationary markings only serve to dilute the actual value of each report. Reviewing Officers will not concur with inflated reports.

A. ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

1. Marine Reported On:

a. Last Name	b. First Name	c. MI	d. SSN	e. Grade	f. DOR	g. PMOS	h. BILMOS

2. Organization:

a. MCC	b. RUC	c. Unit Description

3. Occasion and Period Covered:				4. Duty Assignment (descriptive title):
a. OCC	b. From	To	c. Type	

5. Special Case:			6. Marine Subject Of:			7. Recommended For Promotion:		
a. Adverse	b. Not Observed	c. Extended	a. Commendatory Material	b. Derogatory Material	c. Disciplinary Action	a. Yes	b. No	c. N/A
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

8. Special Information:

a. QUAL		d. HT(in.)		g. Reserve Component	
b. PFT		e. WT		h. Future Use	
c. Status		f. Body Fat		i. Future Use	

9. Duty Preference:

	a. Code	b. Descriptive Title
1st		
2nd		
3rd		

10. Reporting Senior:

a. Last Name	b. Init	c. Service	d. SSN	e. Grade	f. Duty Assignment

11. Reviewing Officer:

a. Last Name	b. Init	c. Service	d. SSN	e. Grade	f. Duty Assignment

B. BILLET DESCRIPTION

C. BILLET ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1. Marine Reported On: a. Last Name	b. First Name	c. MI	d. SSN	2. Occasion and Period Covered: a. OCC	b. From	To

DRAFT COPY

D. MISSION ACCOMPLISHMENT

1. PERFORMANCE. Results achieved during the reporting period. How well those duties inherent to a Marine's billet, plus all additional duties, formally and informally assigned, were carried out. Reflects a Marine's aptitude, competence, and commitment to the unit's success above personal reward. Indicators are time and resource management, task prioritization, and tenacity to achieve positive ends consistently.

ADV						N/O
	Meets requirements of billet and additional duties. Aptitude, commitment, and competence meet expectations. Results maintain status quo.		Consistently produces quality results while measurably improving unit performance. Habitually makes effective use of time and resources; improves billet procedures and products. Positive impact extends beyond billet expectations.		Results far surpass expectations. Recognizes and exploits new resources; creates opportunities. Emulated; sought after as an expert with influence beyond unit. Impact significant; innovative approaches to problems produce significant gains in quality and efficiency.	

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2. PROFICIENCY. Demonstrates technical knowledge and practical skill in the execution of the Marine's overall duties. Combines training, education and experience. Translates skills into actions which contribute to accomplishing tasks and missions. Imparts knowledge to others. Grade dependent.

ADV						N/O
	Competent. Possesses the requisite range of skills and knowledge commensurate with grade and experience. Understands and articulates basic functions related to mission accomplishment.		Demonstrates mastery of all required skills. Expertise, education and experience consistently enhance mission accomplishment. Innovative troubleshooter and problem solver. Effectively imparts skills to subordinates.		True expert in field. Knowledge and skills impact far beyond those of peers. Translates broad-based education and experience into forward thinking, innovative actions. Makes immeasurable impact on mission accomplishment. Peerless teacher, selflessly imparts expertise to subordinates, peers, and seniors.	

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

JUSTIFICATION:

E. INDIVIDUAL CHARACTER

1. COURAGE. Moral or physical strength to overcome danger, fear, difficulty or anxiety. Personal acceptance of responsibility and accountability, placing conscience over competing interests regardless of consequences. Conscious, overriding decision to risk bodily harm or death to accomplish the mission or save others. The will to persevere despite uncertainty.

ADV						N/O
	Demonstrates inner strength and acceptance of responsibility commensurate with scope of duties and experience. Willing to face moral or physical challenges in pursuit of mission accomplishment.		Guided by conscience in all actions. Proven ability to overcome danger, fear, difficulty or anxiety. Exhibits bravery in the face of adversity and uncertainty. Not deterred by morally difficult situations or hazardous responsibilities.		Uncommon bravery and capacity to overcome obstacles and inspire others in the face of moral dilemma or life-threatening danger. Demonstrated under the most adverse conditions. Selfless. Always places conscience over competing interests regardless of physical or personal consequences.	

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2. EFFECTIVENESS UNDER STRESS. Thinking, functioning and leading effectively under conditions of physical and/or mental pressure. Maintaining composure appropriate for the situation, while displaying steady purpose of action, enabling one to inspire others while continuing to lead under adverse conditions. Physical and emotional strength, resilience and endurance are elements.

ADV						N/O
	Exhibits discipline and stability under pressure. Judgment and effective problem-solving skills are evident.		Consistently demonstrates maturity, mental agility and willpower during periods of adversity. Provides order to chaos through the application of intuition, problem-solving skills, and leadership. Composure reassures others.		Demonstrates seldom-matched presence of mind under the most demanding circumstances. Stabilizes any situation through the resolute and timely application of direction, focus and personal presence.	

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. INITIATIVE. Action in the absence of specific direction. Seeing what needs to be done and acting without prompting. The instinct to begin a task and follow through energetically on one's own accord. Being creative, proactive and decisive. Transforming opportunity into action.

ADV						N/O
	Demonstrates willingness to take action in the absence of specific direction. Acts commensurate with grade, training and experience.		Self-motivated and action-oriented. Foresight and energy consistently transform opportunity into action. Develops and pursues creative, innovative solutions. Acts without prompting. Self-starter.		Highly motivated and proactive. Displays exceptional awareness of surroundings and environment. Uncanny ability to anticipate mission requirements and quickly formulate original, far-reaching solutions. Always takes decisive, effective action.	

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

JUSTIFICATION:

1. Marine Reported On: a. Last Name	b. First Name	c. MI	d. SSN	2. Occasion and Period Covered: a. OCC	b. From	To

DRAFT COPY

F. LEADERSHIP

1. LEADING SUBORDINATES. The inseparable relationship between leader and led. The application of leadership principles to provide direction and motivate subordinates. Using authority, persuasion and personality to influence subordinates to accomplish assigned tasks. Sustaining motivation and morale while maximizing subordinates' performance.

ADV						N/O
	Engaged; provides instructions and directs execution. Seeks to accomplish mission in ways that sustain motivation and morale. Actions contribute to unit effectiveness.		Achieves a highly effective balance between direction and delegation. Effectively tasks subordinates and clearly delineates standards expected. Enhances performance through constructive supervision. Fosters motivation and enhances morale. Builds and sustains teams that successfully meet mission requirements. Encourages initiative and candor among subordinates.		Promotes creativity and energy among subordinates by striking the ideal balance of direction and delegation. Achieves highest levels of performance from subordinates by encouraging individual initiative. Engenders willing subordination, loyalty, and trust that allow subordinates to overcome their perceived limitations. Personal leadership fosters highest levels of motivation and morale, ensuring mission accomplishment even in the most difficult circumstances.		

A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G ☐ H ☐

2. DEVELOPING SUBORDINATES. Commitment to train, educate, and challenge all Marines regardless of race, religion, ethnic background, or gender. Mentorship. Cultivating professional and personal development of subordinates. Developing team players and esprit de corps. Ability to combine teaching and coaching. Creating an atmosphere tolerant of mistakes in the course of learning.

ADV						N/O
	Maintains an environment that allows personal and professional development. Ensures subordinates participate in all mandated development programs.		Develops and institutes innovative programs, to include PME, that emphasize personal and professional development of subordinates. Challenges subordinates to exceed their perceived potential thereby enhancing unit morale and effectiveness. Creates an environment where all Marines are confident to learn through trial and error. As a mentor, prepares subordinates for increased responsibilities and duties.		Widely recognized and emulated as a teacher, coach and leader. Any Marine would desire to serve with this Marine because they know they will grow personally and professionally. Subordinate and unit performance far surpassed expected results due to MRO's mentorship and team building talents. Attitude toward subordinate development is infectious, extending beyond the unit.		

A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G ☐ H ☐

3. SETTING THE EXAMPLE. The most visible facet of leadership: how well a Marine serves as a role model for all others. Personal action demonstrates the highest standards of conduct, ethical behavior, fitness, and appearance. Bearing, demeanor, and self-discipline are elements.

ADV						N/O
	Maintains Marine Corps standards for appearance, weight, and uniform wear. Sustains required level of physical fitness. Adheres to the tenets of the Marine Corps core values.		Personal conduct on and off duty reflects highest Marine Corps standards of integrity, bearing and appearance. Character is exceptional. Actively seeks self-improvement in wide-ranging areas. Dedication to duty and professional example encourage others' self-improvement efforts.		Model Marine, frequently emulated. Exemplary conduct, behavior, and actions are tone-setting. An inspiration to subordinates, peers, and seniors. Remarkable dedication to improving self and others.		

A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G ☐ H ☐

4. ENSURING WELL-BEING OF SUBORDINATES. Genuine interest in the well-being of Marines. Efforts enhance subordinates' ability to concentrate/focus on unit mission accomplishment. Concern for family readiness is inherent. The importance placed on welfare of subordinates is based on the belief that Marines take care of their own.

ADV						N/O
	Deals confidently with issues pertinent to subordinate welfare and recognizes suitable courses of action that support subordinates' well-being. Applies available resources, allowing subordinates to effectively concentrate on the mission.		Instills and/or reinforces a sense of responsibility among junior Marines for themselves and their subordinates. Actively fosters the development of and uses support systems for subordinates which improve their ability to contribute to unit mission accomplishment. Efforts to enhance subordinate welfare improve the unit's ability to accomplish its mission.		Noticeably enhances subordinates well-being, resulting in a measurable increase in unit effectiveness. Maximizes unit and base resources to provide subordinates with the best support available. Proactive approach serves to energize unit members to "take care of their own," thereby correcting potential problems before they can hinder subordinates' effectiveness. Widely recognized for techniques and policies that produce results and build morale. Builds strong family atmosphere. Puts motto ***Mission first, Marines always***, into action.		

A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G ☐ H ☐

5. COMMUNICATION SKILLS. The efficient transmission and receipt of thoughts and ideas that enable and enhance leadership. Equal importance given to listening, speaking, writing, and critical reading skills. Interactive, allowing one to perceive problems and situations, provide concise guidance, and express complex ideas in a form easily understood by everyone. Allows subordinates to ask questions, raise issues and concerns and venture opinions. Contributes to a leader's ability to motivate as well as counsel.

ADV						N/O
	Skilled in receiving and conveying information. Communicates effectively in performance of duties.		Clearly articulates thoughts and ideas, verbally and in writing. Communication in all forms is accurate, intelligent, concise, and timely. Communicates with clarity and verve, ensuring understanding of intent or purpose. Encourages and considers the contributions of others.		Highly developed facility in verbal communication. Adept in composing written documents of the highest quality. Combines presence and verbal skills which engender confidence and achieve understanding irrespective of the setting, situation, or size of the group addressed. Displays an intuitive sense of when and how to listen.		

A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G ☐ H ☐

JUSTIFICATION:

1. Marine Reported On: a. Last Name	DRAFT COPY b. First Name	c. MI	d. SSN	2. Occasion and Period Covered: a. OCC	b. From	To

G. INTELLECT AND WISDOM

1.PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION (PME). Commitment to intellectual growth in ways beneficial to the Marine Corps. Increases the breadth and depth of warfighting and leadership aptitude. Resources include resident schools; professional qualifications and certification processes; nonresident and other extension courses; civilian educational institution coursework; a personal reading program that includes (but is not limited to) selections from the Commandant's Reading List; participation in discussion groups and military societies; and involvement in learning through new technologies.

ADV							N/O
	Maintains currency in required military skills and related developments. Has completed or is enrolled in appropriate level of PME for grade and level of experience. Recognizes and understands new and creative approaches to service issues. Remains abreast of contemporary concepts and issues.		PME outlook extends beyond MOS and required education. Develops and follows a comprehensive personal program which includes broadened professional reading and/or academic course work; advances new concepts and ideas.		Dedicated to life-long learning. As a result of active and continuous efforts, widely recognized as an intellectual leader in professionally related topics. Makes time for study and takes advantage of all resources and programs. Introduces new and creative approaches to services issues. Engages in a broad spectrum of forums and dialogues.		

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2. DECISION MAKING ABILITY. Viable and timely problem solution. Contributing elements are judgment and decisiveness. Decisions reflect the balance between an optimal solution and a satisfactory, workable solution that generates tempo. Decisions are made within the context of the commander's established intent and the goal of mission accomplishment. Anticipation, mental agility, intuition, and success are inherent.

ADV							N/O
	Makes sound decisions leading to mission accomplishment. Actively collects and evaluates information and weighs alternatives to achieve timely results. Confidently approaches problems; accepts responsibility for outcomes.		Demonstrates mental agility; effectively prioritizes and solves multiple complex problems. Analytical abilities enhanced by experience, education, and intuition. Anticipates problems and implements viable, long-term solutions. Steadfast, willing to make difficult decisions.		Widely recognized and sought after to resolve the most critical, complex problems. Seldom matched analytical and intuitive abilities; accurately foresees unexpected problems and arrives at well-timed decisions despite fog and friction. Completely confident approach to all problems. Masterfully strikes a balance between the desire for perfect knowledge and greater tempo.		

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. JUDGMENT. The discretionary aspect of decision making. Draws on core values, knowledge, and personal experience to make wise choices. Comprehends the consequences of contemplated courses of action.

ADV							N/O
	Majority of judgments are measured, circumspect, relevant and correct.		Decisions are consistent and uniformly correct, tempered by consideration of their consequences. Able to identify, isolate and assess relevant factors in the decision making process. Opinions sought by others. Subordinates personal interest in favor of impartiality.		Decisions reflect exceptional insight and wisdom beyond this Marine's experience. Counsel sought by all; often an arbiter. Consistent, superior judgment inspires the confidence of seniors.		

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

JUSTIFICATION:

H. FULFILLMENT OF EVALUATION RESPONSIBILITIES

1. EVALUATIONS. The extent to which this officer serving as a reporting official conducted, or required others to conduct, accurate, uninflated, and timely evaluations.

ADV							N/O
	Occasionally submitted untimely or administratively incorrect evaluations. As RS, submitted one or more reports that contained inflated markings. As RO, concurred with one or more reports from subordinates that were returned by HQMC for inflated marking.		Prepared uninflated evaluations which were consistently submitted on time. Evaluations accurately described performance and character. Evaluations contained no inflated markings. No reports returned by RO or HQMC for inflated marking. No subordinates' reports returned by HQMC for inflated marking. Few, if any, reports were returned by RO or HQMC for administrative errors. Section Cs were void of superlatives. Justifications were specific, verifiable, substantive, and where possible, quantifiable and supported the markings given.		No reports submitted late. No reports returned by either RO or HQMC for administrative correction or inflated markings. No subordinates' reports returned by HQMC for administrative correction or inflated markings. Returned procedurally or administratively incorrect reports to subordinates for correction. As RO nonconcurred with all inflated reports.		

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

JUSTIFICATION:

1. Marine Reported On: a. Last Name	b. First Name	c. MI	d. SSN	2. Occasion and Period Covered: a. OCC	b. From	To

DRAFT COPY

I. DIRECTED AND ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

J. CERTIFICATION

1. I CERTIFY that to the best of my knowledge and belief all entries made hereon are true and without prejudice or partiality and that I have provided a signed copy of this report to the Marine Reported on.

(Signature of Reporting Senior) (Date in YYYYMMDD format)

2. I ACKNOWLEDGE the adverse nature of this report and

☐ I have no statement to make

☐ I have attached a statement

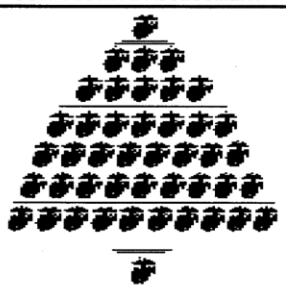
(Signature of Marine Reported On) (Date in YYYYMMDD format)

K. REVIEWING OFFICER COMMENTS

1. OBSERVATION: ☐ Sufficient ☐ Insufficient

2. EVALUATION: ☐ Concur ☐ Do Not Concur

3. COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT: Provide a comparative assessment of potential by placing an "X" in the appropriate box. In marking the comparison, consider all Marines of this grade whose professional abilities are known to you personally.

DESCRIPTION		COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT
THE EMINENTLY QUALIFIED MARINE	☐	
ONE OF THE FEW	☐	
EXCEPTIONALLY QUALIFIED MARINES	☐	
ONE OF THE MANY HIGHLY QUALIFIED	☐	
PROFESSIONALS WHO FORM THE MAJORITY OF THIS GRADE	☐	
A QUALIFIED MARINE	☐	
UNSATISFACTORY	☐	

4. REVIEWING OFFICER COMMENTS: Amplify your comparative assessment mark; evaluate potential for continued professional development to include: promotion, command, assignment, resident PME, and retention; and put Reporting Senior marks and comments in perspective.

5. I CERTIFY that to the best of my knowledge and belief all entries made hereon are true and without prejudice or partiality.

(Signature of Reviewing Officer) (Date in YYYYMMDD format)

6. I ACKNOWLEDGE the adverse nature of this report and

☐ I have no statement to make

☐ I have attached a statement

(Signature of Marine Reported On) (Date in YYYYMMDD format)

L. ADDENDUM PAGE

ADDENDUM PAGE ATTACHED: ☐ YES