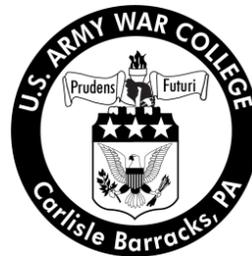


Strategy Research Project

Mission Command: A Time-Proven Leadership Philosophy that Emphasizes Trust

by

Colonel Gregory H. Penfield
United States Army



United States Army War College
Class of 2014

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The Army's formal adoption of mission command as its central philosophical approach to leadership and as a warfighting function is nearly four years old. Its basic elements – mission type orders executed within the commander's intent to exploit the initiative while accepting prudent risk – are not exactly new or innovative ideas. Yet the Army continues to struggle with implementing mission command as its core principle for leadership and command, and the force seems to not quite understand where the Army is going regarding mission command. This paper will seek to answer two fundamental questions: whether mission command is really a new philosophy or just an reintroduction of existing doctrinal precepts, and what the Army is really trying to accomplish with mission command. This paper will review the current mission command construct and look at command in previous Army doctrine to answer the first question; describe what the Army is doing to implement mission command to date to answer the second question; and finally offer potential potential measures to institutionalize mission command as a core philosophy.

Mission Command: A Time-Proven Leadership Philosophy that Emphasizes Trust

Modern warfare demands prompt action, decentralization, and a high degree of individual initiative.

—1962 Field Manual 100-5, *Operations*

The Army's formal adoption of mission command as its central philosophical approach to leadership and as a warfighting function is nearly four years old. Its basic elements – mission type orders executed within the commander's intent to exploit the initiative while accepting prudent risk – are not exactly new or innovative ideas. Yet the Army continues to struggle with implementing mission command as its core principle for leadership and command, and the force seems to not quite understand where the Army is going regarding mission command. Legendary Yankees catcher Yogi Berra once quipped, "You got to be very careful if you don't know where you're going, because you might not get there."¹ To paraphrase Daniel Hughes, as long as Army officers regard mission command simply as a policy of short general orders, rather than a fundamental principle governing all, requiring decisions and judgment, they will not understand what the principle entails, let alone implement it on the battlefield.² To help ensure the United States (U.S.) Army knows where it is going with mission command, this paper will seek to answer two fundamental questions. The first question focuses on whether mission command is really a new philosophy or just a reintroduction of existing doctrinal precepts. The second question explores what the Army is really trying to accomplish with mission command. This paper will review the current mission command construct and look at command in previous Army doctrine to answer the first question, and describe what the Army has done to date to implement mission command to answer the

second question. Finally, this paper will offer potential measures to better institutionalize mission command as a core philosophy.

The Current Mission Command Construct

Many wonder where the current idea of mission command originated, and why the Army deviated from its previous command and control precept. Today's impetus for mission command stems from the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), General Martin Dempsey, who in his 2012 Mission Command White Paper, articulates mission command as the principal manner by which joint forces should exercise command and control. The Chairman provided a clear mandate for all commanders to model the mission command philosophy and instill it across the force, stating:

We will not embrace mission command from a simple combination of policy, doctrine, education, and training. These guide and shape, but do not create belief and capability. Understand my intent: I challenge every leader in the Joint Force to be a living example of mission command. You have my trust.³

The Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, Joint Pub 1-02, defines mission command as, "The conduct of military operations through decentralized execution based upon mission-type orders."⁴ Current Army doctrine recognizes that military operations as a whole defy orderly, efficient, and precise control, with an enemy force trying to impose its will while preventing such an imposition of will on its own forces.⁵ In light of this recognition, the Army formulated a new concept, unified land operations, to replace full spectrum operations as the basis for conducting its land power mission. The Army expands the mission command definition in Army Doctrine Publication 6-0, *Mission Command*, beyond the joint definition to encompass its philosophical relationship to enabling unified land operations. It states that mission command is, "The exercise of authority and direction by the commander using mission

orders to enable disciplined initiative within the commander's intent to empower agile and adaptive leaders in the conduct of unified land operations."⁶ This philosophy emphasizes the centrality of the commander and his role in driving the operations process, developing teams, and influencing internal and external stakeholders.

Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 6-0 further outlines the guiding principles of mission command that assist commanders and staffs in balancing the art of command with the science of control. Those principles are to build cohesive teams through mutual trust, create shared understanding, provide clear commander's intent, exercise disciplined initiative, use mission orders, and accept prudent risk. Clear, concise, and easily understood commander's intent, disciplined initiative and mission orders are time-honored principles. The mission command philosophy also encourages an iterative dialogue between leaders to ensure shared understanding and co-create context that will enable the disciplined initiative required to exploit opportunities.⁷ Further, doctrine describes this dialogue as not top down, but a mutually enabling exercise. For example, most discussions revolve around the commander empowering his subordinates. Conversely, subordinates, through disciplined initiative that exploits an opportunity and maintains a position of relative advantage, opens up options for the commander not previously available. This empowers the commander to take further action to exploit the opportunities afforded by his subordinate.⁸ The mission command philosophy, underpinned by mission-type orders and commander's intent, does describe the need to empower subordinates to continually exploit the initiative and seek positions of relative advantage within the broader context of unified land operations.

The Army also describes the science of control within mission command as enabling the execution of mission command as a warfighting function, defined as, “the related tasks and systems that develop and integrate those activities enabling a commander to balance the art of command and the science of control in order to integrate the other warfighting functions.”⁹ Intuitively, this linkage as a warfighting function to the overall mission command construct provides the execution function necessary to allow the commander to drive the operations process of plan, prepare, execute, and assess. The material aspect of mission command is the Mission Command System, an “arrangement of personnel, networks, information systems, processes and procedures, and facilities and equipment that enables the commander to conduct operations.”¹⁰ Mission command as a warfighting function enables the staff functions that support a commander, and facilitates the art of command. Mission command facilitates the science of control, consisting of systems and procedures to improve the commander’s understanding and to support accomplishing missions.¹¹ It also supports the execution of many tasks across all the warfighting functions, and is thus the integrating warfighting function.¹² Regardless, the warfighting function’s purpose at the end of the day is to achieve what MG Thomas James, Director of the Mission Command Center of Excellence, describes as: “Getting the right information to the right individuals at the right time and place to provide the necessary situation awareness for decision.”¹³ The logic map associated with ADP 6-0 provides a graphical narrative that helps communicate the Army’s vision of a mission command philosophy and warfighting function that enables unified land operations.

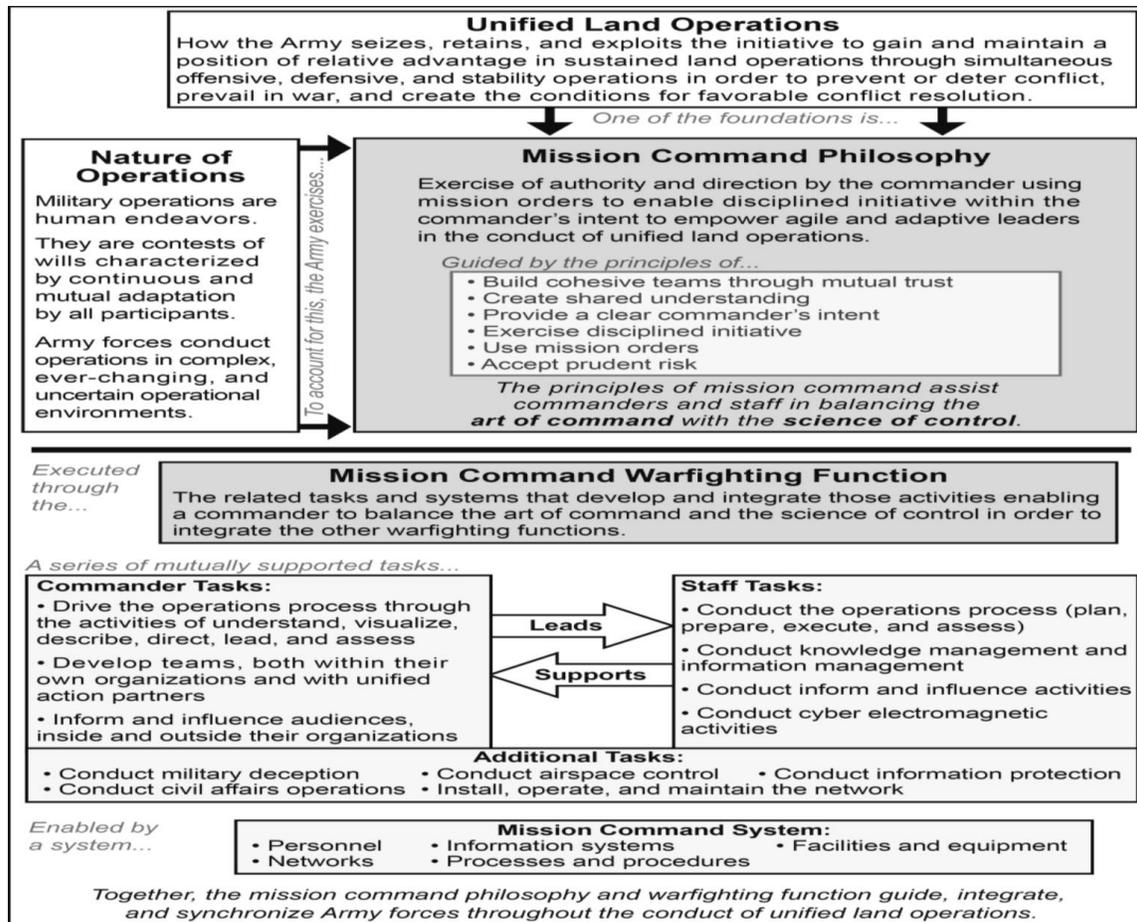


Figure 1: Mission Command Logic Map

This contextual background of the Army's current mission command philosophy provides the basis to explore doctrinal and historical references to mission command in determining whether this is in fact a new philosophy or a reemphasis of previous doctrinal concepts.

How the Army Historically Described Command and Control

Although a recent CJCS mandate, research supports the assertion that the concept of mission command is not new to the U.S. Army. In fact, Army doctrine since 1905 has described its philosophy on command in the very manner it now describes as mission command. Command and Control – a competing term to mission command —

has been the doctrinal and leadership mainstay in the U.S. Army. Doctrine used the term command and control (C2) to enable leaders and codified C2 as the method for leaders to effectively employ forces. In fact, command and control is a joint warfighting function and for many decades was either part of the Army battlefield operating system or a warfighting function.

Colonel (Retired) Clint Ancker III, director of the Combined Arms Doctrine Directorate, Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth, KS, provides an excellent description of this doctrinal lineage in his March 2013 Military Review article entitled, *The Evolution of Mission Command in U.S. Army Doctrine, 1905 to the Present*. Ancker's article illustrates that with few exceptions, the Army's doctrine specifically described how to exercise command and control in its desire for leaders to seek the initiative in the absence of orders within the commander's intent. A passage from this article shows that the inaugural 1905 Field Service Regulations included such language related to current mission command, stating,

An order should not trespass on the province of the subordinate. It should contain everything that is beyond the independent authority of the subordinate, but nothing more. When the transmission of orders involves a considerable period of time during which the situation may change, avoid detailed instructions. The same rule holds when carrying out orders under any circumstances in which the originator of the order cannot completely forecast; in such cases, issuing *letters of guidance* is more appropriate. It should lay stress upon *attainment of the object*, and leave open the employment of means.¹⁴

The term *letters of guidance* refers to commander's intent, a key element within the mission command philosophy. Even the 1962 version of FM 100-5, *Operations*, stated that modern warfare demands prompt action, decentralization, and a high degree of individual initiative.¹⁵ Ancker reinforces this relationship between mission type orders and commander's intent in his citation from the 1962 version of FM 100-5, "Orders must

be timely, simple, clear and concise. Mission type orders are used to the greatest practicable extent, but should provide the commanders concept, or intent, to insure [sic] that subordinate commanders, acting on their own initiative, direct their efforts to the attainment of the overall objective.”¹⁶ Not surprisingly, previous Army doctrine also mentions this impetus for dialogue. As Ancker notes in his article, the 1944 version of FM 100-5 stated:

Personal conferences between the higher commander and his subordinates who are to execute his orders are usually advisable, that the latter may arrive at a correct understanding of the plans and intentions of their superior...can effect better support or coordination frequently by decentralized control such as during marches or in rapidly changing situations.¹⁷

Throughout Ancker’s article, similar passages from a wide range of doctrinal references highlight language consistent with the current mission command philosophy. For example, the 1982 FM 100-5, which described the AirLand Battle concept, strongly emphasized the tenets of mission command:

Initiative implies an offensive spirit in the conduct of all operations. The under-lying purpose of every encounter with the enemy is to seize or to retain independence of action...To preserve the initiative, subordinates must act independently within the context of an overall plan. They must deviate from the expected course of battle without hesitation when opportunities arise to expedite the overall mission of the higher force...Improvisation, initiative, and aggressiveness—the traits that have historically distinguished the American soldier—must be particularly strong in our leaders.¹⁸

The language in the revised 1986 edition of FM 100-5 also aligns with that outlined in today’s ADP 6-0. This provides further evidence that this leadership philosophy has always been present, and what the Army has always described as command and control, it is now calling mission command:

Decentralization demands subordinates who are willing and able to take risks and superiors who nurture that willingness and ability in their subordinates. If subordinates are to exercise initiative without endangering the overall success of the force, they must thoroughly understand the commander's intent. . . . In turn, the force commander must encourage subordinates to focus their operations on the overall mission, and give them the freedom and responsibility to develop opportunities, which the force as a whole can exploit to accomplish the mission more effectively.¹⁹

There have been other references to mission-type orders cited in use by Army leaders to instill initiative, the most notable being a well-known German concept, *Auftragstaktik*. The concept of *Auftragstaktik*, often translated as mission command, denotes decentralized leadership. This command philosophy requires and facilitates initiative at all levels of command directly involved with events on the battlefield. It allows and encourages subordinates to exploit opportunities by empowering them to demonstrate initiative and exercise personal judgment in pursuance of their mission while maintaining alignment with the commander's intent.²⁰ *Auftragstaktik* remains alive and well within the German Army, and many U.S. officers view the U.S. Army's mission command philosophy as *Auftragstaktik* by another name. However, (then) LTG Perkins, the former Combined Arms Center Commander, provided a briefing on mission command that emphasized how it expands upon the concept of *Auftragstaktik* to enable unified land operations and continuously seek and gain a relative position of advantage in complex environments.²¹ While this may be true, mission command clearly embodies elements of *Auftragstaktik*.

Dempsey notes in the White Paper that, "Our need to pursue, instill, and foster mission command is critical to our future success in defending the nation in an increasingly complex and uncertain operating environment....and to inform the development of Joint Force 2020."²² Joint Vision 2020 further discusses two sources of

friction in the projected future environment: the existence of uncertainty and chance, and the unpredictable actions of other actors.²³ This does not seem strikingly different from what Carl Von Clausewitz describes in his seminal book, *On War*, regarding the fog and friction of war. He also notes that every person has the ability to introduce friction and uncertainty, therefor implying that any attempt to describe the future otherwise is purely an academic exercise devoid of reality.²⁴ LTG Perkins put a more succinct point on the future environment, stating that the only thing he knows with absolute certainty is the future is unknown, and we must plan to operate against that unknown.²⁵ What this really means is that the environment from time immemorial has always been complex and uncertain, that perhaps only the speed at which change occurs may be the difference. U.S. Army Forces Command, in a recent coordinating draft outlining its leader development guidance, alludes to this speed of complexity to reinforce the criticality of leaders who understand and exercise mission command in a period of uncertainty:

After more than a decade of complex and persistent operations with an all-volunteer force, we face an operational environment that is increasingly chaotic and fueled by the speed of the information age. This increasingly complex security environment – coupled with a period of organizational transformation and fiscal austerity – requires the Army to build and empower leaders who can apply reason, problem solve, manage change and, make consequential decisions with limited information.²⁶

What this research clearly illustrates is that in reality, regardless of the environment in which our Army operated, the ideas now described as mission command have been an integral part of how the Army expects its officers and non-commissioned officers to exercise command of Soldiers. Stated another way, the mission command philosophy is nothing new; the Army's formal adoption of the term mission command in essence does not significantly alter the existing practice of this leadership philosophy.

This also provides a potential insight that the Chairman's emphasis on mission command at this particular point in time may be an effort to reinforce this philosophy during the upcoming period of relative stability, pending drawdown, and looming fiscal austerity so the Army retains what it practiced in combat. If that is the case, this supports the assertion that current efforts are more a forcing function to instill mission command and not about change to a new leadership philosophy. An exploration of what the Army is doing now to emphasize mission command may provide further insights into what it is trying to accomplish.

Implementation Efforts

John Kotter, in his book, "Leading Change," provides an eight-stage process for creating major change.²⁷ As the research above demonstrates, mission command is not a new concept and thus its implementation does not really equate to major change for the Army. Kotter's model, however, does provide a useful framework from which to examine the Army's current efforts to institutionalize mission command and align the organization with the April 2010 Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff Mission Command White Paper. A guiding coalition of Army strategic leaders is driving force-wide implementation of mission command, and in many respects the Army is leading this transition across the joint force. The U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command Pamphlet 525-3-3, *United States Army Functional Concept for Mission Command 2016-2028*, is a vision and strategy that aligns with Kotter's model and essentially serves as the foundational document for describing mission command and its warfighting function.²⁸ The Army is empowering broad-based action through its Doctrine, Organization, Training, Material, Leadership and Education, Personnel, and Facilities process, better known as DOTML-PF. The Army generated short term wins through

execution of the mission command philosophy in its combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, with junior leaders, empowered by commanders, using intent-driven initiative to achieve decisive tactical results in combat. Other examples of short-term wins include using terminology to describe organizational functions, i.e. Mission Command Center of Excellence; Mission Command Training Program; and Mission Command Centers in the Guard and Reserve, and fielding technological enhancements that are providing increasingly capable network systems that enable the application of mission command.

Collectively, these robust efforts to implement mission command appear sufficient to drive the desired outcomes. However, arguably the two most important stages – *establishing a sense of urgency* and *communicating the change vision* – are key areas where the Army is falling short in explaining why mission command is necessary. The Army's failure to create a narrative that lays out the "Why" for mission command leaves an intellectual void for the Army's leaders to understand and internalize this command philosophy. The use of mission command vice command and control may in fact create cognitive dissonance for Army leaders. The timing of this emphasis on mission command is also a factor. LTG Robert Caslen and COL(P) Charles Flynn noted in their article, *Introducing the Mission Command Center of Excellence*, note that General Dempsey acknowledges the Army is living the principles of mission command in Iraq and Afghanistan, but mission command must be institutionalized within the culture to make its employment a reality across the force.²⁹ The timing of GEN Dempsey's White Paper may further indicate that he views his vision as a forcing function for the military to sustain the emphasis on mission command

achieved during the past twelve years of war. This intellectual void may contribute to a lack of trust between senior leaders and those subordinates expected to execute mission command.

Potential Implications

Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 1, *The Army*, states that, “Army leaders are critical to establishing the institutional culture and climate of trust essential for mission command.”³⁰ Eitan Shamir, in his article “The Long and Winding Road: The US Army Managerial Approach to Command and the Adoption of Mission Command (Auftragstaktik),” notes that a mission command approach presupposes the existence of trust in the individual’s ability to act wisely and creatively when faced with unexpected situations, independently from higher authority.³¹ Thus, trust is foundational to an organization’s culture and an essential component of command and control or mission command. The Army Capstone Concept acknowledges that, “Network-enabled mission command will require an institutional culture that fosters trust among commanders, encourages initiative and expects leaders to take prudent risk and make decisions based on incomplete information.”³² ADP 6-0 speaks directly to the criticality of mutual trust that builds shared confidence among commanders, subordinates, and partners, and whereby effective commanders build cohesive teams. There are few shortcuts to gaining the trust of others. Leaders gain or lose trust through everyday actions more than grand or occasional gestures and thus takes time to earn. Shared experiences and training, usually gained incidental to operations but also deliberately developed by the commander, provide the environment of trust.³³ Mission command assumes an inherent trust in an individual’s ability to act prudently and creatively within the commander’s intent when faced with unexpected situations, independent from higher authority.³⁴

Shamir supports this notion, pointing out that mission command's approach focuses on the realization that 'no plan survives the first contact with the enemy' and therefore a good plan is a start point that allows a subordinate maximum freedom to decide and act according to the emerging situation and changing circumstances.³⁵

These statements and doctrinal passages appear simple in concept. Yet former Army officer Donald E. Vandergriff properly cautions against expecting immediate change. He notes that, "A military culture that supports Mission Command takes time to develop and must be embraced across the entire spectrum of the Army and practiced in every institution—operational and generating forces—while decrees from above cannot magically decentralize operations conducted by adaptive leaders."³⁶ Two key factors – the modular brigade construct with associated unintended effects on Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN), and a failure to exercise mission command at home station – may contribute to a climate where trust is not a given.³⁷

The Army's reliance on brigade-centric formations using a modular approach to task organization assumes a level of trust that may not exist between key senior leaders. The inherent flaw with this concept is the initial lack of trust exhibited toward a unit commander with whom the headquarters has not habitually interacted or trained. There is typically an assessment period, with higher degrees of control measures, which (purposely) inhibits a subordinate's freedom of action and precludes seamless integration and immediate readiness for combat. Depending on the size and geographic dispersion of the units involved, this period can be substantial. Commanders must relinquish a substantial degree of control to subordinates for mission execution, and thus assume greater risks in doing so. These same leaders also need to trust that their

higher headquarters will underwrite decisions and accept the consequences of prudent risk. Leaders must develop and assess subordinate leaders through habitual interaction and training to gain mutual trust and mitigate this risk. This is most problematic between brigade commanders and division or JTF commanders, and perhaps less pronounced between division and corps commanders since they probably know each other to some degree. Army Divisions have training, readiness, and oversight (TRO) for brigades assigned to their installation or under their divisional flag. Yet, as frequently occurred during the past ten years of ARFORGEN, combat commands task organized many brigades to a different division-level command under which the units had little if any previous training or experience. A missing element was the mutual trust garnered in training or even through personal interaction prior to deployment.

This is why commander involvement with leader development at home station is so essential to building trust between leaders and subordinates. This is less of a problem initially at the brigade level and below, since organic battalions, with their organic companies, train and deploy as a brigade combat team. It does matter when battalions and companies are task organized to a different brigade. This problem was partially mitigated during the Cold War period when units habitually cross-attached companies during training, and further enhanced today through the formation of combined arms units. The Army's Regionally Aligned Forces (RAF) concept may also mitigate this unintended effect. Addressing the impacts of the modular brigade construct and associated effects through ARFORGEN begins at home station. If the Army is to sustain its approach to leadership through mission command, it must ensure a continuity of that leadership philosophy at home station.

GEN Dempsey, in his thoughts soon after becoming the 37th Chief of Staff of the Army, noted that, “When we deploy, we can requisition nearly everything we need. What we cannot requisition is trust, discipline, and fitness....Every day we should ask ourselves if we are doing enough to contribute to a climate of trust...”³⁸ Lacking the essential cultural element of trust in home station may limit the Army leader acceptance and implementation of mission command. As noted earlier, the operational environments in Iraq and Afghanistan provided an opportunity to exercise mission command. However, inherent differences between home station and combat operations may affect mission command execution. For instance, will commanders who exercised mission command in combat by necessity due to geographical dispersion, cultural difference, and mission requirements continue to do so at home station? What if some commanders tighten the reins of control at home station, perhaps leading to a similar perception from the 1990’s of a zero defect Army?³⁹ Exercising mission command, whether in combat or at home station, translates words into deeds and sets the example for others to emulate.

A potential reason for the Army’s emphasis on mission command now may in fact be a hedge against the very specter of a return to zero-defect environments during this looming drawdown period. The Army’s leaders recognize the institution cannot limit the mission command philosophy solely to combat environments, and requires an interactive commander who develops subordinates in a supportive manner. Mission command must also occur in an equally permissive home station environment that accepts the consequences of taking prudent risks and rewards those who do so within a commander’s intent. Failure to do so has immediate, negative effects on trust. A recent

Center for Army Leadership Annual Survey of Army Leadership (CASAL) is telling: 24% of Army leaders believe that their superiors held honest mistakes against them, while 30% believe that their unit/organization promotes a zero-defect mentality.⁴⁰ As the U.S. military approaches another drawdown period, wise leaders will promote a culture of trust and eliminate the perception of zero-defect mentality. Equally disturbing, in both the 2011 and 2012 CASAL surveys, “Develops Others” continues to be the lowest rated core competency across all levels. Further, respondents rated on average only 61% of Army leaders as effective at developing their subordinates and 59% at creating or identifying opportunities for leader development.⁴¹ Brigade and battalion commanders fared better at 83% in subordinate assessment of their ability to exercise mission command principles, while company grade officers were closer to 75% effectiveness.⁴² This outcome highlights the need for better development of company grade subordinate leaders. Home station is an ideal environment to instill a mission command philosophy in subordinate leaders and then place these leaders in situations that facilitate decision-making that aligns with the commander’s intent...without fear of retribution.

Perhaps William S. Lind’s vision of mission command best exemplifies the need for this mission command philosophy in home station. He views mission command as a series of contracts between superior and subordinates where the superior, in his contract, pledges to make the result he desires crystal-clear to his subordinates, and leaves the subordinate maximum latitude in determining how to get the result, and perhaps the greatest change – to back him up when he makes mistakes.⁴³ This latter point is important, as any deviation from that permissive environment may result in disillusioned leaders confused by the contrarian leadership style that differs from what

they experienced in combat. Others may take a different path, rebelling against any form of micromanagement by ignoring stifling orders. For example, LTG (Ret) Dan Bolger once noted there are some who believe that initiative is the hallmark of American soldier, saying, “Put a lieutenant in the jungle with a radio and he will ask forgiveness not permission. Try to micromanage him and he will find the off switch...from the American Revolution to the Persian Gulf War, this has been the American method.”⁴⁴

Where the Army Should Focus its Efforts

The Army’s concerted efforts in a relatively short period belies the fact that the Army still has much work yet to do. Thus, the Army’s senior leadership must make the cultural dimension a major priority for implementation. Applying Kotter’s final two stages – *consolidate gains and anchor new approaches in the culture* – will help facilitate a decentralized, mission type orders, initiatives-based mindset. Within that context, there are four specific measures the Army must adopt to complete this transition. These measures reflect Daniel Hughes’ earlier point about ensuring officers understand the fundamental principles of mission command so they can implement it at home station and on the battlefield.”⁴⁵

First, the Army should stop trying to explain mission command in terms of a new requirement based on a changed environment that replaces command and control. The narrative should instead emphasize that the Army’s current use of mission command describes what has been a consistent and combat-tested command philosophy, and that it has equal value in a home station environment. This complements earlier statements on the need to demand with equal vigor the execution of mission command in home station operations to replicate the leadership in a combat environment.⁴⁶

Second, it is imperative that the Army hold leaders accountable for creating a mission command environment everywhere the Army operates to link our organizational behaviors to the necessary conditions for success in combat. Accountability is essential; there is a strong bench of officers capable of leading these organizations within a mission command construct if current commanders cannot. Thus senior leaders must create an environment of trust that enables their subordinate leaders to comfortably take risks, encourage initiative in their own subordinates, and expect them to do the same. This will increase senior leader credibility and send a clear signal that exercising mission command is the expected behavior for all leaders. This measure will also embolden subordinate commanders to command with confidence, take prudent risks, and develop their subordinate leaders to operate using mission command.

Third, the Army should make direct changes to personnel policy. Leading also implies modeling the desired behavior. Personnel policy examples to monitor those specific behaviors include requiring comments within the Officer Efficiency Report (OER), 360 degree Multisource Analysis and Feedback (MSAF) for key leaders, and specifying mission command attributes for promotion or command selection criteria.

Finally, to enable trust within the modular brigade construct and unintended effects of ARFORGEN, the Army should look at ways to develop relationships between its brigade commanders and the division and corps commanders prior to combat deployments. For example, the Army should conduct periodic conferences where brigade and higher commanders can interact, exchange ideas, and develop a shared understanding of each other to build the foundations of trust in peacetime.

The mission command philosophy is not a new concept, and in fact is a codification of previous doctrine and existing practices among its leaders. Further, it is the right leadership philosophy in the ever-present complex and chaotic operational environment. General Dempsey set a clear vision in the Mission Command White Paper in an apparent effort to sustain the culture of mission command as the premier leadership approach during a period of relative stability, a looming drawdown, and fiscal uncertainty. Providing a clear articulation why the Army is emphasizing mission command now, and how trust underpins every facet of mission command, will help eliminate cognitive dissonance. The Army's institutional efforts to instill this philosophy must include an equal emphasis in a home station environment, driven by leaders who model the very attributes doctrine espouses. There can be no substitute for leadership to make this occur, as General Dempsey clearly stated in his earlier demand for leaders to be a living example of mission command. The Army is at the forefront of institutionalizing that vision, its leaders must lead the charge, and it must adopt the above recommendations to sustain momentum and achieve its desired mission command outcomes.

Endnotes

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