

## Comments:

### Biggest Issue: **Communications at every level**

- ✓ Believe leadership makes what they feel are the right decisions for the right reasons; that rationale is not communicated; therefore, perceptions form and to most of us perception is reality
- ✓ Little leadership dialogue; a lot of LTCs (Cdrs) not stepping up to the plate (maybe what defines a successful Battalion Commander needs to be redefined); lack of communication between leaders and led
  - ✓ **Troops make big deal out of things because they don't hear anything from leadership**
  - ✓ Risk aversion; has become a military cultural thing; commanders are not willing to take risk (and subordinates know it)
  - ✓ Bosses "too busy"; no face-to-face; maybe email is not such a good thing
- ✓ Leaders need to stay involved with junior leaders; feel overwhelmed ARE overwhelmed
- ✓ Most important thing is to be a leader yet the first thing that falls out when time is tight is mentoring; professional development program; reading program, etc.
- ✓ Counseling is not happening
- ✓ **Knee jerk reaction to adverse publicity; don't act like everyone needs to be punished or "trained" for acts of a few; characterize it as what it is "a criminal hiding in the Army"—taking steps to get rid of him or her; NOT a characteristic of all soldiers**
- ✓ Don't issue press releases that are not accurate; we know they are not and it threatens leadership credibility
- ✓ **Bottom line:** lack of communication breeds lack of trust

**PERSTEMPO** (see comments on homesteading): not the issue; the difference is between OPTEMPO and DEPTEMPO—feel DEPTEMPO is OK (evidenced by reenlistment in frequently deployed units) if the mission is a good one, you are given responsibility and authority, and have the support of superiors; problem is tasking in garrison (make work; leadership unwilling to say enough is enough)

- ✓ Need time to mentor junior leaders (for example—how to be a Battalion S-4, squad leader, etc.)

### Personnel Issues

- ✓ **Wrong people at Branch; fast-trackers—think if you are not, YOU must have done something wrong; they (assignment managers) do not set people up for success**
- ✓ YG 88 is facing a major problem with CFD; personnel managers are haggling over "slots" and not sending folks they think may CFD somewhere else—CFD area not picking them up (not PAO/PSYOP/IO yet); a good example of not taking care of people

- ✓ Personnel system works individual replacements—maybe not the best approach; regimental type affiliation
- ✓ **Definite rift between “haves” and “have nots”; young officers quickly decide they do not want to be a have not**
- ✓ **People get promoted not on how well they do their jobs—but on what jobs they have—if all jobs aren’t important to the Army, then why have them**

### **Family Issues**

- ✓ Allow people to homestead because reasons for moving are gone (perhaps regimental affiliation); allows spouses to have career
- ✓ Need the stability; need spouse career
- ✓ Medical and dental—now paying for things that are not better
- ✓ Either tell young soldiers and young families that they are welcome and we will take care of them OR don’t encourage young families; now we tell them we want them but don’t provide adequately for them
- ✓ **Constant erosion of benefits**
- ✓ **Don’t talk Quality of Life if you don’t intend to put some “oomph” behind it; PX is too expensive; BDUs--\$70 a pair; housing falling apart; healthcare; if you can’t improve it don’t say you will**

### **Training**

- ✓ Often don’t train the “go to war” slice; Ex: at CTCs—units often don’t accept engineers, PAO, etc because they are training for CTC, don’t know what do to with them and, as a result, won’t know what to do with them when they need them
- ✓ Lack of ammunition for familiarization; generally enough for qualification but little else
- ✓ Everything overly centralized (not just training but the example is here); Division Commander directing training based on two battalions going to NTC; everything else stops; gives young leaders responsibility for training and hold them accountable

### **Recruiting**

- ✓ Like the Marine approach to recruiting; make it the challenge
- ✓ Put Army job info on the internet; Monster.com, etc.; the Marines are there
- ✓ Concerts, events where young people are; be there
- ✓ We have molded Basic Training to fit soldiers; not soldiers to Basic Training

### **General**

- ✓ **The Army has always treated people badly—now they don’t have to take it**
- ✓ Treating symptoms not causes
- ✓ Have lost too many military traditions; “required” social functions serve a purpose; start out required—end up enjoyable

- ✓ Young officers are getting out because they feel out of touch with leadership; the Army they are experiencing is NOT the same as when GOs were LT/CPTs
- ✓ **Government Civilians are out of control; especially bad here at Fort Leavenworth; they work for us**
- ✓ Long term impact of contracting; not making things better; don't hold contractors accountable
- ✓ Our uniforms are ugly and not distinctive
- ✓ Barracks policy; CON: lacks unit cohesion; PRO: gets soldiers away from problems they face at work
- ✓ The CGSC Leadership Lecture Series should arrange for respected retired and current senior leaders to come and mentor students; in the theater; civilian clothes; at night; talk about our profession (Army, Navy, AF, Marines, CG, civilian); not speeches—share ideas—answer questions

### **Leadership Issues**

- The army's senior leadership has a definite credibility problem. There is a lack of trust.
- Recent BAH fiasco is a prime example. For a year, we're told about the upcoming terrific pay raise; lots of fanfare. Then we get the new BAH rates, which result in a loss of money greater than the pay raise for many individuals. BAH decrease was of course done silently with no advance warning, while senior leaders were busy trumpeting the pay raise. The fact that it was recently corrected helps, but does not eliminate the sense of mistrust.
- Anthrax issue is another example of the credibility problem. Officers / NCOs / Enlisted wary of blindly accepting senior leader assurances now.
- Can trace it back several years, to the lack of straight talk in personnel briefs during the VSI/SSB period. Officers were told that 98+ percent of CPTs were leaving voluntarily; truth is one-time passovers could "choose" between VSI/SSB or wait another year for the virtually certain second passover and thereby get less separation money. To say that those who left after one passover did so 'voluntarily' is a perversion of the truth.
- Officers question how much the senior leaders really care – "riding the status quo" vs standing up and sounding off. To hear a general officer make the statement that something is "above my pay grade" generates massive cynicism. As LTs, we all went to bat for our soldiers. Most of those problems were above our pay grade – but we stood up for what we believed in. Why is it so hard to do when you're wearing stars?
- Cynicism is so rampant that it even extended into discussion of this sensing session and the process by which students will be chosen to participate.
- The public doesn't care about our problems – and STN alone isn't going to fix it. We need senior leaders to stand up before Congress, the administration, the public, and explain reality. Our civilian leadership is out of touch with the military, there's a declining percentage of military experience among them. That's got to be addressed by senior leaders, not Majors at the local Optimists Club.

- Army as a values-based organization. We all have values cards. Loyalty works both ways. “Where’s the [senior leader] loyalty? To the system? To political correctness? Or to the soldier?”

## Job Factors

- Work is not as meaningful; not enough training time / \$; too many distractors. Preoccupation with risk assessment to the extent that training quality suffers.
- Junior officers aren’t having fun – and more importantly, see that their immediate superiors aren’t having fun either.
- Decreasing desire to be Bn cdrs: one officer while at PERSCOM reported that when BQ CPTs were interviewed, less than 10% stated they wanted to be Bn Cdrs.
- Job satisfaction is low; even / *especially* in BQ jobs. Get in, punch the ticket, get out so the next guy can step in. No time to actually DO anything, make the unit better, focus on long-term issues.
- Not enough time to really DO the BQ jobs.
- LTs not given enough time in actual troop-leading , leader development positions.
- Raters / Senior Raters “terrified” of counseling – not doing right by subordinates. “I’ve been in the Army 14 years, and I’ve been counseled in writing twice – and once was by my ACE here.”
- OERs: ACOM ratings based on ‘need’ (the guy in the BQ job) rather than actual performance/potential.
- “Center of Mass is okay”: if that’s true, why are we only giving 3% BCOM reports?
- *”See your wife and kids this spring; you won’t see ‘em for the next two years”;*  
*“Take 14 days leave if you need to, but get over here quick” – words of advice from gaining units to CGSC students.*
- GEN Meigs tells us all soldiers in USAREUR get two 10 day leaves – that’s great; what about the other 10 days we’re all entitled to annually?
- What kind of message are departing CPTs taking to the outside world? CPT attrition is a short-term problem; the attitude they have when they leave could produce a much worse long-term problem.

## Benefits

- “I don’t think I’ll *have* any benefits when I retire”.
- Benefits are steadily eroding, and perception is that senior leaders count on us to just continue to “do more with less” – and like it. We’re all conditioned to “suck it up and drive on”, but there is a growing feeling that senior leaders (mil and civ) are exploiting that attitude, counting on us to drive on while our promised benefits continue to disappear.
- **Low pay, substandard housing, inadequate medical care, lack of spouse/family support networks, civilian “support personnel” whose attitude indicates they believe the service member is there to support them, not the reverse.**
- **Much more disturbing than the bullet above is the perception that nobody cares enough to do something about it, and it’s only going to get worse. HOOAH !**

## Misc.

- "When we get here, we're told 'we value you, you're the best and brightest, live a balanced life, etc, and then we're told to live in dilapidated quarters, use inadequate, outdated, broken technology in our classrooms, which are housed in a building without decent maintenance, with asbestos, leaking roof, etc.'" \*"Things are worse here now than 10 years ago when I was here for CAS3."
- Families vs career progression. It's become too hard to do both well. Spouses feel unappreciated.
- "I signed up for daycare in June before I got here. It's now the end of February and I just got a call saying there's an opening. My family is leaving in less than three months. It's a little late."

## Reasons for Captain Attrition:

- Lack of empowerment for captains/company commanders. Too many decisions taken out of their hands. Closely connected to perceived inability to take risks and fail (**zero defect mentality**).
- Company command experience is key impression for opting for military career. If it is negative, fewer company commanders will elect to stay. Captains are less likely now to believe "it will get better," particularly since their close mentors (04s/05s) will tend to be negative too.
  - Perception of "no 1 block, no future" or at least a reduction of options.

## Potential now

seems to be determined earlier and earlier in a career. No room for "late bloomers;" no ability to overcome a 2 block.

- **Zero defect culture does not reward risk-takers = Little challenge or opportunity to display unique competencies = Low job satisfaction/failure of expectations.**

## Importance of Issues to Career Decisions (10=High; 1=Low):

- Job satisfaction: High (9-10)
- Time for personal/family life: Moderate (6-7); Command climate that demonstrates concern with this issue is more important.
- Integrity and professionalism in the organization: High (8-10) Ranking officers MUST set the example.
- Overall quality of life: High (9-10) in peacetime. Less important in warfighting.
- Spouse's overall satisfaction: High (9-10); Some officers say 10+ (the critical variable)
- Civilian job opportunities: Low (2-3); Majors--who have largely made career decisions--aren't here for the money.

- Personal freedom: Low (1-2); High level not asked for or expected by career Army officers. It is a service to the nation provided by the military. Important to be appreciated for it, however.
- Working hours and schedules: Moderate (4-5) Higher negative motivator if working hours reflect other issues, like lack of concern of commanders for their soldiers time.
- Opportunities for career advancement: Moderate (4-6) Perceived fairness is the key
- Pay: Moderate (5-6)
- Retirement benefits: Moderate-High (6-8) Importance as an issue increases with time in service

#### Impact of PERSTEMPO on Career Decisions:

- Number of unaccompanied tours: (Medium-High) Perceived equality across branches and grades is key. Importance increases with officers with families (spouse and dependent impact)
- Weeks/year away from home: Importance depends on what you are doing and where you are doing it. In some cases, it can be an incentive.
- TOS before PCS: Moderate. Increasing importance as children get older.

Officer "say" in reassignment process: Very Branch dependent. A majority believe they have a reasonable amount of input with assignment officers.

#### Reaction to the following phrases:

**"Powerpoint Army":** Form over substance; overreliance on computers; use of computer and info systems micro-management and **enforcement of "zero-defects"**

**Peace-keeping:** Reality; relevance; 21st century; loss of focus on warfighting skills; problem to be solved.

**Micro-management:** Worse every day; overreliance on email and statistics; more stats=less judgment; less face-to-face contact with superiors; more management and less leadership; linked to zero-defects culture; loss of human dimension; social alienation; info systems provide opportunity to task in 5 seconds without due thought to time required to accomplish the task (action tasked, action completed mindset)

**Mentoring:** Less time given to building true comradery and esprit de corps; trend toward mentors as politicians; some good happening; lost art in some branches (particularly CSS); dissatisfaction of seniors influences juniors; leadership dependent; application is uneven across units and branches; some mentors concentrate on one or two officers and leave the rest; done right, it is the answer to zero defects and micromanagement.

**Top-down loyalty:** Character; ethics; accepting responsibility; related to zero-defects

**Zero defects:** No risks in training; getting worse; short assignments in key positions (XO/S3) magnifies errors, causes officers to be oriented on short-term results; field grade officers are biggest violators; leads to looking for culprit and the entire chain of command hangs.

**Readiness reporting:** Truth hurts but necessary; seniors MUST set the example; lots of this inflation left from drawdown--it is over but culture hasn't caught up.

- Quality of on-post housing and BAH. There seems to be a lack of concern or awareness by senior DoD officials when it comes to the quality of on-post housing. While there are some success stories, most Army (and other services') housing is dilapidated, outdated, small, and/or in need of significant repairs or maintenance. One example is the common practice of no dishwasher in the kitchen and inadequate storage area or parking slots. These housing inadequacies are especially true for company and field grade (Major) housing. I have lived in post housing for the last two tours, here and at FT Knox. At both places, we had relatives visit us and comment on the poor quality and small size of Army officer housing. These relatives come from medium income backgrounds and hold Army officership in high regard. They expected more from company/field grade housing and frankly, so do I. The exception of course, is O-6 and above housing. Senior officials these days are scratching their heads trying to figure out why Captains (O-3s) are getting out at alarming rates. Where is the incentive to stay in when they look across the street and see the Majors' quarters, run-down cracker boxes just like theirs. The BAH issue has already been discussed and hopefully is being fixed. Recommend developing a service-wide post housing improvement plan. Place big emphasis on remodeling existing structures if possible. Priority of improvement to junior NCOs, then to company/field grade officers. This is the market segment that are still young enough to get out of the service if they want to (not close enough to 20 YOS). All field grades get four bedroom housing, regardless of the number of kids. NCOs get minimum of three bedrooms, then four if they have enough kids. To make the funds available for this program, back off the medium weight brigade and other costly modernization programs (DD-21, Crusader, F-22). Although we do need to keep our armed forces at the highest state of technology and readiness, we also need to invest in our servicemember's quality of life. With our current equipment and weapon systems, we will dominate any force in the world for another 10-15 years. By far, the most important asset we have is people, and unless we do something fast, they will continue to ETS in order to better provide for their families. Advertise and execute this program and not only retention will improve, but recruiting as well.

- BAH. Never reduce the amount of BAH, regardless of what the surveys say. Continue to raise BAH in all areas possible. However, don't throw all the money at BAH. There are a lot of servicemembers who love to live on post because of schools, security, and the community-like atmosphere.
- It is not that kids today don't want to join the Army, there are simply more opportunities available in the civilian world. Kids coming out of high school are going to college at a greater rate because the push for education. The Army needs to focus on this. I know that programs have been developed to address this but why can't a soldier who is considering re-upping get a guarantee in his re-enlistment for four years of college at the expense of the military. I'm not talking about night school. This soldier completes his degree and goes back into service for a designated period.
- While addressing education, why is CGSC not accredited as a Masters program? I have been told that we are doing graduate level work so why not award graduates of CGSC with their Masters? This is an area that is not in synch with the other services' staff colleges.
- Housing is deplorable. Not only here but across the board. There is not enough housing and what exists needs remodeling. If the CSA wants to work on retention how about pumping some dollars into adequate and plentiful housing for our soldiers. One of the many headaches a soldier and his family go through during a PCS is worrying where they will live. Long waiting lists do not help the matter. I believe the Army owes this to our soldiers that everyone should be quartered and not have to worry about house hunting.
- JROTC needs a shot in the arm. If you would look at the quality of men who are currently serving in these positions it is easy to understand why we have a recruiting problem. Let's put some studs in there and have that tour not be a career killer for them.
- Public candor from senior leadership is a good thing. It shows commitment (whether you agree with the opinion or not) irregardless of political outfall. A Flag officer shouldn't have to retire to be vocal and opinionated.
- The Navy has significantly reduced the administrative requirements (inspections) placed on commanders during turn-around training, is the Army pursuing this?
- The armed forces have one major advantage over the civilian sector: unique/exciting jobs that aren't primarily focused on cash flow. We need to capitalize on this difference by:
  - A. Providing resources for realistic training. (Shortages of training ammunition/missiles is a current issue for Navy/Air Force flyers.) This not only increases readiness but shows resolve by the services for their troops and influences morale.



B. Everyone's a warrior. Combat training shouldn't be limited to combat arms. Case in point, the 2nd Class Petty Officer pulling duty in the mess decks for a whole cruise. Where's his or her feeling of accomplishment and esprit de corps? Why shouldn't a yeoman qualify on the pistol range annually?

- Pay. McDonalds in Overland Park is offering \$12.00 an hour. Should an untrained private take a pay cut to join up. Maybe, if my previous comment Part A is implemented. Plus, we need to emphasize the fringe benefits of the military, especially for the junior enlisted. (medical, dental, etc.) This is becoming a major selling point for companies.
- Housing. I've never had the opportunity to live on base and I don't feel cheated. Privatize with short term leases. This is not an infrastructure the military is equipped to or should be involved in.
- Reference Officer Retention. Instead of looking for outside influences, the Army needs to look inward. Good units with good leaders retain more soldiers. The same is true for the officer corps. When junior officers have strong, positive leadership, they are more inclined to stay in the Army. When presented with bad leadership, they want out. Talking with peers, most notably in the past 6 months, there seems to be an alarming number of bad leaders out there. Leaders who sugar coat things to higher; leaders who lie; leaders who are immoral; leaders who won't think twice about killing a career over an honest mistake or a difference of opinion; leaders who lead by fear and intimidation; leaders who care more about themselves than their soldiers/officers; leaders who look away at transgressions of others "for the good of the Army". Who wants to work under conditions where they are exposed to bad leadership? Who wants to be in an Army where the people who succeed do not fit the mold of the person you want to be? Who wants to be in a unit where the leadership would not think twice about overworking you or exposing you to unnecessary hardship and/or risk? Who wants to serve in an organization where they are disgraced by the acts of a few? While I can't voice the percentage of bad leaders, what number of examples would indicate that there are too many? I would argue that in the profession of arms, one would be too many. If in an officer's first couple of years in the Army he exposed to bad leaders without any examples/exposure to good leaders, you can bet he will leave. If exposed to an even mix of good and bad, the severity of each and/or the sequence relative to the time of the decision to stay in the army is made, will effect the decision. If exposed to only good leaders, there will still be some who elect to leave the service but at a much lower rate.
- The root of the problem. The problem arises from the those in position to weed out the bad leaders either don't know or they turn away from the bad leader's bad attributes. This is caused in part by the fact that both a good

leader and a bad leader can produce good results. The bad leader can get good results by intimidation, instilling fear or by lying. Whereas the good leader gets results by instilling in their subordinates a desire to perform well? I liken this to the leader who gets his soldiers to jump out of the trench and attack the enemy by following his men and using the point of his sword vs the leader who leads from the front, who soldiers want to beat him to the enemy to protect their leader and achieve the leader's desired results. The problem is at the end of the day, both were successful. Therein lies the rub. To these leaders' raters and senior raters, both were successful. In fact, the bad leader may be perceived to be more successful because this leader is the one who will not hesitate to proclaim his success or even lie about it. The effect of this manifests itself in one of two ways. To the impressionable officer or the officer who wants to succeed at any cost, they may pick up on this leadership style and thus perpetuate the bad leadership. On the other hand, to the not-so impressionable officer, they determine that it is unacceptable that:

- they need to be like the bad leader to succeed or
- that the Army rewards these bad leaders with promotion and further command, so they leave.

- How to fix? The obvious answer is to weed out the bad leaders. A mechanism needs to be developed to bring to light the bad leaders. Indicators should be looked for - can it be that a unit with high attrition is suffering the effects of bad leaders? Results should not be the only criteria used for evaluating a leader's performance and future potential. How a person achieves these results or if the results were in fact truly achieved needs to be looked at by the raters/senior raters. One such way would be to solicit input from subordinates and peers as to the nature of a person's leadership and character. If this had been done in the past, certain shortcomings in character or leadership would come to light before a leader gets promoted to a position where the same conduct they have been doing their whole career becomes a national headline. Another way would be to have subordinate and possibly peer commanders rate the truthfulness/effectiveness of a rated officer's self-proclaimed accomplishments on the OER support form. A final methodology would be to mandate the use of command climate surveys as part of the evaluation process.
- Until an officer corps that possesses impeccable character and leads by inspiration is developed, you will continue to see a mass departure of junior officers. They may cite other reasons such as pay, PERSTEMPO, family, etc, for leaving, but the truth of the matter is that the kind of people that the Army wants to keep, the kind that will develop into good leaders, are the kind that will sacrifice these things if given good leadership and an environment in which they can develop into the good leader they want to be....
- We are field grade officers and we are still treated like privates.

- Even though the drawdown is complete, I still feel that we are still a zero-defects army. As a result of the drawdown, competition increased. Officers were so worried about their careers that the "survival instinct" has been prevalent. Even though we have completed the draw down, I still feel that many officers are so worried about their careers that they still back stab. Again, I think this is what many did to get through the drawdown. It is now ingrained in these officers.
- I was glad to see the BAH issue addressed and that at least do the right thing was eventually done. There is still a long way to go on housing and quality of life, but it did help me trust the system again. More on housing..... Quite frankly, I and my wife are embarrassed by the housing I live in. I have asked everyone in my family and my wife's family not to visit us here because of the size and condition of quarters. I just got promoted to field grade and this is what I have to show for it. The other day I was on I-70 and I saw HUD type housing off the highway that looked exactly how army housing looks. I don't get it.....
- We are the top 50 % of the our year group..... What benefit do we get by attending CGSC in residence? None that I can see. If someone can get the same credit doing CGSC by correspondence, why should they come here?
- Captains are getting out of the army because they have nothing to look forward to. The good and fun jobs are few and far between. Then when in them, they spend more time trying to stay out of trouble because the zero defects environment is still alive and well. It is not necessarily the pay that is the problem with retention, it is the many times unreal expectations of those in senior leadership positions.
- Power point and computers has only allowed higher level commanders to control and micro manage more. We say we want our junior leaders to display and exercise initiative. Well get off their backs and out of business and allow them to make mistakes. I have been fortunate to serve under commanders that have allowed me to make the mistakes of commission and not and allow me to learn from my mistakes. Most junior officers are not allowed to make these mistakes and survive and learn, so they don't use their initiative. Instead, they wait to be told what to do.... So do you think in combat they are going show any initiative.....No..... So soldiers are going to die.
- In many cases it is who you know, not what you know or how hard you work. This is in competing for jobs, OERs etc.....
- My wife tells me every day to get out of the Army. She is disgusted with the quality of life and the high stress pace.

- We all waste so much time trying to suck up and making slides with statistics that we are not doing our jobs.

**1) LT/CPT look at disgruntled Field Grades and say “We don’t want to be like them”**

- a) Senior dissatisfaction
- b) Limited initiative
- c) Too few opportunities

**2) Warrior Ethos disappearing**

- a) PK/PE/HA missions
- b) Techno-focus instead of soldier/leader focus
- c) Diplomatic police not warfighters
- d) Too much apologizing / blatant spin control

**3) Job versus Profession**

- a) Waning benefits
- b) Money for college
- c) OVERLY proud of pay raise
- d) BAH fiasco (and the clumsy damage control)
- e) RA commissioning (“...for a career as an officer in the regular Army.”)

**4) Bureaucracy**

- a) Painfully slow
- b) Frustration with the “nothing we can do about it”
- c) Division XXI redesign ( Loss of Combat power without the multipliers)
- d) Time is squandered on things other than training

**5) Communications shortcomings**

- a) Leaders to soldiers
- b) Army to its leaders
- c) Army to Congress/Administration
- d) Army to America

**6) Deteriorating Trust in Senior leadership**

- a) Lack of consistent vision
- b) Poor command climates
- c) Expediency vs. effectiveness
- d) Zero Defects mentality is stronger than ever.

**7) Instability**

- a) Units and people
- b) Assessments without end, but never implementation

### **8) Drawdown turbulence**

- a) Movement creates turbulence, will continue as long as there is movement
- b) Need proper perspective. Not as bad as 1975 Army.

### **9) Capturing exiting personnel data**

- a) ACAP survey - What is that data being used for?
- b) How about a 5-year post PCS survey to find out if the ACAP survey is still valid?

### **10) Watering down of standards (Not really germane to this discussion but I include it)**

- a) CGSC image tarnished by the "Leavenworth B"
- b) "Everybody passes" versus Task, Condition, Standard
- c) Education not a priority (instructors pulled to meet requirements - short-term gain, long-term pain)

### **11) Officer assessments**

- a) Are we assessing the right people?
- b) Branch-by branch assessment

### **12) Is the Army's Grass turning Brown?**

- a) Recognize the glidepath for the drawdown
- b) Relative depravity perception

### **13) Assignment Process**

- a) Fair - occasionally
- b) Branch dependent
- c) ADSO = "hose me"
- d)

### **CAPTAIN ATTRITION ISSUES:**

NOTE: Students think most of the reasons CPTs leave apply to MAJORS as well; O4s just have too much invested to get out. (Most perceive that the 10 year point is latest window - based on comments from corporate headhunters - to get out and get a decent start on the corporate ladder).

- The booming economy isn't the reason people leave but it gives more options/makes the choice easier to make - so does the INTERNET in terms of facilitating job searches.
- Not enough company command time; system pushes officers to command as junior CPTs so there's lots of time is left for staff and other jobs (like AC/RC). Many branches are adamant about no 2d commands. Other services, like USAF, let an officer spend the first 10 years learning his trade (e.g. A-10 Pilot).
- Need more Senior CPTs as commanders - one reason for micromanagement is that Bn Cdrs don't trust the junior ones as much.

- Turbulence and uncertainty are key reasons for leaving - officers perceive the blame starts at CSA level (he's in charge).
- Personal Time/Family life is a big factor and today many O3s are married . For a lot the choice to resign hinges on the wife's decision ("I'm tired of moving every 2 years; if you want to PCS again you can do it without me"). Spouse's job/career (inability to pursue one) a factor.
- Lack of tour stabilization. Part of problem is poor management by Branch Personnel (lack of time/people to properly manage assignments). Need to double the number of assignment officers; only takes a relatively few officers out of the field and would make a lot of difference in trying to plug the right officers into the right slots.
- Regimental system is a joke for officers so quit talking about it.
- Frequent 6 month deployments - no real credit, as there is with a 1-year unaccompanied tour.
- Lack of installation resources - billets/quarters falling down (except for general officer quarters).

### **FIELD GRADE CONCERNS (BESIDES THOSE ABOVE)**

- Zero Defects is real; evolved during draw-down when Army was looking for any "reason to non-select officers". Now it's here to stay. No tolerance for mistakes. One reason for this mentality at field grade level is extremely junior BN Commanders (often selected as Majors(P) who have been promoted below the zone, have limited experience, and are intent that nothing will "derail their train"). No freedom to take chances/fail/learn from mistakes. Not many "old, seasoned Bn commanders" out there.
- Predictability in assignments is important - 6 months TDY isn't as bad if there's adequate planning time for the family.
- Spouses increasingly starting to think there is no assignment that allows for some "down time/get to know the family again time".
- Hours worked are too long (because so many hours are for the wrong reason - i.e. making the perfect PowerPoint briefing). If it's rewarding work, the long hours won't matter.
- Mentoring is a catch-phrase; "can't mandate someone will be your mentor anymore than you can mandate someone will be your friend". An overly formalized system is self-defeating.
- Powerpoint - often a clear sign that leaders don't want the details; allows them to pretend to be interested; allows hard issues to be skirted.

### **LEADERSHIP ISSUES**

- No end in sight for additional MOOTW deployments. The current administration would deploy a division anywhere for political gain and the current military leadership (all services) will never take a stand - they aren't the ones doing more with less.

- Perception seems to be that McMaster's book, Dereliction of Duty, could have been written about the current JCS and the current OPTEMPO. Example cited was the Chiefs finally telling Congress something was wrong when it couldn't be denied any longer (and when the troops in the field had already been saying it for years). No one thinks a service chief would have the guts to take a stand, much less resign, on a matter of principle - last person perceived as having that kind of stand-up fortitude was Krulak.
- Some students wondered if the CJCS has gone from being a warfighter to a yes-man?

#### CPT attrition:

- Too much borrowed military manpower. Not doing what they signed up for. Retention becomes a problem once they come back from the field (be that Bosnia/Albania/or other real operational/training mission).
- Treating soldiers like pieces of meat instead of valued individuals is the primary reason for bad retention. Captain retention is a result of the Army's management of them, i.e. downsizing response placed an emphasis on elimination instead of training and retention, and BRAC was conducted without the slightest regard for the individual soldier. If you feel unloved and unappreciated by the system you might as well be a civilian and make more money.
- Red cycle, admin support, peacetime missions (especially CONUS) are no fun. Sit in garrison too much... no real ammo/bullets. Too much computerized simulation, not enough real training.
- They (Captains) do not want to be like us. Burning midnight oil, see our jobs (O-4) as even less fun.
- Digitization has taken away the hands-on part of the job that is so satisfying. Monitor watchers vs switch throwers/trigger pullers. Knowledge workers key to this development. If Army truly relies on knowledge workers it should not be nickel and dimeing pay and benefits to save a few million (current BAH & Tricare are examples... not the output but the way we've outsourced its management and not held someone accountable for the screwups).
- Continuous and unrelenting erosion of benefits (Tricare, retirement, housing). Leadership at the top constantly talking about what's in the works but never seems to become reality. Put money where your mouth is... not in it for the money, but what little there is of it and how it is protected by the leaders indicates where their real interests lie.
- Feeling overwhelmed and under-resourced. Too many training detractors and too much micromanagement. Not empowering front line leaders... senior officers concerned with zero defect environment (Brigade commander: "You're only one incident away from the end of a career"). Too many knee jerk reactions to events from above. Too much time spent on administrative details and non-essential tasks.

#### Reassignment Process:

- Mixed reviews on influencing assignments. However generally all agree the process the Army uses is antiquated and does not seem to reflect the CSA's concerns with respect to retaining quality personnel. Most agree personnel "managers" just plug holes. Get the personnel managers at the tip of the spear with the program. System needs reform, needs to change like everything else is changing, and not continue to do it the way they've always done it.
- "My sister submitted paperwork to leave the USAF and they bent over backward to get an assignment she couldn't turn down. That's showing real concern from top to bottom in the personnel management system."
- Number of tours. Rarely spend enough time on station to get really good at a job. Too much "punch the ticket" creating incredible turmoil and turnover... negative impact on the unit.
- Limited opportunity for battalion command equals limited future. Branch assignment briefs say it's not so... we ain't buyin it. Another indication of an assignment/promotion system needing some kind of reform.

Other reactions:

- Changing force structure prior to fielding the weapons that are required with less force is not smart. Strategy mismatch.
- Failure to conduct additional rounds of BRAC.
- Housing for young enlisted with families is hosed up. Fix it! We are watching. Put money where mouth is here. If the family is taken care of the soldier is happy and focused on the mission.
- Health care. Loved reading a general's comments in the last TRICARE update that he had never had a problem with the system. His aide probably makes his appointments and files his claim forms. Ask the soldiers.
- Political correctness. Tired of overemphasis to media reactions (wallet cards, ID tags, CO2 til you drop, glossy inserts on homosexual policy, etc). Let's get drunk and kick up our heels.
- Over control of what and how we think.
- Senior officers are more concerned with "pretty" versus "substance." Sick of PowerPoint presentations that wouldn't survive a reality check.
- It increasingly seems that senior officers are out of touch with the lower ranks and do not truly understand the implications of new technology. Senior officers are too insulated. Seem to care only about their careers. They don't seem to care about us except superficially.
- E-mail leadership. Get rid of it.
- Very senior (top most) leadership needs to read McMaster's "Dereliction of Duty," and evaluate themselves. Are they more concerned with pleasing the civilian leadership at the expense of the "Army".
- Peace Keeping: OK, it's a mission. Tired mission, not real work. Bosnia is a disgusting quagmire.
- Micro-anagement: A killer on the frontline. Too many events directed from above.



- Mentoring: Not happening at the O-4 level.
  - Top down loyalty: need to walk the talk.
  - Zero defects: a real problem, killed a lot of good officers.
  - Readiness reporting: inflated and way too time intensive. 1000's of hours for USR! Should be something done daily at all levels via automated systems feeding into a unified database. USR is too subjective. Leadership should not be able to manipulate the numbers the way they do. Motto should be, "If you can't measure it, you can't manage it."
  - Get back to basics. Let leaders lead:
    - Give time for training and resources to leaders at the front (builds character & confidence).
    - Too much focus on technology simulations - soldiers want the "real thing," let them do it. Must be tough & realistic... not a computer driven CPX with lots of PowerPoint slides.
    - Allow people to stay in jobs for significantly longer periods without hurting them. Need to build technical and tactical proficiency... too much PCS'ing.
  - Photo-Op Diplomacy: we did not join to be policemen. We should commit troops when U.S. National interests are at stake, not because we feel bad about it. Need "COHERENT" foreign/military policy. Knee jerk reactions out of control.
  - Training (medium weight force/initial entry): It does no good to reduce weight to be deployable if the USAF can not move you and you are not trained. If deploying by sea weight savings provides no advantage. Still need time to train regardless of how fast you get you equipment there. Why are we rushing to get to a 1,000 year old conflict?
- 
- A simple After Action Review process was chosen as the format with issues to be grouped under three general headings: Strategic Issues, Major's Quality of Life Issues, and Subordinate Quality of Life Issues. The forum quickly broke down to a quite negative, verbal free-for-all. Everyone in the Staff Group participated and as one might expect there was less than consensus on several major issues. The key issues and debates are briefly outlined and paraphrased in the following paragraphs.
  - "If you are having fun, you can put up with the housing, medical, and moving irritations, if you are not enjoying your job, putting bandaids on these problems just won't work. Why would any captain aspire to that?"
  - Major's Issue: The Army Leadership is out of touch, not trusted.
  - Disbelief that the leadership did not know the effects of the BAH decision on the soldiers (Give a raise with one hand and take away tax free money with the other) They targeted the senior enlisted and middle grade officers since they have too much invested to leave.
  - How many generals' wives work? Do they really understand the two working adult professional family (Educated officers, marry educated spouses who also have

careers). If the military member is not in a satisfying job the spouse's unhappiness eases the decision to leave.

- Brigadier General Hale. Double Standard—Battalion Commanders, Brigade Commanders, and General Officers have offenses “pushed under the carpet” that majors and below get nailed for—the group offered names and incidents they have seen.
- Spend “billions” to build the medium brigade, a need obvious to everyone since at least 1995, when the quality of life issues (housing, medical care, and too frequent moves) go unsolved.
- Soldiers First, We Care For Soldiers, are empty slogans.
- The perception of the erosion of benefits insures that currently serving military officers will
- not help the recruiting effort, especially of their own kids. Mixed results to the question:
- “Would you want your kid to serve in the military?”

“Creeping cynicism from a decade of broken promises.”

- The Leadership still does not understand that the move away from the operational track
- clearly shown in the functional area surveys and signup. It was a clear signal of the dissatisfaction in the force over the Battalion Commander Brass Ring Syndrome and a desire by many officers to get job skills for life after the Army.

**Strategic Issue:** The Army has no strategic vision of its operational or training environment. (No one in the group offered to write one.)

- Fight and Win, two Major Theater Wars continues to be the Army line, when the reality on the ground since 1991 has been Smaller Scale Contingencies. There is a difference in arguing that an Army must train for war to be successful across the spectrum, and being upfront, honest, and forward thinking about what the Army is really going to do over the next decade—and preparing the officers, troops, families, and units for those tasks.
- AR 350-1. It is impossible to train to standard on all of the tasks outlined in the Army's training documents. This leads to shortcuts, “lying,” on reports, and misguided training not related to missions units are actually going to conduct. If the Army had a vision of what its role really is in today's world it might be able to train to standard to accomplish its mission. However, with MOOTW/SASO and Offense/Defense there is too much on the plate.
- The emphasis on Force Protection is a major problem in training and in mission accomplishment.
- Subordinate's Issue: If the Captains see that the Battalion Commander is working for himself and not the unit, that the Majors in the S3 and XO positions are not having any “fun,” why would they want to stay.

- Zero Defect-Zero Tolerance is the root cause. (Several members said if the commanders are real leaders, this problem goes away or is minimized.) Too many command selectees are “pretty boys” who have not seen real troop duty since they were captains and are on their way up, no matter what. Commanders should have real muddy boots.
- Fun or Job Satisfaction would ameliorate much of the dissatisfaction with housing, medical care, and optempo, perstempo turbulence.
- Demand 2 Blocks on the OERs don’t help. Senior Rater Profiles are screwed up.
- Subordinate’s Issue: Quality of Life for enlisted personnel.
- No soldiers on food stamps
- No Specialist 4 with 7 kids can expect not to be on food stamps or to have a SUV.
- This debate went back and forth. E-4s should not expect the material wealth of O-4s, but both should have a quality of life commensurate with their education, skills, and time in service.

Strategic Issue: The Senior Leadership does not inform the Force.

- This is the information age and it is not happening.

Strategic Issue: The Army leadership needs a Congressional Marketing Plan like the Air Force.

- Major’s Issue: Perstempto, too many Special Duty billets at headquarters, and general officer “by-names” for “fair haired boys” all exacerbate the perstempo problem.
- Why can’t assignments be longer?
- Ticket punching continues.
- Civilianization and Contractorization take money, duties, and positions away from uniformed personnel inappropriately. We don’t work for contractors, too many senior civilians incompetent or out of touch. Problem of “reimbursable contracts.”
- Getting the TOE units filled is a good idea, gutting TRADOC to make it happen, especially at the initial entry level training sites is a terrible idea.
- Major’s Issue: Too many, poorly reimbursed moves.
- Family stability is important.
- Full reimbursement for moves is the right thing to do. You can shop for a “depreciated couch.” The Army contractor mover ruined the furniture, the Army should insure the service member gets a replacement, not partial payment and a ream of paperwork.

Strategic Issue: What is the senior leadership’s view of Quality of Life?

## CSA “Pre-Sensing Session” Comments

- Army should survey why people stay in (while they continue to serve) and why those who chose to leave, leave (within months of departure). May provide better answers than “Let’s throw money at the problem.” (To solve a problem, that problem must first be defined.
- Senior leadership is missing the important issues. For example, we need to gear recruiting to highly computer-literate “Y-Generation” teens.
- Have we assessed “who is coming in the military? Are people coming in for 20 years? Can we restructure to accommodate the new reality of careers (changing more often)? How will we keep people in for as long as we need them? Can we continue to create opportunities to influence young officers (e.g. good initial tours, challenges, etc.)?
- Many leave because the Army is “no fun” any more. Initial tour is key – if junior enlisted and officers are not engaged and happy in their first tours, it is a big problem. Also we spend too much time talking sensitivity vice combat. We need to be fair and considerate, but we need to be warriors first, not social workers.
- We live and fear “zero tolerance.” Puh-lease do not say we are not. One bad (even mediocre, even apparently okay, but “velvet hammer”) OER and we’re through. Bosses refuse to take risks for fear of failing (whatever happened to desire to achieve?) Instead, we try to out do others with fancier Power Point briefings (form over substance). (Once heard that the Russians working with NATO troops in Bosnia chided that NATO meant “No Action – Talk Only.”) We are a talk Army. Officers question whether or not it is worth investing years and years only to have a boss who doesn’t see eye-to-eye damn them on a report. Junior officers want and need the room to succeed and the chance to learn from mistakes (we don’t have time to make them all ourselves).
- One guy/OER can “kill” you. This is a combination of ignorance of a changing OER system, arbitrary assignment of value or status to some words/phrases over others, and lumping all jobs except command into the same level of intensity. For example, an O-4 division planner’s job is more difficult and time consuming than a major instructor, and should be rated accordingly. This career risk problem threatens livelihood, and in our mostly married culture, this is stressful.
- Make sure LTs and CPTs know about selective continuation for O-4s.
- Are we sacrificing our –10/-20 maintenance standards for QoL issues? (A soldier driving a golf cart replicating a tank is less apt to feel good about his job.) We need to acquire and maintain the highest standards as well as fund QoL projects. (For example, is it really true that the reason we aren’t getting a new Bell Hall because the WPPA stepped in to gym West Point a new gym? That is the rumor here – and cynical as it may be, we are generally likely to believe this sort of information.) Bottom line is we need to use O&M dollars to fund O&M, not pet projects, not QoL. We shouldn’t be forced to trade readiness for replacement heating systems or asbestos removal.
- Some officers felt that with the increased OPTEMPO and personnel turbulence, the number of dual military couples would decrease, further exacerbating “demographic” issues in the force. (I suspect many senior officers welcome this – to keep women

away – but as they comprise 15% of our force, if they begin the exodus and become harder to replace in kind, we will experience even more significant recruiting and retention shortfalls.) Today, family is first then the military. Don't know if that's a change, but it appears more pronounced.

- The downsizing of the force from 18 to 10 divisions (with inadequate draw down from TDA and national headquarters (READ: MDW)) has caused a “too much, too few” situation in which we all must do more than truly possible. Every suspense is NOW, little long range planning is done (or when done, appreciated), and low-density MOS soldiers are always gone. Why would one stay?
- Loss of full time enemy within the careers of majors has caused disillusionment with why they are here. Do we do war (train for combat)? Or do we spread peace and love (and the occasional foodstuff) all over the world, regardless of our national security and only connected to national interests through the most convoluted ways? While it would be nice to “defer” missions assigned by the NCA, this is not possible. Instead we need to communicate to our forces that peace operations have long been among our (military) missions. Our lack of acceptance of this and focus tend to create greater disruption, including training for BCTP immediately upon return from extended deployments.
- Predictability relieves much stress. Our lives are not predictable.
- Micro-management reduces predictability when a plan is changed to accommodate a senior officer's demands for control, rather than results. What is the mission? Let me do it.
- Wives have a vote (and now, often, earn more than the military member). And as our lives become less predictable family tensions rise. (Navy families are separated much more than we are (time wise) but it is generally during planned absences. A much better option.) Unless we can plan personal and family “down time,” we will continue to lose good people. As long as we always respond “can do, now!” for less than national security threatening deployments, we will never focus and we will never have a plan. Why is it that the navy plans to have a percentage (roughly half) of their ships at sea, the Air Force has AEFs on call, but the Army claims to be able to send 10 divisions anywhere, anytime? We are trying too hard and need to reassess long term effects on can-doism. For example, a senior leader who spoke here recently, recited with pride how a platoon deployed to an airfield for a short notice deployment in record time – then went on to say they sat there for weeks until someone figured out they needed a flight to transport them. This is not something to be proud of. That unit could have been preparing their families for the separation instead of proving we can deploy in x hours.
- CSA could call on qualified officers from the NG and USAR to fill AD shortcomings.
- Service to Nation should target primary schools, not AARP.
- Enlist renowned former military to espouse the value/benefit of the military in their success.
- Better professional career counseling to junior officers early. Those who desire stars must learn early that road. Others need to know options other than stars. They are bombarded with requests (lures) from outside organizations. The military has much to offer, make it more well known.
- Fix government housing.

- Compensate those separated better. Recompense should be higher for those on short notice deployments, or back-to-back. Also should be extra for cumulative time away.
- Compare civil sector daily routines/hours with military. Often to make the big bucks, hours and traveling are also very high.
- Personnel assignments are not done professionally, nor by professionals in personnel management (I suspect few of our general officers rely on a unit-trained IMO to provide their computer support). Too much buddy-buddy and who you know, vice demonstrated capabilities and desires. When desires are met, stress is lower and enjoyment higher. We all know of people unaccompanied in Korea (involuntarily) who knew someone who WANTED to go to Korea but were refused.
- Many JMOs who have gotten out wish they hadn't. Maybe we could feature them in some capacity in recruitment/retention. Many miss the camaraderie. However, many recognize there are challenges out there, too.
- Perceived lack of respect of the Administration for the military is debilitating.
- Working junior soldiers outside their skills (make-work) helps make up their minds to leave.
- Increased OPTEMPO has second and third order affects on developing, training and mentoring soldiers. We're too busy in the field to teach subordinates who have spent too little time in schools (trained by unqualified instructors) because the TRADOC goal is not to certify competence, but to "pound through" the numbers and let the "students" learn their jobs in the field. Can you say Catch-22?
- Filling divisions is only "a" solution, not necessarily "the" solution. Without support, divisions can't deploy. Without qualified and trained soldiers, divisions are full of incompetence. Maybe we need to look to filling corps and eliminating divisions ("Blasphemy? All those GO positions! We will never do that no matter how much sense it makes!")

### **COMMENTS FOR CSA'S SENSING SESSION**

- Assignment program is inefficient and unresponsive.
  - Very little attempt in made to consider the desires and needs of the officer.
  - Assignment officers are somehow identified and selected as "fast burners" who have little identification with other folks in the field who do their job and would like to have more input in where they go and what they do.
  - The assignment process is a check the block affair where the officer being reassigned has little or no input into where he or she goes; family considerations are not part of the equation.
- There are too few opportunities for battalion command and thus long-term career potential is limited, even though the branch managers say that the situation is changing, the perception is that you must command a battalion or you can forget promotion beyond LTC. This is all part of a perceived lower glass ceiling despite

what branch managers say; now we are being told that attainment of the rank of LTC should be our most realistic goal.

- The OPTEMPO is killing the force and driving people out of the Army.
  - Working 10-16 hours a day takes the fun out of the job and means that you miss a large portion of your children growing up.
  - Commanders put too much on the training schedule and demand that it all be done perfectly; the result is mediocre training, long hours, frustration, and disillusionment.
  - Only lip service is paid to quality of life issues when your rucksack is always packed and you are never home.
  - The captains don't want to be like us; they perceive that being a field grade officer is really no different in terms of job satisfaction and quality of life (and may be much worse in terms of hours, etc.), thus there is little incentive to stay in the service.
- Degradation of benefits (retirement, health care, etc.) coupled with PERSTEMPO/OPTEMPO combine to erode morale. At the same time, installations that should be closed to save money escape the BRAC ax because of domestic political considerations.
  - TRICARE is more than a minor irritant. A general officer may not have any problem with the system, but he should try it down at the other end of the food chain.
  - Soldiers on food stamps is a travesty and someone must do something!
  - Pay is not that significant an issue in relative terms, but to trumpet a big pay raise while quietly reducing BAH is more than a "small, but annoying inequity."
  - Lobby Congress to bring back the medical care that retirees were promised.
- We talk about initiative and agility, but we reward officers who follow a rigidly prescribed path to success; being innovative will get you fired unless your results are so outstanding that your boss can't slam you. Forget about taking risk; we don't reward risk takers.
- There is too much micro-management. We spend a lot of money, time, and effort in training and educating our officers, but then we will not let them do their jobs without intense micro-management of virtually every task.

- Saying that we are not a zero defects Army does not make it so; there is no freedom to fail and everyone is just a step away from a 2 block (or worse) and the potential end of your career.
- The above applies doubly to battalion and brigade commanders, many of whom command as if they were scared of their own shadows and therefore will not let their officers and NCOs do their jobs.
- For the same reason, too many battalion and brigade commanders rule by fear and intimidation and there is little meaningful mentoring going on.
- Loyalty often only goes in one direction.
- Political correctness reigns; there are too many programs that appear to be in response to media scrutiny (values cards, CO2, homosexual sensitivity training).
- The high turn-over rate not limited to company grade officers; an officer hardly has time to learn his job, before it is time to move on to the next block to be checked on the career trail.
- There is a perceived loss of focus and direction at the highest levels of civilian and military command (peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance, medium weight brigade, civilian leadership out of touch with the military).
- Trying to field a new force structure that is based on equipment that hasn't been fielded yet appears to be a dangerous course of action.
- Senior officers must stand up and be counted; the force is being pulled in every direction and no one appears to be falling on his sword over it. We are involved in peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance, and a myriad of other missions that detract from our stated mission of protecting the nation against enemies foreign and domestic. Meanwhile, we are signed up for other types of missions all over the world. Now it looks like we will be involved in Africa and will no doubt have a battalion or two on the Golan Heights when/if the Middle East peace accords are ever completed. Pretty soon there will no one left to defend the nation should such a need arise. Senior officers must make the civilian leadership know what they are doing to the force and insist that the situation be rectified; to many, this situation is analagous to the situation described in *Dereliction of Duty*.
- There is a credibility gap between senior leaders and the rest of the Army and senior leadership is losing the confidence and trust of its subordinates; there are growing doubts about the trustworthiness of senior military and DOD civilian leadership. Service member suspicions of anthrax vaccinations, BAH changes, Gulf War syndrome, adequacy of retirement and health care, and the handling of senior officer ethical cases (MG Hale) are immediate examples of the effects of the growing credibility gap that has caused many in the Army to question senior leadership.



- CSA should ruthlessly pursue senior officers who commit UCMJ offenses. Place general officers in prison if they commit offenses that would land a Major or an NCO in jail. Double standards cannot be tolerated.
- There is a continuing concern with post-Army marketability: some reason, "why stick around for 20 years in the midst of increasingly vulnerable benefits while the civilian sector offers greater opportunities for increased pay and benefits, stability, and quality of life?" Also, when is the best time to enter the job market? In your 20s, 30s, 40s, or 50s? Age has become an increasingly important factor in marketability - despite laws against age discrimination.

Assorted other comments/observations/recommendations:

- **The Army should have a program that provides investment education/opportunities for its soldiers. A soldier who is seeing returns on his money other than buying lotto tickets and understands personal investment because the Army has contracted a company to provide financial services is going to be a harder working soldier.**
- CSA should REQUIRE all DIV thru MACOM staffs "take 25% off the plate". Have DSCOPS give him a decision brief on which priorities to cut. A trickle-down effect would probably ensure less PERSTEMPO and more focus on home station training. DSCOPS could also "lay out" all the directed, required training - DOD, JCS?, DA, MACOM, CORPS, DIV - in training days and recommend which training could be reduced or eliminated. It's no wonder why company and battalion commanders feel hand-tied and have less satisfaction.
- Why not use the CGSC class as a leadership laboratory to conduct studies on issues of concern to the CSA? There is a lot of talent in each class with officers with wide and varied experience.
- Specific ideas about retention (from one student):
- **The question isn't what can we do about the high rate of attrition in the army, but rather what we can do about making society, soldiers, and their families excited about the army/military. Specifically, how do we generate our society into believing that the military is a 'first choice,' viable, and highly respected career choice?**
- We must get our politicians more involved. The recruiting shortfall is a national problem, and could become a crisis. - direct lobbying from the senior levels of the

military to the senior levels of government, and generation of support from the grass roots level.

- **We need a complete revision of how and who we recruit. For example, the army continues to entice young men and women with quantitative rewards, such as large sums of bonus money to join the army, but what are we doing as a collective campaign to target young men and women with qualitative rewards such as leadership skills, sense of pride, and dignity.**
  
- Finally, we must look at the soldiers who are already in the military. What are we doing to take care of them? They will either be our greatest recruiters (if the experience is good), or our greatest adversaries (if the experience is awful). Bottom line, is I don't believe the army has an integrated plan complete with a PAO package, an advertising package, a psychological input or even a comprehensive recruiting plan.
  
- Other radical thoughts on recruiting:
  1. Recruit disabled persons in a limited capacity
  2. Lift the ban on homosexuals
  3. Provide 15-year contracts as other European countries do.
  4. Give \$1,000 bonuses for every service member who signs up a person into the military
  5. Place recruiters right next to college campuses to sweep up the drop outs (when kids drop out of college, who better than to provide an alternative to 'Wendy's')
  6. Conduct partnership with industry whereas soldiers in certain skill sets, are trained and work in the military for 5 years, and then are guaranteed a job with Fortune 500 companies.

### ***Why has CPT attrition risen from 6.7% to 10.6% in the last 10 years?***

Drawdown - young captains saw perceived unfairness in the drawdown as some seniors were 'forced' out of the Army; the captains did not want to have the same experience.

Family QOL - e.g., PCSing to a post with a 13 month waiting list for housing every 2 years.

Shift in Army personality - a 'go to work, go home' Army. There is no socialization as a unit. 'Political correctness' has killed the Friday afternoon social hour at the Officer's Club (and the clubs are gone, too). Its a job instead of a way of life.

Junior leaders spend too little time in jobs with troops (plt ldr, co cmd).

More accurate OERs are allowing individuals to forecast career potential better - some got out because OERs received were not conducive to making O-5 (zero-defect mentality?)

Quality of initial leaders encountered - poor leaders led to personnel getting out.

Specific reasons cited by the staff group as to why they stayed in.

- Job satisfaction
- Integrity and professionalism of fellow soldiers
- (Lack) of (similar / equivalent) civilian job opportunities
- Leadership and mentorship experienced

Do you feel you truly have a say in you assignment process?

Yes - 6

No - 7

(This is a shocking number, to me!)

Impact of PERSTEMPO -

High PERSTEMPO is generally viewed as good by 'first termers', as they are doing what they signed up for. However, as they experience multiple deployments to the same places with the same mission, personnel get tired, as the tasks become drudgery. Especially true for 'High demand, low density' MOSs. Students stated that high PERSTEMPO units like the 82nd and 101st have high reenlistment rates.

Time between PCS moves -

Some stated a desire for more stability - 3 to 4 years between PCS moves (especially true if off-post housing must be purchased, due to limited on-post housing and a small rental market). Others complained of limited PCS potential - move from CONUS post to overseas post, back to same CONUS post, back to same overseas post...

Peacekeeping -

Not why we joined the Army!

**If this issue is so import to the CSA, why is he only spending one hour of his time with the CGSOC student? Why only 16 students? Why not a town hall meeting with at least one per staff group?**

So what? The CSA will meet with "specially selected" representatives for a total of 60 minutes on 3 March. He will likely be given a "filtered" version of the Millennium Class' feedback (which may or may not accurately reflect our views). In the final analysis it appears that this initiative can be added to a long line of initiatives that are

long on rhetoric, and short on action.

**Narrative explanation of above comments:**

First and foremost, this feedback is only as good as the action that is taken on it. We all agree that the decision to solicit this input is just a first step toward effectively solving the issues that we raise. It is not enough to simply “say” these issues will be collected and acted upon. Admittedly, we are somewhat pessimistic about this process. The fact that these comments will be collected, deciphered, “filtered” and passed through the chain of command, in our group’s opinion, bastardizes the process. If the CSA’s intent is to solicit free and unfettered input, then this process is not in keeping with his intent. Likewise, if the CSA is truly concerned about retaining captains, a small but significant reflection of the larger quality of life issues troubling the army, than one hour of his time spent at Ft. Leavenworth is not enough. Actually, one hour each day is not enough. As senior representative for the army, he alone is in a position to truly place emphasis on quality of life issues. In times of uncertainty (which most would agree describes our current security environment), organizational experts from Mintzberg to Quinn to Gates suggest you concentrate on core strengths. There is no better time than now to focus on our army’s core strength- it’s people. Quality of life is the issue! The current exodus of captains is symptomatic of the decline in our army’s quality of life.

Most of what we outline below is a reflection of the issues endemic to all military members (single or married. Based on the issues we outline below, the stage they are in their lives, and the luxury of alternatives given today’s growth economy, it is not surprising that captains are deciding the costs of continued service exceed the benefits.

III. In the last ten years, voluntary CPT attrition has risen from 6.7% to 10.6%. Why are Captains getting out? The issues of a strong economy, numerous job opportunities, deployment frequency, and “doing more with less” are well understood. Are there other reasons?

1. Care for family is number one reason Captains are getting out...benefits, pay, medical & housing

- too much money out of pocket for medical
- better family benefits in the civilian sector
- too long to see a doctor...especially a specialist
- all the above just adds to family pressures
- if people are the core of the army, then take care of the people

2. Too much micro-management taking place.

- Captains are told exactly how to do their jobs....can’t use their initiative
- should receive mission oriented order and left along to do the job
- being task at last minute to do something, then expected to work last or on the weekend to get it done
- Captain’s are watching the officer’s above them....don’t like what they see in terms of working hours.....treatment by their superiors

3. Army is an admin army... not tactical... expectation is high quality training...not getting it
  - there is a lack of training across the board
  - the money for training is going toward other requirements..PK and other continuances
4. Quality time for family.
  - many officers feel they should work hard, but also be able to spend time with their family
  - should be no need for an 18 hours work day while in garrison
  - expectation is that while at school (CGSC) time should be available for family.....not seeing it
5. Just plain not having fun anymore.
  - feel they are being ask to conduct task/mission with resources

*Narrative explanation of above bullets:*

The first area we looked at is taking care of families. The theme of this discussion centered on the general decline in benefits and services (ranging from housing to medical to pay) that we've experienced in the past 8 to 10 years. Subordinate to this issue is spouse satisfaction. This is influenced by a number of other areas. One significant contributor to spouse dissatisfaction is the ever-decreasing number of benefits and services, as well as the quality of those benefits and services. What used to be taken for granted, in the way of benefits and services, is either no longer available or of such poor quality that military members look to alternative "out-of pocket" solutions instead. A second contributing factor is the increasing instability associated with frequent "open-ended" deployments and PCS transitions. Spouses are unable to establish any long-term employment or community relationships because of this instability. Lastly, the army relies on (some may say expects) military spouses (wives) to perform family support activities for which they are not paid, trained or resourced properly to perform. If the army must rely upon this form of "volunteering," then it must build institutionalize this service.

**IV. What is the importance of the following issues in terms of making career decisions?**

- job satisfaction
- time for personal/family life
- integrity and professionalism in the organization
- overall quality of life
- spouse's overall satisfaction
- civilian job alternatives
- personal freedom
- working hours and schedules
- opportunities for career advancement

- pay and retirement benefits

1. Quality of life issue is the most important.

- job availability for spouse at new duty local
- frequency of moves wear on entire family
- spouses are unable to establish any long-term employment or community relationships because of this instability
- spouses are forced into the AFTB program...many unit have quotas on number of spouses...end up becoming responsible for many other families
- no assurance of career advancement...career is pretty much set
- relook retirement program....offer some type of vested system for job security sake

2. Leadership.

- we have a checklist type of leadership....not a true leadership...senior leader are simple checking the block
- examples are risk management, safety, CO2 training and homosexual training to mention a few
- lost of trust in senior leadership....they talk the talk but don't walk the walk...BAH as an example....they had to know about it....if not they were derelict in their duties

*Narrative explanation of above bullets:*

The second area addressed relates to a decline in professionalism and poor leadership. Though this is a difficult area to quantify, we did agree that some areas of leadership and professionalism have been replaced with “bureaucratic management” techniques. The information age, and its attendant information technology enhancements, has provided the army leadership with an opportunity to radically empower young leaders. Meaning to provide more information and the time and flexibility to operate independently, assuming they understand their task (ie. Have been properly trained and understand the intent). In reality however, the technology has been used to micromanage junior leaders, and the tasks they perform.

As we move further away from actual exercises, toward staff planning and simulation exercises, leaders are becoming more concerned with managing information than they are with being leaders.

Mentoring was discussed as well. We agreed it was not being done enough, and not effectively, in those cases it was being done. How many leaders actually attempt to mentor their subordinates because they want to (not because the army’s leadership manual prescribes it)?

Likewise, current leadership norms tend to consider anyone below the rank of major as “immature” and “irresponsible.” The degree, to which junior officers are not treated as mature individuals across the entire spectrum of tasks performed, is a significant issue. We also talked about retirement benefit options in some detail. Captains are in a position to leave the service and seek employment with companies offering competitive 401(k) programs that do not hold them to beyond a five-year commitment. Perhaps it is time for the army to reevaluate the duration of our service member’s retirement commitment.

Given their alternatives, and the fact that historically, young people are less prone to making long-term professional commitments it may be time to consider other programs. A program that provides individuals with an option of 10, 15 or 20 years may motivate captains to remain in service longer.

**V.** What is the impact of increased personnel tempo (PERSTEMPO) on the willingness to accept the conditions of an Army career? How important is/are:

- the number of unaccompanied tours in a career?
- the number of weeks per year away from home?
- time-on-station before PCS?

1. Quality vs quantity time away.

- much of the time training away from home station is wasted...simulation away from home station
- continuances are continuing to add up...many are felt to be unnecessary

*Narrative explanation of above bullets:*

The third general area discussed is that the Army is no longer fun. The group agreed that this phenomenon is due to a number of contributing factors. These are: resource constraints, zero defect mentality, the “up-and-out” syndrome, and the opportunity to replace live training with simulations

**VI.** Do officers truly have a “say” in the reassignment process?

- most officers felt they do get a say in their assignment
- a few felt they were told one thing and another was done

**VII.** What reactions do you have to the following phrases? What do they mean to you?

- “PowerPoint Army”
- peace-keeping
- micro-management
- mentoring
- top-down loyalty
- zero defects
- readiness reporting

1. Power Point Army.

- we are leading by email
- too much time spent getting things pretty....not conducting real training...pretty vs content

2. Zero defects army.

- officers don't feel as if they can make mistakes

- new OER cause commanders to put staff officers in the two block to make room for one blocks for commands...many staff officers feel this puts them at a disadvantage from that point on
  - up and out policy threatens the officer's chances of retirement...the cooperate world has a vested policy
  - officers are forced out on H/W standards but are in outstanding physical condition
3. Lack of focus on where the army is headed.
    - force twenty-one, light, mobile strike force
    - seem we design the force before we decide what the mission should be...should be other way around
  4. Mentoring.
    - it simply is not happening
    - counseling rarely happens...even with the new support form
  5. Top-down loyalty
    - just plain don't see it that way...perception is top is watch their own butt

Narrative explanation of above bullets:

The last area we discussed related to the current force design initiatives. Though we do not know to what extent it may influence captains, the sudden and frequent changes to the army's force design exact a heavy toll on everyone. Bottom line, we will be inheriting these new designs in years to come.

Junior officers are often taken advantage of in performance reports. Most, serving within staff positions, are often subordinated on performance reports in an effort to inflate command performance reports. This dynamic immediately places the individual at a disadvantage for subsequent board reviews. Ironically, the junior officers serving in these staff positions are commonly selected from among their peers because they are superior performers.

**ATTRITION**

- Many felt that the ranks are voluntarily thinning because of a perception that they are not appreciated by senior leaders, that they are merely tools for their (senior leaders) advancement. This also fits the leadership category.
- Too much "gotta check the block" mentality. Too much focus on managing careers and not enough on building warriors. Associated with this is a strong perception that merit takes a back seat to who you know (improprieties in the personnel management system). Assignments to the best jobs/units is linked to commanders previously worked for. Commanders and senior leaders take care of people they know and like, not infrequently at the expense of better, more qualified soldiers.



- Too many back to back non-troop assignments. One soldier in this staff group will leave here going to his THIRD consecutive non-troop assignment. He feels this is detrimental to his (ops) career and has seriously considered getting out (he is an infantryman).
- Competition on the outside is pulling some away. Many civilian careers pay better, have better benefits, offer investments plans and have retirement plans. Associated with this was 10 minutes of discussion on the erosion and inadequacy, as well as poor management/administration of our compensations. Tri-care, BAH, no 401K type retirement plan were examples.
- Non-resident CGSC officers feel there is no career left for them. Their chances for promotion and career enhancing jobs are greatly reduced so they cut bait to salvage as much time towards a civilian career as possible. This was linked to the preceding bullet to make a compelling case for some majors to leave service.
- Too much to do and not enough people to do it. This did not translate to too high an OPTEMPO. They felt that frequent/multiple deployments isn't as much an issue as undermanning w/o a commensurate tailoring of (often seemingly non-essential) job related tasks. Officers in non-divisional units will continue to see this trend as we pull from the institutional army to fill our divisions to 100%. Difficult to spend quality time with families even when not deployed.
- Some are choosing the spouses career over the soldiers. In some cases the spouse is the bigger bread winner. Why should her career suffer, or the family endure separation to sustain two careers.

## **LEADERSHIP**

- Staff group members feel there is a lack of direction from senior leaders for the force. We have concepts but there is no real flesh to them (concepts/vision) to provide good direction for the total force.
- Leaders are not adequately addressing/dealing with issues that directly affect the morale/quality of life of the soldiers. Senior leaders talk a good talk but don't walk the walk. They are not representing the interests of the soldier to the civilian leadership.
- LTCs and COLs don't represent soldiers' concerns/points of view to more senior leaders. Too much "HOOAH Sir, We Got It."
- Staff group members feel that senior leaders don't communicate well with us (probably by design). We never hear the ground truth from our senior leaders. They are too politically correct when addressing us. We get more information about issues that directly affect us and the direction of the Army in unofficial publications than we do from our senior leaders.
- Where are our Officer's Clubs? No more prestige/distinction in being an officer.
- When senior civilian (and/or military) leadership doesn't live by our values/ethos, this has a negative affect on the force, in terms of expectations,

attitude, morale, trust, etc. It erodes the strength of character of the institution and makes it harder for subordinate leaders to inculcate Army (Service) values with soldiers.

### **ACE Facilitation Guide in Support of the CSA's CGSOC Sensing Session**

GENERAL: The staff group was very animated on these issues. All had an opinion. Despite efforts to direct the conversation to perceived positivism, virtually every officer was negative. Of the 13 USA officers in the group, only ONE was even considering remaining in service after 20 years. All were initially reluctant to participate in this discussion, as many believed they would be held accountable via an audit trail for what they said. That, in and of itself, speaks volumes about the environment of today's Army!

The facilitation guide was very useful and the following comments were proffered:

***In the last ten years, voluntary CPT attrition has risen from 6.7% to 10.6%. Why are Captains getting out? The issues of a strong economy, numerous job opportunities, deployment frequency, and "doing more with less" are well understood. Are their other reasons?***

- a. Spouse Dissatisfaction – a number of majors said captains are getting out because younger wives, who are not as indoctrinated in sacrifice, are sick of having to mail in TRICARE forms a dozen times before the errors are corrected – they are tired of living in Georgia without air conditioning – and they are tired of moving the family every 18 months. Healthcare, 40 year old quarters, continuing reduction in money for base support, forced “family support” groups instead of a genuine family feeling, constant short-notice deployments, no consideration for soldiers who have served overseas upon their return, etc. all make for unhappy soldiers.
- b. NO input on assignment for Captains – virtually every officer said that PERSCOM leaves a lot to be desired as a personnel management organization. They show little consideration or compassion for officers and do not work WITH officers to effect assignments. Many pointed out that there is no such thing as career management – in other words an officer's experience and skills appear to not be considered when making subsequent assignments. As example, an officer coming out of a high speed assignment as a platoon leader in the 82d then gets sent to what is perceived as a throwaway job – range control officer at Fort Benning. The message to them is their career is sidetracked – why wait around for the inevitable – get out!
- c. Deployments are not satisfying and occur too often – because senior leaders are devoted to micro-management and their own career advancement they spend most of their time avoiding mistakes instead of explaining to soldiers why they are on a deployment and what impact they are making. Bosnia was held up as an example – many saw that a real difference could have been made by soldiers out in the streets

meeting and influencing the populace – taking measured risks – rather than sitting on a base hunkered behind sandbags. And THEN, since these real world deployments don't COUNT as "real" training, the day after the soldiers return from 6 months in Bosnia they have to go into an NTC train-up cycle and deployment so their CG can get a report card. Bottom line is OPTEMPO is too high not only because the NCA is sending us everywhere but because senior leaders need to then add their training requirements on top of the deployments. Senior leaders need to stop blaming the NCA for our deployment woes and adjust what they can control to ameliorate current conditions – but they don't because they care about their report card.

***What is the importance of the following issues in terms of making career decisions?***

--The following items were chosen unanimously as "VERY IMPORTANT:"

- integrity and professionalism in the organization
- job satisfaction

--A majority felt the following items were "VERY IMPORTANT;" the rest said "SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT."

- pay and retirement benefits
- opportunities for career advancement

--A majority felt the following items were "SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT."

- opportunities for career advancement
- spouse's overall satisfaction
- time for personal/family life
- working hours and schedules
- overall quality of life
- personal freedom
- civilian job alternatives

***What is the impact of increased personnel tempo (PERSTEMPO) on the willingness to accept the conditions of an Army career? How important is/are:***

- the number of unaccompanied tours in a career? Virtually every officer was fully prepared to do unaccompanied assignments overseas. They did not appreciate, however, at the end of the tour being asked "Hey, how you would you like to be an

OC out at the NTC?” There is no consideration given to those coming from overseas tours versus homesteaders.

- the number of weeks per year away from home? This has a direct effect on the decision to remain in the Army, ESPECIALLY when the weeks away are based on not-well-thought-out deployments where missions are not understood – and especially when they are given on short notice! One officer commented that the Army’s need to always “rip” people out of the training base to support deployed forces only emphasizes how screwed up our force structure and thin organizations are.
- Time-on-station before PCS? Every officer feels that 4 years should be the norm with a goal of 5 to 6 years. Let them settle in a house, build some equity and get their kids in school. Virtually all said their time on station is usually 2 years or less (!?!?) and only a few said they had more than one assignment 3 years or longer!

***Do officers truly have a “say” in the reassignment process?***

- Half believed that they have some input on where they are assigned; the other half laughed! Some believe they MAY have some input as they get more senior, others laughed at those comments! The general feeling is that few officers are comfortable with PERSCOM as a career management agency.

***What reactions do you have to the following phrases? What do they mean to you?***

(as a general note, virtually all of these evoked negative reactions)

- “PowerPoint Army” – True! What did we do before PowerPoint? What happens when the power goes out! One officer challenges a unit to go through a NTC rotation WITHOUT any generators – does not think they could get out of the Dust Bowl let alone produce an order! Senior officers are to blame BECAUSE they are the ones that demand more “high-speed” presentations and view form as more important over content! Senior officers are also the ones who see PowerPoint briefs as a way to “get more information” – in other words, stick their noses DEEPER into battalion commander and company commanders’ business. As example, when a battalion commander (lieutenant colonel!) shows a slide that identifies 4 individuals in the battalion as “Not PT Qualified,” why in the heck does he need to have a backup slide to identify who those 4 folks are? Why, because the CG is going to ask who they are. Why, because he doesn’t trust a lieutenant colonel battalion commander enough to manage his PT failures! That is the essence of much that seems wrong in the Army – senior leaders personally intervening and devoting themselves to micro-management rather than focusing on the big fixes that make people WANT to stay in!

- Peace-keeping – not in and of itself bad, but we give soldiers expectations about doing exciting, warfighting type stuff and then we send them off to “peacekeep” without fully explaining to them their mission. A number of officers feel this is the case because we have no strategy or vision at the senior levels when we do these missions so that there is no clear message to get to the junior levels. Another problem is that the force structure does not support the Army doing half a dozen peacekeeping missions. Our senior leaders must demand more structure or less missions and stop saying “can do!”
- Micro-management – at all levels! One thought was to allow senior to talk to juniors from division to company command only once a week to give direction! There is a perception that the “two-levels” down concept has really expanded to four! Most thought it would be a great idea if senior leaders went back to the historically sound “ONE LEVEL” down. Virtually every officer felt that division commanders commanded companies and brigade commanders were commanding platoons.
- Mentoring – What? Where? The group felt that “mentoring” was a synonym for favoritism. The “generals’ sons” were raised as an example – Luck, Riscassi, Timmons, Ono – all incredibly seem to be on the fast track. The idea of hiring mentors was also discussed. All thought it was an incredible waste of money. Senior officers need to learn to spend time developing subordinates (one officer suggested the Army should initiate an “Officer Professional Development Program,” where, as example, in peacetime the officers of a battalion actually spend one-two days per week away from the battalion with the battalion commander studying and learning their trade while the NCOs run the garrison.) For the majority, OPD – and mentoring - has been completely non-existent or was simply a once-a-month lecture on the new OER system! All believed that they should choose their mentor – a task that would be made easier if senior officers were more accessible and not preoccupied with their next promotion.
- Top-down loyalty – DOES NOT EXIST. Senior leaders will throw subordinates under the bus in a heartbeat to protect or advance their career. There is no trust of senior leaders in terms of loyalty because the record is clear. At the highest level, as example, 4 stars will watch our health care erode without taking a stand.
- Zero defects – absolutely – a symptom of a peacetime Army – since there is no war to evaluate performance, we have to evaluate everything! We have a whole generation of officers in senior leadership that was taught that unless something is being formally evaluated it is not good training. Many think that is crap. There is real value in letting a platoon leader go out and bumble around and make mistakes. May not be the most efficient in the short term but probably is the most worthwhile education in the long term! Unfortunately, platoon leaders (as one officer reminded referred to as “Platoon Commanders” in most armies!) don’t get to do much of anything NOT under the gaze of their bosses. Therefore they NEVER develop confidence, initiative or the ability to trust!

- Readiness reporting – absolute lies! The data has been manipulated so much that it has become meaningless. One four star came and explained how subordinate units had reported C2 because much of their strength was attached far from the flag pole. To fix this – instead of giving that unit their strength back or other augmentation that made them legitimately C1 – the rules were simply changed! This is how the majors perceive readiness reporting in a nutshell. All believe that the lie is sustained to the highest levels so that the senior leadership has no real conception of what readiness is.

### ***What is your perception of the Army's senior leadership?***

The current crop of majors find it somewhat incredible that the senior leadership mentions ethics to them. From their perspective, these are the same folks that won't support healthcare, the same folks that allowed housing allowances to erode, the same guys that get personally involved and tinker with the assignment process (how can a GO make an informed decision on who should have BQ job? He doesn't know all the candidates, so it becomes out-and-out favoritism), the same guys who base decisions on political correctness rather than right and wrong. Many believe their needs to be a clean sweep of senior leadership before the rest of the Army follows. Many pointed out that they were not talking about moral ethics (i.e. "sleeping around") but PROFESSIONAL ethics – selfless service, honesty to subordinates, courage of their convictions, etc.. Other comments were:

“They are not doing much right.”

“They do not speak truthfully to Congress or the force. They should keep in mind that we see them on C-SPAN AND we read the EarlyBird!”

“General Officers DO NOT stay in assignments long enough to have a vested interest in the organization or unit, or even to get to know the organization or unit. Therefore, their focus is on short-impact fixes that make them look good and get them their next star.”

“The General Officers in the US Army would gain much from having instruction and developing an understanding on “selfless service” versus “selfish service.” Most are preoccupied with their careers. Unfortunately, this is the type of officer the system moves along.”

“Our General Officers should be the smart guys who have the moxy to tell Congress where we really stand.”

“The senior leaders of today had an officers club that encouraged comradery when they were majors and lieutenant colonels, but now they see no utility so they took them away from us. And then they wonder why we don't feel that we are part of something special?”

“Soldiers ARE NOT getting out because the of the economy or job market – they are getting out because senior leaders are micro managers.”

“We create expectations for our soldiers that we don’t fulfill. We stifle initiative of smart soldiers at every turn because their may be some risk associated with the idea. Most importantly, our senior leaders are incapable of listening because the system has told them how good they are so many times that they really believe they are some sort of special, infallible animal. They need to wake up to their shortcomings and allow the rest of the Army to contribute.”

## **OFFICER CORPS CONCERNS ABOUT THE DIRECTION OF THE ARMY**

- The Army officers interviewed uniformly perceive a shortfall in Army readiness. They also perceive that senior Army leaders are understating the problem. This damages the credibility of senior Army leaders.
- Current OPTEMPO degrades the quality of professional life. Units operate at the 80% intensity level all the time, instead of cycling down during non-deployment times in order to “rest, recuperate, and rebuild unit cohesion.” At all levels commanders go hard throughout their command tours because that may be their only chance to command at that level. Reputations and careers are made in command billets. Units “surge” during the command tour, only to surge again during the tour of the subsequent commander, without break. To illustrate: A unit returns from a deployment just in time to begin train-up in preparation for a scheduled CTC rotation. The unit commander is evaluated based upon CTC performance, thus the unit never rests. This dynamic pervades the Army. “When Army senior leaders are young combat arms officers, they understand the difference between maximum and sustained rates of fire. When they get to senior positions of leadership, they seem to forget.”
- Turbulence in units is too high. Personnel turnover is too frequent, which degrades unit cohesion. It also limits individual job expertise as well as leadership effectiveness, which has a direct and adverse impact on unit capabilities. This dynamic is reflected in a long-term downward trend in CTC performance. Many studies of this dynamic have been done, yet nothing has reduced the trend or changed the policies. The perception is that this dynamic is well known, yet ignored
- Senior leaders continually state that quality of life issues effect families, which effect readiness, yet the downward trend seems to continue. Taken individually, QOL issues may seem minor, but collectively they are significant. Two examples are listed (there are more):
  - TRICARE: “For a profession that requires its members to move frequently, it is absurd to have a health care system that administratively requires its members to ‘unplug’ from a departure station and ‘re-plug’ upon arrival at a new station.” This was one of several comments on Army healthcare.

- The BAH debacle (a highly publicized taxable base pay increase coupled with a quiet reduction in BAH, thus creating a net income loss) damaged senior leader credibility. It is inconceivable that someone didn't do the math beforehand, so the perception is that these policies were implemented with the full understanding of the implications. It was acknowledged that, to their credit, senior leaders seem to be rapidly correcting this problem.
- It is believed that most officers do not practice proper counseling of subordinate leaders, nor do they know how. It is believed that the Army does not do enough to teach how to counsel, nor does it enforce standing requirements to counsel leaders. In a similar vein, the new OER is considered a "band-aide" which will not address the tendency to not counsel and not develop leaders, and to not tell the truth on OERs for fear of hurting the officer.
- It is believed that the Army has finally evolved into a "zero defects" culture. Given intense competition for limited command and promotion opportunities, officers can ill afford to "fail." Commanders who cannot afford failure tend to put primary importance on appearing to excel in all things. This tendency also results in a lack of tolerance of "mistakes" made by subordinates. Couple this with the lack of proper counseling results in hesitant and underdeveloped junior officers. This will eventually permeate all grades.
- The education of officers is extremely important to the health of the Army. Army service schools, particularly CGSC, should be fully staffed with the Army's best officers.
- Not enough leadership and warfighting skills are taught at officer basic courses. Lieutenants arrive at their gaining units unprepared to lead NCOs and soldiers.

#### General:

As middle managers, feel betrayed by senior leaders:

Specifics include:

- BAH cuts in conjunction with the highly publicized pay increases breeds discontentment and distrust in senior leaders
- Healthcare is inadequate especially for soldiers with families (Tricare/Champus), now paying for low quality services after promise of full benefits
- Officers rewarded for "quantity" vice "quality" time. Perception of being at the office late is rewarded with good OER's and jobs, vice working efficiently
- Doubts with the theme "We are a better Army then 10 years ago". SG hears this but knows Army is doing more with less and doesn't believe it can be better by being busier
- CSA talk at CGSC was uninspiring, felt CSA squandered an opportunity to emotionally meet with his Majors



- Army not keeping up with evolution of society (both parents working, spouse careers), now more difficult to be uprooted than in past “Society has made it harder to be a warrior”
- Don’t think CSA knows the kind of hours they are required to put in

#### Professional:

- Army is “who you know society” best jobs are often given to officers who have friends/mentors in high places or connected to the job
- OPTEMPO increase and force structure decrease is hurting families, and job satisfaction, leading to exodus from military.
- Jobs in garrison becoming mundane- PowerPoint slides, Form over substance becoming the norm,
- Battalion Commanders and up are not held accountable. Commanders are part of OPTEMPO problem. “Won’t cut back on my watch” is the general theme among commanders. Senior Commanders take on all missions with no/little regard for subordinates. Not doing deployments as a commander is a sign of weakness and decreases potential to reach the next level as an individual
- Bankruptcy of Army future. Perception is ROTC and Recruiting are not “plush” commands when in reality they may be our most important. No one wants them
- “Prize jobs not fun anymore” Battalion Command once most sought after position but due to changes in job description, job satisfaction is declining. Junior officers see the field grads working long hours and are less interested in performing those duties
- Single soldiers often pressured to take undesirable TDY’s, deployments, holiday duties since “no family to worry about”
- Military being civilianized, not received well. Should support military not other way around

#### Personal:

- If spouse is not happy we are not happy. Harder to uproot families so often due to spouse career (often with higher pay than his/her military spouse) and undesirable Army postings. Quality posts were given up for budgetary reasons while out of way “inexpensive” posts were maintained (Polk, Riley, Drum, Wood). Few employment ops for spouses at those postings
- Complete dissatisfaction with recent BAH issue, quality and availability of post housing,
- Healthcare is completely inadequate some have supplemental healthcare due to inadequacies in TRICARE/CHAMPUS system. Stop talking about it and fix it
- Female officers have a difficult time balancing military and family life. Army doesn’t help-Day care facilities often inadequate and long waiting lists upon arrival at a duty station are the norm. Need more support from Army leadership to balance quality of life/job satisfaction issues. Big reason for female officers leaving the service

**Note:**

When asked how many will do 20 years and out all but 2 officers raised their hand. Changing the question to If you were picked up for Battalion Command and assured you would make 06, all but 3 officers still raised their hands