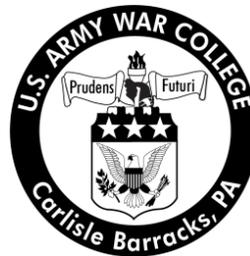


Revisiting the Navy's Moral Compass: Has Commanding Officer Conduct Improved?

by

Captain Jason A. Vogt
United States Navy



United States Army War College
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Captain Jason A. Vogt
United States Navy

Captain Mark F. Light
Department of Command, Leadership, and Management
Project Adviser

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U.S. Army War College
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

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This paper builds upon Captain Mark F. Light's Strategy Research Project "The Navy's Moral Compass" by investigating steps taken by the US Navy addressing commanding officer misconduct. Reviewing Captain Light's findings, as well as findings of a recent Naval Inspector General report, this paper explores Navy Leadership initiatives such as the Charge of Command and Command Qualification Program along with analysis of statistics of Navy commanding officer firings from 2010 through 2013. The paper reviews previous recommendations and their effect on commanding officer misconduct. While some progress is apparent, the paper reviews additional steps for the Navy to consider and makes recommendations calling for the Navy to provide future transparency and consistency regarding data involving commanding officer misconduct, potential dissuasive measures to consider in the future and a call for additional and more thorough studies on the subject. By taking a look at where the Navy stands regarding commanding officer misconduct, this paper will define today what has succeeded, what has not, and provide a path to the next level of debate regarding the Navy's policies, standards, and ethics for commanding officers.

Revisiting the Navy's Moral Compass: Has Commanding Officer Conduct Improved?

Nobody trusts or has confidence in leaders who believe they cannot be held accountable for what they do.

—Admiral John C. Harvey Jr.¹

The United States Navy continues to face poor decision making among a small number of specific commanding officers (COs), as demonstrated by continued headlines: “Squadron Commander Relieved of Duty after Alleged Drunk Driving Incident.”² “Amphib CO Fired, Source Says Linked to Alleged Bribery Scheme.”³ “Sub Commander Relieved of Duty after Woman Alleges He Faked Death to End Affair.”⁴ Since the publication of Captain Mark F. Light’s article *The Navy’s Moral Compass*,⁵ individual cases of Navy Commanding Officers making poor decisions continue to trouble those entrusted with leading Navy commands. While it remains a statistically low percentage of overall commanding officers, continued behavior reinforces Captain Light’s assessment that this is an integrity issue for the Navy. In the three years since the original paper significant debate has occurred and corrective actions to resolve the issue have been taken by the Navy. Is it enough, or even moving in the right direction to solve the issue? This paper intends to review the findings of Captain Light’s work while updating its analysis with data since the initial writing, explain and assess actions taken by Navy leadership since 2011 to improve the quality of commanding officers, and explore additional variables in today’s debate on commanding officer behavior. Finally, the paper will present further recommendations to reduce future personal indiscretions by commanding officers.

The Moral Compass and Inspector General's Report 2010

The topic of CO misconduct was addressed in *The Navy's Moral Compass* after data provided by the Career Progression Division of the Naval Personnel Command covering CO's "detachment for cause" (DFC) from a period of 1999 through 2010 was reviewed and analyzed.⁶ This determined firings are determined in two broad categories (professional and personal reasons), then broke down the personal reason firings by community, rank, and duty type. The results were academically analyzed by the author who reached the conclusion that the Navy must accomplish three tasks to improve the quality of the Navy's commanding officer corps in order to elevate the character of naval leadership.⁷ First, Navy leadership must establish a sense of urgency to not just deal with issues quickly and publicly to maintain transparency, but to effect change that will preclude unscrupulous actions in the first place. Second, set an ethical and moral standard (preferably in writing as the Army accomplished in its *Army: Profession of Arms 2011* and *Army Operating Concept* of 2010) in order to help create a shift in the Navy mind-set and the culture as a whole. Finally, the Navy must improve the metrics, specifically the documentation of potential moral shortcomings in the Navy's periodic evaluation system through the Bureau of Personnel's Fitness Report and Counseling Record. Captain Light concluded with three recommendations for change; Navy leadership must elevate the priority of ethical behavior to include the establishment of a central database of every CO relieved of command owing to personal or professional failures to facilitate further tracking and analysis. Additionally, the Navy must undertake a campaign to set standards of integrity and honorable behavior. Lastly, the officer fitness report should be modified in format and concept to specifically address character and integrity.⁸

Concurrent to the publication of *The Navy's Moral Compass*, The Navy Inspector General's Office released its *Commanding Officer Detach for Cause Study 2010*.⁹ Focusing on cases of CO firings between January 1, 2005 and June 30, 2010, the report determined the Navy CO DFC firing rate to be overall a low percentage (approximately one percent per year) with a small variance from year-to-year. There was no correlation between CO DFCs and career paths, personality traits, accession sources, time in command, or year groups, however it was noted the preponderance of Navy-wide CO reliefs were for personal misconduct.¹⁰ It was additionally noted that in personal misconduct events it appears that fired CO's either did not possess the insight into their motives and weaknesses to prevent them from engaging in unacceptable behavior or felt they had the power to conceal the issue (the "Bathsheba Syndrome").¹¹ Furthermore, the report stated the four recommendations implemented from the previous Inspector General DFC study, while valid and a solid foundation for reaching a long term reduction in the rate of CO DFCs, had no discernable impact on the DFC rate following its release in 2004.¹² The 2010 report concluded by submitting three recommendations to reduce the number of CO reliefs that are DFCs: First, develop an officer leadership training continuum from accession through major command under a single owner to provide consistent curriculum development and oversight of execution. Second, improved Immediate Superior in Command (ISIC) oversight should be fostered to allow better assistance to COs in identifying potential or ongoing issues early. Third, the Navy should enforce existing requirements for Command Climate Assessments and their corresponding executive summaries.¹³

Actions and Reactions

Whether in response to the 2010 papers or simply coincidental timing in light of continued (and sometimes very public) cases of CO failure, Navy leadership began taking steps in early 2011 to address the trend of CO personal shortcomings. Fleet Forces Command Admiral John C. Harvey, Jr. recognized that the majority of COs detached for cause during his tenure were for personal misconduct, which he confronted by memorandum to his subordinates¹⁴ and through his official Navy blog site.¹⁵ This public acknowledgement was the beginning of several initiatives by senior Navy officials to instill more honor and integrity to the position of commanding officer.

Charge of Command

By June 2011 Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Admiral Gary Roughead distributed a memorandum notifying COs and prospective commanding officers of the expectations for each of them to meet the highest standards of personal and professional conduct while in command; a “charge of command.”¹⁶ Roughead’s memo addressed three essential principles considered by him, as CNO, to be the heart and soul of command: authority, responsibility, and accountability. Within the document these principles were tied to both the tradition of command in the Navy and the U.S. Code outlining the expectations of conduct of individuals in command.¹⁷ His successor, Admiral Jonathan W. Greenert reinforced the charge of command by requiring then serving and prospective commanding officers to not only review the memorandum, but sign it with their immediate superior as a compact between Navy leadership and Navy Commanders and Commanding Officers.¹⁸ This step created not only a counseling opportunity and mentoring tool, but a contract between the Navy and its commanding officers regarding personal conduct.

Command Qualification Program

The Navy further codified the process for setting a standard and determining future commanding officers through Admiral Greenert's introduction of the Navy's Command Qualification Program.¹⁹ Released in June 2012 and with an implementation deadline of September 1, 2012, the instruction plainly issued the policy, procedures, and set the basic minimum standards for the qualifying and screening of Naval Officers for command. Up until then individual communities were charged with determining how to go about selecting future commanding officers. This autonomy resulted in sometimes widely varying criteria. For the first time, the Navy established minimum standards across all officer designations and published requirements that included potential commanding officers pass an administrative screening board. Additionally, in support of the Command Qualification Program the Navy's Command Leadership School Command Course (a required course for prospective commanding officers) instituted a written test covering tenets of leadership, duties and responsibilities of commanding officers, and authorities per U.S. Navy Regulations and the Uniform Code of Military Justice.²⁰ The Command Leadership School was also directed by the Command Qualification Program to conduct 360 degree assessments of prospective commanding officers, debriefed by a certified counselor to prospective commanding officers so the individual could reflect on adjusting his or her leadership traits prior to assuming command. Additionally, a pilot 360 Assessment Program is underway in the Navy's Surface community that is focusing on officers at a department head level (several years before potentially assuming command). This program will be evaluated by the Chief of Naval Personnel in June 2014 to determine its effectiveness, manpower and

funding requirements and provide a recommendation on expanding the program to other officer communities.²¹

Command Climate Assessment

Recent events have brought a renewed rigor to the Department of Defense and Navy's Equal Opportunity program, specifically regarding race, gender, and sexual orientation, covering topics from hazing to harassment to assault to fraternization. One measure of the Equal Opportunity program's effectiveness occurs through the Command Climate Assessment, a survey that should occur within 90 days after a new CO assumes command with annual follow-up assessments during the command tour.²² The Navy's use of the Command Climate Assessment to support its Equal Opportunity program goes back many years, with little changing in how the responsibilities are defined for the ISIC and commanding officer.²³ Unfortunately, over the years many commands did not fully execute the program, historically using the results more for "internal consumption" within a command and not necessarily making a priority to provide results to the ISIC. This resulted in inconsistent application of lessons learned across commands within the Navy. Two issues refocused the Equal Opportunity program and renewed interest in results of the Command Climate Assessment; the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" and increased scrutiny on the Military's Sexual Assault/Prevention Response program. These topics made the Command Climate Assessment a useful tool both within the command and as a measure of the command when presented up the chain of command.

While the Command Climate Assessment cannot be used as a single tool to determine CO wrong doing or personal misconduct, when shared with the ISIC it can be an indicator for a CO's superior to pay close attention to individual commanding officers

who may need assistance, guidance, or stricter oversight regarding the command or individual actions. This thoroughness by the ISIC follows closely with the 2010 Navy Inspector General report recommendation of enforcing existing requirements for Command Climate Assessments.²⁴ Unfortunately, since the publication of the Inspector General's (IG) report the Navy experienced a period where no assessments occurred. Contract issues with the company responsible for maintaining the servers that support such assessments eliminated the survey for a period of approximately six months in late 2012 and early 2013.²⁵ The reintroduction of Command Climate Assessment surveys coupled with renewed Navy leadership direction regarding equal opportunity make for a more robust assessment. Commands now must use the triangulation method utilizing multiple sources of information to include the survey, command assessment team focus group, interviews, records reviews, and assessors' observations to properly complete the climate assessment process.²⁶ Renewed emphasis on ISIC involvement, to include follow-up reports on actions taken at the command in response to the assessment, should result in the Command Climate Assessment being a more useful tool in the future.

Reactions and Response

A consequence of an information age with increasing use of social media and viral networks is a near immediate discussion occurring with any change (or potential change) in the way business is conducted. This was the case with the release of the Charge of Command, as feedback varied from strong support to outright aversion. The Association of the United States Navy was quick to publish support for the initiative, stating "Admiral Gary Roughead's legacy to the nation will be an inspiration to the officers and leaders that will follow him."²⁷ Other sources provided blogs condemning

the move, calling the Charge of Command “A pathetic response to the real problem we have with COs being fired. Only a fonctionnaire [*sic*] thinks that a bit of paper can substitute for solid leadership and a culture of honor and integrity - but that is the decision that has been made.”²⁸ Military publications such as Navy Times were quick to describe each step to improve leadership, and provide requisite editorial comment. Additionally, each CO firing continued to be a “front page” headline. Websites such as SailorBob.com, a U.S. Naval Institute sponsored professional forum for Surface Warfare Officers, provided an informal environment for members to discuss, debate, and argue the usefulness of not only the chosen direction of Navy leadership, but also the conclusions of various studies and dissect each firing event.²⁹ Other communities host similar forums, each providing a community network where virtual peer pressure of colleagues offer an additional deterrent to misconduct while deliberating individual events and issues. However, debate and opinion pieces do not define the success of the initiative. Continued analysis of subsequent commanding officer firings would be necessary to determine if the adjustments were meaningful.

2011-13 Data and Trend Analysis

To maintain consistency with the previous study, DFC data for the period 2011 through 2013 was requested from the Career Progression Division of the Naval Personnel Command however with ongoing official investigations and the ever increasing scrutiny on CO firings, the data was not provided. This does not mean comparable statistics cannot be collected from other sources. As the topic of CO’s being removed from command is a high visibility issue, knowledge of firing events have been publicly accessible through various sources, including the Navy Times and multiple internet websites, chat rooms, and blogs.³⁰ Because a number of firings do not result in

a DFC procedure and documentation, the adjustment in data source likely results in more firings being considered in this study than are officially documented by the Navy.³¹ Understanding that a departure from the data source used in the previous analysis leaves room for speculation on the validity of the findings of this research, the author attempted to maintain consistency with previously determined standards defining why CO were removed and considered all firings as potential DFCs. In an effort to utilize the most public form of data during 2011 through 2013, the list of fired commanding officers published by Navy Times was used as the baseline for this analysis.³² Although a known disparity in potential data sets (for example, Navy Times reported 17 firings in 2010 while NPC published 23³³), the analysis will focus less on statistical specifics and more on apparent trends potentially linked to Navy actions. Figure 1 presents the total number of firings from 2010 through 2013. Because the firings occurring in 2010 were addressed in Captain Light's paper, the 2010 data is provided here as a starting point and the analysis will focus on those firings occurring after the publication of the Charge of Command (July 2010).

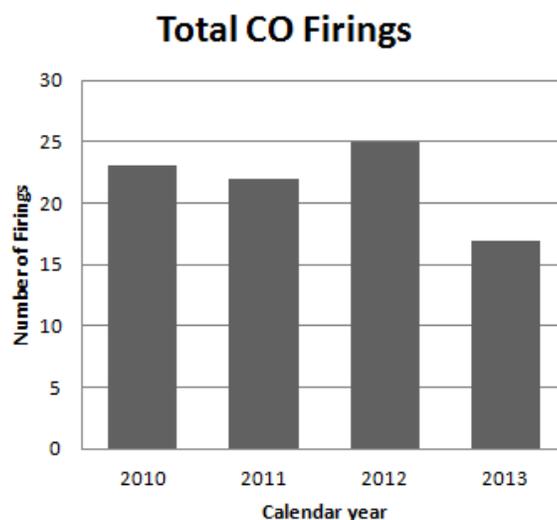


Figure 1. Commanding Officers Fired

Investigating the cause of each published firing using the definition of personal misconduct provided by the 2010 Inspector General report³⁴ it was determined that events can continue to be binned into previously established groups to define the removal: Personal, Professional, and Unknown. It is noted that until Navy Personnel Command officially determines if a removal is classified as a DFC, several firings are included in the analysis that upon official NPC determination may be removed from the data set. Additionally, with Freedom of Information Act requests from various sources still pending, a number of data points will likely be transitioned from Unknown to another category. Figure 2 provides the breakdown of firings for personal, professional, and unknown/unpublished reasons. It is apparent that the number of Unknown firings has increased in recent years. This is due to a lack of specific detail provided as to a reason for firing, most often given as simply a “loss of confidence in ability to command.” An assumption can be made that the lack of published details indicates many Unknown cases are for professional reasons, primarily because the “sensationalism factor” that the media provides personal failings cases is absent. However for this analysis, without those details the case remains Unknown.

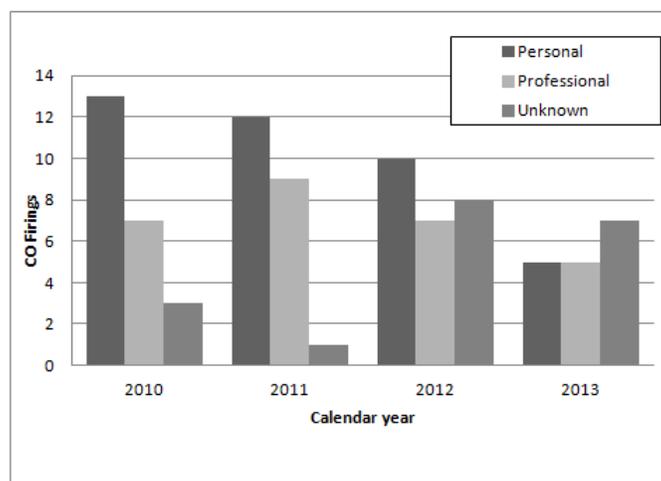


Figure 2. Firing by Type: Personal, Professional, Unknown

Concentrating only on the firings identified as personal, the data trends downward from a high point of 13 in 2010 to only five in 2013. It is noted that six of the 13 firings during 2010 occurred after Admiral Roughead’s Charge of Command memorandum was circulated. Because the analysis of this study focuses on firings since implementing Navy initiatives, those six will be considered along with 2011 through 2013 data. Breaking the data down by community (Figure 3) does not reveal any trends or patterns, presumably due to the decreasing number of cases. As was concluded by both Captain Light and the IG’s report, no trends or patterns are apparent in occurrences after the Charge of Command when examining the rank of the individual or if the command being operational/sea duty versus a shore command is a determining factor. In each case involving personal failing, the transgression (personal misconduct, inappropriate behavior, alcohol related incident, et cetera) was independent of professional requirements. With the shrinking data set it is necessary to investigate beyond community groups and explore individual cases for trends and linkages.

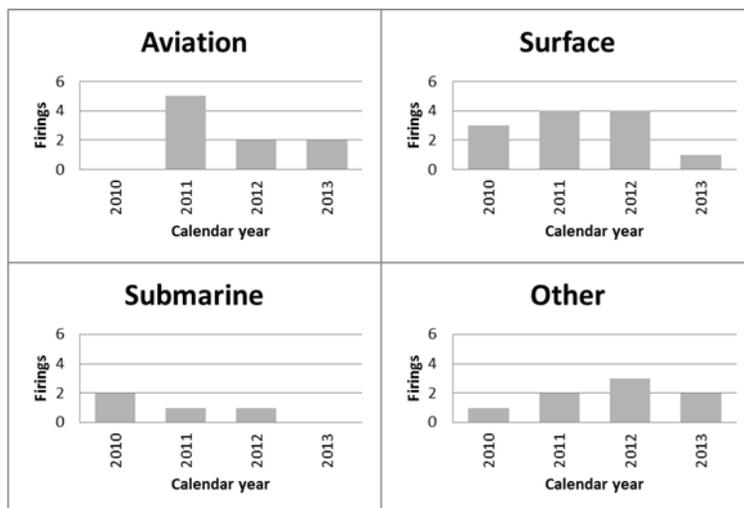


Figure 3: Firings by Community (Post Charge of Command) for Personal Reasons

Since the Navy initiated steps to improve commanding officer accountability, the trend lines appear to support the goal of reducing firings for personal misconduct reasons. Though only a few years into the enterprise, the result is indicative of effective messaging and training for prospective commanding officers regarding expectations while in command. So with a limited data set to review (approximately 34 Navy COs have been fired for personal misconduct issues since the Charge of Command and Command Leadership School focus), why are there still failures? And though this is a small number considering the overall number of commands and commanding officers in the Navy, determining why a small number of individuals executing the duties of commanding officers still do not “get it” invites further scrutiny. Previous reports clearly stated organizational culture played no role in determining CO failings for personal misconduct reasons.³⁵ Both the 2004 and 2010 Inspector General reports brought specific attention to no discernable correlations between career paths, personality traits, accession sources, time in command, or year groups.³⁶ However, even though the overall number of firings per year continues to shrink and events are spread across all communities, one peak is worth noting as an outlier within Aviation; members of the electronic warfare community (Electronic Attack Squadron (VAQ) and Fleet Air Reconnaissance (VQ)). Review of the varied cultures and subcultures within the Navy support the Inspector General’s conclusion that a lack of correlation persists with this one exception. Since the Charge of Command this subculture of the Navy makes up half of the aviation CO’s fired for misconduct (five of ten), 17 percent of all misconduct CO’s fired in recent years, and the only Navy CO fired for misconduct in 2014 (as of the time of this paper’s submission).³⁷

The anomaly of this group could be due to any number of reasons. Because of the relatively short amount of time and small number of Navy wide events being compared, this may be an unfortunate coincidence for the community. This may be a cultural divergence that was not present or recognized during previous studies and has developed out of the community culture, training, and ethos of a group collectively located at a single air station (the Navy's VAQ community and the VQ squadron where a firing occurred during the period reviewed in this study are all based at Naval Air Station Whidbey Island). Or possibly this is a niche that simply has not had enough time pass to ingrain the new "standard" for commanding officers into the system. Based on standard Navy rotations and promotions the department heads during 2010-2011 who witnessed their CO as the first to sign the Charge of Command and articulated behavior standard have not yet returned to be CO's themselves. To ensure every year group of every community understands and executes the Charge of Command may take between four and seven years to complete; an era the Navy is just entering into.

Regardless of the reason for misconduct within a specific cluster, neither the cultural organization nor individual member can provide an excuse for actions that are clearly and plainly articulated as inappropriate by the Navy. With the implementation of the Charge of Command, misconduct by a commanding officer comes down to a conscious decision by the individual. None of those fired demonstrated anything but a clear understanding of right and wrong by not only Navy regulations, but in the vast majority of personal misconduct cases an understanding the issue was wrong by according to law, a moral code, or both. Between Command Leadership School training for prospective COs, the Command Qualification Process, a commanding officer's clear

understanding of the expectations of his or her ISIC and the Charge of Command, the mechanisms are in place to minimize commanding officer misconduct.

Recommendations and Conclusion

While the goal to have zero commanding officers relieved of command is an unachievable objective (professional mishaps will occur), it is not unrealistic to eliminate reliefs due to misconduct or individual ethical failures. Positive steps have been taken to better define the role and expectations of commanding officers through the Charge of Command, to better set the minimum standard for COs through the Command Qualification Program, and to measure a command's tone by a routine and standard Command Climate Assessment. Together these are good first steps to identifying and eliminating individual misconduct among leaders. The Navy's continued enforcement of these topics, and any follow up initiatives are necessary to avoid a long term appearance that the actions are reactionary or "bandages" and not a true long term and sustainable solution. To enhance the gains already achieved, the following recommendations are offered.

Be Transparent and Consistent, Navy

Whenever it is time for the service to move forward, the Navy often times proves to be its own worst enemy. Two consecutive CNO's placed the integrity of commanding officers high on their respective priority lists, and set a standard of expected performance. Yet when a commanding officer is relieved and there is no official reason or statement by the Navy that the firing occurred for either professional reasons or personal failings the reaction is Big Navy has something to hide. The vague yet ubiquitous "loss of confidence" leaves much to the imagination, particularly in a social media and blog environment where the allegation of hiding details equates to an overall

loss of confidence in the establishment. This lack of transparency is compounded each time an event is not publicly acknowledged or officially tracked because it did not fit a determined criterion, specifically the financial parameters of a DFC. This was identified in the 2010 Inspector General report where it was acknowledged several cases of commanding officers who were relieved early could be considered in the report, but because the DFC process was not initiated it was considered outside the scope of the IG study.³⁸ The IG plainly states in the course of their investigation there was no reliable way to determine how many cases existed in which the CO was detached early and departed quietly and “successfully” when a DFC might have been more appropriate.³⁹ The most glaring example is the mismatch of data from 2003 when there was a reported 26 commanders relieved, yet only seven were listed by Naval Personnel Command as DFC’s.⁴⁰ When the concern over potentially inconsistent Navy data is combined with Navy Personnel Command unwillingness to release what is considered to be a comprehensive list, lack of transparency is evident when it comes to CO misconduct. To rise above the misgivings of what does or does not constitute a DFC, the solution is to call it what it is--a firing is a firing. Correlating it to whether the event costs the Navy money to affect the change will, in the long run, continue to cost the Navy in trust and integrity. The removal of a commanding officer prior to the scheduled projected rotation date should be addressed by the ISIC if it occurs for operational reasons or not.⁴¹ If that results in a designation of a “no-cost DFC” category to track firings, future studies will have a more thorough data set to analyze. Dealing with all firings was addressed in the 2004 IG report, but was not revisited in the 2010 report. And while this step could

potentially discredit the data and findings of this paper, at least there would be a consistent listing to be analyzed, discussed and debated.

Compounding this lack of transparency was the Navy's acceptance of Command Assessments being unavailable for a period of six months. Allowing contract and budget issues to drive the availability of a leadership tool when the 2010 Inspector General's report stated ". . . Command climate assessments would be a better tool for commands if there was a broader understanding throughout the fleet . . ." of what the assessment was and how to use it.⁴² Not using the tool for a period in 2012 to 2013 depreciated the value of it in the eyes of the fleet. Additionally, the IG determined the correct use of the assessments, to include accurate executive summaries for the ISICs, would have highlighted to the ISICs the personal behavior and command climate issues earlier in almost all of the CO DFCs in those categories.⁴³ Although back online in 2013, the lack of effective use of the assessment process so soon after being identified as necessary to help identify CO issues is an additional mixed signal regarding its importance.

Steps toward transparency would be achieved with not only a consistent database, but a more thorough tracking system. In an age where sabermetrics track the sport of baseball down to details of performance (and potential performance) in specific situations, the Navy should investigate developing a more thorough database of tracking the development of potential commanding officers and performance of current commanding officers. Documenting details of not only firings but all data leading to and during command may uncover linkages or trends that have yet to be considered, including tracking who worked for whom over the years and what was determined in 360 degree evaluations, both as the evaluated and as an evaluator. Nowhere has a

record been developed that follows how subordinates of a CO relieved for misconduct fair in future positions, or if there is any correlation to future misconduct. While potentially a herculean task, such a mission would align with the Navy's Human Resources Community (HR), specifically within the HR Core Competencies of management and development.⁴⁴ Until such a data field is established and employed, public speculation and scrutiny will continue in the media and across various blogs and boards.

Reexamine the Data

The Inspector General reports completed in 2004 and 2010 each took an objective look at the DFC process and came up recommendations to address future commanding officer failings. With a limited scope of only observing DFCs and not all events of COs being removed from command an incomplete picture was presented. While that picture provided enough clarity for the CNO to determine the Charge of Command, Command Qualification Program, and Command Assessment were necessary, the incomplete data may have the Navy chasing symptoms rather than a cure. It is time for another official Navy review of not just the DFC process, but any and all COs removed from command prior to the anticipated rotation date. Though it may take a harder look at COs, a more complete understanding of the effectiveness of initiatives will be determined.

Establish and Enforce Dissuasive Measures (Monetary)

Regardless of the amount of training, the administrative documenting of personal and professional expectations, or the examples of colleagues who are relieved for their own misconduct, perhaps the risk of personal misconduct is simply not high enough for those on the edge. When a commanding officer is relieved for individual failures the

topic quickly appears in any number of articles, comment sections, blogs or chat rooms. In almost every case someone provides a variation on the statement “Commander X may no longer be the commanding officer, but he will still get to retire with his twenty years, receive his full pension, get a lucrative position outside the Navy and other than some fleeting embarrassment he will receive no real punishment.”

Command is the pinnacle of the military profession. And when in command it is not a part time job. It is not an assignment only to be conducted during business hours, but as described by Admiral Roughead being a position that is duty-bound to uphold strict behavioral standards, even when commanders are off-duty.⁴⁵ And similar to other professions, a commanding officer must be held accountable when performance results in failure. Across most professions failure is often addressed by the removal of professional position and credentials, through pecuniary actions, or both. Doctors who do not perform risk losing a professional license and a punitive judgment for malpractice. Lawyers can be disbarred or sanctioned for demonstrated inability. The Navy has historically embraced removal of faltering leaders from an authority position, but has not addressed financial compensation for the investment of time, training, and trust imbued by the service while the leader held that position.

It is time to debate the value of Navy Leadership establishing an administrative board charged with reviewing individual leadership firings, a post-command screening board. This board would be independent of the chain of command and unrelated to any pending procedures under the Uniform Code of Military Justice resulting from misconduct. Upon review of the individual circumstances resulting in a commanding officer being fired this board should be granted the power to recoup bonuses, or impose

other financial penalties upon those who make poor personal decisions while in command. This does not mean every failed commanding officer would or should owe a financial debt to the Navy. A purely professional failure may require the removal of the individual from the command to restore balance, and after review by this objective panel no further action would be necessary. But a personal failure, specifically misconduct, can be viewed as a breach of contract; an inability of the individual to abide by the Charge of Command. With many commanding officer positions being designated as worthy of additional pay or bonuses, the financial penalty could be simply that the failed commander return what the Navy has invested in the individual during command.⁴⁶ By looking at all bonuses received while in command (which could include any training or specialty bonuses and payments such as flight, sea, nuclear, medical specialty, command responsibility or other critical skills pay), those bonuses could be considered insurance against a poor decision--perhaps viewed as a refundable security deposit by the Navy on one's command tour. This would require each firing to be reviewed individually, as each commanding officer has potentially a different level of investment by the Navy in getting him or her to and through command. For the more than 99 percent of commanding officers who live within the Charge of Command and successfully complete a command tour the hazard is nonexistent. For the individuals considering the risk of misconduct, this step may be the necessary motivation that previous initiatives have not tapped into. And even by eliminating one firing, this option would take the Navy a step closer to eliminating misconduct among commanding officers.

Since publication of *The Navy's Moral Compass* the Navy has made progress to reduce commanding officer misconduct. Success has been found by not only implementing new initiatives but also by ensuring previously established guidelines are properly executed, resulting in a solid foundation to reduce commanding officer firings for misconduct in the future. Holding commanding officers to a consistent and higher standard is necessary to achieve long term success of the position, and until the number of misconduct cases is zero the press must be sustained. The Navy must continue to strive for a high standard, improve transparency regarding the standard, and continuously apply attention to review data trends and scrutiny to those entrusted with command. And whenever necessary, improve the process to identify and track alleged issues, and subsequently hold individuals accountable.

Endnotes

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² "NAS Whidbey Squadron Commander Relieved of Duty after Alleged Drunk Driving Incident," *Whidbey News-Times*, April 12, 2011.

³ Tony Lombardo, "Amphib CO Fired, Source Says Linked to Alleged Bribery Scheme," *Navy Times*, October 2, 2013.

⁴ Karen Florin and Jennifer McDermott, "Sub Commander Relieved of Duty after Woman Alleges he Faked Death to End Affair," August 13, 2012, <http://theday.com/article/20120812/NWS09/120819922/1017> (accessed January 10, 2014).

⁵ Mark F. Light, "The Navy's Moral Compass: Commanding Officers and Personal Misconduct," *Naval War College Review* 65, no. 3 (Summer 2012): 136 – 152. Originally published as *The Navy's Moral Compass: Commanding Officers and Personal Misconduct*, Strategy Research Project (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, March 26, 2010).

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ U.S. Navy Department, *Commanding Officer Detach for Cause Study 2010* (Washington DC: Naval Inspector General), [hereafter Naval IG 2010] Executive Summary.

¹⁰ Ibid. Per Naval IG 2010 report, "Personal Misconduct" included five subcategories; Orders Violations, Computer Pornography, Falsifying Documents, Adultery/Inappropriate Relationships/Harassment/Sexual Assault, and Alcohol/DUI. Executive Summary.

¹¹ Ibid., 15.

¹² Ibid., 20.

¹³ Ibid., 20-21.

¹⁴ William H. McMichael, "Honors Reprimanded but Can Stay in Uniform," *Navy Times*, August 24, 2011, <http://www.navytimes.com/article/20110824/NEWS/108240313/Honors-reprimanded-but-can-stay-in-uniform>

¹⁵ Admiral J.C. Harvey Jr., "USS PONCE (LPD 15) CO/XO Relief," Archived U.S. Fleet Forces Command Blog (2009-2012), blog entry posted April 26, 2011, <http://usfleetforces.blogspot.com/2011/04/uss-ponce-lpd-15-co-xo-relief.html> (Accessed January 10, 2014).

¹⁶ Sam Fellman, "CNO Underlines Command Conduct Standards," *Navy Times*, July 18, 2011.

¹⁷ U.S. Code Title 10 Section 5947 – Requirement of exemplary conduct.

"All commanding officers and others in authority in the naval service are required to show in themselves a good example of virtue, honor, patriotism, and subordination; to be vigilant in inspecting the conduct of all persons who are placed under their command; to guard against and suppress all dissolute and immoral practices, and to correct, according to the laws and regulations of the Navy, all persons who are guilty of them; and to take all necessary and proper measures, under the laws, regulations, and customs of the naval service, to promote and safeguard the morale, the physical well-being, and the general welfare of the officers and enlisted persons under their command or charge."

¹⁸ Chief of Naval Operations Jonathan W. Greenert, "The Charge of Command," memorandum for all prospective commanding officers, Washington DC, November 8, 2011.

¹⁹ Department of the Navy, OPNAVINST 1412.14, "Command Qualification Program," 4 June 2012.

²⁰ Ibid., 2.

²¹ Ibid., 3.

²² Department of the Navy, OPNAVINST 5354.1F CH-1, "Navy Equal Opportunity Policy," September 20, 2011.

²³ Ibid., 7-10.

²⁴ Naval IG 2010.

²⁵ Department of the Navy, Navy Personnel Command, "Questions and Answers Concerning DEOMI's Website and DEOCS Communications Outage," http://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/support/21st_Century_Sailor/equal_opportunity/Documents/DEOMIDEOCSQA.docx (Accessed March 15, 2014).

²⁶ Department of the Navy, Navy Personnel Command, NAVADMIN 336/13, "Guidance on Command Climate Assessments," December 30, 2013.

²⁷ Aaron Bresnahan, "The Charge of Command," September 1, 2011, <http://www.ausn.org/NewsPublications/NavyMagazine/MagazineArticles/tabid/2170/ID/10775/The-Charge-of-Command.aspx> (Accessed 21 March 2014).

²⁸ CDR Salamander, "Skipper, Come Sign Your Page 13," blog entry posted July 20, 2011, <http://cdrsalamander.blogspot.com/2011/07/skipper-come-sign-your-page-13.html> (Accessed 15 January 2014).

²⁹ *SailorBob 2.0, The Real SWO Gouge Home Page*, www.sailorbob.com (Accessed January 10, 2014).

³⁰ There are several internet locations where the Navy community has created opportunity online to discuss events or post opinions. Examples include; *SailorBob 2.0, The Real SWO Gouge*, www.sailorbob.com, *Information Dissemination*, www.informationdissemination.net, *CDR Salamander*, cdrsalamander.blogspot.com, *I like the Cut of His Jib!!* navycaptain-therealnavy.blogspot.com, and *The Stupid Shall be Punished*, bubbleheads.blogspot.com.

³¹ As explained in the *Navy's Moral Compass*, a DFC (detachment for cause) is an administrative procedure that releases funding to move personnel subsequent to the removal of naval officers from their current duty assignments for cause; it may not be required if suitable officers are available to relieve the officers who have been fired, and thus not documented. See U.S. Navy Department, *Military Personnel Manual* (Washington DC: 30 March 2007), chap 1611-020 ch 18, sec 1.

³² "Commanding officer, XO and senior enlisted firings," *Navy Times*, <http://www.navytimes.com/article/99999999/CAREERS/302050309/Commanding-officer-XO-senior-enlisted-firings> (Accessed 16 January 2014).

³³ "2010 Navy Commanding Officer Firings," *Navy Times*, 15 December 2010, <http://www.navytimes.com/article/20101215/NEWS/12150322/2010-Navy-commanding-officer-firings> (Accessed 18 March 2014).

³⁴ Naval IG 2010 report, "Personal Misconduct" included five subcategories; Orders Violations, Computer Pornography, Falsifying Documents, Adultery/Inappropriate Relationships/Harassment/Sexual Assault, and Alcohol/DUI. Executive Summary.

³⁵ Light, "The Navy's Moral Compass: Commanding Officers and Personal Misconduct."

³⁶ Naval IG 2010.

³⁷ Janis Reid, "NAS Whidbey Squadron Commanding Officer Fired for Racism, Other Misdeeds," *Whidbey News-Times*, January 13, 2014; "Whidbey Commander Relieved," *Whidbey News-Times*, February 28, 2012; Sam Fellman, "Report: Fling in Italy Sank Flagship CO's Career," *Navy Times*, January 13, 2014; "NAS Whidbey Squadron Commander Relieved of Duty after Alleged Drunk Driving Incident," *Whidbey News-Times*, April 12, 2011; "Growler Squadron CO Fired on Deployment," *Navy Times*, July 19, 2011.

³⁸ Naval IG 2010.

³⁹ Naval IG 2010, 16.

⁴⁰ Craig Whitlock, "Navy has Spike in Commanding-Officer Firings," *Washington Post*, June 17, 2011; U.S. Navy Department, *Commanding Officer Detach for Cause Study 2004* (Washington DC: Naval Inspector General), November 15, 2004, Executive Summary; and Light.

⁴¹ It is understood that changes of command may occur outside the commanding officer's PRD for reasons such as changing operational commitments or to support an officer's career requirements and promotion gates. Such events should be well documented by the ISIC.

⁴² Naval IG 2010, 19.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ *Navy Personnel Command, Human Resources Officer Homepage*, <http://www.public.navy.mil/BUPERS-NPC/OFFICER/DETAILING/RLSTAFFCORPS/HR/Pages/default.aspx> (Accessed March 20, 2014).

⁴⁵ Craig Whitlock, "Navy has Spike in Commanding-Officer Firings," *Washington Post*, June 17, 2011.

⁴⁶ Department of the Navy, MILPERSMAN 7220-100, Command Responsibility Pay.