

**United States Air Force Company Grade Officer
PME and Leader Development:
Establishing a Glide Path
for
Future Success**

**A Monograph
by
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Abstract

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE COMPANY GRADE OFFICER PME AND LEADER DEVELOPMENT: ESTABLISHING A GLIDE PATH FOR FUTURE SUCCESS by Major Patrick J. Owens, USAF, 56 pages.

Leadership and the attributes of great leaders have long been topics of study within the professional military education system, yet the subject of sustained, integrated and systemic leader development has only recently received substantive treatment within the United States Air Force. Unlike the United States Army, the Air Force lacks a doctrinal foundation on which to base the leader development process. This monograph addresses the role of PME at the company grade level in the development of Air Force officers in light of ongoing Army and Air Force leader development initiatives as well as recent leader development literature.

Through the Army Leader Development Campaign Plan and the United States Air Force Developing Aerospace Leaders (DAL) initiative, both services are reexamining the methods by which they design and integrate leader development systems to purposefully develop future leaders who will operate in an increasingly complex global environment. The United States Army Transformation process and the Training and Leader Development Panel report are significant initial guideposts to the future of Army leader development. For the Air Force, the recent addition of the Air and Space Basic Course and the work of the Air Force DAL are positive first steps in the development of future Air Force leaders.

This monograph concludes that the Air Force must develop and promulgate leadership and leader development doctrine to guide and inform the leader development process. The Air Force should continue to develop both occupational and universal competencies in an ongoing effort to design a purposeful and systemic approach to leader development. The Air Force should also ensure all company grade officers have access to intensive leader development experiences by making Squadron Officer School in residence available to all company grade officers. Finally, the Air Force should leverage current technology to allow distributed leader development education and training opportunities while company grade officers are serving in operational assignments.

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INTRODUCTION

Leadership is the most critical attribute for senior officers of each branch of the United States armed forces. Whether commanding an Air Force fighter wing, an Army infantry brigade, or directing the work of a division within the Joint Staff, senior officers must possess the competencies and attributes required to lead effectively regardless of the organization they are chosen to lead. These competencies and attributes are not genetically acquired, nor are they gained over a short span of time. They are gained as a result of the experience, education, and training an officer accrues over time. Though experience can only be derived from the challenges encountered during the course of an officer's career, the quality, quantity and timing of leadership education and training can be controlled through the professional military education (PME) programs of each of the services.

In developing and administering PME programs, each service must consider the vision of its leadership for the future. That vision is expressed in service doctrine, which is physically manifest in regulations, manuals, instructions, and pamphlets, as well as the writings of each service's educational institutions. The publishing of these materials, especially as they relate to leader development, is an area in which the Army has excelled.

A survey of United States Army doctrinal materials leads one to believe that the Army places a great deal of emphasis on leadership in doctrine and training at all levels within the officer corps. *Field Manual (FM) 22-100, Army Leadership*, is a comprehensive, doctrinal document with a three-fold purpose:

- To provide leadership doctrine for meeting mission requirements under all conditions.
- To establish a unified leadership theory for all Army leaders: military and civilian, active and reserve, officer and enlisted.
- To provide a comprehensive and adaptable leadership resource for the Army of the

21st century.¹

Though *FM 22-100* is broad enough to cover leadership development through all ranks of military and civilian members of the Army, it is thorough in its treatment of leadership. It establishes a leadership framework, sets specific expectations for Army leaders, and offers practical guidelines for daily leadership at the direct, organizational, and strategic leadership levels.

While FM 22-100 is the Army's primary leadership manual, it is supplemented by a variety of publications which address specific issues with regard to leader development, to include Department of the Army (DA) Pamphlet 350-58, *Leader Development for America's Army*, a baseline doctrine document which describes the Army's leader development model. Taken together, the Army's current doctrinal publications, institutional articles, and command-directed forums, such as the Army Training and Leader Development Panel (ATLDP), give the impression of a vibrant and evolving approach to leader development.

The ATLDP, commissioned in 2000 by the Chief of Staff, US Army, General Eric K. Shinseki, provides a comprehensive review of the state of training and leader development in the Army and serves as proof positive that the Army is challenging itself to evolve in these areas. The panel's final report is the result of thousands of interviews, many of which were with company grade officers. While the initial focus of the ATLDP study was on Army Transformation and the Transformation Campaign Plan, the panel realized it needed to shift its focus based on its early interviews. As a result, the panel assessed Army training, doctrine, and practices to determine their relevance to the Army as it transforms to a more agile and lethal force.² The panel's recommendations include far-reaching changes in the way it prepares its officers for future leadership roles which will challenge current practices and institutional

¹ United States Army. *FM 22-100, Army Leadership: Be, Know, Do* (Washington, D.C: Government Printing Office. August 1999), vii.

² United States Army. *The Army Training and Leader Development Panel and Officer Study Report to the Army*: (Washington, D.C: 2001), OS-1.

structures—how the Army adopts these recommendations remains to be seen; however, the Army’s willingness to ask difficult questions and open the subject to professional dialogue demonstrates its commitment to the subject of leader development.

A cursory comparison of U.S. Air Force doctrine leads one to conclude that the Air Force has not historically placed the same degree of emphasis on the broad area of leader development, especially at the company grade level of the officer corps. The Air Force capstone document addressing leadership, *Air Force Pamphlet (AFP) 35-49, Air Force Leadership*, published in 1987, stands in marked contrast to *FM 22-100*. At a length of ten pages, the pamphlet is merely an executive summary of leadership principles and challenges. It lacks the depth and breadth of its Army equivalent, and fails to draw connections to other Air Force doctrine. The comparative lack of doctrine caused one Air War College student to conclude that leadership doctrine has “diminished practical application and importance to early Air Force career progression.”³ This paucity of Air Force leadership or leader development doctrine prompts one to ask if the subjects of leader development and leadership receive sufficient formal institutional treatment, especially at the company grade level.

The comparative lack of Air Force leader development doctrine seems inconsistent with the emphasis on training and education put forth in *Air Force Vision 2020*, the keystone document that publicly charts the strategic direction of the Air Force over the next two decades. Because *Air Force Vision 2020* reflects “key organizational and conceptual improvements”⁴ and lays the foundation for the future of the Air Force, it should be considered a significant document for discerning the Air Force position regarding the current and future operating environment as well as the preparation of officers to meet the significant challenges that lay ahead. In the forward, the Chief of Staff and the Secretary emphasize the importance of “conducting the training necessary

³ David J. Bertholf, LTC. *What is and Where is the United States Air Force Leadership Doctrine?* (Maxwell AFB: Air University, April 1995), 31.

⁴ United States Air Force, *America’s Air Force Vision 2020*, (Washington: Department of the Air Force, 2000), 2.

to prepare each new generation of airmen to lead.”⁵ The vision goes on to describe the highly uncertain environment in which Air Force leaders will operate, one that will offer a “wide range of challenges and responsibilities.”⁶

The implications of a lack of common leadership training and education at the company grade level may be greater for the Air Force than for its sister services. By its nature, the Air Force is a highly technical service in which the majority of combatants are officers, most of whom are aviators, and few of whom practice direct leadership over subordinate ranks. While at the company grade level, these officers focus on honing their technical competence and have little opportunity to practice leadership, thus denying them the ability to acquire leadership skills and attributes through direct experience. Therefore, it is imperative that the Air Force make the best possible use of PME as a method to prepare officers for the future leadership challenges they will face as commanders and staff officers.

Recent actions by Air Force leaders have focused on the need to groom officers with sufficient depth and breadth to assume leadership positions in the complex political/military environment of the new century. The Developing Aerospace Leaders (DAL) initiative is evidence of the Air Force commitment to this endeavor. The DAL Charter, signed by then Chief of Staff General Michael Ryan in 1999, acknowledged the need to “develop officers who understand the full spectrum of Air Expeditionary Forces and aerospace operations, officers who can be articulate in staff assignments, in joint assignments, in operational assignments—regardless of their core specialty.”⁷

This statement directly addresses the issue of Air Force officership versus Air Force specialization. Many individuals both within and outside the Air Force have long held that Air Force officers identify more with those who serve in the same career field than they do with Air

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ General Michael Ryan, *Developing Aerospace Leaders (DAL) Charter*, (Washington: Department of the

Force officers in general. This cultural norm is distinctly different from that of the U.S. Marines—a service branch in which each officer refers to himself or herself as “a Marine” before mentioning a particular branch or specialty. According to General Richard S. Neal, USMC (Ret.), former Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps, the common culture of the Marine Corps is created from the outset at the Marine Officer Basic Course. This common culture partly explains the equality felt among all Marines, regardless of specialty.⁸

On the surface, the issue of service culture and officer self-identification may appear innocuous, but it may also point to a deeper issue involving ignorance or lack of appreciation for the capabilities of the service as a whole. This ignorance or lack of common corporate culture may prevent individuals from fully understanding the broader capabilities and objectives of the organization as a whole. For this reason, individual officers may be less likely to provide effective leadership in a larger organization such as a squadron or to serve as an articulate spokesman for the Air Force in a joint or multinational staff environment.

The purpose of this monograph is to conduct a critical examination of the current Air Force PME program for company grade officers and to determine if it is sufficient to assist in the development of men and women who are capable of leading in both joint and service roles in the increasingly complex environment of the new century. The monograph uses two criteria to answer the research question. The first criterion is to compare current Air Force doctrine and education to the Army model for leader development and PME for its company grade officers. The monograph incorporates recent leader development literature, service doctrine, current and planned PME programs, and the expertise of service leadership centers, to include the Center for Army Leadership (CAL), to provide this comparison. Army doctrine and training will be used as a metric due to the organizational expertise of the Army in the field of leader development and the criticality of leadership in the Army due to its core competencies and the nature of its fighting

Air Force, 1999), 3.

⁸ General Richard S. Neal, USMC, (Ret.). Comments made to SAMS Seminar 1 at Ft. Leavenworth, KS on

forces.

The second criterion compares current and planned PME programs to the stated requirements of Air Force leaders as expressed in service publications and the writings published by service educational institutions. This criterion was chosen in order to evaluate current practice against the stated doctrine and guidance provided by Air Force leadership.

LEADER DEVELOPMENT THEORY

The organizational mandate to embark on a purposeful program to develop leaders is so important and far-reaching for an organization's future success that it may be tempting for the responsible department to focus on developing the program before it has defined leadership development, characterized the leadership development process, or identified the desired competencies of its future leaders. In the corporate world, such an approach could contribute to the poor performance or eventual demise of the corporation. For the U.S. military and the nation that it serves, the implications of leadership failures are more far-reaching. The events of September 11th and the on-going war against global terrorism provide ample evidence of the significance of developing competent and confident leaders throughout the ranks of the armed forces.

In order to provide a neutral metric with which to view service leader development doctrine and practices, it is useful to first review recent literature in the field of leader development. Significant areas of interest for this monograph include contrasting views of on the nature of leadership development and a proposed leader development model. As in any academic discussion, it is important to first define terms.

Definition

In the Center for Creative Leadership's *Handbook of Leadership Development*, leadership development is defined as "the expansion of a person's capacity to be effective in leadership roles and processes. Leadership roles and processes are those that enable groups of people to work together in productive and meaningful ways."⁹ This definition rightly places the emphasis on the concept of the individual. In a large organization such as the Air Force, it would be convenient to see the leadership development process in terms of groups of peers passing through developmental gates and developing at the same rate and with the same set of competencies based on their age, education, and years of experience. This is certainly not the case—each individual in an organization brings unique experiences, training and education to the workplace environment. Therefore, the process of developing these individuals for positions of leadership must be directed to expand their competencies based on each individual's strengths and weaknesses.

In *High Flyers: Developing the Next Generation of Leaders*, Morgan McCall, former director of research at the Center for Creative Leadership, suggests that all organizations develop leaders whether they are doing so intentionally or not—the existence of a leader development program is immaterial. Developing leaders learn from the results of their experiences (positive and negative) as well the experiences of those around them.¹⁰ In an effort to stimulate thought on the nature of leader development, he offers two contrasting views which have significantly different implications for how an organization approaches the development of its future leaders.

⁹ Cynthia McCauley, ed., *Handbook of Leadership Development* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998), 4.

¹⁰ Morgan W. McCall, Jr., *High Flyers: Developing the Next Generation of Leaders* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1998), 1.

Two Perspectives

An organization's concept of development itself has broad implications as to how it views the leadership development process. The assumptions an organization makes about leadership requirements, attributes of leaders, and the role of experience have fundamentally different implications for the design of leadership development systems.¹¹

Development can be thought of in two ways. The first way to view development, known as the "selection perspective," is centered on the refinement of pre-existing capabilities—polishing the "diamond in the rough." The second view of development, the "developmental perspective," is one in which the individual is seen as acquiring new abilities through the development process.¹² The significance of these two very different views toward development is that they form the basis for determining how an organization plans to recruit, train, and promote its people throughout their time with the organization. In *High Flyers*, McCall provides a diagram (Figure 1) that highlights the fundamental differences between these two contrasting views of leader development.

If an organization subscribes to the first view, it will attempt to identify individuals with the necessary basic ingredients, whatever they may be, that will form the foundation of future success. Over the course of their careers, the organization will continually challenge these individuals until they rise to their maximum potential or "fail."

The danger in this approach lies in the "halo effect" it may bestow. An individual may have superb technical or tactical skills that places him above his peers at lower echelons in the organization, but technical competence may not necessarily translate into the ability to lead

¹¹ Ibid., 15.

¹² Morgan W. McCall, Jr., *High Flyers: Developing the Next Generation of Leaders* (Boston: Harvard

people at higher organizational levels. Additionally, early career success may cause the organization to underestimate the importance of developmental opportunities to ensure that the individual possesses the right “skill set” to succeed at higher level positions.

In adopting the latter view of development, the organization acknowledges the significance and power of the development process. The success or failure of the individual is not pre-ordained based on intrinsic or genetic qualities. Greater emphasis would be placed on a comprehensive development program whereby all individuals are given the opportunity to gain the requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities to successfully lead at higher echelons in the organization.

In subscribing to the selection perspective, an organization is placing the greatest weight of effort on the front-end process of recruitment and hiring. The organization is charged with determining the attributes that distinguish successful leaders and finding a means to measure those attributes in potential employees. The organization must attempt to identify the attributes that distinguish successful leaders and recruit and hire those individuals who fit that prescription for success. Once the individual enters the organization, she is challenged with increasing responsibility to gain experience and test leadership ability skills. At this point, the organization is counting on experience as the sole development tool and success in the individual’s current assignment as a determiner of potential for positions of greater responsibility.¹³

The developmental perspective, as its name infers, requires the organization to take a more holistic approach to the developmental process. The organization must first identify the challenges that future leaders will face, identify the kind of experiences that prepare individuals to meet those challenges, identify people who can learn from those experiences, and then construct a program to “grow” individuals to successfully cope with the challenges that have been

Business School Press, 1998) , 11.

¹³ Ibid., 15.

identified at the outset.¹⁴ By adopting this perspective, the organization is acknowledging that leadership development requires a purposeful, proactive, and continually evolving process that continues throughout an individual's career.

This is the view taken by the Ford Motor Company at its Leadership Development Center. Ford acknowledges the corporate challenges of thriving in a rapidly changing world, as well as the need to constantly assess and reinvent its leader development program. Stewart Friedman, director of the center, states, "leader development is an evolutionary process that changes as the needs of an organization change...the what, why and how of a program should change in response to emerging issues."¹⁵ The "what, why, and how" of a leader development program provide the designer with the most vexing questions, and the answers form the cornerstone of the program. To answer these questions, a model is needed to understand the essential elements of a developmental experience as well as the context in which development occurs.

A Developmental Model

To assist organizations with the design of leadership development programs, the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) created a model (Figure 2) describing the significant elements of developmental experiences and the factors affecting the quality of the leadership development experience and process.

Part A of the model, developmental experiences, includes the elements of assessment, challenge and support. The CCL contends that years of research and experience have led it to the conclusion that these elements are essential both as a motivation and resource to the individual undergoing a developmental experience.

Assessment provides individuals with insights into their current performance and allows them to chart a course toward their goals by analyzing strengths and weaknesses. Both formal and

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Stewart D. Friedman, "Leadership DNA: The Ford Motor Story," *Training and Development*, March 2001, 29.

informal methods of feedback may be used to provide assessment. Formal methods may include performance appraisals, 360-degree feedback, and organizational surveys. Informal feedback may include unsolicited feedback from peers as well as supervisors.¹⁶

Challenge is the second key element of leadership development experiences. Individuals who are not given challenging opportunities rely on time-tested personal strengths and employ familiar methods of resolving problems that have yielded positive results in the past. There is no opportunity for growth or the expansion of their capability. Challenging experiences require individuals to question the adequacy of their work patterns, knowledge and approaches to problem solving. Upon acknowledging his deficiency, the individual must develop new competencies or methodologies to be successful.¹⁷

The disequilibrium created by new challenges is a key factor in the need for support during the developmental process. As an individual is undergoing the rigors of challenging experiences, sources of personal support, especially one's immediate superior, are needed to maintain a positive view of himself and serve as a motivator to continue in the developmental process, regardless of the setbacks that are inevitable along the way.¹⁸

Part B of the leadership development model focuses on the development process. The model asserts the interrelated and complimentary nature of developmental experiences and the individual's ability to learn from the experiences. Developmental experiences can enhance one's ability to learn, and an enhanced ability to learn can result in more significant developmental experiences.

The ability to learn is significant in that it emphasizes the highly personal nature of the development process. Individuals undergoing similar experiences all learn to different degrees and in different ways based on factors such as motivation, personality, and learning tactics.

¹⁶ McCauley, 9.

¹⁷ Ibid., 11.

¹⁸ Ibid., 15.

Finally, the model asserts that the organizational context is the critical backdrop against which the leadership process is placed. An organization's, strategy, culture, and systems shape the focus, integration, and responsibility for the leadership development process.¹⁹

With these views of leader development and the development process, we now turn to the current leader development process in the U.S. Army, as well as current initiatives for the Army as it undergoes transformation.

ARMY LEADER DEVELOPMENT

Doctrine and the Leader Development Model

The U.S. Army takes a very deliberate institutional approach toward the development of its future leaders, and doctrine has a central role in informing this process. Doctrine permeates every aspect of Army operations. Not only does it give direction regarding the leader development process, its mastery and exploitation by Army leaders is a central goal of Army leader development.²⁰

One can best understand the Army's emphasis on the significance of leadership and leader development by reviewing the introduction of *DA Pamphlet 350-58, Leader Development for America's Army*, the cornerstone document of Army leader development. The Army's message to its members is clear—the Army views the development of confident and effective military leaders as its “most enduring legacy to the future of the Army and the nation.”²¹ This statement is important in that it places leader development at the forefront of Army training and education requirements. It also establishes the proper relationship between the terms leadership and leader development, which are often confused or used interchangeably. *Army Training and Doctrine*

¹⁹ Ibid., 7.

²⁰ United States Army, *DA Pamphlet 350-58, Leader Development for America's Army: The Enduring Legacy*, (Washington: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 13 October 1994), 2.

²¹ Ibid., 3.

Command (TRADOC) Regulation 351-10, Institutional Leader and Training and Education provides thorough definitions of both terms²² and further delineates the difference between leadership and leader development by plainly stating, “Leadership is the product of the leader development process.”²³ This statement is significant in that it acknowledges the primacy of leader development over the Darwinian concept of leader selection as outlined by McCall in *High Flyers*. The Army is declaring that as an institution, it believes it can and must purposefully inculcate the values and provide the training, education, and experience necessary to groom future Army leaders. The Army Leader Development Process (ALDP) (Figure 3) is the construct used to develop these leaders.

The foundations of the ALDP are the three pillars of the Army Leader Development Model: institutional training and education, operational assignments and self-development. The pillars are considered to be interconnected, progressive and sequential. They are progressive in that the system prepares leaders for positions of increasing responsibility and complexity. They are sequential in that each succeeding operational assignment or educational/training opportunity builds upon the previous assignment or course of study.²⁴

Institutional education, or PME, normally precedes significant new levels of operational assignment and is regarded as the institutional basis upon which leaders are developed to realize their maximum potential. PME also provides Army officers with the theoretical base needed to carry out the increased responsibilities that accompany successively more complex operational

²² United States Army, *TRADOC Regulation 351-10, Institutional Leader Training and Education*, (Fort Monroe, VA.: Headquarters Training and Doctrine Command, 1 May 1997), 6. *Leader development* is the process of developing or promoting the growth of confident, competent military and civilian leaders who understand and are able to exploit the full potential of present and future doctrine, organizations, technology, and equipment. Leader development (1) Is a continuous and cumulative process of education and training, experience, assessment, remediation and reinforcement, and feedback., (2) Involves evaluating and selecting individuals for promotion, positions of greater responsibility, and additional duties. (3) Is an integrated, progressive, and sequential process that involves institutional training and education, operational assignments, and self development. *Leadership* is the process of influencing others to accomplish the mission by providing purpose, directions and motivation. Effective leadership transforms human potential into effective performance.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ United States Army, *DA Pamphlet 350-58, Leader Development for America's Army: The Enduring*

assignments.²⁵ The Army stipulates several significant imperatives with regard to institutional training and education: ensure that leaders have received the proper education and training in preparation for subsequent operational assignments; train leaders in only critical tasks they will need as leaders; and select the best qualified leaders for resident courses.²⁶

While *Leader Development for America's Army* and its leader development model provide the doctrinal basis for the leader development process, *FM 22-100, Army Leadership*, describes the personal character and competencies the Army wants to “grow” in its leaders over the course of their careers. These two publications provide a doctrinal linkage between leader development and leadership and reinforce their relationship as defined by TRADOC. This linkage is significant in that *Army Leadership* provides the institution with a guide to educate and train leaders as well as a mechanism with which to measure the effectiveness of the leader development process. This mechanism and the central construct of *Army Leadership* is the Army Leadership Framework (Figure 4) or “BE, KNOW, DO.”

The leadership framework describes the leader of character and competence by identifying requisite values, attributes, skills and actions. The framework first identifies what the leaders must BE. This includes the values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage as well as the mental, physical, and emotional attributes a leader must possess to be successful. The framework then identifies what the leader must KNOW. This includes the interpersonal, conceptual, technical and tactical skills or competencies a leader needs to succeed. Lastly, the framework depicts the actions a leader must DO to continually influence, operate, and improve his organization. The DO or action aspect of the framework is well nested in that it draws directly from the manual's definition of leadership.²⁷

Legacy, (Washington: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 13 October 1994), 4.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 6.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 8.

²⁷ United States Army, *FM 22-100, Army Leadership: Be, Know, Do*, (Washington: Headquarters, Department of the Army, August 1999), 1-3, 1-4. *FM 22-100* defines leadership as “influencing people—by providing purpose, direction, and motivation—while operating to accomplish the mission and improving

The leadership framework is useful in that it is universal—it applies to all levels of leadership (direct, organizational and strategic). The real strength of *Army Leadership* is that it builds on the general nature of the framework by including sections on the specific skills and actions required at the three different leadership levels. As an example, the manual discusses the increased significance of persuasion as an interpersonal skill at the organizational level.²⁸ Within the realm of education and training, the inclusion of competencies such as persuasiveness needed at higher leadership levels allows courseware developers to include content designed to develop these competencies.

The Army Officer Education System (OES) at the Company Grade

The Army OES currently includes a three-tiered system of schools for attendance by company grade Army officers. They include the Officer Basic Course (OBC), the Officer Advance Course (OAC), and the Combined Arms and Service Staff School (CAS3). As a first step in transformation, the Army is conducting a pilot program at Ft. Benning in which the Basic Officer Leader Course (BOLC) replaces OBC. As BOLC has not yet been implemented across the Army and is related to Army Transformation, it will be discussed in a subsequent section.

The Officer Basic Course (OBC) is a branch-specific (infantry, armor, engineer, etc.) course providing second lieutenants with an opportunity to acquire leader, tactical, and technical knowledge and skills needed to lead platoon-size units.²⁹ OBC is sixteen to nineteen weeks in duration depending on branch and is attended by all Army officers prior to arriving at their first operational assignment. *TRADOC Institutional Leader Training and Education* makes no mention of educational requirements during the Officer Basic Course.

Like OBC, the Officer Advanced Course (OAC) is branch-specific and focuses exclusively

the organization.”

²⁸ United States Army, *FM 22-100, Army Leadership: Be, Know, Do*, (Washington: Headquarters, Department of the Army, August 1999), 6-3.

²⁹ United States Army, *TRADOC Regulation 351-10, Institutional Leader Training and Education*, (Fort

on training. Normally attended four to six years after commissioning, the OAC prepares officers for company command and positions at battalion and/or brigade staff levels. Primary training objectives include significant command functions including establishing a disciplined command climate, executing the unit's assigned missions, developing and evaluating subordinates, and administering the Uniform Code of Military Justice at the company level.³⁰ Following OAC, officers attend the six-week Combined Arms and Services Staff School (CAS3) at the Army's Command and General Staff College in Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas.

The CAS3 program, together with the OAC, comprises the Captain's Career Course and is also referred to as the Staff Process Course. The goals of CAS3 are to improve the officer's ability to analyze and solve military problems, communication skills, ability to interact and coordinate as a member of a staff, and understanding of Army organizations, operations, and procedures. In meeting these goals, the officer should possess the skill needed to serve as a key staff officer of the Army in the field.³¹ Like OBC and OAC, CAS3 is attended by all officers, ensuring a degree of consistency of training and education among all Army officers.

The OES was a subject of great import during the ATLDP process and has garnered great attention since the publication of the panel report. The findings of the ATLDP and Army Transformation will most certainly result in fundamental changes in the OES. The previously mentioned BOLC pilot program is early evidence of these forthcoming changes. As the primary drivers in ongoing Army leader development initiatives, it is important to discuss both Army Transformation and the ATLDP in sufficient detail to understand critiques of the shortcomings of the current system and proposals for long-term change.

Monroe, Va.: Headquarters Training and Doctrine Command, 1 May 1997), 15.

³⁰ Ibid., 16.

³¹ Combined Arms and Services Staff School, US Army Command and General Staff College, available from www.cgsc.army.mil/cas3/cas3/cas3info.htm; Internet; accessed on 6 Dec 2001.

Army Transformation

The Army is in the midst of a fundamental transformation that will affect nearly every aspect of Army organization, equipment, and training, including leader development. The ultimate goal of transformation is to arrive at a force known as the Objective Force, which is “strategically responsive and dominant at every point on the spectrum of conflict.”³² The process by which the Army will arrive at the Objective Force is delineated in the Army’s Transformation Campaign Plan (ATCP). The following description of the Objective Force paints a vivid picture of the wide variety of competencies that will be required of future Army forces:

The Objective Force must be strategically responsive and operationally and tactically agile throughout the use of its inherent horizontal and vertical mobility. Operating as part of a combined, joint/interagency team, it must be capable of conducting rapid and decisive offensive, defensive, stability, and support operations. The force must be able to dominate a distributed, non-linear battlespace in all operating environments—open rolling, complex and urban—against a broad range of conventional, unconventional threats, each capable of employing weapons of mass effects and destruction.³³

While the Objective Force will leverage advances in science and technology to field state-of-the-art combat systems and establish information superiority over adversaries to enable the force to operate as described, the task of preparing Army officers to lead the objective force is central to the success of transformation. In a 2001 *Military Review* article entitled *Training and Developing Army Leaders*, Lieutenant General William Steele, then the Commanding General, U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, stated his views on this matter succinctly, “the centerpiece of our formations remains quality leaders and their soldiers...not technology.”³⁴

The implications of the Objective Force for Army leaders are profound. Army leaders at

³² United States Army, *United States Army White Paper: Concepts for the Objective Force* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 2001), ii.

³³ United States Army, *United States Army Transformation Campaign Plan* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 2001), 17.

³⁴ Lieutenant General William M. Steele and Lieutenant Colonel Robert P. Walters, Jr., “Training and Developing Army Leaders,” *Military Review* (July-August 2001): 2.

all levels will have unprecedented access to information. They will be required to use this information to rapidly develop situational understanding and employ combat power. Operational employment in the non-linear battlespace will require leaders to make decisions at the tactical level that may have implications at the operational or strategic levels of war, especially when conducting stability and support missions.

To develop leaders with these competencies and ensure the linkage of multiple activities necessary to arrive at the Objective Force, the Army has included leader development as one of twelve lines of operation in the ATCP. The goal of the training and leader development line of operation is to “ensure training and leader development actions required to maintain trained and ready Legacy Forces and produce transformed units and leaders capable of joint warfighting as well as change.”³⁵ The Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) has developed the Leader Development Campaign Plan (LDCP) to address the specific requirements of the training and leader development line of operation in the ATCP; however, any discussion of the LDCP would be premature without first discussing another major input to the process of developing the plan, the Army Training and Leader Development Panel.

The Army Training and Leader Development Panel

The ATLDP represents the Army’s first attempt to critically assess the way it institutionally develops leaders in light of Army Transformation. The panel’s final report, issued in May 2001, has the potential to have a significant impact on training and leader development in the officer corps, especially at the company grade level.

Interviews with thousands of officers of all ranks, including over 1,700 lieutenants and 4,000 Army captains,³⁶ revealed the following concerns in the area of leader development and training:

- Junior officers are not receiving adequate leader development experiences.

³⁵ Department of the Army. *United States Army Transformation Campaign Plan*. (Washington, D.C., 2001), 17.

³⁶ Ibid.

- Micromanagement by senior officers prevents junior officers from having the opportunity to learn from the results of their decisions and actions.
- There is diminished contact between seniors and subordinates.
- OES does not provide officers with the skills for success in full spectrum operations.³⁷

In addition to these panel findings, Brigadier General David Huntoon, the Deputy Commandant, Command and General Staff College and advisor to the ATLDP, articulated two of his principal concerns regarding the ATLDP report. His first concern is that it appears junior officers seem to be more focused on proper career planning than on the business of becoming successful young Army leaders. He also noted that the current shortage of Army captains has been forcing the premature movement of young lieutenants out of small unit leadership positions prior to the requisite developmental opportunities. General Huntoon summarized his concerns by stating, “we’ve got to put a focus on leader development for its own innate importance as opposed to personnel management, which in many cases has been taking the lead in our Army’s culture.”³⁸

The panel’s published findings and General Huntoon’s observations point to possible deficiencies in both the developmental process, the OES, and in the quality and quantity of developmental experiences for junior leaders. In terms of elements needed to impart truly developmental experiences, the statements above imply insufficient attention to each of the elements (challenge, assessment, and support) of the Center for Creative Leadership’s leader development model (Figure 2).

The panel voiced some concern regarding how the Army develops leader competencies, which the panel defined as “underlying characteristics related to effective or superior

³⁷ Office of the Leader Development Campaign Plan. *Leader Development Campaign Plan Briefing (Draft)*. (Ft. Leavenworth, KS, 2001), 5.

³⁸ Brigadier General David Huntoon, Deputy Commandant, Command and General Staff College, interview by the author, 28 February 2002, Ft. Leavenworth, KS.

performance.”³⁹ The panel identified values-based and research-based competencies as those currently promulgated in Army doctrine. While the panel lauded values-based competencies as timeless and “irrefutable,” it found limited value in the use of research-based competencies⁴⁰ because they may not apply in the current or future operational environment. This led the panel to propose the introduction of a strategy-based method to ensure desired leader competencies are aligned with the operational environment in which Army leaders will operate.⁴¹

The panel identified two “metacompetencies,” adaptability and self-awareness⁴², that were deemed critical competencies of leaders given the dynamic nature of the operational environment. The rationale used by the panel was that these competencies are central to engender the lifelong learning that Army officers will need to face the challenges of the full range of Army operations. According to General Huntoon, after much research in the field of leader development, the panel concluded, “self-awareness and adaptability were two overarching competencies that would best prepare our future leaders to succeed now and in the future.”⁴³

The panel’s attempt to identify competencies based on the strategic challenges its leaders will face represents a critical step in designing a leader development system that will truly prepare leaders for the future. This is a key element of McCall’s methodology for designing leader development programs and an integral part of the Army’s institutional effort to respond to the challenges of Army Transformation and the ATLDP—the Army Leadership Development Campaign Plan.

³⁹ Department of the Army. *The Army Training and Leader Development Panel and Officer Study Report to the Army*: (Washington, DC. 2001), OS-2.

⁴⁰ Ibid., OS-2. The research method examines the performance of successful leaders, systematically analyzing their behavior and validating them as consistent with superior performers to derive the remaining skills, knowledge and attributes.

⁴¹ Ibid., OS-2.

⁴² Ibid., OS-3. *Adaptability* is defined as the ability to recognize changes to the environment; assess against that environment to determine what is new and what to learn to be effective; and the learning process that follows...all to standard and with feedback. *Self-awareness* is the ability to understand how to assess abilities, know strengths and weaknesses in the operational environment, and learn how to correct those weaknesses.

⁴³ Brigadier General David Huntoon, Deputy Commandant, Command and General Staff College, interview by the author, 28 February 2002, Ft. Leavenworth, KS.

The Army Leader Development Campaign Plan

The Leader Development Campaign Plan has three primary objectives:

1. Prioritize leader development requirements and focus resource allocations.
2. Adapt institutional leader development to today's operational environment and objective force needs.
3. Synchronize training and education from pre-commissioning through War College.⁴⁴

Ultimately, the three objectives grew out of the Army's forward-looking operational doctrine, expressed in the recently released *FM 3-0, Operations*. *FM 3-0* explicitly states Army leaders are expected to train their forces to operate successfully across the full spectrum of Army operations.⁴⁵ However, the prevailing belief at the near simultaneous publication of *FM 3-0* and the release of the Army Training and Leader Development Panel Report in the summer of 2001 was that the "OES does not train and educate officers in the skills they need for full spectrum operations."⁴⁶ Consequently, the need to design the OES to successfully meet the demands of full spectrum operations has become the institutional mandate for LDCP. In summarizing OES transformation, General Huntoon stated that it is fundamentally about "providing quality leader development experiences and once those have been accomplished, then moving the officer up to the next leadership or supervisory responsibility. In doing so, (the Army is) preparing that officer before he or she moves into that next position."⁴⁷

One of the ways in which the Army is attempting to do this at the company grade level is through the implementation of the Basic Officer Leadership Course (BOLC). BOLC is a two-phase leader development course attended by every Army officer after commissioning. The

⁴⁴ Office of the Leader Development Campaign Plan. *Leader Development Campaign Plan Briefing (Draft)*. (Ft. Leavenworth, KS, 2001), 5.

⁴⁵ For a discussion of full spectrum operations see Army *FM 3-0, Operations*, page 1-15.

⁴⁶ Lieutenant General William M. Steele and Lieutenant Colonel Robert P. Walters, Jr., "Training and Developing Army Leaders," *Military Review* (July-August 2001): 6.

⁴⁷ Brigadier General David Huntoon, Deputy Commandant, Command and General Staff College, interview by the author, 28 February 2002, Ft. Leavenworth, KS.

pilot program is currently being conducted at the Army Infantry Center at Ft. Benning, Georgia, and the program is scheduled for full implementation in FY03.

BOLC is fundamentally different from the Officer Basic Course in that the first phase consists of common core training and is attended by all Army officers in a mixed branch environment. The first phase is six weeks in duration and is followed by branch specific technical and tactical training, which will vary in length from ten to twelve weeks.⁴⁸ The total duration for both phases of BOLC will be approximately the same as the current duration of OBC.

TRADOC has three stated goals for BOLC:

1. Produce leaders with character, who are self-aware and adaptable.
2. Produce leaders who demonstrate the characteristics of an Army Leader (BE-KNOW-DO)
3. Produce leaders who embody the warrior ethos and have a physical fitness ethic.⁴⁹

One of the strengths of BOLC is its increased emphasis on leader development experiences and evaluation, which is equivalent to the assessment element necessary for a developmental experience. Lieutenants are observed and counseled by instructors as well as peers as they perform in a variety of challenging leadership roles from team leader to platoon sergeant.⁵⁰ BOLC will emphasize these leader development challenges by devoting approximately seventy-five percent of its program of instruction to field time⁵¹ and eighty-six percent of the 587-hour program to leader development activities.⁵²

BOLC Phase I features another dramatic improvement over its predecessor; the mixed

⁴⁸ Office of the Leader Development Campaign Plan. *Leader Development Campaign Plan Briefing* (Ft. Leavenworth, KS, 2001), 13.

⁴⁹ US Army Training and Doctrine Command, *Basic Officer Leader Course*. Undated Powepoint briefing e-mailed from Maj Mason of US Army TRADOC to author in November 2001, 4.

⁵⁰ Matthew Cox, "Leadership Course Designed to Unify Force." *Army Times*, 12 March 2001, 20.

⁵¹ Major Michelle Mason, *Basic Officer Leader Course*. Point paper, dated 17 October 2001, e-mailed from Maj Mason of US Army TRADOC to author in November 2001, 2.

⁵² US Army Training and Doctrine Command, *Basic Officer Leader Course*. Undated Powepoint briefing e-mailed from Maj Mason of US Army TRADOC to author in November 2001, 13.

branch training environment. In the OBC format, new second lieutenants proceeded directly from their commissioning source to branch specific training and did not enter into a formal training course with officers of other branches until attending CAS3. This fostered a culture where branch affiliation predominated over a common overarching culture among all Army officers. BOLC has a clear mandate to begin to change the current culture by emphasizing cohesion and trust among officers across all branches of the Army during the course of instruction.⁵³

The confluence of Army Transformation and the release of ATLDP have created a dynamic environment in which Army officers and leaders have engaged in extensive dialogue on the future of Army leader development and the OES. The implementation of BOLC is one of the first manifestations of this dialogue. Unlike the Army, the Air Force has not undergone dramatic organizational or doctrinal changes in the recent past. Still, the Air Force is examining better ways of preparing leaders for the future, as evidenced by the creation of the Developing Aerospace Leaders Initiative and the DAL Support Office by General Ryan. The following section will examine the current Air Force doctrine, OES, and leader development initiatives to serve as a basis of further discussion in light of current leader development literature and Army initiatives.

AIR FORCE LEADER DEVELOPMENT

The significance and role of leadership in the Air Force has been a matter of great debate through the years. Generally recognized as the most technology-oriented service, the Air Force has been portrayed as a service dominated by managers and technicians. In a post-Desert Storm treatise on the state of the Air Force, Carl Builder characterized the service as one with leanings toward an occupational rather than institutional value system. He viewed these tendencies as an

⁵³ US Army Training and Doctrine Command, *Basic Officer Leader Course*. Undated Powerpoint briefing e-mailed from Maj Mason of US Army TRADOC in November 2001, 7.

outgrowth of the service's dependence on specialization, technology and lack of a core identity.⁵⁴

The history of Air Force occupationalism is well documented in Colonel Mike Worden's *Rise of the Fighter Generals*, in which he examines the superior promotion rates and predominance of the "bomber generals" in the 1950s and early 1960s followed by the rise to power of the "fighter mafia" in the 1970s.⁵⁵ In both cases, the focus was on the predominant mission and weapon systems of the times. The Air Force cannot thrive with this kind of narrow parochialism in today's complex and highly integrated military environment.

In an era marked by dramatic increases in the significance of space operations, unmanned combat vehicles, information operations and the aerospace expeditionary task force (ASETF), the Air Force demands leaders with sufficient depth and breadth to harness the full potential of aerospace power. As Colonel Rich Hassan, Chief of the Air Force General Officer Matters Office stated, "we need to ask ourselves if we are cultivating people today that will have the perspective to lead in the environment of tomorrow."⁵⁶ Beyond the employment of aerospace power, the Air Force requires leaders who can articulate the capabilities and value of aerospace power to Air Force personnel, the American people, and the political leadership. Developing these leaders is the responsibility of the institution. The lieutenants and captains of 2002 will constitute the leadership of the Air Force when we arrive at the date referred to in *Air Force Vision 2020*. Now is the time to prepare them to realize that vision. The following section explores what the Air Force is currently doing to accomplish this objective.

Air Force Doctrine

Under the tenure of former Chief of Staff General Michael Ryan, the Air Force made significant strides in the area of doctrine development and promulgation. In May 2001, General

⁵⁴ Carl H. Builder, *The Icarus Syndrome: The Role of Air Power Theory in the Evolution and Fate of the U.S. Air Force*, (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1994), 8.

⁵⁵ Colonel Mike Worden, *Rise of the Fighter Generals: The Problem of Air Force Leadership, 1945-1982* (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 1998), x.

⁵⁶ United States Air Force, "Air Force Evaluates Professional Development of Its Total Force," 4

Ryan released a Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) 01-03 May 17 encouraging all airmen to read the basic doctrinal documents in order to “understand the overarching portrait—or vision—of why our aerospace team exists and how its inherent capabilities can best be employed.”⁵⁷ Shortly after the release of the NOTAM, Major General Lance Lord, chief of the Air Force Doctrine Center, acknowledged the challenge of inculcating doctrinal understanding to “colonels out there who got to where they are without having to know much about doctrine.”⁵⁸ While a case can be made that the lack of doctrinal understanding goes far beyond colonels, the significant point to note regarding Air Force doctrine is that the Air Force has only recently begun to put increased emphasis on its development, publication, and inculcation among the force.

AFDD-1, Air Force Basic Doctrine, defines “doctrine” as “officially sanctioned beliefs and warfighting principles that describe and guide the proper use of air and space forces in military operations.”⁵⁹ A review of *AFDD-1* and Air Force doctrine in general reveals that the service provides its officers, educators, and trainers with few sanctioned beliefs, guidance or expectations with regard to the areas of leader development and its product, leadership. As the fundamental doctrinal document of the Air Force, *Air Force Basic Doctrine*, lacks even a basic discussion of the critical nature of leadership in the employment of air and space power. Even when addressing centralized control and decentralized execution, a key tenet of airpower, *AFDD-1* fails to emphasize the critical function of the leader in providing centralized control.⁶⁰ As a doctrinal document, *AFDD-1* discusses leadership in a purely tangential manner. Currently, there are no doctrinal documents to supplement the minimal references to leadership in *AFDD-1*.

To find the last approved document addressing leadership, one must refer to *Air Force Pamphlet (AFP) 35-49, Air Force Leadership*, approved by then Chief of Staff Charles Gabriel in

September 2001, EBSCOHost Military Library Full Text accessed 6 November 2001.

⁵⁷ General Michael Ryan, “NOTAM 01-03 May 17,” May 2001.

⁵⁸ Department of Defense, “Doctrine Helps Warfighters Overcome Drawing a Blank,” 8 August 2001, EBSCO Host Military Library Full Text accessed 6 November 2001.

⁵⁹ United States Air Force. *AFDD-1, Air Force Basic Doctrine*. (Washington, DC, September 1997), 1.

⁶⁰ Maj. Steve Michael, “Air Force Doctrine and Leadership,” *Aerospace Power Journal*, Summer 2001, 86.

September 1985. At a length of only ten pages, *Air Force Leadership* serves merely as a “pocket reference” on leadership. Divided into four sections, it briefly discusses the leadership concept, leadership traits, leadership principles, leadership situation, and leadership preparation. *Air Force Leadership* includes no discussion of leader development. This document is no longer available through official publication distribution channels and cannot be considered current doctrine.

The brevity and obsolescence of *AFP 35-49* reinforce comments made by Major General Charles D. Link (Ret.), director of the Air Force Developing Aerospace Leaders (DAL) Office, when he stated the Air Force has never really defined leadership as a service. While formalized bureaucracies and scientific advances have made command more difficult, the concept of command has not been advanced.⁶¹

To partially address the concerns of leaders such as Major General Link, the Air Force is currently finalizing *AFDD 1-3, Air Force Leadership*, the first official leadership doctrine since the Air Force doctrine series was established in the mid-1990’s. As it is approaching final coordination, the author was unable to obtain a copy of this document. Those individuals who are familiar with the draft document indicate that it is directed at senior officers. If this proves to be the case, the benefit this document will have in influencing the development of company grade officers is questionable.

Though Air Force doctrine provides very little in the way of leader development guidance, it does elucidate the Air Force position with regard to the importance of education and training within the service. In *AFDD 2-4.3, Education and Training*, the Air Force provides the reader with insights into the significance of education in preparing officers for planning and leadership roles in a dynamic operational environment. While the document addresses the importance of maintaining sound education and training programs, its emphasis with regard to developing leaders is clearly manifested in its discussion of education. The importance of education cannot

⁶¹ Department of the Air Force, “USAFE First to Test New Leadership Curriculum,” 23 August 2001, EBSCO Host Military Library Full Text, accessed 6 November 2001.

be overemphasized, as it is described as the foundation of the capabilities of aerospace power.⁶²

AFDD 2-4.3 defines education as “the process of imparting a body of knowledge to intellectually prepare individuals to deal with dynamic environments and solve ill-defined problems by using critical thought and reasoned judgment.”⁶³ It is the related concepts of critical thought and problem solving that permeate *Education and Training’s* discussion. Indirectly, the ability to think critically and develop solutions to problems seems to be the Air Force equivalent of the Army’s concept of the metacompetencies of self-awareness and adaptability as desired qualities of leaders.

While *Education and Training* provides a convincing argument as to the value of education, it provides little in terms of linkages between education and leader development. The exception is one reference to leader development as a theme of PME.⁶⁴ Interestingly, *Education and Training* classifies education in one of four categories: PME, professional continuing education (PCE), graduate education, and volunteer education. While the roles of PME and graduate education are well defined, the concepts and roles of PCE and volunteer education are most compelling as they are left to the reader to discern. Though not defined, PCE is described as contributing to an “unbroken continuum of education by providing educational opportunities that complement the periodic education provided in PME and enhance the understanding of Air Force members through courses within a particular functional area.”⁶⁵ Though this description constitutes one-third of the one paragraph dedicated to PCE, it seems to imply that the Air Force acknowledges the need for educational opportunities which reinforce leader development experiences gained during PME. The description seems to allow for the creation of Air Force programs which would “weave” operational experiences with PME experiences. The role of volunteer education vis-à-vis PME is also vague. Defined as programs which “enhance the

⁶² United States Air Force, *AFDD 2-4.3, Education and Training*, (Washington, D.C., Department of the Air Force, 9 September 1998) 6.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 12.

intellectual growth and knowledge of Air Force personnel,”⁶⁶ *Education and Training* stops short of offering specific examples of the linkages between voluntary education and other educational or developmental opportunities.

While the Air Force lacks specific leader development doctrine, *Education and Training* at least provides insights into the Air Force’s emphasis on the importance of education, specifically as it applies to the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills. This is as close as the basic doctrine comes to acknowledging specific leader competencies. In alluding to professional continuing education and volunteer education, the doctrine acknowledges that sporadic formal educational opportunities such as PME are insufficient in and of themselves, but fails to provide further insights as to how they may be integrated with training, PME, and workplace experiences to compliment these leader development opportunities.

The Air Force OES at the Company Grades

Air Force Instruction (AFI) 36-2301, Professional Military Education, defines PME as the portion of military education that:

1. Provides the nation with military personnel skilled in the employment of aerospace power in the conduct of war and small scale contingencies;
2. Provides Air Force personnel with the skills and knowledge to make sound decisions in progressively more demanding leadership positions within the national security environment; and
3. Develops strategic thinkers and warfighters.⁶⁷

AFI 36-2611, Officer Professional Development, reinforces the objective of the PME experience as one which “rounds out an officer’s ability to perform at higher levels of responsibility by refining critical analytical and communication skills.”⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Ibid., 13.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 14.

⁶⁷ United States Air Force. *Air Force Instruction 36-2301, Professional Military Education*, (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Air Force, 1 June 2000), 1.

⁶⁸ United States Air Force. *Air Force Instruction 36-2611, Officer Professional Development*, (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Air Force, 1 April, 1996), 8.

The current Air Force PME system includes two programs for attendance by company grade officers. They include the Air and Space Basic Course (ASBC) and the Squadron Officer School (SOS). Both resident programs are conducted by the Air University's Squadron Officer College at Maxwell AFB, Alabama.

ASBC is an accession level four-week resident course designed for attendance by newly commissioned Air Force officers within one year of entering active duty. The ASBC mission is to "inspire new USAF officers to comprehend their roles as airmen who understand and live by USAF core values, articulate and demonstrate USAF core competencies, and who dedicate themselves as warriors in the world's most respected aerospace force."⁶⁹

ASBC, originally known as the Aerospace Basic Course (ABC), was chartered by Air Force leadership in 1996 and fully instituted in 1999. The establishment of ABC was an initiative designed to remedy a perceived loss of the common culture of the "airman" in the Air Force. Prior to ABC, Air Force officers did not receive formal PME until attending Squadron Officer School between four and seven years of commissioned service. According to General Lloyd W. Newton, former Commander of the Air and Education Training Command (AETC), the course was designed to bring all newly commissioned officers together to create a common base of understanding regarding the employment of aerospace power.⁷⁰ Prior to the initiation of the course, Air Force officers were "stovepiped" into specialty schools without having formal interaction with Air Force officers outside of their specialty and with little understanding of the culture of the Air Force or the employment of aerospace power.

The ASBC curriculum includes four major areas of concentration; the profession of arms, leadership and management, military studies, and international security studies. Of these four areas, over ninety-percent of the curriculum time is dedicated to the profession of arms and

⁶⁹ United States Air Force Squadron Officer College. "Air and Space Basic Course Curriculum," available from <http://abc.maxwell.af.mil/curriculum.htm>; Internet; accessed 12 March 2002.

⁷⁰ Department of the Air Force, "Air Force's Newest Officer School Opens," 24 August 1999, EBSCO Host Military Library Full Text, accessed 12 March 2002.

leadership and management.

The profession of arms program includes introductions to the fundamental doctrinal underpinnings of air and space power, such as air and space power functions and U.S. Air Force core competencies. It also provides introductory instruction on the sister services, joint planning, space fundamentals, information operations, and the air tasking order.⁷¹ The profession of arms area of instruction features Blue Thunder, the capstone exercise of ASBC. Blue Thunder is a four-day field exercise in which students produce and execute a joint aerospace operations plan at wing and air operations centers in a simulated deployment scenario.⁷²

The leadership and management area of instruction objective is to have students “apply leadership skills to influence and direct people and resources to accomplish the mission.”⁷³ Covering approximately twenty hours of contact time, the leadership and management area combines physical fitness awareness and training, instruction on team development and problem solving, team building exercises, peer feedback, and guest speakers discussing leadership topics.⁷⁴

Unlike the other three Air Force PME programs, ASBC does not identify distinguished graduates, which constitute the top ten percent of a given class, upon completion of the program.⁷⁵ This policy indicates that the Air Force considers the developmental experience more important than the early identification of “fast-burners,” officers who are deemed to have greater future potential than their peers. Given the relative inexperience and the broadly divergent backgrounds and training of the newly accessed officers, the emphasis should remain on the building of a common framework of knowledge among all students in the course. In addition, the lack of a distinguished graduate program ensures a focus on the concept of team building that is

⁷¹ United States Air Force Squadron Officer College. “Air and Space Basic Course 2002 Syllabus,” available from http://abc.maxwell.af.mil/area_a1000.htm; Internet; accessed 12 March 2002.

⁷² Department of the Air Force, “Air Force’s Newest Officer School Opens,” 24 August 1999, EBSCO Host Military Library Full Text, accessed 12 March 2002.

⁷³ United States Air Force Squadron Officer College. “Area A2000—Leadership and Management,” available from http://www.au.af.mil/au/soc/abc/phase_a2600.htm; Internet; accessed 7 November 2002.

⁷⁴ United States Air Force Squadron Officer College. “Area A2000—Leadership and Management,” available from http://www.au.af.mil/au/soc/abc/phase_a2000.htm; Internet; accessed 7 November 2002.

⁷⁵ United States Air Force Squadron Officer College. “Air and Space Basic Course Curriculum,” available

central to the course.

Recent actions by the Air Force Personnel Center (AFPC) indicate a significant commitment to ensuring one hundred percent attendance at ASBC by new officers. Early in 2001, AFPC informed wing commanders that they, not their group commanders, were the sole waiver authority to excuse wing personnel from attendance at ASBC.⁷⁶ Though student vacancies were relatively low through the remainder of FY01, AFPC released a second message to commanders in September 2001 to reinforce the command emphasis on ASBC and the importance of this developmental experience.⁷⁷

By most accounts, the ASBC course has filled a large void in the Air Force company grade PME program. In an address to the second ever ABC class, Lieutenant General David W. McIlvoy, then vice commander of AETC, told students that ABC “may prove in the future to be one of the most important things our Air Force has done for you and the Air Force in general.”⁷⁸ Reviews from new officers attending the course have been uniformly positive as well. At the same time, Air Force leaders acknowledge that ASBC is only a first step in the area of leader development. General Link’s belief that officer development should not hinge on “a few hours in the classroom as lieutenants”⁷⁹ underscores that fact.

Squadron Officer School (SOS) is the primary level PME program along the Air Force continuum of education and is attended by company grade officers with four to seven years of commissioned service. The successor to the Air Corps Tactical School, SOS has undergone significant changes in course length and content throughout its 52-year history. The most recent change occurred in January 2000 when the resident course was shortened from seven weeks to

from <http://abc.maxwell.af.mil/curriculum.htm>; Internet; accessed 12 March 2002.

⁷⁶ Jennifer Palmer, “New Rule: Don’t Ditch Your ABC,” *Air Force Times*, 12 February 2001, 24.

⁷⁷ Rod Hafemeister, “For Young Officers It’s Get to Class; And that’s an Order,” *Air Force Times*, 15 October 2001, 10.

⁷⁸ Department of the Air Force, “New Officers Learn Air Power ABCs at Aerospace Basic Course,” 15 October 1999, EBSCO Host Military Library Full Text 2002 accessed 12 March.

⁷⁹ Jennifer Palmer, “Officers Need More Breadth, Integration,” *Air Force Times*, 5 February 2001, 11.

five weeks to eliminate duplication between the newly instituted ABC and SOS curricula.⁸⁰

The SOS mission is to “develop dynamic leaders rededicated to the profession of arms.”⁸¹ The central objective of the program is to strengthen students’ officership and leadership skills through the application of classroom knowledge in field environments. Through its exercise program, SOS also emphasizes the symbiotic relationship between followership and leadership.

SOS builds on the doctrinal foundations and leader development experiences of ASBC. The curriculum is similar to ABC with subject areas including the profession of arms, leadership and management, military studies, international security studies, and communications. A primary difference in the two programs is the increased time committed to the leadership and management area, which constitutes nearly one-third of the total course length.⁸²

The leadership and management curriculum places emphasis on time-constrained, group exercises and athletic events which emphasize team-building, problem-solving, communication, followership and leadership skills. The keystone event of the curriculum is Project X. Project X is an exercise in which teams attempt to meet a stated end state by using specified “tools” to overcome challenging physical constructs at multiple stations on the Project X site. The nature of the event is withheld from new SOS students in order to achieve the affect of having to solve a previously unknown problem in a very short amount of time. Project X has withstood the test of time as a developmental tool. In a testimony to the impression Project X leaves on students, Major Luke Grossman, a 1992 SOS graduate currently attending the U.S. Army School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS), recalled Project X as the most significant leader development exercise he experienced during his attendance at SOS.⁸³

The fact that all eligible officers do not attend the SOS program in residence is a point of

⁸⁰ Department of the Air Force, “Squadron Officer School Set Opportunity Rate Goals,” 31 August 1999, EBSCO Host Military Library Full Text 2002 accessed 12 March

⁸¹ United States Air Force Squadron Officer College. “Squadron Officer School Curriculum,” available from <http://www.maxwell.af.mil/au/soc/sos/curriculum.htm>; Internet; accessed 12 March 2002.

⁸² United States Air Force Squadron Officer College. “SOS 2002—Resident Syllabus,” available from <http://sos.maxwell.af.mil/syllabus.htm>; Internet; accessed 12 March 2002.

concern. Though the Air Force maintains a policy of one hundred percent PME attendance in residence,⁸⁴ classroom constraints growing out of the initiation of ABC have caused attendance to slip toward eighty percent.⁸⁵ This figure is consistent with data available at the Air Force Personnel Center Statistics web site, which as of February 2002, reported that 12,086 of 15,129, or eighty percent, of active duty majors had attended SOS in residence.⁸⁶ As the SOS correspondence course is not able to replicate the group exercise experience at Maxwell AFB, those officers who are not able to attend the course in residence are not able to experience the challenges that are offered in exercises such as Project X. Just as significantly, resident PME attendance at SOS has traditionally been considered as a discriminator during promotion boards. Data from active duty line major promotion boards data from 1995 through 2001 reveals that while seventy-one percent of captains completing SOS by correspondence or seminar were promoted, eighty-five percent of captains completing SOS in residence were promoted. This differential in promotion rates has increased to an average of twenty-five percent over the past four boards.⁸⁷ Taken together, less than one-hundred percent attendance at SOS in residence and lower promotion rates for those not attending in residence make for a dangerous combination from both developmental and cultural standpoints. In this situation, the fledgling officer may not only be denied the chance to hone her skills in a challenging, yet non-threatening training environment, but she and her peers may arrive at a real or perceived notion that she is less fit for continued advancement in terms of responsibility and/or rank. As a result, a relatively junior officer is at a real disadvantage in terms of leader development and consideration for promotion several years before she meets her primary board for promotion to major.

⁸³ Major Luke Grossman, USAF, interview by author, 11 March 2001, Ft. Leavenworth, KS.

⁸⁴ Department of the Air Force. *Air Force Instruction 36-2301, Professional Military Education*, (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Air Force, 1 June 2000), 9.

⁸⁵ Jennifer Palmer, "Tight Quarters Limit SOS Enrollment," *Air Force Times*, 24 July 2000, 22.

⁸⁶ Air Force Personnel Center Statistics Web Site, Officer Demographics (Residence PME), available from www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/demographics/demograf/RESPME.HTML, accessed on 15 March 2002.

⁸⁷ Air Force Personnel Center Statistics Web Site, Promotion Demographics, available from www.afpc.randolph.af.mil, accessed on 15 March 2002.

The possibility of reinstating a locally administered PME program to serve as a bridge between ASBC and SOS has reemerged recently. The proposed one-week course would be a variation on the Lieutenant's Professional Development Program, which was administered at the wing level in the 1980s, before the initiation of ASBC. In a pilot course conducted at Hurlburt Field, Florida, areas of instruction included leadership, officership, and air power and met with positive feedback from pilot program participants;⁸⁸ however, the course has not been adopted for implementation across the Air Force.

The Air Force has acknowledged the importance of systemic leader development with the publication of the Developing Aerospace Leaders (DAL) charter and the subsequent formation of the DAL Support Office. While still in its infancy, the DAL process has the potential to fundamentally alter the systems and processes by which the Air Force will purposefully prepare Air Force officers for leadership as senior officers. The role of PME in leader development will be a major area of inquiry throughout the DAL process.

The Developing Aerospace Leaders (DAL) Initiative

General Michael Ryan, former Chief of Staff of the Air Force, chartered the DAL initiative in 1999. This initiative constitutes the most comprehensive review of Air Force human resource development programs in over twenty years.⁸⁹ The purpose of the DAL initiative is to examine ways to improve officer development so as to equip officers with the competencies needed to lead the Air Force during a time of multiple significant changes in the global society. Originally intended as a two-year program, the DAL initiative was extended indefinitely by General Ryan and continues to receive the support of his successor and current Chief of Staff, General John Jumper.

In chartering the DAL initiative, General Ryan acknowledged that Air Force officers needed

⁸⁸ Department of the Air Force, "Hurlburt Test Base for New Officer PME Course," 18 November 1998, EBSCO Host Military Library Full Text accessed 12 March 2002.

⁸⁹ Developing Aerospace Leaders (DAL) Frequently Asked Questions, available from www.dal.af.mil;

to broaden in terms of education and experience. He also asserted that in doing so, some officers would need to change their Air Force mindset, and in some cases, their Air Force identity.⁹⁰ General Ryan's statement is important as it openly addresses the lack of common culture and prefaces the entire DAL process by advocating the need for officers to reach the common understanding that Air Force officers are all Airmen who are part of a unified, coherent, and knowledgeable Air Force.⁹¹

The charter is also significant in that it defines the institutional responsibility of the Air Force to the American people. The unique capabilities that the Air Force brings to the nation include the ability to:

- Ensure the complete understanding of national security interests and how to fully exploit the aerospace domain to support national objectives.
- Envision, develop, acquire, support and employ capabilities, which exploit the aerospace domain to create military effects.
- Develop, cultivate, and maintain operational competence in the mediums of air and space.
- Communicate the absolute and relative value of aerospace capabilities to the American people and their representatives.⁹²

By tying these capabilities to the need for a common culture among airmen, General Ryan's charter is an important initial guidepost for officer and leader development agencies. In a general sense, understanding these capabilities constitutes the competencies that will be required of all Air Force officers, regardless of their specialties.

General Ryan's bold challenge to the institutional Air Force certainly answers the mandate of noted organizational culture expert, Edgar Schein, who in his seminal work, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, asserts, "leaders create culture and...must manage and sometimes

Internet; accessed on 6 December 2001.

⁹⁰ Ryan, 1.

⁹¹ Ibid., 2.

⁹² Ryan, 2.

change culture.”⁹³ Given the influence of organizational leaders to create the formal processes and informal conditions in which leader development occurs, their impact cannot be overestimated. The DAL process incorporates Air Force senior leaders through the DAL Executive Steering Committee, a standing advisory body including twenty-five general officers representing every major command and career specialty in the Air Force.⁹⁴ These officers, in representing various organizations and subcultures within the Air Force, will have a significant impact on the DAL process.

The mission of the DAL initiative is to improve leader development by first determining the competencies⁹⁵ required for leadership into the twenty-first century and then recommending ways to instill these competencies through training, education, and experience.⁹⁶ To that end, DAL will encompass all aspects of human resource development to include accessions, professional military education, training, assignments and exercises.

The cornerstone concept of DAL’s leadership development vision is the “purposeful” development of officers. The DAL process is focused on determining the proper developmental paths for officers as they transition from specialists to transformational leaders. The DAL process recognizes the need for continuous learning and the proper integration of education, training, and assignments. According to General Link, the DAL operates on the premise that “development must begin with an individual’s first association with the Air Force and then continue through a whole career, rather than just those occasions when he or she is in class somewhere.”⁹⁷ The DAL process subscribes to active human resource management to take company grade specialists and provide them with the education, training and experience to

⁹³ Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1992), 209.

⁹⁴ Major Kathleen Cook, “CSAF Legacy: Developing Our Nation’s Airmen,” Air Force Link Web Site, available from www.af.mil/new/Sep2001/n20010905_1236.shtml; Internet; accessed 6 November 2001.

⁹⁵ “Competencies” include skills, knowledge, and abilities related to specific occupations and universal characteristics considered desirable regardless of occupation.

⁹⁶ DAL Support Office, *DAL Presentation to 3rd Wing Forum*. 13 November 2001, Powerpoint briefing e-mailed from DAL Support Office to author, November 2001.

⁹⁷ U.S. Department of Air Force, “New Air Force Office Helps Develop Aerospace Leaders,” 28 December 2000, EBSCO Host Military Library Full Text, accessed 6 November 2001.

become core and aerospace specialists at the field grade levels. Some of those officers will eventually become transformational leaders as colonels and general officers.⁹⁸

PME is viewed as a key component in the DAL leader development construct. As a key component, the current Air Force PME system is one of five areas being carefully scrutinized within the DAL process. The objective of the DAL PME review is to ensure the Air Force educates its officers at the right time and with the right method to expand their development as aerospace leaders.⁹⁹ The establishment of the accession level Air and Space Basic Course in 1999 has met with the DAL intent of beginning the development process and creating a common culture at the earliest opportunity. As the DAL Support Office and associated agencies study the current PME system and propose possible changes, DAL's action and executive committees will study and evaluate recommendations before sending them forward for consideration by the Chief of Staff.

While some hail the DAL process as the answer to Builder's criticisms of the Air Force culture in *The Icarus Syndrome*,¹⁰⁰ the initiative is not without skeptics. One officer interviewed for an *Inside the Pentagon* article indicated that he discerned "no changes in the basic method that the Air Force identifies its leaders and selects them for promotion and I see nothing in the program that is likely to foster such a change."¹⁰¹ Though it appears too early in the DAL process to make such an evaluation, there is little doubt that the findings and recommendations of the DAL will challenge the Air Force to make fundamental changes in the way it manages and develops its officer corps. Changes that are perceived as promoting a degree of equality among

⁹⁸ DAL Support Office, *DAL Environment Definitions*. 5 September 2001, Document e-mailed from DAL Support Office to author, November 2001. "Transformational leaders" are defined as airmen who have gained tremendous depth in envisioning, developing, planning, and employing aerospace capabilities. These leaders shape vision/mission/values/ideas, are connected to national security interests, and are responsible for airmen development.

⁹⁹ DAL Support Office, *DAL Presentation to 3rd Wing Forum*. 13 November 2001, Powerpoint briefing e-mailed from DAL Support Office to author, November 2001.

¹⁰⁰ Dr. Michael Thirtle, "Developing Aerospace Leaders for the Twenty-First Century," *Aerospace Power Journal* (Summer 2001): 56.

¹⁰¹ Elaine M. Grossman, "Air Force Meets Skepticism on Addressing Leadership Challenges," *Inside the Pentagon*, 19 October 2000, 24.

all Air Force officers regardless of specialty may meet with resistance from those who prefer to remain in a culture where an officer's value and potential is determined by the uniform he wears or the patches he affixes to that same uniform.

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Air Force has recently made important strides to improve the quality and timing of PME, especially as it relates to the implementation of the Air and Space Basic Course; however, the service must continue to seek new and innovative ways to maximize the value of PME in the preparation of company grade officers for leadership positions in the field and general officer grades. The publication and promulgation of interim DAL products, statements of support by senior Air Force leaders, and the increased attention leader development has received in recent Air Force professional literature seem to indicate that the DAL process will serve as an important vehicle for the thorough examination of the current PME system. Whatever the success of the DAL in reshaping Air Force leader development, it will be incomplete without a parallel effort to ensure that the Air Force develops the doctrinal foundations to inform and guide the total leader development process, of which PME is only a small part.

The Doctrine Imperative

The Air Force has made significant gains in its quest to improve the quantity, quality, and awareness of service doctrine. Just as importantly, the Air Force has undertaken a concerted effort to inculcate this doctrine, especially to the future leaders who are now attending ASBC and SOS. However, current Air Force doctrine is clearly focused on the tactical and operational employment of air and space power, and the service has not published a doctrinal leadership document since the 1987 release of *AFP 35-49, Air Force Leadership*.

The Air Force lacks authoritative and coherent doctrine in the areas of leader development and leadership. Currently, the closest single document Air Force officers have with which to

examine leader development or leadership is *AU (Air University)-24, Concepts for Air Force Leadership*, a collection of articles by luminaries in the field of leadership and leader development, to include senior Air Force leaders past and present. *Concepts for Air Force Leadership* is a valuable resource, but does not carry the weight or authority of doctrine. It does not provide Air Force officers, leaders, educators, and force developers with a set of institutional beliefs about the essence of developing competent and confident leaders. In addition, it was not designed to delineate the processes by which Air Force officers will prepare for increasing levels of leadership and responsibility. The lack of basic Air Force leadership and leader development doctrine denies the institutional Air Force and its people a roadmap with which to navigate toward the service's long term vision for itself and its leaders.

By contrast, *FM 22-100, Army Leadership* and *DA Pamphlet 350-58, Leader Development for America's Army* provide Army personnel and force developers with a common understanding of what the institutional Army desires in its leaders as well as the methods by which it proposes to develop those leaders. The availability of these resources is of tremendous importance within the framework of company grade leader development and PME. Army officers are schooled in the concepts of leadership set forth in *FM 22-100* from OBC or BOLC onward. With an emphasis on the BE, KNOW, DO framework, Army officers quickly come to understand what is expected of them, and educators, trainers, and leaders have a degree of objective guidance with which to measure the progress of those officers. For this reason, the BE, KNOW, DO leadership framework and *DA Pamphlet 350-58's* Leader Development Process should serve as points of departure from which the Air Force may derive its own leadership and leader development doctrine. They are valuable not because they represent fundamental truths, but because they offer straightforward constructs which provide a common understanding to those young officers whose development they affect.

According to *Air Force Basic Doctrine*, one of the purposes of doctrine is to provide airmen

with a common set of understandings on which to base decisions.¹⁰² Since leaders are charged with making decisions, there is a clear imperative for the development and promulgation of leadership and leader development doctrine that applies to all Air Force personnel. This doctrine must serve as the basis for future changes to ASBC, SOS and any proposed intermediate company grade PME programs. Without such guidance, the Air Force will have difficulty achieving both a high degree of consistency between PME programs and a universal understanding of the expectations of its people, especially in the officer corps.

Implications of the Developmental Perspective

A central theme of Morgan McCall's approach to leader development is the need for organizations to adopt a developmental perspective toward leader development rather than the Darwinian selection perspective. Once an organization commits to actively developing its people, the implications are clear—the organization must make a concerted effort to identify the challenges leaders will face and the experiences needed to prepare those leaders to successfully meet those future challenges. Within the context of those experiences, the organization must provide the challenge, assessment, and support to its people to enable valuable learning.

The DAL initiative and the creation of ASBC demonstrate an increased Air Force commitment to the developmental perspective. DAL is significant in terms of its commitment to the “purposeful” development of leaders. The DAL process is remarkably consistent with McCall's developmental perspective. In the area of accessions, the DAL is researching ways to identify the types of individuals who can most readily learn from experience to become aerospace leaders. In an effort to identify the strategic challenges future Air Force leaders will face, the DAL is in the midst of a thorough review of all general officer job specifications to define what competencies and experiences will be needed. Simultaneously, the DAL is attempting to ascertain how training and exercises can be used to create the developmental experiences that are

¹⁰² United States Air Force, *AFDD-1, Air Force Basic Doctrine*, 1.

beneficial to future leaders. As with the Army's approach to leader development, the DAL is integrating all these efforts with its inquiry into the current Air Force PME system to determine how it can be leveraged to compliment the other aspects of the leader development process.¹⁰³

While the development of integrated solutions based on the DAL's concurrent inquiries has the potential to maximize the developmental value of time spent in resident PME, the complex relationships among the inputs and outputs of the development process will present many institutional challenges. The intricacies of the development process being addressed by the DAL are very similar to those illuminated during the ATLDP. One of the findings of the ATLDP is that the current leader development model, the three pillars of the ALDP, is inadequate in its representation of how the Army views training and leader development.¹⁰⁴ As a result, the Center for Army Leadership at Ft. Leavenworth is leading the effort to develop a new model based on ATLDP recommendations. It is likely the DAL will contend with similar issues as it begins to consider its recommendations to senior leaders. Great effort will be required on the part of the DAL and senior Air Force leaders to balance fiscal constraints, force structure and leader development imperatives to arrive at a process which maximizes developmental opportunities for the greatest number of officers.

Within the framework of the DAL process and under the developmental construct, the Air Force should reconsider the matter of SOS attendance in residence by all company grade officers. This is not a new concept--past Air University studies have consistently concluded that this opportunity should be made available to as many officers as possible.¹⁰⁵ Under the current system, company grade officers are guaranteed only one resident PME experience, the four week ASBC, over the life of their Air Force careers. By contrast, a typical Army officer is assured of at least forty weeks of company grade training and education incorporating leadership and leader

¹⁰³ DAL Support Office, *DAL Presentation to 3rd Wing Forum*.

¹⁰⁴ *The ATLDP Officer Study Report to the Army*, OS-17.

¹⁰⁵ Major Daniel P. Bangs, "A Survey of Studies on Factors Affecting Air Force Professional Military Education" (Student report, Air Command and Staff College, 1986), 22.

development concepts in the curriculum. The duration of company grade training will not change markedly with the Army-wide implementation of BOLC.

ASBC should not be the only resident experience for Air Force company grade officers. Newly accessed officers have no Air Force work environment experiences to inform and expand the “lessons” of their ASBC experience. As ASBC graduates mature in the profession and go on to attend SOS in residence, they are able to apply their experiences to situations they faced in their operational assignments. In this context, true synergy occurs in which practical experience is inextricably bound to knowledge and experience gained in the “leadership lab” of SOS. Those officers who complete SOS solely by correspondence miss the developmental experiences of resident PME and, as the data suggests, are subject to less promising career opportunities as either a direct or indirect result.

The Air Force should make every effort to make resident attendance at SOS available to every company grade officer. Given the likely benefits company grade officers will derive from the developmental experiences of attendance at SOS in residence, and the relatively small investment needed to make this opportunity available to officers still in the formative stage of their careers,¹⁰⁶ implementing this course of action is clearly in the best interest of the service.

Experience versus Education in PME

In the zero-sum game of fiscal resource priorities, the duration and content of resident PME courses has always been open for debate. Since its establishment in 1950, SOS has undergone appreciable variations in course duration,¹⁰⁷ varying from several months to its current length of five weeks. While it is not the intent of this monograph to advocate a position regarding course duration, its current duration must certainly be considered when discussing course content.

In *High Flyers*, McCall points out that while “formal programs can be significant

¹⁰⁶ *AFI 36-2301, Professional Military Education*, 10. SOS is attended within four to seven years of Total Active Federal Commissioned Service.

¹⁰⁷ Bangs, 7.

developmental events, educational programs are clearly complementary or supplementary to on-the-job experiences.”¹⁰⁸ If this is the case, any organization attempting to optimize the value of formal leader development programs should do its utmost to ensure that these programs be nested with the overall development process. One of the strengths of Army BOLC is that it places overwhelming emphasis on field and leader development experiences. While the much shorter Air Force PME programs may not be able to fully replicate that emphasis, the prevalence of leader development experiences in the BOLC curriculum provides a useful point of reference for the DAL as it examines the current PME program.

The Air Force must continue to study ways to maximize the benefit of time spent at resident PME, especially given the fact that an Air Force company grade officer will spend a maximum total of only nine weeks in formal PME, assuming she attends SOS in residence. Courses of instruction should be tailored to ensure that classroom time, developmental experiences, and individual assessment are integrated in the proper proportions to ensure that officer students have the best opportunity to succeed in leadership positions as they assume greater responsibility within their units. Challenging leader development exercises that provide realistic, time-constrained decision-making, such as Project X, should continue to be a centerpiece of Air Force company grade PME.

Every effort should be made to minimize the in residence completion of basic coursework that can be accomplished by each officer prior to attendance in residence, especially in the case of SOS. It is not unreasonable to ask a captain to complete a series of required readings prior to attending SOS. In this way, minimal time would be devoted to establishing a common base of knowledge in a subject area before proceeding to the application phase of the course.

As ASBC is an accession level program, it is expected that a significant amount of time would be dedicated to instruction on basic doctrinal concepts of air and space power. Once appropriate leadership doctrine is developed, officers should receive thorough initial instruction

¹⁰⁸ McCall, 75.

to establish a common base of understanding and to make them aware of the values and competencies the Air Force expects in its leaders.

Identifying Competencies

Through the Army Leader Development Campaign Plan and the Air Force DAL, both services have made important strides in identifying the need for defining the competencies that characterize good leaders. *Army Leadership* and the Army Leadership Framework may provide the Air Force with valuable reference guides as it seeks to define the universal competencies or values it seeks in its leaders. The Army leadership doctrine is detailed, yet clear enough that any Army officer would understand what the Army expects of its leaders. The Air Force requires similar unequivocal doctrine.

The Army's identification of the self-awareness and adaptability metacompetencies has value in light of Army transformation and the Objective Force concept. Because the systems and processes of the Objective Force concept are in development, the Army identified overarching competencies that have relevance no matter what final form the Objective Force takes. While there is merit and practicality in that approach, the question of how the Army intends to purposefully develop these metacompetencies is one which has yet to be answered. The DAL approach to identifying specific job specifications of Air Force general officer billets is consistent with McCall's assertion that an organization must identify strategic challenges prior to creating developmental systems. This, along with the DAL's development of occupational competencies, such as air operations and mobility operations, indicates a pragmatic approach to this critical step in recreating the leader development process.

Both the DAL approach toward developing occupational competencies and the Army metacompetency approach have merit for the Air Force as it seeks to establish guides with which to refine its leader development process. Once the competencies are established, the Air Force OES, especially PME, should be leveraged to assist in the development of these

competencies. Education plays a key role in refining the critical thought process and developing the personal introspection necessary to create self-aware and adaptive leaders who have the capacity to solve ill-defined problems. Leaders who display these capabilities will succeed in accomplishing the mission regardless of the environment in which they operate.

A Holistic Approach to Development

One of the ATLDP findings regarding the leader development model was that the model fails to identify the interrelationships between institutional training and education, operational assignments, and self-development. In today's technology environment, the ability now exists to blur the lines or merge what were once considered separate and distinct leader development activities. The Army's proposed Warrior Knowledge Center is one example of the possible application of technology to merge education and training with operational assignments. In this concept, Army personnel deployed anywhere in the world are able to contact Army centers of excellence to seek assistance with tactical or operational problems.

Utilizing such technology, the Air Force should examine methods by which the leader development experiences of officers could be leveraged after they depart resident PME. Technology enables distributed educational opportunities between members of the same flight of a given SOS class. In this way, officers who shared in the same leader development experiences during SOS could critically examine some of their post-SOS experiences within the context of their common SOS experience.

The DAL process has identified the need to review all aspects of the Air Force personnel management system from accessions through general officer job specifications. Such an effort is needed to fully integrate each element of the system to purposefully develop leaders capable of leading the Air Force into the middle of this century. Formal PME programs, as they are now defined, are too short in duration to be of lasting value if these experiences are not integrated with assignments, training and exercises, and professional continuing education.

CONCLUSION

While the Air Force DAL initiative has the potential to significantly improve the focus, relevance, and integration of company grade PME with regard to leader development, the Air Force lacks the leadership and leader development doctrine to inform and guide the process in which the DAL is currently engaged. The development, publishing, and institutional advocacy of this doctrine should receive the highest priority and should be nested closely with the findings and recommendations of the DAL. Current Army doctrine and concepts emerging as a result of the ATLDP and Army Transformation will provide useful constructs and points of departure in the process of developing Air Force specific doctrine.

The concurrent identification of occupational and universal competencies, which are currently being discussed within the context of the DAL, is critical to the ongoing effort to design a systemic approach to leader development. DAL efforts to codify the knowledge requirements for billets filled by Air Force general officers represents a useful parallel effort; however, the Air Force OES should focus its efforts on supporting the development of self-aware and adaptive leaders who are capable of leading units and staffs to mission accomplishment independent of the environment in which they operate.

The implementation of ASBC signals an important first step in establishing a common basis of understanding regarding the Air Force mission and promulgating a common Air Force culture rather than one dominated by occupationalism. To ensure continuity of development, the Air Force should examine systems which will allow for greater developmental opportunities for officers between ASBC and SOS. A course of instruction similar to the former Lieutenant's Professional Development Program may be a useful intermediate tool to provide this continuity. In addition, current technology makes the use of distributed training and professional continuing education more practical than ever.

To the maximum extent possible, SOS should focus on providing officers with the

opportunity to lead in realistic and time-constrained scenarios. To maximize the value of the experience, ASBC and SOS instructors should provide individual students with comprehensive assessments of their performances which they can apply in future leadership opportunities. In an effort to provide company grade leader development experiences to all officers, the Air Force should alter its policy to make SOS available to all officers—ASBC should not represent both the first and last resident PME experience for junior Air Force officers.

Air Force company grade PME, especially in light of the brevity of resident courses, cannot be an episodic or isolated leader development activity. Doctrine, the OES, and personnel management systems must reflect and support a leader development process which integrates PME, operational and staff assignments, PCE, and distributed training and education to provide continuity in the development of company grade officers and visibility for Air Force leaders charged with developing company grade officers for future leadership in increasingly complex operating environments.

ILLUSTRATIONS

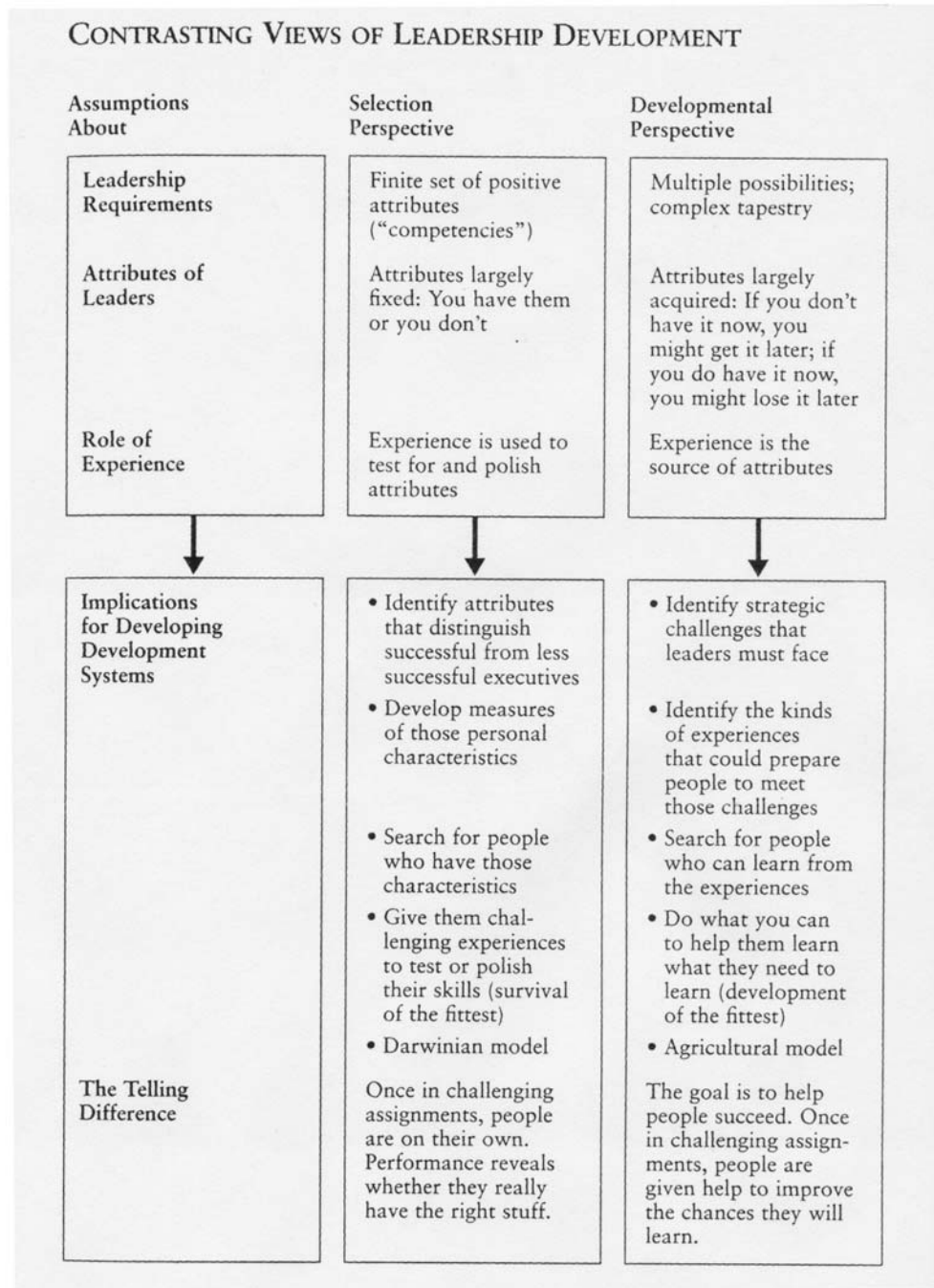


Figure 1: Reprinted, by permission, from Morgan McCall, *High Flyers*, 15.

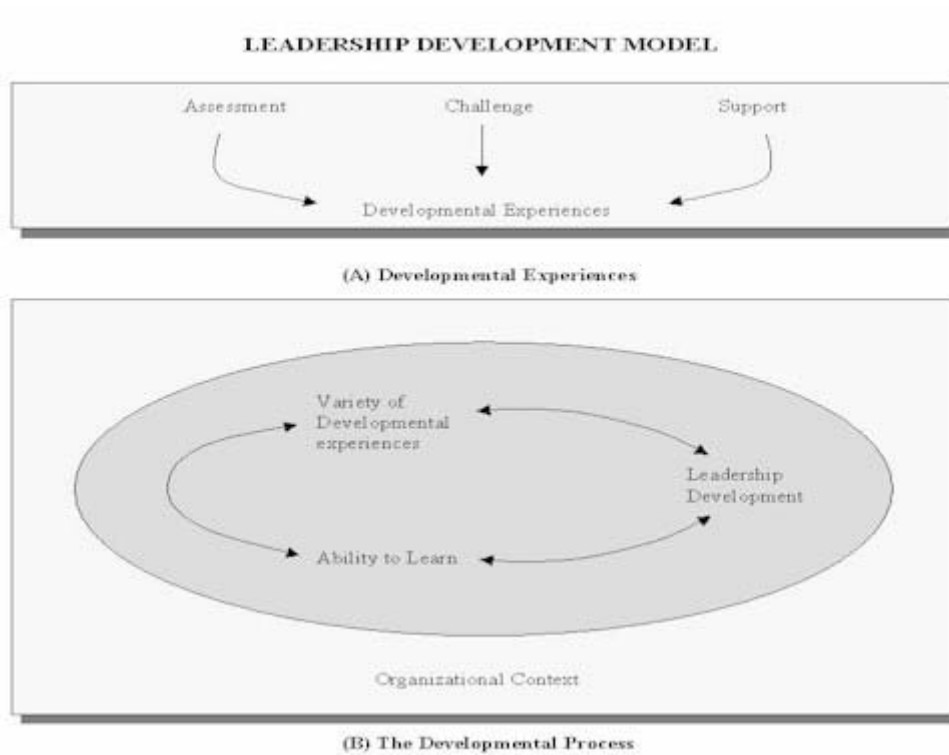


Figure 2: Reprinted, by permission, from McCauley, et al, *Center for Creative Leadership Handbook of Leadership Development*, 11.

The Army Leader Development Model

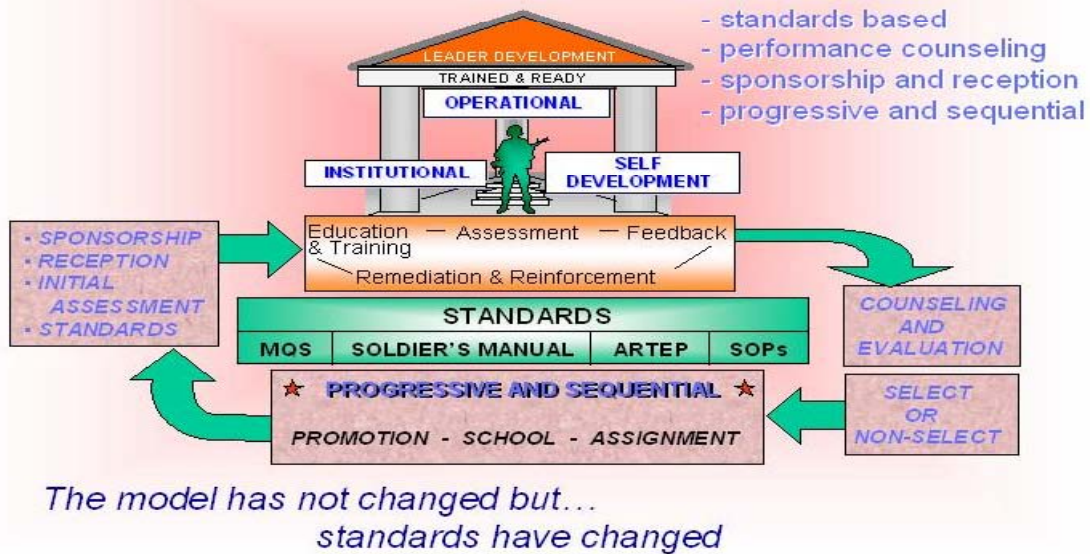


Figure 3: The Army Leader Development Process. Reprinted from The United States Army Center for Army Leadership Website, <http://www.leadership.army.mil/images/LdrDevMdl.htm>; Internet; accessed 12 March 2002.



Figure 4: The Army Leadership Framework. Reprinted from *FM 22-100, Army Leadership*, 1-3.

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