

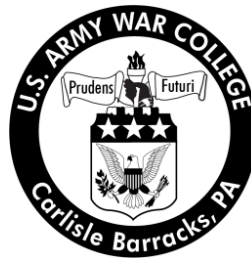
# Civilian Research Project USAWC Fellow

## RETAINING OFFICER TALENT

### HOW CAN THE US ARMY BETTER MANAGE AND EMPOWER ITS TALENTED OFFICERS FOR RETENTION AFTER THEY MEET THEIR INITIAL ACTIVE DUTY SERVICE OBLIGATION (ADSO)?

by

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United States Army War College  
Class of 2013

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USAWC CIVILIAN RESEARCH PROJECT

**RETAINING OFFICER TALENT**

**HOW CAN THE US ARMY BETTER MANAGE AND EMPOWER ITS TALENTED OFFICERS FOR RETENTION AFTER THEY MEET THEIR INITIAL ACTIVE DUTY SERVICE OBLIGATION (ADSO)?**

**BY**

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## Abstract

Title: RETAINING OFFICER TALENT

HOW CAN THE US ARMY BETTER MANAGE AND EMPOWER ITS TALENTED OFFICERS FOR RETENTION AFTER THEY MEET THEIR INITIAL ACTIVE DUTY SERVICE OBLIGATION (ADSO)?

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Key Terms: market mechanism, talent identification, junior military officer

Over the past four decades, a considerable amount of research has attempted to identify why a portion of the U.S. Army's initial term Junior Military Officers (JMO) depart the service after only serving approximately three to five years on active duty. Although the results of prior research are mixed, there are two common themes that explain why most JMOs leave the service for a career in the civilian labor market: limited ability to control and have a voice in their career development combined with family quality of life concerns. This research suggests the Army replace its outdated industrial age personnel management system with one that is tied to competitive talent markets used in the corporate world. These best practices provide the value and perspective JMO's require when deciding whether or not to continue serving the Army at the completion of their initial ADSO. This builds trust across the institution, unit, and JMO cohort as it sets the conditions for further empowerment, development, and retention of our officer talent pool.

'That's it; I'm getting out.' How many times have we heard Junior Military Officers (JMO) say those words during their time in uniform? Invariably every senior Army leader has a story of the 'one who got away' – the bright, energetic officer who accomplished the mission extremely well, ahead of time, and with minimal guidance. I can recall on several occasions during my career hearing those words from frustrated or defeated JMOs<sup>1</sup> who had a bright future ahead of them. But, for reasons unknown until their resignation papers hit their boss' desk, the boss did not see it coming and by that time it was too late. After 21 years of service, the stories are many, but the most disappointing was the one I heard while attending a 2013 Duke University fellowship from a former Captain who the Army invested greatly in to educate at West Point and later through flight training in Chinook helicopters. The officer was denied the opportunity to participate in an Advanced Civil Schooling program to obtain a Master's Degree and continue his service in the Army. A twice deployed Afghanistan veteran, he elected to submit his resignation only after five years of service and attend Duke University with his 9/11 GI Bill benefit. Was it a failure of leadership, an inflexible personnel system, or possibly a family issue that led to this officer's decision to leave? And, what could have been done to retain the officer who the Army invested hundreds of thousands of dollars in to serve beyond his initial Active Duty Service Obligation (ADSO)?

The U.S. Army is at a strategic crossroads after more than a decade of war, challenged with conflicting requirements to downsize while still retaining quality junior officers. In other words, the Army must decide who do they retain and who do they let go? Those decisions are currently being considered and are likely to have already been

made by general officers well before this paper is released for distribution. Therefore, this paper will not try to answer this question. However, what this paper will endeavor to answer is how can the Army better manage and retain its talented JMOs for future service beyond their initial ADSO once the retention decisions are made. How does the Army keep the agile, innovative, adaptable and resilient officers who they believe are required to lead the service into the future beyond the immense initial investment in their development? Or put another way; how does it keep JMO talent with these abilities?

**Thesis Statement:**

The Army must increase the return on its initial human capital investment by retaining its talented JMOs through an innovative, flexible, and empowering talent management system that provides choice and career control by way of a market mechanism – a mechanism that matches talent to jobs rather than assigns its talent based on an occupational specialty, a developmental need, and a vacancy.

**The Problem:**

Before any analysis or recommendations can be offered to the Army for consideration, the service as an institution must recognize it has a problem with talented JMOs leaving the service after completion of their initial ADSO. After that recognition, it must understand why those officers are leaving so it can begin to craft policy to address the true attrition challenge. This recognition will prevent the expenditure of more time and resources in support of personnel policies that may not address the underlying issue which can lead to unintended consequences and missed opportunities to retain our talented JMOs.

It is important to note this analysis is not a discussion of retaining the best and brightest as all of our officer's have varying types of talent within the first three to five years of their initial ADSO and those talents are required across many different positions. At such an early stage in the career of this target population, it is next to impossible to determine who the Army should retain and who it should let go as these JMOs are just beginning their careers and have minimal evaluation depth in their files. Editorials by Army senior leaders stating we are losing our best and brightest among this population cannot be proved or disproved and are purely anecdotal as these officers are just starting their careers. Therefore, this analysis will not try to answer it. Rather, this paper will discuss the empowering benefit of creating an optimized personnel talent management system for the varying degrees of hidden JMO talent that currently exists in the Army to be identified and afforded the opportunity to rise to the top through an empowering market mechanism.

Last but certainly not least, the Army must define talent management. It begins with how the Army can identify and earmark talented officers for future service so it is transparent to JMOs early in their career. Senior leaders communicating a clear definition early and often empowers JMOs and earns their trust in the system that develops them for future service. Once crafted, this definition will serve as a benchmark against their training, education, and experience throughout the course of their career and in turn will create the value and perspective talented JMOs require to stay in uniform beyond their initial ADSO.

## **Army Leader Development:**

Training, education, and experience are the fundamental leadership tenets of the recently published 2013 Army Leader Development Strategy (ALDS). This strategy states: "leader development and talent management together are built on fundamentals. Army leaders must be living examples of 'Be, Know, Do' through demonstrating traits such as being adaptable, agile, flexible, responsive, and resilient."<sup>2</sup>

Due to the dynamic and complex nature of our world, the Army demands that as the organization moves forward, it must have talented leaders who can think on their feet and gain a competitive advantage over an adversary to fight and win on their ground. The Army also understands there are no clear indicators of where it will fight and what will be its assigned mission in the future. However, what the Army does know is the past 10 years of war and the nature of the asymmetric conflict coming out of Iraq and Afghanistan has produced the officer talent pool it requires - a combat seasoned officer corps that is self aware, adaptive, innovative, and resilient.<sup>3</sup>

These are the characteristics the Army has deemed necessary for JMOs to have if they are to succeed in leading the service into an uncertain future. This is reiterated by the Army Reserve 100<sup>th</sup> Division Commander at Fort Knox and CEO of GSE Environmental, Brigadier General Mark Arnold in an *Armed Forces Journal* article where he states:

Today's best junior officers, those with high talent and a strong calling to service, should become the admirals and generals who testify before Congress and serve as Joint Chiefs in 20 years. Retaining them is vital; losing them hurts our long-term ability to creatively transform the military as security challenges change.<sup>4</sup>



The Army will struggle coming out of a decade of war with who to retain and who to let go as the majority of JMOs have the combat and leadership experience the Army requires. Civilian corporations also require leadership experience as it is often sought after at the highest levels of business. "Such skills transfer with ease into the civilian labor market and are in high demand by leading Fortune 500 companies who seek to attract such talent. For example, a 2006 Korn/Ferry International study stated male military officers are almost three times as likely as other American men to become CEOs. Individuals such as former presidential candidate Ross Perot, General Motors CEO Daniel Akerson, former Proctor and Gamble CEO Bob McDonald, Johnson and Johnson CEO, Alex Gorsky, and FedEx CEO, Fred Smith to name just a few attribute their leadership skills to their time in uniform." <sup>5</sup>

Contemporary criticism revolves around the Army and other military services' inability to properly manage its officer talent which has caused an early exodus of seasoned combat officers to the business world. At this point in time, "the Army is short roughly 1,000 Captains across a span of five year groups, which does not take into account JMOs departing the Army early as their departure will only increase this gap and leave more positions empty across the force."<sup>6</sup>

To understand this criticism, it is worthy of examination to see just what JMOs are saying are the reasons that are driving them to leave the service for a career in the civilian labor market. This talent identification re-examination should lead to policy changes that identify through exit surveys and other aggregate data the trends associated with JMOs making the decision to leave the Army at a very early point in their career. It would be a step in the right direction to measure the reasons driving

JMOs present and future to leave the Army early in their career rather than stay and compete for the opportunity to become the Army's senior leadership in the next 20 years. Any outcome of this measurement would provide senior leaders with the data necessary to make an informed decision to target and remedy policy that affects this population.

**The Army's JMO talent loss:**

At this present time the Army does not conduct formal exit interviews of its departing officers, nor does it have a repository of data over time to show the trends or causes for their departure. A request for data showing the reasons why JMOs depart the service upon meeting their ADSO was given to the Army Human Resources Command, the Army Research Institute, and the Army G1 during the research phase of this analysis. All organizations gave a negative response on tracking and having such data available and agreed it should be something the institutional Army performs on a regular basis to better understand why officers depart the service. In the absence of institutional data and trends on this issue, research found that think tanks and academia are the only organizations tracking such information as a snapshot in time and not in the aggregate.

Two 2011 Harvard University Masters in Public Policy candidates, Sayce Falk and Sasha Rogers, polled nearly 250 JMOs who left the service between 2001-2010 about their experiences and the reasons driving their decisions to leave. In counterpoint, they asked 30 active duty JMOs the same questions in an effort to rule out bias against the military since some opponents of a post-military survey may chalk up those officers

as “sour grapes” and not commensurate with someone the military would want to keep anyway.

75% of the officers polled said this was their first opportunity to provide feedback to the military after leaving the service and 80% of the group stated the best officers they knew had already left the military before serving a full career. The surveyors were surprised to find deployment tempo and military compensation were not the driving force behind JMO decisions to leave the military. Falk and Rogers summarize that there were two overarching factors that emerged as reasons this surveyed group of JMOs left the service: 1) organizational inflexibility, primarily manifested in the personnel system, and 2) a lack of commitment to innovation within the military services.<sup>7</sup>

The charts below taken from the candidate’s research survey at Figure 1 itemize the percentages of the reasons why this group of JMOs decided to leave and what would make them stay:



Figure 1

Career control, quality of life, and better assignments for top performers were the overarching areas of importance for the Out Of Service (OOS) JMOs who decided to leave the service for a career in the civilian labor market. In comparison, Falk and Rogers' measured the same considerations against an Active Duty (AD) population and found only a 12% variance exists between the OOS and AD sample populations. This number suggests both populations share the same level of importance towards these career considerations regardless of whether they are currently serving or decided to leave the service and are currently working in the civilian labor market

Opponents of the assertion that the Army is losing young talent often say those who leave, the OOS population, are nothing more than ‘sour grapes’ and are not the officers who the Army would want to keep anyway. The table below refutes this claim as those who are currently serving, the AD population, largely think and believe the same way as the OOS population. A more detailed look at the percent variance between the two groups by category can be seen below at Figure 2.<sup>8</sup>

| TOPIC                                                                                                                   | % Respondents Agree |              |     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------|-----|
|                                                                                                                         | OOS<br>(N=242)      | AD<br>(N=30) | Δ   |
| <b>MORE OF THE BEST YOUNG OFFICERS WOULD STAY IF ...</b>                                                                |                     |              |     |
| The military offered better assignments to the best officers.                                                           | 85%                 | 71%          | 14% |
| The military promoted the best officers more quickly.                                                                   | 83%                 | 52%          | 31% |
| They were not obliged to pursue a higher rank.                                                                          | 41%                 | 25%          | 16% |
| The pay was based on performance instead of time-in-service.                                                            | 62%                 | 57%          | 5%  |
| Jobs were assigned through a market mechanism.                                                                          | 67%                 | 63%          | 4%  |
| There were more options to attend schools for professional development.                                                 | 76%                 | 71%          | 5%  |
| They would leave regardless of reforms to the personnel system.                                                         | 38%                 | 29%          | 9%  |
| <b>PERSONNEL</b>                                                                                                        |                     |              |     |
| The military personnel system does a good job of weeding out weak leaders.                                              | 10%                 | 18%          | 8%  |
| The military personnel system does a good job of retaining the best leaders.                                            | 7%                  | 18%          | 11% |
| <b>PERSONNEL</b>                                                                                                        |                     |              |     |
| The military personnel system does a good job of matching talent to jobs.                                               | 14%                 | 25%          | 11% |
| Talented officers receive better assignments than average.                                                              | 29%                 | 43%          | 14% |
| I was satisfied with the billets that I was assigned.                                                                   | 76%                 | 86%          | 10% |
| <b>PERSONNEL</b>                                                                                                        |                     |              |     |
| The military should expand early promotions.                                                                            | 74%                 | 61%          | 13% |
| The rate of military promotions should not be accelerated.                                                              | 42%                 | 54%          | 12% |
| <b>INNOVATION</b>                                                                                                       |                     |              |     |
| The military is committed to innovation.                                                                                | 50%                 | 31%          | 19% |
| My commanders reward(ed) my innovative ideas.                                                                           | 68%                 | 54%          | 14% |
| <b>OP TEMPO AND QUALITY OF LIFE</b>                                                                                     |                     |              |     |
| Returning to 1:2 dwell-time ratio would have a significant impact on my likelihood of staying on active duty.           | 26%                 | 41%          | 15% |
| Shorter deployment length would have had a significant effect on my decision to leave active duty.                      | 35%                 | 45%          | 10% |
| <b>OP TEMPO AND QUALITY OF LIFE</b>                                                                                     |                     |              |     |
| I was personally prepared for my deployment(s).                                                                         | 79%                 | 76%          | 3%  |
| My unit was prepared for its deployment(s).                                                                             | 76%                 | 72%          | 4%  |
| The officer education system did an effective job of training me to lead my unit in full-spectrum operations.           | 57%                 | 50%          | 7%  |
| <b>COMPENSATION</b>                                                                                                     |                     |              |     |
| The military's healthcare and non-financial retirement benefits factored into my concerns about financial compensation. | 49%                 | 78%          | 29% |
| End-of-deployment bonuses based on deployment performance is an effective way to reward officers.                       | 47%                 | 33%          | 14% |

Figure 2

Similarly, Tim Kane author of “*Bleeding Talent*” surveyed a group of 250 West Point graduates from various classes ranging from 1989 to 2004. His results yielded much of the same results as the Falk/Rogers survey where 82% of the surveyed population agreed that frustration with the military bureaucracy and family reasons were

among the top reasons for leaving the military.<sup>9</sup> In addition, his survey results were congruent with the Falk/Rogers' survey results which summarized the lack of career control combined with an inflexible personnel assignments system that is void of a talent matching mechanism as among the leading causes of JMOs leaving the service.<sup>10</sup>

The survey results provided by Falk, Rogers, and Kane was useful, but represented a cohort of officers who have already departed the Army and who could be labeled as 'sour grapes' - not someone the Army would want to keep anyway. Therefore, in July of 2013, I decided to take the Falk/Rogers' survey questions and conduct my own survey of 29 active duty Army Captains selected by their units as high performers with equally high potential to attend a prestigious five week program called the Strategic Studies Fellows Program (SSFP) at the Institute for Defense and Business (IDB) in Chapel Hill, NC. Their results were uniformly consistent with the results from both the Falk/Rogers and Kane surveys who polled both OOS and AD officers just 2 years earlier.

28 out of 29 officers in the SSFP at the IDB volunteered to take the survey and rank ordered from top to bottom with #1 being the most influential and #6 being the least influential of factors that would influence their decision to leave the service. Their results are as follows:

1. Family and quality of life concerns
2. Limited ability to control my own career
3. Frustration with the military bureaucracy
4. Weak superior officers
5. Operational and deployment tempo
6. Financial reasons

Most noteworthy of this population who have all deployed at least twice to either Iraq or Afghanistan is the 93% agreement among them that many of the best officers who are considering leaving the service would stay if the military offered more choice of assignments to its talent pool. Also, more than half of the group, (63%) believed the Army would be best served in achieving this by implementing some sort of competitive market mechanism to fill those assignments.

In response, the Army should consider a process where talent management is less focused on distributing the officer corps based on an MOS identifier, a vacancy, and a developmental need, but rather enlists the cooperation of commanders across the Army with vacancies. Through an interview process, field commanders are in the best position to determine from the available officer talent pool who is the best match based on their experience and inherent talents. In turn, the officer talent pool has a voice in that interview to become a principal in the assignment process rather than a recipient of it. Arguably, this gives JMOs what they most desire - more control and a voice in their own career and its development.<sup>11</sup> Overall, three independent surveys were conducted that yielded similar results. A unique opportunity exists at this point in Army history coming out of a decade of war to address these concerns by shaping personnel policy that positively affects this officer cohort.

This is especially important as our military is subject to a forced drawdown that will equate to an Army personnel end-strength reduction from a high of 580,000 to 490,000 by year's end in 2017 and those numbers could dip lower. The Army Chief of Staff states "these end-strength and force-structure reductions predate sequestration and ongoing fiscal year 2013 budget reductions...if sequestration continues into fiscal

year 2014, Army reductions to end-strength, force structure and basing will only be the first step.”<sup>12</sup> – It is clear our force is going to become substantially smaller and all of our varying degrees of talent will be subject to some stringent review for retention and separation. The US Army Human Resources Command chart, at Figure 3, depicts a dotted line for a normal attrition glide path running parallel to a solid line which depicts the required base attrition which is where by law the Army must be at the end of 2017. The difference between the two glide paths represents a force end strength reduction of 24,400 (19K Enlisted / 5K Officers). The point of this chart lies in the fact that the 24.4K reduction cannot be attained through predicted losses and normal attrition. Involuntary retirement programs such as Selective Early Retirement Boards (SERB) for Lieutenant Colonels and Colonels have already been implemented for select cohort year groups. These programs and others like it are currently being considered to pare down the force and are likely to be expanded for other JMO cohort year groups that are over strength.<sup>13</sup>

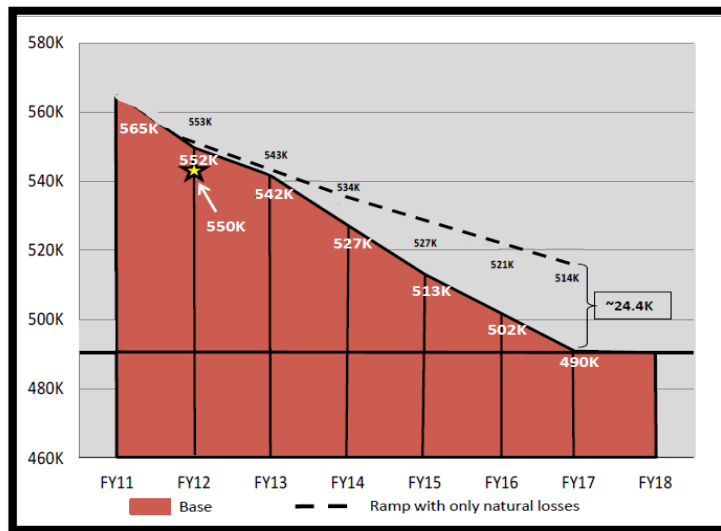


Figure 3

The challenge the Army has in this endeavor amidst a forced drawdown of so much talent born from 10 years of combat is who do they retain and who do they let go?



As previously mentioned, those decisions are currently being considered and are likely to have already been made by general officers well before this paper is released for distribution. Therefore, this paper will not try to answer them.

However, more relevant to this, how can the Army better manage and retain its talented JMOs for future service beyond their initial ADSO? In other words, how do we keep the agile, innovative, adaptable and resilient officers who the Army has determined are required to lead the service into the future beyond the Army's immense initial investment in their development?

**The JMOs: Who they are, what they want, and what they aren't getting:**

In part, the answer may lie in understanding the generation represented by current JMOs. It is important to note that the pool of combat experienced officers the Army seeks to retain represent a generation of officers commonly referred to as GEN Y or Millennials. The characteristics of GEN Y officers are represented in the current cohort of JMOs who for the past decade have gained the very characteristics in demand by the Army while deployed to lead the service in a dynamic, complex, and ever changing future environment. These seasoned officers **born into the information age** are the very officers the Army must compete for with civilian business and who may consider leaving the Army for a civilian career at the completion of their initial term of service obligation.

The earliest of the Army's millennial officers were born in 1980. They represent the target population who received their commission into the Army from a 4-year college institution as early as 21 years of age in 2001; coincidentally the same year we were attacked on September 11<sup>th</sup>. Gen Y is significantly larger than the baby boom

generation (50% larger) by 75 million members. “They make decisions out of preference for choice and control which is a byproduct of living in the information age powered by the internet. The transparency of information at their fingertips makes them more aware, agile, and in some cases quicker decision makers than previous generations as they view knowledge as belonging to everyone as it creates a basis for building new relationships and fostering dialogue.”<sup>14</sup> This was readily seen on the battlefield as the popular junior officer website for commanders, [www.companycommand.army.mil](http://www.companycommand.army.mil), was and continues to be a valuable collaboration tool to share information, ideas, and best practices among JMOs.

Millennial officers tend to operate more effectively through empowerment in flatter organizations and are predisposed to making choices based on the sharing of information available to them. They are less likely to thrive in a vertical organization with layers of bureaucracy that is hierarchical in nature. Therefore, a predetermined hierarchical career model much like the one currently offered by the Army may not inspire Gen Y or tap their key attributes -- and may force them into jobs that neither give them career satisfaction, nor provide for their individual growth or the growth of the institution in which they serve. The military’s greatest generational challenge may be how to leverage Gen Ys inherent talents in an organization that is hierarchical in nature. The current Army personnel management system does not provide the empowerment necessary to best leverage and develop the way a Gen Y officer thinks and processes information.<sup>15</sup>

The challenge the Army may have with a millennial generation born of the information age and driven by choice and control is “how to shape that culture by adding

value and perspective to select leaders of that generation it earmarks for future service.”<sup>16</sup> In order to do that, it helps to first understand what drives the millennial generation to make the choices they do, and recognize that these choices may run contrary to Army developmental models.

“Two of the most prominent theorists of generational change, historian and satirist Bill Strauss and historian and demographer Neil Howe, have suggested in their 2007 book *Millennials Rising* that Gen Y may be something of a throwback to its grandparent’s generation – the generation that grew up in the Depression, fought in WWII, and came home to build a powerful national economy...like their grandparents, millennials appear to be deeply committed to their priorities of family, community, and teamwork.”<sup>17</sup>

Today you find this line of thought is congruent with the sentiment of what JMOs are asking their HRC assignment branch managers when it comes to stationing for their development in the Army. When assignment officers ask JMOs what is their overarching concern when requesting an assignment after completion of the initial ADSO, invariably their reply is not, where can I get a command the soonest or where can I go to be successful and competitive for promotion? But rather JMOs said – “location, location, location.”<sup>18</sup> This is largely because the Army only affords JMOs stationing choice as a measure of control when considering where they should go next. Rather, a step in the right direction to change this would be the implementation of a market assignment mechanism that would increase the amount of control JMOs have to map out the direction of their career.

The Army Chief of Staff's 2012 manning guidance seeks to increase unit and Soldier stability to enhance the health of the force which would address the desire for location by JMOs, but this is merely a goal as the Army must balance meeting requirements with its available population ready to move. The Army has been criticized by opponents of its up or out system that develops officers against a key and developmental timeline which requires their movement for diversity in training, education, experience and ultimately promotion up through the ranks. Strauss and Howe's assessment of family and community are largely represented in the JMOs preference for location over what other developmental opportunities may await them at another location that is not their first choice.

So what happens when a JMO doesn't receive their station of choice? Is it a problem for the Army to meet its requirements with its available population due to an exodus of JMOs, and what are the reasons for JMOs leaving the service? At present, the US Army does not officially or formally conduct exit interviews with officers who resign their commission and leave the Army. Therefore, it is difficult to know the reasons and most importantly the trends over time by year as to why junior officers decide to leave the Army for a career in the civilian labor market or to pursue other opportunities such as graduate school. This is not to say the Army Human Resources Command (HRC) does not ask these types of questions on an informal basis. However, they are not standardized questions, and they are not tallied in the aggregate for analysis over a given period of time. Therefore, what is relied upon are post-exit interviews done by think tanks and researchers in academia that may or not may capture the total aggregate picture given the sampling done by year group at the time

the survey was administered to JMOs. This must change in order for the Army to understand why officers are leaving the service.<sup>19</sup>

### **Meeting Army Requirements – Matching faces to spaces:**

The Army HRC is the program implementation office charged with manning the force with the right officer, at the right place, and at the right time. They take Army developmental strategy and policy directives from the Pentagon's personnel office (Army G1) and assign leaders based on their performance and potential to positions around the globe. This is a cyclical process achieved bi-annually based on Army manning requirements, which is more commonly referred to as 'meeting the needs of the Army.'

Naturally, the Army HRC does track its inventory of officers who are on hand vs. the requirements they must use them against to fill positions across the force. This is where HRC is charged with the mission to meet Army requirements by assigning the right person, with the right experience and skill sets at the right place and time in their developmental timeline to a vacant position. This is the Army's human capital or talent management system where officer talent supply meets demand by distributing it to accomplish the mission. In some cases requirements may be in excess of an available population and vice-versa given an officer's cohort year group – thus you have an over strength or under strength situation for that year in question.

A current example of such a personnel inventory snapshot can be seen at Figure 4 below. This OEMA (Office of Economic Manpower Assessment) chart depicts a mid-career officer shortage represented by a dotted line and a mid-career officer required strength represented by a solid line. The difference is represented by a shortage

shaded in red; this is commonly referred to as a “bathtub” result given its shape on the chart. This shortage of officers translates into Army requirements that are not filled due to a lack of population to fill them. In some cases the positions go unfilled or the tactical Army in the field fills them with personnel who are not representative of the rank and grade the position requires. This can lead to an officer corps that is promoted too quickly or with individuals placed into positions they are not yet ready to assume which can lead to career dissatisfaction and an early departure from service.

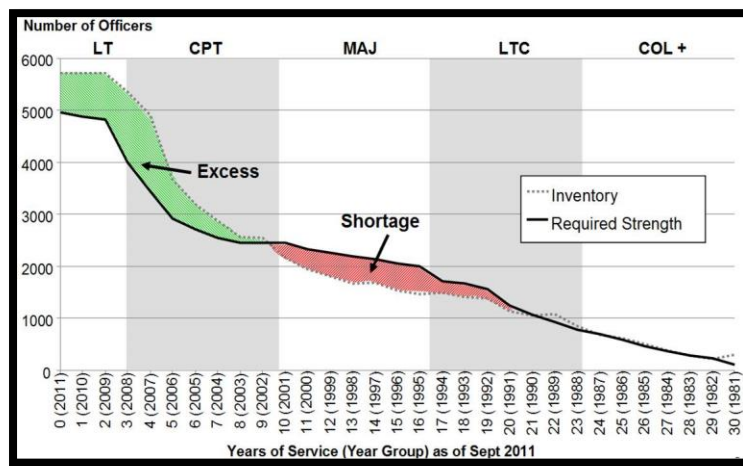


Figure 4<sup>20</sup>

The Army Human Resources Command (HRC) states these officer shortages both current as depicted in Figure 4 and projected as depicted in Figure 5 below represent shortages due to grade reduction requirements and changes in force structure. These changes coincide with recent decisions to reduce the size of the force by eliminating more brigade combat team headquarters elements which contain a higher proportion of senior grade personnel. Therefore, in future years there will be a shift from a shortage in Majors to a shortage in Captains. At present, this projection has the Army short 260 Captains for the 2009 year group cohort which is 4 years from now

in 2017. This does not take into account JMOs departing the Army early as their departure will only increase this gap and leave more positions empty across the force.

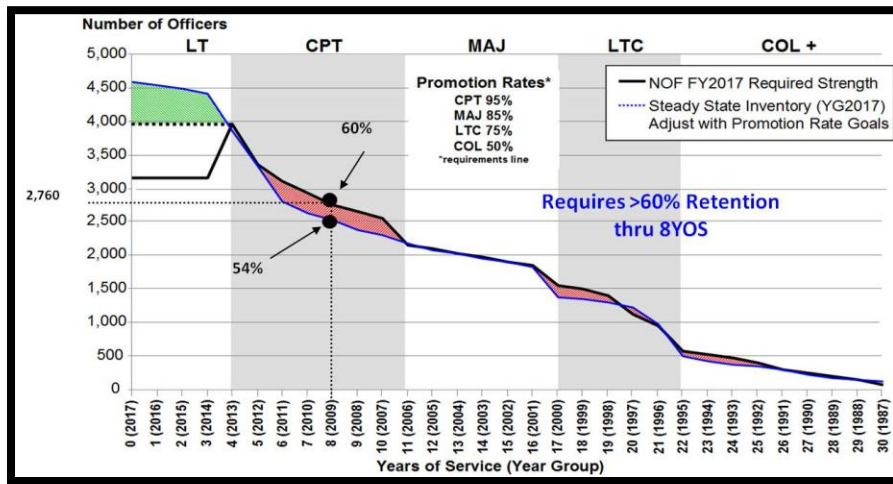


Figure 5

Those who claim the Army is losing talent and that it operates at a deficit will generally hear in response that the Army to some degree has always operated at a personnel deficit at one time or another in its history and still accomplishes its mission. Army Chief of Staff manning guidance ensures operating forces deployed in the field are fully manned to support the war and other prioritized operations which is why we have accomplished our assigned mission abroad.

However, what is not being said is also important; the bill payer for such mission accomplishment is the generating forces back home who are charged with training and educating the force. Generating force units operate at a deficit and are where the Army assumes its risk in officer shortages. Because of this, the Army seeks to correct this imbalance in the force coming out of 10+ years of war by rebalancing the officer corps talent pool. This creates a force of haves and have-nots as the better officers go to operational assignments and the lesser officers go to the generating force to educate

and train the next generation of talent. This creates a bi-furcated force compounded by the shortage in available officers which places the Army as a whole out of balance.

**Defining Talent Management:**

It is important to clearly define talent management for this junior officer population, the unit in which they serve, and the Army institution that assigns them. This definition will serve as a departure point for planning, analyzing, and managing a talented officer's career at each of these levels and will provide the transparency JMOs require so they receive the value and perspective necessary for continued service. At present the Army does not have an approved definition using these terms.<sup>21</sup> However, as previously mentioned, the ALDS states talent management complements leader development as it "looks to develop and put to best use well-rounded leaders based on the talents they possess – talents derived not only from operational experience but also from broadening assignments, advanced-civil schooling, professional military education, and demonstrated interests."<sup>22</sup>

The Army HRC considers officer leader development through broadening assignments (talent management in current terms) to be:

"the purposeful expansion of an Army professional's capabilities and understanding provided through opportunities internal and external to the Army throughout their career, that are gained through experiences and/or education in different organization cultures and environments resulting in an Army professional who can operate at the strategic level in multiple environments."<sup>23</sup>

This definition has largely been the practice at the Army HRC for the past two decades toward developing each year group of newly commissioned officers as they progress throughout their career. Research doesn't suggest that this definition in and of



itself is the issue; rather JMOs have issue with the implementation of the definition as it relates to their ability to control and choose the path of their career over time.

In the implementation of manning guidance tempered by this definition, you have several key guidelines the US Army HRC follows in distributing its talent across the force which is rooted in Army Regulation 600-3. They are:

- 18-24 months of key developmental (KD) time.
- Return to normalized officer timelines to allow officers to fill broadening positions.
- Encourage officers with high performance and potential to pursue competitive broadening.
- Develop our best candidates and not just best applicants.
- Closely manage those officers who receive an academic/intellectual developmental investment.<sup>24</sup>

The 2013 ALDS provides a model for the future development of the officer corps by way of training, education, and experience. The timeline chart at Figure 6 depicts how the individual officer, the US Army Human Resources Command, and the leadership in the field manage an officer's career across a standard 20 year career.

It is clear the Army plans on investing more time in broadening assignments (shaded in blue) for the officer talent pool it earmarks for future service after the successful completion of KD assignments. For a JMO, this equates to successful completion of a company command or equivalent based on a functional branch's definition of a KD assignment.

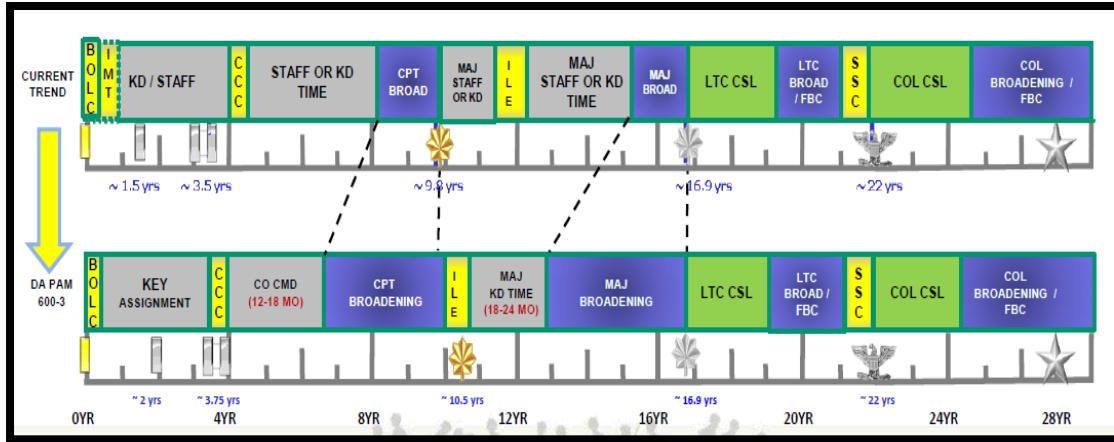


Figure 6<sup>25</sup>

Arguably, this lock step process has worked for many years in the development of Army officers. However, at this present time in Army history we have a cohort of talented JMOs who have been given autonomy in combat to make life or death decisions. The successful ones return to a system that does not necessarily empower them by providing them the choice and control they seek in order to map out their career as they see fit. This can lead to career dissatisfaction and an early departure from service when they have so much more to offer.

This is by no means an easy task as the Army HRC must balance time, space, and officer development towards meeting Army requirements in its quest to manage a highly experienced, combat seasoned officer corps who have a vast degree of knowledge, skills, and abilities born from a decade of combat. Most important is their challenge to identify hidden officer talents that may not be obvious on their record brief because of their exposure to a breadth and depth of jobs in both Iraq and Afghanistan, and then match those talents through online collaboration in the field to jobs available. Arguably, this will produce an officer corps that is more satisfied and is more likely to continue to serve in positions they are best suited beyond their initial ADSO.

### **Empower JMOs beyond location preference:**

As previously mentioned, JMOs are focused on location, location, location which is derived from their desire to have assignment flexibility to manage their own career and because this is their only measure of control in the assignment process. Preferences vary from officer to officer as they must consider not only their own but also the preferences of their family when considering where to be assigned next. In part, HRC has the opportunity and capability to create value and perspective by changing JMO thinking. By decentralizing the assignment selection process and by empowering the officer in the field, the Army gives JMOs what they desire – more control and a voice in the direction of their career, or put another way more flexibility. This can be achieved by providing more than just a duty location and an available assignment to an officer for consideration on a web page. By doing so, we force JMOs to focus on the location rather than the unit of assignment and the vacant position. Rightly so, they are only going to focus on location because that is the only amount of control we offer them. This must change if the Army is to increase the initial return on investment for JMOs to continue serving beyond their initial ADSO. This can be achieved by allowing the officers in the field to compete for assignments through a market mechanism process. A process by which field commanders interview JMOs as applicants for a vacant position, rather than an assignment officer at HRC sending an officer to an installation based on the content of their officer record brief. In other words, empower the commanders and the officers in the field to let the cream rise to the top. This will create a market that will determine those who are best suited and where they are to be assigned along their developmental timeline. Subsequently, it will create the value and

perspective laterally across the organization as well as vertically from the bottom up. If this strategic vision statement is to be matched by operational implementation, there must be a program that looks to best achieve the desired end state.

### **The Army Green Pages:**

The Army Green Pages (GP) may be just the program that leverages and empowers the talents and preferences of a millennial JMO corps and properly matches them to available jobs which can in turn create the value and perspective for these combat experienced JMOs to stay in the military beyond their initial ADSO.

In August of 2010, the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs and the Commanding General for the Army's Training and Doctrine Command directed the U.S. Army Office of Economic and Manpower Analysis (OEMA) to conduct a proof-of-concept piloting of the Army Green Pages. Designed by OEMA, GP is an "experimental web-based talent management environment to study behavioral responses to market-based incentives implemented within existing officer assignment practices."<sup>26</sup> In short, it empowers officers and units by giving them a stake in the assignment process by way of inputting personnel requirements and capabilities from both the unit and officer respectively for all to see. By doing so, it not only creates competition for talent among the units seeking to fill open assignments, but also provides simultaneous transparency of the jobs available to the officers seeking them. This is the empowering benefit to the officer and the unit commander. It also assists the Army HRC in finding the right person for the right position given an increase of data and information to make such a decision.

GPs provides the talent identification that goes well beyond a codified record brief which can be incomplete or incorrect. With GPs, officers update in real time their talent and experience on their webpage as he or she completes each tour and prepares for the next assignment cycle. In turn, this is made visible to the Army HRC and the units in the field seeking to fill an assignment with a particular skill set.

“The process is dynamic, iterative, and continuous as new talents and requirements are continuously uploaded to the web and made visible by all stakeholders in the process. As a talent management information system, GPs inventories officer talent supply and organizational talent demand, thus creating a marketplace for the alignment of both. See Figure 8 below for a graphic depiction of this operating concept.”<sup>27</sup>

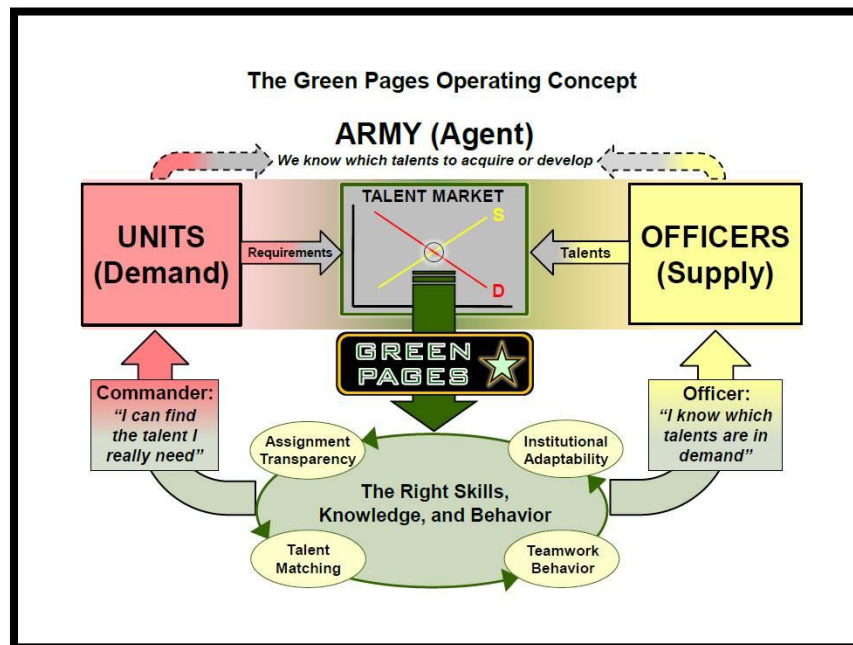


Figure 8

The main finding of the GPs pilot was that the process revealed “an abundance of granular and accurate talent information”<sup>28</sup> In other words; it identified the hidden

talent that exists across the force that would otherwise go unnoticed due to existing Army career models which lack the clarity needed to properly match talent to jobs available.

In terms of the officer, the unit, and the institution, GPs also does three important things. First, it provides a familiar web-based platform that gives JMOs access to jobs available across the Army. Second, it brings in the unit commanders as principals in the assignment process by way of interviews to determine the right fit based on a unit's mission. Third, it empowers officers to seek out jobs based on more than just a duty location, but rather to have a conversation with their potential new boss to see if the available position based on the duty description is right for them.

Most importantly, after interviewing with potential bosses, 49% of all officers changed their number one assignment preference after using GPs upon learning the commander had a position for them based on their talent and experience. Whereas previously their duty location preferences were based solely on personal desires for a geographic location. This kind of empowerment shaped officer preferences by giving them more control in the process which led to greater assignment satisfaction and performance at locations where JMOs are requested by the unit.<sup>29</sup>

However, not all commanders had the vision to see the value of such a talent management program as they grew up in an industrial era personnel management system. The GP pilot study results mentioned some unit commanders, "could not grasp the concept or need for such a talent management program and that those leaders are the product of an industrial era HR practice which promotes the 'interchangeable' officer paradigm. Their cultural muscle memory view of officer management is to send me any

officer and I'll develop him or her appropriately – that's what leaders do...since the current system produced me, and since I'm a talented and dedicated officer, the current system must be good enough."<sup>30</sup>

This is not intended to be a debate on whether or not the Army produces great leaders; rather it is aimed at highlighting that the Army is missing an opportunity to properly identify and place the leadership talent it possesses by matching available talent appropriately to the jobs available. Failure in this regard leads to officer inefficiency, reduced performance, lower job satisfaction, and eventually drives officers to depart the service early.<sup>31</sup>

Today's JMOs and the ones who follow are uniquely different than their predecessors. If the Army is to keep talent, it must consider the best way to identify, cultivate, and leverage it for an uncertain world as people, not weapons systems make the U.S. Army the best in the world.

**GPs as a new HR management policy - cost/benefit:**

In his arrival message in August 2003 as the 35<sup>th</sup> Army Chief of Staff, General Peter Schoomaker said it best, "The American Soldier remains indispensable. Our Soldiers are paramount and will remain the centerpiece of our thinking, our systems, and our formations."<sup>32</sup> Today's information age evolves faster than our institutions and doctrine can keep up. GP was designed to benefit and empower a millennial officer corps born of 10 years of combat who thrive on knowledge and control in fluid combat environments.

However, Green Pages is currently an outlier program not part of the global Army human resources strategy, and requires software certification funding for it to continue

across the Army writ large. Currently, “the limiting factor for GPs implementation is program certification that amounts to a cost of roughly 300 million dollars,”<sup>33</sup> which in an era of constrained budgets and cutbacks is less likely to be approved due to the looming uncertainty in the DoD fueled by sequestration.

It is worth mentioning that this is not a plea for a specific software implementation program, but rather a note that GPs has been tested and works as a model for empowering the field to make informed choices that are not based solely on location and the input of the Army HRC. That said, whatever is chosen moving forward for implementation should reflect the output of the GPs assignment tool.

However, if you subscribe to the General Schoomaker’s notion that Soldiers are the Army and they represent the centerpiece of our thinking, then it becomes abundantly clear what programs should continue and which ones cut as we move forward. Therefore, tough choices need to be made that focus on replacing outdated industrial age human resources management processes with ones that leverage information age practices tied to market based incentives in corporate America.

### **Corporate America Best Practices:**

Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel in a 03 April 2013 speech at the National Defense University recognizes this particular time in DoD history like the ones before it where after a major conflict, we look for ways to reduce our force in order to meet presidential and legislative mandates. In particular and most appropriate to this discussion he states that “the military is not, and should never be run like a corporation...but that does not mean we don't have a good deal to learn from what the



private sector has achieved over the past 20 to 30 years...which leads to more agile and effective organizations and more empowered junior leaders."<sup>34</sup>

Four high performing Fortune 500 companies represented across different market segments that invariably compare to the Army in size and scope were considered for their personnel practices in this research as they directly compete with the global market and the military for JMO talent.

It is ironic we find a best practice in this first company that the Army can use to potentially increase retention of its talent. Future's Inc. is a company that helps Soldiers transition out of the military by properly matching them to available jobs in the civilian marketplace through the use of a cloud based software platform.

### **Future's Inc.**

Originally started as a non-profit organization for teen career job matching opportunities 13 years ago, Futures Inc. of Durham, NC has become one of the premier military to civilian job matching companies for service members departing the military who are looking for a civilian job that best aligns with their military skills.

Futures Inc. CEO, Geoff Cramer states "our business sectors continuously tell us they struggle to match their job requirements and industry standards with the Army MOS skills...and current procedures to match Soldiers with their civilian jobs are inadequate and labor intensive...and the current 'cattle call' job fairs do not deliver a viable, scalable solution with the necessary return on investment for their time and resources."<sup>35</sup>

Taking this business sector plea into account, the team at Futures Inc. set out to develop a user-friendly virtual process for Soldiers and corporations alike that matches

military skills to civilian job requirements which in turn provide better placement and satisfaction for both employer and employee. Futures Inc. achieves this through the use of a cloud based proprietary skills latticing engine called *Pipeline* which is active on [www.H2H.jobs](http://www.H2H.jobs). Service members and employers alike go to the site and upload their skills and jobs available for matching by the *Pipeline* software and when complete, the software appropriately matches both principals for a potential interview either virtually or at the next hiring event.<sup>36</sup>

In 2012, the Army Career and Alumni Program (ACAP) hosted three hiring events using Futures Inc. software to match Soldiers to employers and the results were positive for both groups. More than half (54%) of the Soldiers who participated in the hiring event were matched using the *Pipeline software* and received offers from employers as a result their participation. 91% of employers stated they received a higher percentage of candidates who matched their critical skill requirements as opposed to traditional job fairs. Similarly, 96% of the Soldiers who participated in these events stated this process is more effective than traditional job fairs and by matching them to employers who are seeking their skills, they anticipated a job offer as a result.

Both the Army GPs and Future's Inc software models provide evidence for the need to properly match talent supply to demand. They allow accurate talent identification to occur while empowering the individual to focus on what organizations seek their talent as opposed to a discussion driven by location alone. By changing the assignment process, we change the way our JMOs think by giving them the control they desire to consider all factors that influence their career direction and leader development, not just assignment location alone.

## **Proctor & Gamble (P&G)**

Very similar to the U.S. Army's leader development model, P&G focuses on developing young adults straight out of college where 90% of their human capital is accessed for future growth. Equal to the Army, P&G develops their talent through education, training, and experience through a breadth of assignments. However, where P&G differentiates themselves from the Army is in the practice of assigning those young adults for professional development to continue. Although now a practice of the past, P&Gs leadership at various levels would make informal recommendations to young leaders as to where they should go next for their career development and promotion. In turn, the subordinate would take senior leader recommendations on blind faith that it was good for their career and then follow the recommendation. Laura Mattimore, P&Gs corporate HQs HR executive in charge of talent management states, "This is no longer the case, as we have found success in what we call talent forums among a triad of principals at various organizational levels who are comprised of the senior, the subordinate, and the HR manager."<sup>37</sup> These groups of principals now engage in an annual dialogue with the young employee in order to determine the best fit for assignment and future development. This process has proven successful across the P&G rank and file as it has led to an increase in retention of young employees at the 5-10 year mark which is the very same timeframe where the Army sees young JMOs depart the service after serving their initial ADSO.

P&G recognized early on the value of increased retention percentages which led to further statistical modeling to see why having such a dialogue was important. P&G learned the drivers of retention were as follows:

- a. Meaningful work – Young employees will sacrifice if what they are doing is value added and makes a difference in the organization.
- b. Personal well being – Is the value I am getting in return equal to the sacrifice I am making and am I being appreciated for that sacrifice.
- c. Learning in Growth – People want to work at P&G because they know they will learn, develop, and grow within the company.

Arguably, this is powerful information any high performing company would want to have but often struggles to obtain. The importance of these findings is not based solely in the content, but rather in the dialogue of talent forum that occurred which led to it. This model is congruent with the senior, the subordinate and the HR manager found in the Army GP initiative.

### **Price Waterhouse Coopers (PwC)**

PwCs approach to talent management spans from recruiting to alumni in what the organization refers to as their opportunity of a “whole lifetime” approach to human resources management. JoAnne Veech, the firm’s talent manager states, “even after a talented employee departs, as a PwC alumnus they still speak well of the company which translates into new hires. More than half of the new people PwC hires are attributable to alumnus outreach and referrals conducted with other companies.”<sup>38</sup>

This whole of a lifetime or best in class alumni approach to how they manage their people is tracked by their Saratoga division which is responsible for PwC’s global departure surveys. PwC’s leadership uses the information gained from these exit surveys to create the value and perspective for shaping their talent management strategy which has a direct impact on retention and messaging for other employees who may also consider leaving the company to work at another firm. As an innovative twist to gain more fidelity into why people leave, the Saratoga division also reaches out to

departing key and talented employees six months after their initial departure exit survey to inquire whether or not the grass is actually greener on the other side, and if PwC could have done anything differently to keep them on the team. PwC has found this to be most informative after the former employee moves on to another firm and has nothing to lose by providing a free and frank explanation behind why they really left the company in the first place.

As previously mentioned, the U.S. Army does not conduct formal exit interviews with standardized questions for rollup in the aggregate and when needed relies on surveys by think tanks and research institutes which may not capture the total attrition picture given the lack of survey continuity from year to year. This is worth taking note as a measure of being effective as well as efficient in an era of fiscal responsibility and constrained budgets. If the Army writes HR policy or offers personnel incentives they need to be implemented against continuous metrics that answer the problems the Army is trying to solve.

### **Deloitte and Touche (D&T)**

Similar to the other companies addressed thus far, D&T also sees the value in measuring what matters to their people who consider leaving or who have left the company. These exit survey metrics are incorporated into the development of their HR talent life cycle strategy which spans an employee's time with the company from accession to beyond as an alumnus.

In terms of talent matching, D&T is experimenting with what Jennifer Steinmann, D&T's Chief Talent Officer calls, "open talent markets". This is a formal yet informal process by which project team leaders interview potential new hires by allowing them to

bid on projects they wish to work based on their inherent skills and experience. This differs from D&T's centralized legacy system of an HR manager scanning a pile of resumes to determine the right person for the project. Steinmann goes on further to state, "we have found by providing a forum for open proposals our employees have a degree of control and buy-in to where they are going next in the company. This directly ties in to what we consider are the top three predictors of talent retention at D&T:

- a. The work I do is deemed important and meaningful.
- b. My leaders take an interest in my career.
- c. Can I make this position work in my life?"<sup>39</sup>

Steinmann reiterates that their corporate talent management strategy revolves back to these three overarching predictors which is driving the current millennial workforce to achieve a higher sense of purpose in the professional services base. This sentiment is congruent with previous assertions made by Strauss and Howe earlier in the paper which drive the millennial workforce's commitment to control and choice for the direction of their career.

### **Recommendations**

1. **Define Talent Management:** The Army HRC has provided a definition of leader development through broadening assignments as the model for a JMOs career path to take shape, grow and flourish. Without offering an explicit definition, the US Army Combined Arms Center 2013 ALDS states that talent management complements leader development as it takes into account the individual talents of an officer and the unique distribution of his or her skills, knowledge, and behaviors combined with the potential they represent.

These mutually exclusive definitions speak to process, but omit the daily task of managing inherent JMO talent so the right officer, with the right skill set can be assigned to the right job, at the right place and time. The Army must provide a clear documented definition of talent management that addresses process and implementation. However, it cannot leave out the means by which you will identify it, nor should be void of a mechanism that supports empowering the talent that exists in the organization.

The JMO, the unit commander, and the Army HRC are all stakeholders in the talent management continuum of a JMOs career path. Each plays an important role as principals in the managing a JMOs career as they equally process the prerequisite knowledge to make informed decisions that balance the needs of the officer and the Army.

At present, the Army does not have a doctrinal definition of talent management in those terms as the ones presented in this research blend the notion of leader development from the Army Combined Arms Center and the Human Resources Command across the tenets of training, education, and experience over time. I submit that a new definition be written which includes process and implementation of educating, training, and developing JMOs. This definition should include all process stakeholders as well as include a means by which JMOs can direct and control the path of their career. In the abstract, talent management is the placement of the right person, in the right job, and the right place and time. However, in a broader organizational sense, talent management is the system that aligns all of the Army's 'people' processes, performance evaluation, performance management, leader development, etc., so they consistently support the Army's overall strategy to execute its assigned missions.

It should be a bottom up, decentralized process definition, rather than a top down centralized one that empowers and reinforces the agile, innovative, creative officer to continue to serve. I submit this new process and implementation definition by way of the GP initiative provides the Army HRC with the required data and information necessary to match the right officer with the right job in his or her career developmental timeline. It also reinforces through empowerment the behavior of the type of officer the Army wants; a JMO who can think on their feet and get things done.

2. Implement a talent market mechanism: No two people are exactly the same and an officer's record brief does not properly identify the inherent talents of our JMO's born from a decade of combat. If the Army is to retain the talent it wants for the next war, then it must create a forum for JMOs to properly identify their talent. Proper talent identification is currently lacking Army wide and should be expanded to include all Army branches if we are to gain the necessary fidelity of the various types of talent we have in our ranks.

Once talent identification is achieved only then can field commanders make informed decisions on who is the best fit for a particular job by allowing JMOs to interview and compete among their peers for those available assignments. This will create the necessary market competition for the talent that is desired at various levels to rise to the top.

However, whenever there is a process change to a longstanding management program, you run the risk of second and third order unintended consequences occurring across your JMO population. Left unchecked, free range empowerment could create an attitude of I versus WE. In other words, what is in my best career interests, rather than



what is in the Army's best interests – even today they are never perfectly aligned. This is where a guiding senior leadership can help JMOs make smart decisions to create the value and perspective necessary to maintain a balance between I and WE.

It is worth reiterating that a talent market provides JMOs with the choice and control of managing their career by making them a principal in the assignment process rather than a recipient of it. Arguably, this will help rather than hinder the Army HRC's task of placing the right officer at the right place and time as it will lead to greater JMO career satisfaction and a desire for continued service due to the buy-in achieved from the officer, the unit commander, and the Army HRC.

The Army Green pages initiative is a proven test pilot program that provides the forum for proper talent identification and market competition to occur. All due diligence for funding and implementation needs to continue if we are to retain the agile, adaptive, and creative officer necessary to fight the next war. By maintaining the status quo, the Army is a risk to losing our experienced JMOs to a civilian market that recruits military talent.

3. Conduct formal exit interviews – Measure what matters: Make no mistake, the Army is an up or out system. Therefore, the Army does not endeavor to keep everyone as it expects attrition over the course of an officer's career at various levels. However, in order for the Army to create the appropriate incentives to retain personnel it wants, it must first know why their talent is leaving for a career in the civilian labor market. As mentioned, the Army does not conduct formal exit interviews of its departing officers, nor does it have a repository of data over time to show the trends or causes for their departure. If talent retention policy or initiatives are to be of benefit in the future, they

must understand and address the reasons driving the talent exodus if they are to be successful. To do otherwise, expends time and resources chasing an initiative that may not retain the leaders the Army needs and conversely may encourage keeping the ones it doesn't. The Army must depart from reliance on think tanks and academic institutions for this data as it is merely a snapshot in time and is not an indicator of aggregate trends or themes across cohort year groups.

A potential course of action to ensure no officer is left out in this process is to make these surveys a prerequisite to the clearance process which leads to the officer receiving their Department of Defense Form 214 (DD 214), the certification record of their military service upon departure. In addition, a follow up survey is recommended at the six month mark after departure to gain further fidelity into the reasons behind why officers decided to leave military service.

Lastly, once floors and ceilings are established across the broad spectrum of reasons outlining why our JMOs are departing the Army at ADSO, the Army should integrate the information gained from these surveys into the consideration and shaping of personnel policy that targets the trends and themes driving JMOs to leave.

The surveys in this paper were a snapshot in time and with different JMO populations. However, they still provide commonalities and trends which is all that is available at this point in time. The Army must talk to its departing JMOs preferably before they decide to leave. If not before, then as they leave and later at the six month mark to better understand their reasons for leaving the service. This can serve as a departure point for having a real discussion of how to retain our officer talent so Army policies can address the real issues driving the exodus.

4. Conduct Due Course Interviews: All too often, we ignore those who choose to stay when their opinion may be the one that matters most. Once a person generates an intention to leave, the likelihood that he acts upon it goes up dramatically. In addition to focusing on the departees, an effort should be made to elicit the input from those who decide to stay. Many civilian corporations are also starting to interview those who remain with the company by asking them why they are staying and what can be done to keep them before they generate an intention to leave.

### **Conclusion**

As stated, the future of America's next conflict is uncertain, but the mission is no less great. Given this uncertainty and the need for talent across all Army organizations, the Army must endeavor to fill all of its available billets with talent so as to eliminate or minimize an imbalance across the force. The Army as an institution must conduct formal exit and due course interviews to understand who it is that stays with and leaves our ranks. Most importantly, the Army must know why that talent is leaving, so that it can shape policy to retain and match the talent supply to the demand where necessary to meet those uncertain future national security needs.

This is not an issue of retaining the best and brightest as all of our officers have varying types of talent that blend and are required across many different job requirements. Rather, this is an issue of empowering officers to identify their inherent talents so field commanders and the institutional Army can properly match talent to the appropriate and available jobs that require it.

If Soldiers are the centerpiece of all the Army does, then Army programs and funding priorities should match senior leader rhetoric in order to retain and not lose the

JMO talent to a civilian labor market. This sets the conditions for the continued success of the officer and the institution he or she serves and facilitates career satisfaction and positive job performance. This also leads to maintaining and preserving the all volunteer force. To do otherwise violates the trust and care given to Army leaders to create the value and perspective necessary for a combat seasoned junior officer corps to lead the service into an uncertain future. This is a step in the right direction towards eliminating the stories of the young, bright, energetic officer who got away, and positively impacts JMO professional culture for years to come.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this research, a JMO is an officer who only serves to the term of his/her Army initial active duty service obligation and then departs the service. Depending on the term of their contractual obligation, this can be anywhere from three to five years.

<sup>2</sup> "Army Leader Development Strategy." *Army Leader Development Strategy*. US Army CAC, 03 June 2013. Accessed 01 July 2013. <http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/CAL/aIDS.asp>, p.4.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Arnold, Mark, "Don't Promote Mediocrity," *Armed Forces Journal* (May 2012), <http://armedforcesjournal.com/article/2012/05/10122486>

<sup>5</sup> Kane, Tim. *Bleeding Talent: How the US Military Mismanages Great Leaders and Why It's Time for a Revolution*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. Print.

<sup>6</sup> Interview with HRC Operations and Plans Division, US Army Human Resources Command, Fort Knox, KY., 18 June 2013.

<sup>7</sup> Falk, Sayce, and Sasha Rogers. *Junior Military Officer Retention, Challenges and Opportunities*. Foreignpolicy.com, Mar. 2011. Web. 03 June 2013. [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/files/fp\\_uploaded\\_documents/Falk-Rogers%20PAE%2003-11%20vF.pdf](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/files/fp_uploaded_documents/Falk-Rogers%20PAE%2003-11%20vF.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

<sup>9</sup> Kane, Tim. *Bleeding Talent: How the US Military Mismanages Great Leaders and Why It's Time for a Revolution*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. Print.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Army Green Pages Proof-of-Concept Pilot Report, "Using Regulated Market Mechanisms to Manage Officer Talent." Office of Economic and Manpower Analysis. 01 October 2012.

<sup>12</sup> C. Todd Lopez, "Brigade combat teams cut at 10 posts will help other BCTs grow", 25 June, 2013. Accessed 02 July 2013. [http://www.army.mil/article/106373/Brigade\\_combat\\_teams\\_cut\\_at\\_10\\_posts\\_will\\_help\\_other\\_BCTs\\_grow/](http://www.army.mil/article/106373/Brigade_combat_teams_cut_at_10_posts_will_help_other_BCTs_grow/)

<sup>13</sup> Tan, Michelle. "The Huge BCT Overhaul." *Army Times*, 02 July 2013.

<sup>14</sup> Fritzson, Art, Lloyd W. Howell, Jr., and Dov S. Zakheim. "Military of Millennials." *Strategy Business*. Booz Allen Hamilton, Nov.-Dec. 2007. Accessed 18 May 2013. <http://www.strategy-business.com/article/07401?gko=f1e94>

<sup>15</sup> Ibid

<sup>16</sup> US Army Human Resources Command, Leader Development Program Unit Brief. US Army HRC, Fort Knox, KY., 24 April 2013.

<sup>17</sup> Fritzson, Art, Lloyd W. Howell, Jr., and Dov S. Zakheim. "Military of Millennials." *Strategy Business*. Booz Allen Hamilton, Nov.-Dec. 2007. Accessed 18 May 2013. <http://www.strategy-business.com/article/07401?gko=f1e94>

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<sup>18</sup> Interview with select HRC Captain Assignment officers and branch chiefs, US Army Human Resources Command, Fort Knox, KY., 18 June 2013.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Interview with HRC Operations and Plans Division, US Army Human Resources Command, Fort Knox, KY., 18 June 2013.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> "Army Leader Development Strategy." *Army Leader Development Strategy*. US Army CAC, 03 June 2013. Accessed 01 July 2013. <http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/CAL/aIDS.asp>, p.3.

<sup>23</sup> US Army Human Resources Command, Leader Development Program Unit Brief. US Army HRC, Fort Knox, KY., 24 April 2013.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> "Army Leader Development Strategy." *Army Leader Development Strategy*. US Army CAC, 03 June 2013. Accessed 01 July 2013. <http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/CAL/aIDS.asp>, p.13.

<sup>26</sup> Army Green Pages Proof-of-Concept Pilot Report, "Using Regulated Market Mechanisms to Manage Officer Talent." Office of Economic and Manpower Analysis. 01 October 2012. p.i.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. p.5

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. p.11

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. p. 30

<sup>31</sup> Kane, Tim. *Bleeding Talent: How the US Military Mismanages Great Leaders and Why It's Time for a Revolution*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. Print.

<sup>32</sup> Peter J. Schoemaker, 35<sup>th</sup> Chief of Staff, Army Arrival Message, 1 Aug 2003, <http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/979626/posts>, Internet; accessed 13 September 2013.

<sup>33</sup> Interview with the Pentagon office of the Army Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, G1.,

<sup>34</sup> Castelli, Christopher J. *Pentagon Mulling Huge Cuts to the Defense Bureaucracy*. Insidedefense.com, 30 Apr. 2013. Web. 01 June 2013.

<sup>35</sup> Interview with Futures Inc. CEO Geoff Cramer, Futures Inc, Durham, NC., 05 August 2013

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Interview with HR Talent Management executive Laura Mattimore, Proctor & Gamble, Cincinnati, OH, 30 August 2013.

<sup>38</sup> Interview with HR Talent Management Executive JoAnne Veech, Price Waterhouse Coopers, New York, New York., 29 August 2013.

<sup>39</sup> Interview with HR Chief Talent Officer Jennifer Steinmann, Deloitte & Touche, San Francisco, CA., 16 September, 2013.