

Operationalizing Mission
Command:
Bridging the Gap Between Theory
and Application

by

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**Operationalizing Mission Command:
Bridging the Gap Between Theory and Application**

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Abstract

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Operationalizing Mission Command: Bridging the Gap Between Theory and Application

To rid yourself of old patterns, focus all of your energy not on struggling with the old, but on building the new.

—Dan Millman¹

Lessons learned from hard fought wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the uncertain character of the anticipated operating environment served as catalysts for change in how the United States Army organizes, trains, and equips Soldiers and units for missions in support of Unified Land Operations.² In order to seize, retain, and exploit the initiative from a relative position of advantage, the Army must develop an organizational culture that emphasizes decentralization and inculcates a long-term commitment to leader development and talent management.³

The Army's failure to operationalize Mission Command is due to a lack of trust and paralysis cultivated in an organizational culture that values the tradition of centralized command and control. "This incongruence in Army culture creates a trust deficit that militates against producing leaders with an entrepreneurial spirit. This disjunction is the heart of the adaptive challenge confronting the Army."⁴ As a result, the Army stands at the proverbial abyss anchored by more than 239 years of tradition with a force that is unable to adapt to the strategic realities of 21st century warfare.

The aim of this paper is to determine if the Army has set the conditions for the successful implementation of Mission Command. Specifically, this paper examines the Army's organizational culture in order to determine if current career incentives and risk management practices align with the axioms of Mission Command. The final section of the paper offers recommendations to Army leaders on how to bridge the gap between

the theory and application of Mission Command focused on the professional development of United States Army Commissioned and Warrant Officers. This is imperative because the values and belief systems of officers and senior leaders influence behavior patterns that shape and define the organizational culture of the United States Army.

History of Decentralized Command Philosophy

The genesis of Mission Command dates back to Frederick the Great and the reforms instituted in Prussia following its humiliating defeat at Jena in 1806.⁵ “The reformists concluded that the rigid and mechanistic Army of the ancient régime was incapable of facing the challenges posed by Napoleonic warfare. The size, composition, and tactics of modern armies had rendered obsolete the traditions of old.”⁶ Nearly one hundred years later, Helmuth Karl Bernhard Graf von Moltke was the first to institutionalize the command approach of Auftragstaktik or mission type orders.⁷ The strict orders process and the protracted character of war appalled Moltke, who believed commanders should have the freedom of action to determine how to execute missions within their commander’s intent.⁸

Moltke and his staff further suggested that, “Compared to their own centralized, process-oriented command and control system, French forces achieved high operational tempo through rapid communication of their commander’s intent.”⁹ Equally important was the disciplined initiative and freedom of action shared by junior leaders, who were empowered to accept prudent risks without seeking approval from senior commanders. This disciplined initiative was decisive during combat operations because it allowed French forces a marked advantage to assess the situation and act decisively

in a timely manner against its competitors.¹⁰ The result was bold offensive actions taken by French leaders in pursuit of tactical military objectives.

During the interwar-period between World War I and World War II, the Germans completely mastered Auftragstaktik as a command philosophy, using it to shape and develop their doctrine, organizations, training, leadership, and officer education systems. Moreover, Auftragstaktik defined how the Germans organized, trained, equipped, and executed operations during World War II. This revolution in military affairs led to the creation of Blitzkrieg, which introduced fast-paced mounted maneuver warfare focused on massing the effects of fires and maneuver at the decisive place and time on the battlefield.¹¹ The 1943 Battle of Kasserine Pass, the Battle of the Huertgen Forest, and Field Marshal Kesselring's successful passage of lines during the Italian Campaign are all clear examples of the operational success of Mission Command during World War II.¹²

Mission Command concepts in the United States Army appear in the 1962, 1968, and 1982 publications of Field Manual (FM) 100-5 Operations. By all accounts, the 1982 change to FM 100-5 was a major milestone forward for Mission Command and decentralization in the Army.¹³ The operational focus of the manual was Air Land Battle.¹⁴ Air Land Battle's four competencies: disciplined initiative, shared understanding through commander's intent, freedom of action, and mission orders--are clearly in the spirit of Mission Command.¹⁵ "Mission Command became formal Army doctrine with the 2003 publication of FM 6-0, Mission Command."¹⁶

In 2012, the U.S. Army formally issued new doctrine on Mission Command, the philosophy and practice of command that serves as a foundation for Unified Land Operations. That doctrine defines Mission

Command as, 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. To provide a framework for the practice of Mission Command, the doctrine established six principles: build cohesive teams through mutual trust, create shared understanding, provide a clear commander's intent, exercise disciplined initiative, use mission orders, and accept prudent risks.¹⁷

Mission Command succeeds in an environment that demands freedom of action, creativity, prudent risk-taking, and inspired leadership. These same attributes enable commanders to execute missions in the contemporary hybrid-operating environment.¹⁸ Words like initiative, empowerment, and inspiration all point to freedom of action under the umbrella of trust. Without trust, Mission Command has little hope for success as either a command philosophy or warfighting function in the Army. With trust, all of the desired effects within Mission Command's definition are possible.¹⁹

The challenges of Mission Command revolve around organizational culture change and control. Specifically, the implementation of Mission Command limits the higher commander's ability to control the outcomes of major battles and engagements, and for many leaders, this is problematic. Therefore, the salient challenge of Mission Command is it mandates organizational culture change by placing the traditions of centralized and decentralized command philosophies in direct contrast with one another. As John Nelsen II writes in *Auftragstaktik: A Case for Decentralized Battle*, "As long as the centralized command tradition remains alive, growth of decentralization will be uneven, confusing, and occasionally contentious."²⁰

The Problem: Organizational Culture

University of California Scholars, Robert Boyd and Peter Richardson suggest that, "Culture is information capable of affecting individuals' behavior that they acquire from

other members of their species through teaching, imitation, and other forms of social transmission.”²¹ The use of the term information in their definition refers to any kind of mental state, conscious or otherwise, that affects behavior patterns.²² According to Army Doctrine Reference Publication-1, *The Army Profession*, “Army culture shapes behavior, forms professional identities, and reflects what the Army finds to be functionally effective in times of strong need. It is, essentially, how the Army does things.”²³

Organizational theorists Edgar Schein, in his book *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, describes three levels of culture: ARTIFACTS, ESPOUSED VALUES, and BASIC UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS.²⁴

ARTIFACTS are visible symbols of a culture. ESPOUSED VALUES provide members a sense of what the organization ought to be, as distinct from what is. Finally, UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS evolve from a continuous use of a problem solution that has repeatedly been successful in the past and has unconsciously become taken for granted as the only way to solve similar problems. Therefore, members instinctively perceive these assumptions as non-confrontable.²⁵

Schein further defines culture as a pattern of shared basic assumptions held by a group to solve problems that has worked well in the past. Therefore, leaders within the organization teach new leaders the way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems.²⁶ Schein’s Iceberg Model (See Figure-1) provides a visual representation of the relationship among ARTIFACTS, ESPOUSED VALUES, and UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS, and their effect on the climate and culture of an organization. Schein asserts that, those basic underlying assumptions of acceptable behavior provide order and structure. Moreover, they establish the conditions for rewards and punishment in an organization, and the use of power.²⁷ However, these same beliefs and basic underlying assumptions influence behaviors that anchor organizational culture to outdated methods

of problem solving and do not promote trust that is essential for organizational culture change.²⁸

Artifacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visible structures and processes • Observable behaviors for example symbols, slogans, and published list of values
Espoused Beliefs and Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideologies, Goals, Aspirations • May not be consistent with “Published Values” • Validated by shared experience
Basic Underlying Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unconscious, taken for granted beliefs and values • Determines perceptions and behaviors

Figure 1. Edgar Schein’s Iceberg Model²⁹

The Problem: Trust

A military culture that supports Mission Command is built on trust--without embedding trust in the organizational culture of the Army it is difficult to sustain innovation and change.³⁰ Harvard professor, John Kotter, supports this assumption, stating that trust is the cornerstone of transformation. Kotter further argues that trust is the necessary component to building an effective team with a common purpose, and trust is the impetus for stakeholders to overcome complacency and misplaced loyalty that prevent needed change from taking place.³¹

The 2013 Center for Army Leadership Annual Survey of Army Leadership (CASAL), which includes interviews from 27,000 sergeants, senior non-commissioned officers (NCO), warrant officers, and commissioned officers from the Active component, United States Army Reserve, and the United States Army National Guard, found that nearly three-fourths (71%) of leaders rated their immediate supervisors as effective at building trust.³² The same CASAL report also suggests sixty-two percent (62%) of active component leaders agree that trust exists among members of Army units and organizations, while an astonishing low forty-two percent (42%) of sergeants and staff sergeants affirm that trust exists within their units.³³

“The less than favorable ratings by Junior NCOs reflect a pattern observed across many areas assessed by CASAL to include UNIT DISCIPLINE, ADHERENCE TO STANDARDS, and IMMEDIATE SUPERIOR EFFECTIVENESS as a leader.”³⁴ Critics of the findings above believe the data reflects the fact that junior NCOs are direct level leaders and do not have the experience to accurately answer this question. From their perspective, the data is insufficient when considering the level of trust or other factors relating to the climate and culture in the Army.³⁵ However, supporters of CASAL theorize that the report provides evidence that there is a trust deficit in the Army between leaders and their subordinates.

A lack of trust and complacency continue to paralyze the Army’s efforts to operationalize Mission Command. This in part is due to “past success under the traditional command and control system, a lack of visible crises, low performance standards, and complacency throughout the ranks.”³⁶ Today, leaders and Soldiers alike realize that the future success of the Army lies in our ability to adapt to challenges in the

21st century security environment, but to date, the Army continues to struggle bridging the gap between the theory and application of Mission Command. “This incongruence in Army culture creates a trust deficit that militates against producing leaders with an entrepreneurial spirit. This disjunction is the heart of the adaptive challenge confronting the Army.”³⁷

Embedding Mechanisms and Reinforcing Mechanisms

According to Edgar Schein, embedding mechanisms are tools leaders can use to influence their organizations how to think and how to behave under certain conditions.³⁸ These powerful tools are artifacts of the emerging culture and they create the “climate” of the organization.³⁹ “What leaders pay attention to, measure, and control on a regular basis, how leaders allocate resources, how leaders allocate rewards and status, and how leaders recruit, select, and promote are all clear examples of embedding mechanisms.”⁴⁰ The organizational philosophy, organizational procedures, and organizational structure are reinforcing tools that underpin embedding mechanisms and foment compliance to cultural norms.⁴¹ Collectively, artifacts, embedding mechanisms, and reinforcing tools signal to leaders and subordinates how to behave, how to lead, and how to integrate and assimilate into the organization. In a word, they shape the organizational culture of the unit.

This paper furthers this point by examining the Army’s approach to officer professional development and career management. In particular, the examination will focus on the Officer Personnel Management System, promotions, evaluations, leader development, and risk management for active component Army Commissioned and Warrant Officers.

Officer Personnel Management System

The Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-3, Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Career Management is the Army's guide for officer professional development.⁴² Department of the Army Pamphlet (DA PAM) 600-3 directly supports the Defense Officer Personnel Management Act, or DOPMA, passed by the United States Congress in 1981 and provides the foundation for the Officer Personnel Management System (OPMS). The purpose of OPMS is to enhance the warfighting capability of the United States Army by fulfilling Title 10, United States Code requirements with an officer corps empowered with the freedom of action and authority to lead the service in 2020 and beyond.⁴³ The U.S. Army Human Resources Command (HRC) is the policy executor within the Army responsible for ensuring compliance with the Personnel Policy Guidance established by the Deputy Chief of Staff–G1.

According to DA Pam 600-3, the focal point for which all personnel management subsystems revolve is the centralized selection process.⁴⁴ Periodically, the DA and HRC convenes a series of centralized selection boards for "retention, career status, promotion, field grade command designation, and selective early retirement" to sustain the all-volunteer force and meet the guidelines outlined in the Personnel Planning Guidance and Officer Personnel Management System.⁴⁵

Critics of OPMS suggest that a centralized personnel management system restricts freedom of action and the ability of leaders to use disciplined initiative to accomplish missions within their commander's intent. More important, a centralized personnel system creates a culture that inevitably dissuades creativity and forces leaders out of key and development assignments before they become proficient in their duties.

The current officer promotion policy is an excellent example to highlight this fact. Under OPMS, both commissioned and warrant officer advancement centers on centralized up-or-out promotion concepts first introduced in 1916.⁴⁶ This policy provides incentives and rewards, creates advancement opportunities for junior officers, maintains the average of the officer corps young, and forces out nonperformers.⁴⁷ “The result of this policy is that promotion is seen within the Army’s culture as the singular measure of success.”⁴⁸ Equally important, the outdated promotion system more often than not bypasses the most creative and innovative leaders who possess views counter to the established norms of the profession.

Further complicating the promotion calculus are time driven gates for school attendance and broadening opportunities for Army officers. Critics of the promotion system posit that the time driven gates associated with the up-or-out promotion system forces officers out of key and development assignments before they become proficient in their duties. Moreover, these mandatory gates disrupt unit cohesion and sacrifice depth of experience espoused under Mission Command for breadth of experience vital to the traditional approach of command and control.⁴⁹ In short, the current officer promotion system does not provide adequate incentives or rewards to inspire change in the Army’s culture. Instead, the promotion system reinforces the principles of command and control resulting in compliant leaders who are unable to exploit opportunities in the operating environment due to regulated patterns of behavior reinforced through OPMS.

Officer Evaluation Report System

In April 2014, the Army instituted a new Officer Evaluation Report (OER) system, (DA Form 67-10), to identify its highest performing leaders who possess the attributes

and competencies outlined in Army Doctrine Reference Publication 6-22, Army Leadership.

The primary function of the Officer Evaluation Report system is to provide information from the organizational chain of command for use by Headquarters, Department of the Army for personnel decisions. The information contained on these evaluations correlates with the Army's needs and individual officer qualifications to provide the basis for personnel actions such as promotion, elimination, retention, school selection, and assignment.⁵⁰

The new OER system advocates merit based advancement for officers in the Army.⁵¹ This evolutionary change readily identifies and rewards top performers in the Army without negatively affecting the careers and promotion opportunities of the remaining officers in the cohort.⁵² Nevertheless, critics believe the changes fall short of the espoused values of Mission Command, which are to inspire and empower leaders at every echelon to achieve effects within their commander's intent.

A major point of contention is the senior rater block check on the backside of the current Company Grade Officer (O-3; WO1-CW2) and Field Grade Officer (O4-O5; CW3-CW5) OERs, which recognizes up to 49 percent of officers as above average. According to Army Operations/Research Analyst Paul Dalen, this metric fails to identify top performers and instead serves as an easy metric for the Army to comply with DOPMA.⁵³ "In a 49 percent top-block system, above average performance is defined as a function of those who are deemed above average--an officer's block check is not a reflection of their individual performance or productivity."⁵⁴

The solution for this problem is the implementation of an evaluation system similar to the model used to evaluate strategic leaders at the O-6 level in the United States Army. Under this model, senior raters can only rate up to 24% of leaders in the top block within

a cohort regardless of branch or functional area designation. This approach is consistent with Italian economist Vilfredo Pareto's "80/20 Rule," which states that 20% of the workforce is high performing and accounts for 80% of the output of the organization.⁵⁵ Therefore, assuming that nearly half or 49% of company and field grade officers warrant a top block rating is impractical. "This is not earth-shattering news to the Army. Since, historically selection rates to centralized selection lists (CSL) jobs and billets have been around 10-20 percent."⁵⁶

The aforementioned changes to the company and field grade OERs will align the espoused values of the Army with the axioms Mission Command by providing the Army with competent, committed, and high character leaders at every echelon. They will, in turn, inspire creative freedom in tomorrow's Soldiers and leaders, and empower them with the authority to accomplish missions within their commander's intent. This change will reduce tensions associated with caustic micromanagement and build trust across the officer corps since the policy will not adversely affect the careers or promotion opportunities of the remaining officers in the cohort.⁵⁷

Over time, the Army will create an organizational culture with empowered transformational leaders who succeed under conditions of uncertainty and who are courageous enough to take prudent risks to exploit opportunities in the contemporary operating environment. More importantly, until the Army addresses the senior rater block check for company and field grade officers, the OER will remain a powerful artifact that is misaligned with the espoused values of the emerging culture of Mission Command and fail to identify the most talented officers to lead the profession in the 21st century.⁵⁸

Leader Development

Chief of Staff of the Army, General Raymond Odierno, stated that “amidst the drawdown and sequestration, the Army’s Number 1 priority is leader development within both the officer and noncommissioned officer ranks.”⁵⁹ Leader development is fundamental to the Army and provides the service with a marked advantage over its competitors that cannot be replaced by advanced technology or stand-off weapons.⁶⁰

The goal of Army leader development is to create the training, education, and experience conditions that produce agile, innovative, and adaptive leaders of unimpeachable integrity, character, and competence who act to achieve decisive results and who understand and are able to exploit the full potential of current and future Army doctrine.⁶¹

The DA PAM Pamphlet 350-58, Army Leader Development Program (ALDP), outlines three domains of leader development: institutional training (training), operational assignments (experience), and self-development (education).⁶² ALDP does not operate in a vacuum. Accordingly, the success of ALDP is contingent on “career-long synthesis of training, education, and experiences acquired through opportunities in all three domains, supported by peer and developmental relationships.”⁶³ After nearly fourteen years of war, ALDP remains out of balance with Mission Command given its emphasis on operational deployments and the time-driven nature of institutional (training).

An example of the latter includes the current use of an officer’s year, month availability date (YMAV) to drive professional development transitions. Under this approach, length of time in key developmental assignments drive the assignment process, instead of level of training, depth of experience, or some other outcome based measure of effectiveness. This incongruence in Army culture does not instill the

cognitive capability in leaders to understand mission type orders, or the confidence to accept prudent risks and act decisively when facing conditions of uncertainty.⁶⁴ All are tasks essential for the effective execution of Mission Command. Furthermore, “this incongruence creates a trust deficit that militates against producing leaders with an entrepreneurial spirit. This disjunction is the heart of the adaptive challenge confronting the Army and its efforts to operationalize Mission Command.”⁶⁵ The excerpt below from the 2014 CASAL provides further support for this argument:

Nearly 65% of active duty leaders believe that the sequence of assignments and amount of time in key developmental assignments are appropriate to prepare them for future, desired assignments. Only half (50%) rate the Army effective or very effective at supporting the development of leaders through personnel management practices. Less than half of senior leaders (44%) agree the Army successfully provides leaders with an individualized approach to development, a principle espoused in adult learning theory and talent management systems.⁶⁶

The 2014 CASAL report provides additional evidence of the Army’s misaligned professional military education (PME) goals. The report states that nearly “seventy-three percent (73%) of recent PME graduates rate the quality of the education they received as good or very good.”⁶⁷ However, the level drops below the acceptable two-thirds threshold (61% of AC leaders) when asked if PME prepared leaders for the next levels of leadership and to (49%) when asked if PME improved their leadership capabilities.⁶⁸ Of note, the Warrant Officer Basic Course and Warrant Officer Advanced Courses, the various Basic Officer Leadership Courses, and the Captains Career Courses all received unfavorable ratings.⁶⁹

As Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Martin Dempsey opined, “Mission Command is fundamentally a learned behavior that leaders must imprint into the DNA of the profession of arms.”⁷⁰ General Dempsey further states, that the “education of our

officer corps must begin at the start of service versus the end in order to instill the cognitive capability to understand and express intent, and to take decisive initiative within intent, resulting in trust throughout the ranks.”⁷¹ In summary, the current Army development strategy is misaligned with General Dempsey’s strategic vision of Mission Command.

Risk Management

Globally integrated operations is the concept for how the Joint Force should prepare for the security environment we will soon face. It requires a globally postured Joint Force to quickly combine capabilities with itself and mission partners across domains, echelons, geographic boundaries, and organizational affiliations. These networks of forces and partners will form, evolve, dissolve, and reform in different arrangements in time and space with significantly greater fluidity than today’s Joint Force.⁷²

Globally integrated operations require a commitment to the use of Mission Command.⁷³ Nested within the philosophy of Mission Command is the idea of risk sharing and the mandate for senior leaders to empower their subordinates to advance their intent using creativity and judgment through the most effective means available at their disposal.⁷⁴ In order to operate in this decentralized manner, leaders and subordinates must engage in a collaborative system of feedback and dialogue exchanges to mitigate both risk to the mission and risk to the force. The question facing military leaders is--are leaders willing to assume the same level of risk born out of necessity in combat due to geographical dispersion during garrison operations at their home bases? Answering this question is vital for an Army seeking to preserve the mutual trust and confidence shared between commanders and their subordinates that served the service so well in combat.

The Army's formal transition to Mission Command as both a warfighting function and command philosophy is step in the right direction. At the same time, the Army has no choice but to be bold and evolve its culture to one that rewards creativity and problem solving, and promotes leaders who take prudent risks when facing conditions of uncertainty.⁷⁵ In order to achieve this goal, leaders should continue to reward resolute action and disciplined initiative at all levels of command. This will in turn build trust between Soldiers and Leaders, and align what Schein would describe as the Army's enacted values (underlying assumption) of military culture with its espoused values for Mission Command.

Recommendations

The following section offers recommendations to senior leaders seeking to bridge the gap between the Army's espoused and enacted values for Mission Command. These recommendations form the foundation for building competent leaders who trust one another up and down the chain of command, and leaders who reward individual initiative and prudent risk-taking.⁷⁶ Specifically, these recommendations offer changes to the Officer Personnel Management System (OPMS), promotions, evaluations, leader development, and risk management systems for leaders in the United States Army.

1. The United States Army should abandon the basic underlying assumption that it executes Mission Command through centralized control. Traditional Command and Control philosophies and prescriptive orders are the antithesis of Mission Command. Instead, the Army should align its espoused behavior (what we say we should do) with its actual behavior (what we actually do).⁷⁷ The result will be an organizational culture that emphasizes decentralization with inspired leaders who empower their subordinates with the means and freedoms to accomplish missions within their intent.

2. Modify the current incentive system. "It does no good to call for promoting the risk-takers when the incentives all work the other way."⁷⁸ The Officer Personnel Management System (OPMS) should seek to reward risk-takers who demonstrate creativity, strength of character, and disciplined initiative to accomplish the mission within their commander's intent. On the other hand, senior leaders must identify and

penalize officers who accept the status quo and passionately embrace risk avoidance.⁷⁹ In the end, this change in the Army's organizational culture will produce leaders with an entrepreneurial spirit and confidence to act decisively under conditions of uncertainty.

3. The United States Army should discontinue its use of time-driven triggers such as an officer's YMAV to drive the assignment process for leaders. Instead, the Army should focus its leader development programs and career development policies on achieving depth of experience versus a breadth of experience in the officer corps. Decentralized command approaches also requires considerable investments in the formal education and training of junior officers. Their aptitude and ability to think critically under the conditions of uncertainty must be high. The expertise gained through experience in key and development assignments and formal education training will create confident and competent junior leaders who diagnose situations, develop creative solutions, and take decisive action within their commander's intent.

4. Effective leadership is key to achieving the Army's leader development vision. Leaders must embrace their direct responsibilities for developing subordinates with the breadth and depth of experience necessary to meet tomorrow's demands.⁸⁰ Additionally, commanders should continue to encourage their subordinates to use formal and informal leader development practices to overcome challenges identified between the espoused and enacted values for Mission Command. In addition to unit mentorship programs, leaders should influence their subordinates to embed and reinforce universal leader development programs, like America's Army--Our Profession (AAOP), Multi-Source Assessment and Feedback (MSAP), Army Career Tracker, and Army Training Network⁸¹ into unit battle rhythm activities.

5. Trust earned over time is essential to the successful implementation of Mission Command in the United States Army. In order to meet this end, the Army should continue to promote, train, educate, and retain leaders who adhere to the Army values and the axioms of Mission Command. Leaders who have the ability to persuade others, leaders who know how and when to compromise without abandoning principles, and leaders who maintain the trust of other influential decision-makers, their peers, and with their subordinates are vital to this effort.⁸² As General Dempsey stated, "Mission Command is fundamentally a learned behavior that leaders must imprint into the DNA of the profession of arms."⁸³ Therefore, short-term solutions that do not empower leaders with the authority to act decisively are impractical. Thus, training on these leader competencies in pre-commissioning sources such the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC), United States Military Academy (USMA), the Officer Cadet School (OCS), and the Warrant Officer Candidacy School (WOCS), and continuing throughout an officer's career is a must for an Army seeking to successfully implement Mission Command.

6. "Modify the current officer evaluation system and corresponding promotion system. Replace the system with one that identifies, develops, and rewards adaptability, creativity, and prudent risk-taking."⁸⁴ Up-or-out promotion policies are necessary in a revised form. This revised system should implement a non-command track with incentives on par with officers in the operations branches in order to achieve balance

across the force. These changes will improve trust across the Army and ensure that the operating and generating forces have talented leaders committed to the principles of Mission Command. The initiative will also reduce discrepancies between everyday cultural manifestations in the Army's Culture between what organizational theorists, Edgar Schein terms the stated goals (Espoused Values) and the unwritten rules that govern our profession of arms (Basic Underlying Assumptions).⁸⁵

Conclusion

Senior leaders have set the conditions for the United States Army to transition from a tradition of command and control to a command philosophy that emphasis decentralization and Mission Command. However, a noticeable gap remains between the espoused and enacted values of the profession. A military culture that supports Mission Command is built on trust, initiative, prudent risk-taking, and broad experience. All of these skills are intangible and they take time to develop. If the Army wants to continue to bridge the gap between the theory and application of Mission Command, senior leaders must carefully embed these espoused patterns of behavior in the Army's Officer Personnel Management System and leader development programs.⁸⁶

Leaders directly influence the behavior patterns that shape and define organizational culture. Therefore, it is important to realize, that the successful implementation of Mission Command in the United States Army is, as was ever the case, entirely dependent on the behavior of Army senior leaders.⁸⁷ Thus far, senior leaders have a changed how the United States Army organizes, trains, and equips Soldiers and units for missions in support of Unified Land Operations. The Army also has a long-term vision, a comprehensive strategy, and the means to reach its goal for Mission Command. Moreover, the Chief of Staff of the Army is leading this change with trust as his vanguard. Over time, this change in the Army's organizational culture will enable the service to align its enacted patterns of behaviors with its espoused values for

decentralized operations. This will allow senior leaders to bridge the gap between the theory and application of Mission Command in the United States Army.

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