

Strategy Research Project

Leadership Responsibilities to Support an Army's Campaign on Property Accountability

by

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United States Army



United States Army War College
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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**Leadership Responsibilities to Support an Army's Campaign on Property
Accountability**

by

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Abstract

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The requirements generated from the past decade of war have resulted in leaders in the United States Army concerned less with the accountability of government property as more time was spent preparing for combat operations. With the current fiscal constrained environment, the Army must concern itself with accounting for property. It can no longer simply purchase additional items when shortages are identified as was done in the past. Strategically, property accountability impacts unit readiness. Unit readiness impacts the Army's ability to provide the Combatant Commander with trained and ready forces. Given these challenges, the Army has launched a comprehensive campaign on property accountability. Although company commanders own the property in the Army, they alone cannot solve this issue. This paper argues that engaged leadership at all levels from squad leader to senior Army leaders is required to achieve success in the Army's campaign on property accountability.

Leadership Responsibilities to Support an Army's Campaign on Property Accountability

Leadership, the lifeblood of an Army, makes a difference everyday in the United States Army. Since the formation of the Continental Army until today with Soldiers deployed around the globe, Army leaders have accepted the challenges

—ADP 6-22¹

The requirements generated from the past decade of war have presented opportunities for leaders in the United States Army who were concerned less with the accountability of government property as more time was necessarily spent preparing for combat operations. Units in the deployment cycle generally were not under fiscal constraints. The present fiscal environment no longer allows leaders in the Army to operate this way. No longer will units have the resources to simply order items they are short without justification. The Army as a whole cannot simply obtain more items just because units are short without impacting resourcing in other areas. On the strategic level, property accountability impacts unit readiness and readiness impacts the Army's ability to provide the Geographic Combatant Commanders with trained and ready forces. Army leaders' concerns regarding property accountability must increase now. To accomplish this end, the Army has launched a campaign on property accountability.

This paper argues that engaged leadership at all levels from squad leader to senior Army leaders is required for the Army to succeed in the current struggle to obtain and maintain accountability of property. Company commanders own the Army's property; therefore some senior leaders believe accountability is the company commander's responsibility alone. However, Army leaders have responsibilities to support and enforce the Army's current campaign to improve property accountability.

Army leaders must ensure that junior officers, non-commissioned officers, and Soldiers understand accountability, including its regulatory requirements. To support these assertions, this paper will focus on leaders' responsibilities to account for Army property. It will describe how the problem of accountability has reached a critical point. It will conclude with recommendations to fix the problem.

How does the Army know there is a problem? Between the summer of 2010 (when the Army established the Campaign on Property Accountability [COPA]), until the fall of 2012, the Army has re-established accountability of over \$3.4 billion in property which has been retained in units possessing the equipment. This is enough resources to equip eight heavy brigade combat teams at over \$438 million each.² In addition, a total of \$33.9 billion of equipment has been accounted for and redistributed across the Army to meet valid requirements.³

Solving this issue requires a change in thinking throughout the Army - not only at the battalion and brigade levels but also in the institutional Army. Junior Army leaders require proper training in property accountability, but are these leaders taking advantage of the multiple training systems that are currently available? Within the Army's personnel management enterprise, are we ensuring that qualified captains are available to be placed into company command positions? Does the Army have enough qualified unit supply specialists, the 92Y Supply Sergeant? Are they in the right places to assure that property transactions and accounting are being effectively accomplished? There is a great deal more to this problem than young company commanders and their supply sergeants doing their job of accountability to resolve or mitigate the issue. Even though at the company level a great deal can be accomplished; these individuals

require the assistance and support of many leaders senior to them to ensure the company commanders, the ones who own the Army's property, are capable of doing their jobs and are postured for success.

The current global environment is fraught with volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (VUCA). Except for a small residual force in the Office of Security Cooperation-Iraq, U.S. operations in Iraq have concluded. Likewise, U.S. operations in Afghanistan are drawing down, leaving Army leaders there with over 1.61 million pieces of equipment to account for during the responsible drawdown.⁴ The current Army mantra includes calls for "engaged leadership" and "getting back to the basics." In reality, thousands of Soldiers and officers, who entered service after 2001, have never learned or practiced the basics of property accountability. Engaged leadership is a way to mitigate the ever encompassing problem of property accountability. According to the Army Leadership manual, ADP 6-22, "Accomplishing the current mission is not enough – the leader is responsible for developing individuals and improving the organization for the near and long-term."⁵ Therefore, engaged leadership is offered as a solution for ensuring the Army is aligned for success with its future missions.

Soldiers and subordinate leaders will do what they see or believe their commanders and senior leaders want or expect, the climate the commander sets for the organization is essential for a successful campaign to improve accountability. However, are company commanders seeing or hearing their battalion or brigade commanders discuss property accountability? Are cyclic inventories and sensitive items inventories tracked at the BN or BDE levels? Are these accountability tools measured and included

on weekly training schedules? If not, these company commanders will give little priority or emphasis to property accountability.

The Army does not have the time or the available funding to do business as usual. The 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review clearly describes current budget constraints, stating, “The Department of Defense will continue to face a challenging fiscal environment.”⁶ In the 2013 Army Posture Statement, Secretary of the Army John McHugh and Chief of Staff of the Army General Raymond Odierno, clearly warned that fiscal challenges will impact the Army. Consider the shortfall of funding subsequent to the FY 13 implementation of sequestration:

The implementation of sequestration in FY13 created a significant shortfall in Army funding, estimated at \$8.3 billion for the remaining months of the fiscal year, which includes nearly \$5.5 billion in the Operations and Maintenance account for active and reserve component forces...The sharp decline over a short period of time significantly impacts readiness which will cascade into the next fiscal year and beyond⁷

With this drop-off in funding, the need to know precisely what the Army possesses is more urgent than ever. Without a solid baseline, the Army and its subordinate units will fail to know what items are on-hand, what items are serviceable, and what the true deficit is between equipment required and equipment-on-hand. Dwindling funds will continue to be spent in an effort to ensure Soldiers and units have what is required to accomplish the missions they are tasked to do. Without good asset visibility, some funds no doubt will be used to purchase items already on-hand but not adequately documented.

Peter Senge established The Laws of the Fifth Discipline. His first law claims that “Today’s problems come from yesterdays ‘solutions’.”⁸ This law adequately describes the current problem with property accountability. Past Army actions to operate in the

VUCA environment have caused the Army to arrive in the current situation: “As a force at war for over 10 years, expediency to get the best equipment to Soldiers in the fight took precedence over accountability. Expediency was the right decision but there is a resource cost associated with the loss of property accountability.”⁹ The past decade of war - which required splitting of the Army’s property books between deployed equipment and equipment left for the rear detachment, along with rapid transformation and establishment of new units within the Army, as well as rotations in the Army Forces Generation (ARFORGEN) model - caused property transactions to occur much more rapidly than in the past. During the creation and transformation of new units, to include Brigade Combat Teams, the arrival of new equipment did not always synchronize with the arrival of new captains to assume command or trained supply sergeants to serve in that critical role. From November 2007 to July 2012 the Army conducted 43,488 Financial Liability Investigations of Property Loss (FLIPL) valued at over \$1.9 billion.¹⁰ In addition, the Army employed additional ways for distributing property to units. Aside from the standard methods, it increased direct fielding from Program Managers who manage the acquisition of equipment for the Army. Likewise there were equipment distributions from the Rapid Equipping Force and increased purchases on Government Purchase Cards. These expedient methods made acquisition easier while making accountability more difficult.¹¹ Maintaining strict property accountability, while training a unit to deploy to combat, is an incredible challenge for any young company commander and their young supply sergeant to accomplish on their own. Senge advises that “Often we are puzzled by the causes of our problems; when we merely need to look at our own solutions to other problems in the past.”¹² However, this SRP takes no position on

whether the Army properly fielded equipment rapidly to ensure Soldiers deploying to combat were well-equipped. Rather, it argues that the Army can no longer rely on these methods.

In June 2013, the Army announced its BCT restructuring plan. As part of the overall plan, the Army will reduce the number of brigade combat teams from 45 to 33.¹³ Although some of these eliminated units will be used to build a third maneuver battalion within a BCT, many units will inactivate or transfer to other installations. This creates another requirement for thousands of items of equipment to be turned in or to be laterally transferred. The Army cannot afford to conduct these transactions incorrectly. The sheer numbers involved will require leader's engagement at all levels to ensure success.

Once in the deployed environment, company commanders must still account for equipment that has arrived during the deployment. During a short relief-in-place and transfer of authority, commanders had only days to inventory their theater-provided equipment that their units received from the outgoing command. They also had to inventory their organic property that they deployed from home station. They were challenged to gain an understanding of the battlefield and battle space they would now be responsible for.

This recent combat environment resulted in many leaders to minimize the importance of accounting for their units' property. As the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army stated:

As I travel across our Army, I get a sense that we've created something of a 'throw-away mentality' in the force... A decade of conflict, marked by an unprecedented level of modernization, and property churn as we cycle forces into and out of combat, has weakened our Command Supply

Discipline Program (CSDP)"... [Now], we must 'squeeze' the most out of every dollar we are allocated, we must take care of every piece of equipment; it is likely what we will have to fight the next battle. We must all be responsible stewards of the resources entrusted to our care in order to remain the decisive land force in the world¹⁴

As budgets for deploying forces were no longer constrained like in the past, the purchase of expendable items, durable items and non-expendable items were not monitored IAW with regulatory procedures. In the combat zones, fiscal constraints were minimal. Many leaders developed what the Vice Chief called a "throw-away" mentality.¹⁵

Non-standard equipment arrived in the theater of operations to combat new tactics, techniques, and procedures being used against coalition forces. Depending on the unit's Standard Operating Procedures, the Force Modernization personnel may have handled their transfers - not Property Book Officers. Equipment was "handed out" rather than issued in accordance to procedures.

Campaign on Property Accountability

From the perspective of the Strategic Thinking Framework, this lack of proper accountability is not aligned with the current environment, specifically DoD's recent fiscal restraints facing the Army. Senior leaders are conducting environmental scanning and developing a new vision for the Army. In July 2010, the Army launched its Campaign on Property Accountability (COPA). As described in ALARACT message 201/2010, COPA is designed to create a culture of property accountability and supply discipline. "This campaign provides the Army's way not only to get back to the basics of property accountability but also to achieve a level of accountability that perhaps had not been reached even before the recent decade plus of war. The campaign requires multiple inputs from subordinate commands to facilitate tracking data."¹⁶ In the more than three years since the implementation of the campaign, some success is evident.

As with any campaign, this one will not culminate with a quick decisive victory. LTG Raymond Mason, the Army Deputy Chief of Staff G-4, proclaimed “We approach this accountability campaign not as a one-time sprint but as a deliberate marathon.”¹⁷

Given the focus on reversing the recent trend, the pendulum is shifting in the right direction. Some of the Army G-4’s positive movement in measures of effectiveness can be attributed directly to leader engagement. For example, a report of late FLIPLs within the Army showed a decrease from 49% late in the 3rd QTR FY12 to 40% late in the 2nd QTR FY13.¹⁸ During that same time period, the average number of days a FLIPL was late dropped from 137 days to 65 days.¹⁹ Even with this improvement this is a considerable number of days above the 75 days allowed to complete the process according to Army Regulation 735-5.²⁰

Although these are just two metrics among several established, direct leader engagement is the key for improving these statistics. While completely eliminating late FLIPLs is unrealistic; there are at times legitimate reasons for late initiations or completions, engaged brigade and battalion leadership demonstrated command emphasis on property accountability to subordinates. Simple tracking charts at a brigade and battalion command and staff meetings demonstrate to subordinates what their leaders regard as important. An analysis of FY13 FLIPLs from I Corps showed the following trends: Of the 701 FLIPLs for Organizational Clothing and Individual Equipment (OCIE), the average days to process the FLIPL was 161 days (over double the authorized days).²¹ For change-of-command or property-book-merger generated FLIPLS the average days were 193 days to complete, over 100 days above the regulation.²² It is expected that if Soldiers train with and use the equipment issued for

OCIE, some items will break, be lost or perhaps stolen. But the significant issue with these numbers is the number of days to complete an OCIE FLIPL. Here again, engaged leadership, this time at the first-line supervisor level, can identify the loss or damage quickly and initiate the accountability process. In *Engaged Leadership*, Clint Swindell asserts that “engaged leadership develops employees committed to the organization and its outcomes, including the methods and means to achieve them.”²³

A requirement in the Army Campaign on Property Accountability ALARACT message tasks all brigade and battalion commanders to sign a memorandum to acknowledge they are responsible for property in their respective units. This task is also a metric which is reported to the Army G4. While the completion statistics continue to fluctuate, Army units were in 86% compliant with this memo requirement as of August 2012.²⁴ The requirement for these senior leaders to have to sign a memorandum stating they acknowledge responsibility is one way to determine the level of command emphasis within the force. These officers have all signed their assumption-of-command orders, which make them responsible for their commands. In accordance to Army Regulation 600-20 (Army Command Policy), a specified command task is “Properly training their Soldiers and ensuring that both Soldiers and equipment are in the proper state of readiness at all times. Commanders are responsible for developing disciplined and cohesive units sustained and at the highest readiness level possible.”²⁵ Commanders are not required to sign a memorandum stating they are responsible for the training of their unit or responsible for the health and welfare of their Soldiers. Yet the culture which has been created over the past decade has led senior Army leadership to require these leaders sign the accountability memorandum. Clearly, senior

leaders have concluded that some commanders are not accepting their inherent command responsibility to properly account for their unit's property.

Prior to the July 2010 implementation of COPA, the Army had a program that was owned by commanders for supply discipline and maintaining accountability. This is the Command Supply Discipline Program (CSDP), outlined in Army Regulation 710-2. "The CSDP is a compilation of existing regulatory requirements. Therefore commanders, supervisors, and managers are required to implement the provisions of this appendix in order to standardize supply discipline throughout the Army."²⁶ The program further describes the responsibilities of commanders (specifically ones above the company/troop/battery level), directing commanders to "Implement an aggressive CSDP by using existing assets to avoid duplication or fragmentation of effort."²⁷ The Army established this program prior to the current accountability situation we find ourselves in now. Significantly, this program was established and maintained at command levels above the company commander. An effective CSDP program requires leader engagement from battalion and higher leadership. Acknowledging that leaders have disregarded this mandatory program, the COPA ALARACT message directs units to return to established programs, to include the Organizational Inspections Programs (OIP) and the CSDP.

In a white paper responding to a VCSA Special Project for Property Accountability, the authors identified 14 gaps which they define as "a policy, process or tool negatively affecting establishment, maintenance or transfer of property accountability."²⁸ Using the Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership, Personnel and Facilities (DOTMLPF) construct, the authors identified lead agent

stakeholders and improvement plans to close these gaps. Several of these improvements involved issues of leadership. The identification of these gaps and recommended improvement actions provide another tool to mitigate the fog and friction of accountability.

Gap One: 'Property Accountability Training for BDE/BN/Co leaders'. The implementation plan to close this gap would be led by TRADOC which would build on training for leaders to develop property accountability as a core competency. The Sustainment Center of Excellence has established a portal under the Sustainment Knowledge Network, which created a one-stop shop for property accountability references and regulations, available training, leader professional development topics and sample standard operating procedures (SOPs).²⁹

Gap Two: 'Transfer of property accountability records are delayed or do not occur, resulting in open transaction or duplicate records'. The lead stakeholder for closing this gap is the Army G-4. The leadership engagement solution here calls for leaders to monitor open lateral transfers within their organizations to ensure actions have been completed and closed out properly. This was designed to reduce when property may have been physically transferred to another organization, and the required documentation has not been completed.³⁰

Gap Three: 'Lack of discipline in accountability and multiple processes to acquire property has led to property by-passing the PBO'. As discussed earlier, for rapid fielding of equipment, many non-standard items or non-Standard Army Management Information Systems (STAMIS) computer replacements provided ways for property to arrive at units without PBO visibility. Therefore leaders must enforce practices which

assure that the PBO has visibility on all actions in which property is acquired or turned-in from units.³¹

Gap Four: 'Unawareness or misunderstanding of durable property management', is a gap that the Army G-4 should close. The G-4 should assure that all Army leaders understand the categories and their accountability requirements of Army property – durable, expendable, and non-expendable.³²

Gap Five: 'Cumulative effect of 10 years of war has resulted in lack of confidence in system inventory'. The lead agency in closing this gap is again the Army G-4. The deliverables here include a revision of the Army COPA to synchronize the CSA's and Sergeant Major of the Army's key talking points on property accountability.³³

While unit leadership is still a critical piece for supporting the Army's current campaign, unit leadership still requires assistance from senior leaders within the Army for training the force to account for property and manning the force with leaders who are competent property managers.

Training the Force

Training the force is an integral part of the Army. As with everything the Army does to achieve high expectations, a training plan is required to achieve success. Through training courses, events, and opportunities, the Army strives to ensure Soldiers are properly trained prior to having to execute a task. Training in property accountability is no exception. As part of the effort to engage leadership within units to re-establish the obligation of stewardship, the Army has set a goal that 100% of all brigade and battalion commanders, command sergeant majors, company commanders and first sergeants will be trained in property accountability; likewise 90% of all platoon leaders and platoon

sergeants will be similarly trained. While this is an extraordinary effort and is moving in the right direction more should be done.³⁴

A crucial missing piece here are those senior non-commissioned officers and officers who are not filling one of the key leadership roles previously identified. Analysis of headquarters companies of battalions or brigades reveals that a significant amount of property is assigned to these units. Although the company commander signs the property book, the senior NCOs who may be the subordinate hand receipt holders need training and certification as well. Since many of these individuals do not work for the company commander and are not in the direct supervisory chain, measures must be implemented to ensure they comprehend what right looks like. As we have learned over the past twelve years, we cannot assume that these senior NCOs fully understand or appreciate the procedures and fundamentals of accountability. For those looking only at the leadership perspective at personnel assigned to standard roles, but not those in perhaps OIC and NCOIC positions, a possible response is that this is only a “green tab” problem.

The initial foundation for training in this topic, as with any training in the Army must start in the beginning of the Soldier’s lifecycle. Whether this comes in basic training and advanced individual training or at the Basic Officer Leadership Course for our lieutenants, the foundation must be set to develop a culture of stewardship. The formalized training must then proceed onto the Captains’ Career Course to build on this already established foundation. Further training on this topic enables junior officers to know what right looks like. Former Army Deputy Chief of Staff, G-4 LTG Mitchell Stevenson testified before the House of Representatives Committee on Armed Services

Defense Financial Management and Auditability Reform Panel that the Army has “Ensured that property accountability is taught at all officer advanced courses in order to reinforce a culture of responsible property management early in an officer’s career. In addition, TRADOC continues to review the Officer and NCO Education System to ensure that junior leaders are trained.”³⁵

While training received by officers and NCOs during their professional military education establishes the foundation, additional training is needed. Multiple tasks required by Soldiers, NCOs, and Officers to perform their duties are introduced in the TRADOC school environment and then refined when they reach their units, property accountability training should be delivered similarly. Over the past few years, the Army - most notably, the Sustainment Center of Excellence at FT Lee, Virginia - created a number of training programs. One of these courses is titled Property Accountability for Leaders in the Contemporary Operating Environment. This 15 hour course, available at the Army Learning Management System that provides leaders with property accountability training scenarios before, during, and after a deployment. While this course is not designed to make the student an expert in all accountability procedures - and at the end there may still be confusion on the difference between the DA 2062 (used for component hand receipt) and the DA 3161(used for issue and turn-in), for example - the students are exposed to both documents and relevant regulations. The course does teach what right looks like; and it directs Soldiers to additional information if required. ³⁶ This course teaches non-supply NCOs and officers how to effectively conduct accountability operations. From November 2011 to June 2013, a total of 1288 members of the Army had completed the course, and an additional 1729 members were

enrolled in the course.³⁷ This course is a step in the right direction but more emphasis must be placed in this area.

A technique used by one brigade commander to integrate this kind of training into an already established Army program was identified as a best practice by the VCSA Special Project team. This commander required all 15 companies of the 516th Signal Brigade to compete in the Chief of Staff of the Army Supply Excellence Award (SEA) program. A directed task in the brigade's annual training guidance, this program "enhances logistical readiness and supply effectiveness of Army organizations."³⁸ Placing this requirement in the brigade's training guidance demonstrates command emphasis in accountability. In collaboration with the Army G-4, the Army Quartermaster School conducts final inspections for units representing the MACOMs. While winning the award is a significant achievement, simply entering the program to compete enhances any unit's accountability procedures and trains its personnel to follow established policy and regulation. In the end, commanders have better-trained and better prepared units.

Manning the Force

Manning the force to achieve overall success in the campaign on property accountability is a critical task. At the end of the day the commander and leaders within Army units are responsible to ensure proper emphasis has been placed on the issue. Commanders also set the climate that supports the Army's campaign; the generating force of the Army has a responsibility to ensure these units have a foundation for success. The Army's Human Resource Command plays a key and critical role in a unit's success. The unit supply specialist, the 92Y military occupational specialty (MOS), is a significant building block in the foundation of successful property accountability.

The responsibility to assign the 92Y Soldier to the unit with a valid requirement is a considerable task. In accordance with the Army's Manning Guidance of 2013 to 2015, not all units will be manned at 100 percent of their authorized strength. ALARACT message 063 / 2014 dated 11 March 2014 provides the Army manning guidance. This document provides the active component Army with the manning priorities that are synchronized with the Army's priorities. Within this manning guidance document, the priorities are determined by where individual units are assigned. Units are placed into one of the following categories: Directed Fill, Rotational Forces, Urgent Forces, Essential Forces, or Important Forces. Within these categories, the percentage at which Human Resource Command will fill a unit varies from eighty percent for Important Forces to ninety percent for Essential Forces to one hundred five percent for some Rotational Forces.³⁹

Although these manning levels were reasonably established to place a priority on units which were either deploying or have been identified as having crucial missions, these levels do not support the priority placed on maintaining property accountability. Personnel requisitions are created based upon the manning levels of the individual units according to the manning guidance. Accordingly, a unit which is categorized as an Essential Force should have only ninety percent of their authorized personnel. For the 92Y specialty, this can mean a number of brigade sized unit supply specialist requirements potentially are unfilled. While failing to reach a one hundred percent fill in more dense specialties may not have a significant impact, a shortage of the low-density specialties, such as 92Y, can lead to significant impacts. Units may go without or be

forced to fill that requirement with a less experienced and qualified or lower ranking Soldier.

It is understandable that different types of units have varying amounts of property to manage on their property books. These differences are factored in by the grade of the Soldiers authorized on the Modified Table of Organization and Equipment (MTOE) or Table of Distribution and Allowance (TDA). Despite the fact the units within the Rotational Forces or Urgent Forces may indeed have a larger amount of property to manage, units within the Essential Forces and Important Forces still have considerable property that must be properly managed, otherwise it will contribute to the on-going accountability issue.

Another challenge for units in the field with the current manning guidance is Soldiers arrival times in their units training cycle. Again, based on the manning guidance, under laps or manning gaps are acceptable. In higher density specialties this also can be managed. With the low-density supply specialists, underlaps or temporary absences can significantly challenge companies and battalions. To address these issues, improvements in unit manning have been initiated. Recognizing the requirement to have a supply specialist on the ground during the redeployment of equipment and during the unit's reset; guidance has been established that requires a stabilization period of 180 days for these specialists. Military Personnel (MILPER) message 11-004 addresses this issue. It directs

To facilitate requirements associated with unit reset, redeployment, and reintegration, all 92Y Soldiers assigned to BCTs, combat aviation brigades, functional and multi-functional support brigades and sustainment brigades headquarters will be retained in the unit for 180-day post-deployment stabilization⁴⁰

This however does not facilitate assigning the Soldiers to units before deployments. While the manning guidance does direct a manning percentage units will be at once they start their train-and-ready phase, several circumstances may hinder that level from becoming reality.

Competing Army requirements for the highest qualified supply specialists also impacts Soldier availability for units. Demands for drill sergeant and most notably, Army recruiter's draws some of the best Soldiers from the ranks of the supply specialist MOS. Performing duties in these career-enhancing positions offer Soldiers tremendous opportunities. However, HRC and assignment managers must ensure that only a small portion of the requirement for the Quartermaster Career Management Field (CMF) is filled with this MOS, or strive for a reduction of Quartermaster Soldier requirements for these positions.

What Right Looks Like

At all levels of professional education, Soldiers must learn what right looks like. This SRP has shown what must look right in post-combat Army property management. An example of how an engaged brigade leader understood the dangers of a lack of property accountability and set conditions for the reset of his unit upon redeployment from Iraq to meet a stringent reset timeline.

In October 2007, then Army Chief of Staff General George Casey directed that redeploying units conduct a six-month reset in response to the operational tempo the Army was facing at the time. The initial planning timeline allowed for Soldiers to reunite with family members for this time frame. In the meantime, the Army would reset the unit's equipment, setting conditions for collective training to begin at the sixth month of reset. The unit would then continue training until its next deployment.⁴¹ After an initial

Rehearsal of Concept (ROC) Drill, the pilot program was used by units redeploying in the winter of 2008. One of the selected pilot units chosen was the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (Airborne) of the 25th Infantry Division from Fort Richardson, Alaska.

This unit returned in December of 2007 from its 15 month deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The reset of the BCT's equipment began in February of 2008 following the Soldier's block leave; however, the BCT's reset planning began in October 2007, while the unit was still deployed. In January of 2008, the Brigade Commander directed a Leader Professional Development class on Property Accountability to ensure all battalion and company commanders were aware of the required procedures and placed the appropriate command emphasis on accountability during the reset of the brigade.

At the end of February 2008, a Department of the Army Tiger Team arrived in Alaska to review the unit's reset processes. Regarding accountability of equipment, the Tiger team emphasized that command emphasis on property accountability was the key to reset success during its short timeline for re-deployment. The commander then directed 100% equipment accountability in theater prior to the redeployment. This included a 100% turn-in of automatic reset items (ARI) rather than the significantly lower mandated requirement. It also included 100% inventories of deployed and left-behind equipment by home station units. Finally, the commander emphasized the importance of the correct merge of the forward and rear property books along with a brigade wide leader professional development training session on property accountability prior to inventories in Alaska. These stringent demands clearly established command emphasis on property accountability.⁴²

The Tiger Team then declared that “4/25 was extremely successful in tying in property accountability to command-directed inventories which led to identification of shortages prior to its return. This is a success story that should be captured for replication by all Army units”.⁴³ Clearly this is an exemplary Army success story. The 4-25th's positive command leadership and emphasis on basic fundamentals drew accolades to the brigade. As with any Army challenge, the commander set the tone.

In *Leading Change*, John Kotter describes an eight-step process for creating major changes in an organization. Kotter claims that “the methods used in successful transformations are all based on one fundamental insight: that major change will not happen easily for a long list of reasons.”⁴⁴ Kotter's eight steps include: 1) Establishing a sense of Urgency, 2) Creating the guiding coalition, 3) Developing a vision and strategy, 4) Communicating the change, 5) Empowering broad-based action, 6) Generating short-term wins, 7) Consolidating gains and producing more change, 8) Anchoring new approaches to culture.⁴⁵ While all apply to this campaign, consider the relevance of the following steps for changing the Army's culture to address property accountability:

His first step in the process is to “Establish a Sense of Urgency”. In this regard, the Army has done just that. By launching the Campaign on Property Accountability, the Army has demonstrated the need to change its business practices. Kotter advises that “Establishing a sense of urgency is crucial to gaining needed cooperation. With complacency high, transformations usually goes nowhere because few people are even interested in working on the change problem.”⁴⁶ To be sure, the Army's complacency in accounting for its property has been exceptionally high over the past decade. Changing this mindset of complacency is a difficult task.

It is easy to see how this sense of complacency has matured in the Army. The requirements generated to place equipment rapidly in the hands of deploying units almost at all costs and the need to ensure units deployed with everything needed to achieve victory and preserve Soldiers' lives shaped an environment in which attention to the details of accounting for all items were not as important as previously.

The role that a crisis contributes to establishing urgency applies to current fiscal restraints. With dwindling budgets looming, easily obtained equipment is becoming a thing of the past. Kotter informs us that "Visible crises can be enormously helpful in catching people's attention and pushing up the urgency level."⁴⁷ The current challenge is fiscal in nature, this fiscal crisis means the Army's culture must quickly change support stringent accountability for Army property.

Perhaps the most difficult aspect of change is creating a new culture. Leaders and their leadership styles set the tone for their commands. The beliefs that your boss' priorities become your priorities are more apparent here than anywhere. Kotter argues that "Culture refers to norms of behavior and shared values among a group of people."⁴⁸ The culture which has been established over the past decade will not quickly change. The regulatory requirements have been established for years. AR 710-2 requirements are not new; the challenge is to enforce them. A recent change to AR 600-8-2 now directs a nontransferable favorable personnel action (Flag) for the reason "Commander's investigation" for anyone who is under investigation for property loss.⁴⁹ The tools are available, including this new one. As the future size of the U.S. Army is not certain, it is undeniable that resources must be used wisely. The Army cannot afford to lose the marathon it finds itself in with property accountability. The analysis in this

SRP provides insight on ways to reduce the friction of accountability. To assist in success in this campaign, senior leaders should consider implementing the following recommendations.

1. *Direct completion of property accountability training.* The completion of Property Accountability for Leaders in the Contemporary Environment prior to completion of professional military education courses such as BOLC, the Captains Career Course, the Advanced and Senior Leader Courses, the Warrant Officer Basic and Advanced Courses, and Intermediate Level Education will ensure leaders have solid foundations in property accountability. Multiple versions of the training can be established so leaders are not completing the same course every few years. This requirement also demonstrates command emphasis.

2. *Emphasis on assignments of the 92Y.* As the Army mans the force, a higher priority must be placed on ensuring that 92Y supply specialists are in authorized positions and are placed in vacant 92Y positions, not just to meet the manning guidance of those units which are under 100%. All units with 92Y personnel should have these positions filled at all times. As stated earlier, leaders can place high levels of emphasis on creating change and solving the accountability issue. However, they need assistance in doing so.

3. *Hold leaders accountable for the climate they create.* The COPA message has established clear requirements for subordinate commanders. Those who fail to achieve these standards must be held accountable. Mandatory comments should be included in officer and NCO evaluations addressing command emphasis on property accountability for those in battalion and brigade command and command sergeants major positions.

Conclusion

Success in the Army's campaign on property accountability will not come quickly. It is a marathon, not a sprint. Although improvements have been made, changing the culture back to the pre 9/11 mindset will not be an easy task. Leadership setting the example for others to emulate provides the foundation for success. Army leaders development of conditions (manning the force, educating the force, establishment of priorities) for subordinate level achievements in this campaign are critical. The emerging defense fiscal realities require the Army to achieve readiness in its formations with the property and equipment currently available. It is now time for all members standing in formations to be not only good, but superb stewards of the Army's resources. During the past decade of war, Army leaders were distracted from their roles as stewards of Army resources. The Army must now refine its skills and set the conditions for future readiness. The Army demands it; its Soldiers deserve it.

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