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AIR FORCE MENTORING:  
DEVELOPING LEADERS

By

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## *Preface*

This report addresses the Air Force's mentoring program and its purpose. Specifically, this research analyzes current Air Force mentoring policies and some suggestions on how to improve the mentoring program.

I thank many people involved in the conduct of this research. First and foremost, I thank a series of fine commanders who taught me the value of mentoring and building subordinate leadership skills. Lieutenant Colonels Steven Otto, Brendan Clare, Joseph Becker, Gregory Lengyel, and Richard Williams provided outstanding role models and inspiration. Their leadership and guidance opened my eyes to the benefits of mentoring and developing leaders. I thank Lieutenant Colonel Mark Jordan for focusing and provoking my thoughts on this subject. Finally, I acknowledge all of the countless peers and subordinates who taught me to teach them. It is for them that I strive to be a better leader. It is also for them that I strive to teach others to lead, for the freedom of our country lies in their hands.

### *Abstract*

The Air Force mentoring program should focus on developing subordinate leadership skills. Current Air Force mentoring instructions substitute career building for leadership development. This substitution distracts leaders from maximizing the leadership potential of Air Force personnel. Developing and institutionalizing mentoring programs focused on building and improving airmen's leadership skills would greatly benefit the Air Force.

The methods used to conduct this research include literature reviews, personal interviews, and a comparison of leadership development programs. The literature review covers current Air Force and Army instructions, civilian and military writings, and interviews with Air Force officers who have commanded Air Force squadrons. Their statements are not part of a scientific survey; nonetheless, they indicate problems in Force leadership development programs. Other interviews were conducted with Air Command and Staff College leadership specialists who dedicate their time teaching leadership to military officers. The instruction review and interviews illustrate that Air Force mentoring programs substitute career management for leadership development. Furthermore, many indications suggest that mentoring programs have not been institutionalized. In contrast to Air Force programs, Army and Marine basic doctrine, Army instructions, military and civil leadership literature emphasize the need for leadership development. I suggest that the Air Force needs to shift the mentoring focus from career development to leadership development. Although many officers rise through the ranks and learn the value of building subordinate leadership skills on their own, creating a mentoring

program focused on developing leadership skills emphasizes the importance of leadership in the Air Force mission.

## **Chapter 1**

### **Subordinate Leaders**

On November 14, 1965, the men of Lieutenant Colonel Harold G. Moore's 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, fought for their lives in Vietnam's Ia Drang Valley. On one isolated part of the battlefield, the North Vietnamese soldiers (NVA) assaulted Lieutenant John Geoghegan's 2nd Platoon of Charlie Company. Clinton S. Poley, assistant gunner to Specialist 4 James C. Comer on one of 2nd Platoon's M-60 machine guns, recalls the chaotic scene:

When I got up something hit me real hard on the back of my neck, knocked my head forward and my helmet fell off in the foxhole. I thought a guy had snuck up behind me and hit me with the butt of a weapon it was such a blow. Wasn't anybody there; it was a bullet from the side or rear. I put my bandage on it and the helmet helped hold it on. I got up and looked again and there were four of them with carbines, off to our right front. I told Comer to aim more to the right. After that I heard a scream and I thought it was Lieutenant Geoghegan.<sup>1</sup>

The scream, however, was not Lieutenant Geoghegan's: he was already dead. Alone, Poley and Comer, without an officer in charge, faced the onslaught of NVA. Fortunately, Lieutenant Colonel Moore prepared these men for just such a situation. Lieutenant Colonel Moore knew that the survival and success of his unit depended on the leadership skills of each 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry member. From majors down to private first class (PFC), Lieutenant Colonel Moore concentrated on developing their leadership skills.

There was one bit of sobering reality that I insisted be introduced at every level in this training. We would declare a platoon leader dead and let his sergeant take over and carry out the mission. Or declare a sergeant dead and have one of his PFCs take over running the squad. We were training for war, and leaders are



killed in battle. I wanted every man trained for and capable of taking over the job of the man above him.<sup>2</sup>

Like the leaderless Poley and Comer, 7<sup>th</sup> Calvary soldiers fought in small groups and by themselves as formal leaders met their fate or were separated in the furious battle. Despite being cut off from their leaders, subordinate stepped in and filled leadership positions providing life saving cohesion and direction. Thus, 1st Battalion had the leadership to fight on, defeating wave after wave of NVA charges. Charlie Company started the battle with five officers and 106 men. Two days later, Charlie Company's senior ranking man was Platoon Sergeant Robert Jemison: all officers and senior NCOs were dead.<sup>3</sup> However, throughout the battalion men like Poley and Comer, although not official leaders by rank or authority, used their leadership skills to overcome the chaos of the battle.

Subordinate leadership greatly contributed to the survival and ultimate battlefield victory of 1st Battalion's 450 men over 2000 NVA in spite of the loss of many leaders. In the Ia Drang Valley, men assumed leadership positions throughout the ranks. They did so because Lieutenant Colonel Moore took the time in training to develop the leadership skills of each soldier. Lieutenant Colonel Moore did not lead subordinates: he led leaders.

Lieutenant Colonel Moore mentored his subordinates and developed their leadership skills. He knew that improving their leadership abilities increased his unit's effectiveness. The concept of building leadership skills through mentoring is neither new nor unique to the military. In fact, the concept of subordinate leadership reaches across time and professions. The statement that "every French soldier carries a marshal's baton in his knapsack"<sup>4</sup> displays Napoleon's understanding of the leadership potential in all subordinates. Furthermore, John Maxwell, founder of the leadership think-tank INJOY, preaches the concept of developing subordinate leaders. "Add ten followers to your organization and you have the power of ten people. Add ten

leaders to your organization, and you have the power of ten leaders times all the followers and leaders *they* influence.”<sup>5</sup>

The subordinate leadership concept recognizes that all members contribute more to an organization when they are empowered with leadership skills. For example, the United States Marine Corps leadership “...philosophy requires competent leadership at all levels. A centralized system theoretically needs only one competent person, the senior commander, who is the sole authority. A decentralized system requires leaders at all levels to demonstrate sound and timely judgment.”<sup>6</sup> The US Marine Corps recognizes the need to build leadership skills at all levels. In the decentralized-execution structure of the United States military, success depends on leadership development throughout the ranks. Through a process of mentoring, superior leaders spend the time and effort to improve the leadership abilities of all subordinates. While the concept of mentoring to build subordinate leaders proved its worth in many examples like the 7<sup>th</sup> Calvary Ia Drang Valley battle, the US Air Force fails to maximize the benefits of mentoring.

The Air Force mentoring system does not meet the challenge of building subordinate leaders. This research concludes that the Air Force mentoring system is too narrow in focus, concentrating more on career progression than leadership development. Furthermore, it appears that mid-level officers (Captain through Lieutenant Colonel) have not institutionalized Air Force mentoring programs. Creating an effective mentoring program focused on building subordinate leaders would benefit current Air Force operations and invest in the future of Air Force leadership.

This paper analyzes these conclusions in three parts. A discussion on the importance of mentoring provides a comparison for the current Air Force mentoring program. The second part reviews Air Force mentoring programs and identifies problems in their practice. These data

were compiled through a literature review of regulations, informal surveys, and interviews with Air Force officers that have commanded squadrons or were deeply involved in Air Force leadership programs. The results of this analysis show that the Air Force mentoring programs focus on career management and many senior officers do not accept mentoring as an institution. The third portion proposes a leadership centric Air Force mentoring program.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Moore, Lt Gen (Ret) Harold G., and Joseph L. Galloway. *We Were Soldiers Once...And Young* (New York: Random House, 1992), 5.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 23.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 165.

<sup>4</sup> Bonaparte, Napoleon. Attributed. From John Bartlett, *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2002), 387.

<sup>5</sup> Maxwell, John C. *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998), 208.

<sup>6</sup> *Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 1* (United States Government, 1997), 81.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Defining Mentoring**

#### **The Importance of Developing Leaders**

The success of the 7<sup>th</sup> Calvary in the Ia Drang Valley battle provides an outstanding example of why the Air Force needs to develop subordinate leaders. However, the benefits of developing leaders go far beyond the battlefield success of the 7<sup>th</sup> Calvary. Developing leadership abilities in subordinate officers multiplies a leader's influence, invests in the future, and improves retention.

Leaders reap immediate benefits from developing subordinate leaders by increasing their overall influence in an organization. A leader who does not develop subordinate leaders relies solely on his leadership abilities to run an organization. As organizations grow, a leader's influence or ability to lead effectively begins to diminish in the lower sections of the organization's hierarchy. To compensate, a leader influences lower echelons through managers. Decisions come from the top down and flow through the managers for implementation. This places great responsibility on the shoulders of the leader for he must not only run the organization, providing direction and vision, but he must also be familiar enough with the details of the lower echelons to make effective leadership decisions for them. This is a very difficult and inefficient leadership method, for few leaders have the ability or time to know enough about every level in an organization to make appropriate decisions. An alternative for the leader is to

develop the lower level managers and make them leaders in their own right. Each manager acting as a subordinate leader allows the leader to delegate authority to lower levels but continue to provide overall direction for the organization. The subordinate leaders, empowered with new leadership skills and the direction from their leader, implement the leader's policies in their sections, increasing productivity and efficiency. Furthermore, having learned from their developmental experiences, these subordinate leaders know the benefit of developing more leaders below them. Now the leader of the organization effectively influences every portion of the organization, for each subordinate leader, taught by the leaders above them, uses their new leadership skills to improve the unit's effectiveness. Additionally, relieved for the burden of making decisions for every level, the leader can focus on steering the organization towards a more productive future. John Maxwell describes this as the Law of Multiplication. "Add ten followers to your organization and you have the power of ten people. Add ten leaders to your organization, and you have the power of ten leaders times all the followers and leaders *they* influence."<sup>1</sup> The leader who builds subordinate leader reaps immediate benefits as these new subordinate leaders multiply in the organization, improving overall productivity and efficiency.

A second benefit of building subordinate leaders lies in the payback to the organization on leadership investment. Fortunes are not built in a day and neither are leaders. People amass fortunes by investing small amounts of money and effort over long periods. The earlier one starts investing money, the more that money works for them over time, accruing interest and multiplying its worth. The same principle applies to leaders and leadership development. "Leadership is developed daily, not in a day."<sup>2</sup> Starting leadership development early in a career yields tremendous benefits in the future. Young leaders, taught and guided by senior leaders on a daily basis, test their fledgling leadership skills as they develop and mature. By the time they

reach higher leadership positions, they have amassed a wealth of leadership knowledge and experience. The Army recognizes and promotes this early development “so that growth opportunities are available from the earliest days of a soldier...”<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, the lessons these leaders pass on to the next generation of subordinate leaders include not only all of those lessons they were taught but also the additional lessons they learned on their own along the way. This process continues to repeat itself; compounding leadership experience and building a leadership knowledge base that passes on to subsequent subordinate leaders.

Finally, subordinate leadership development improves retention. General Hal Hornburg, addressing the Air Command and Staff College, related the top ten reasons enlisted and officer troops leave the Air Force. Both identified mid-level leadership in their top ten reasons for separating, with enlisted troops ranking it fourth and officers ninth.<sup>4</sup> While further research could determine why mid-level leadership poses such a problem, one can infer that improving mid-level leadership would reduce its negative impact on separations. Developing officers’ leadership ability earlier in their careers would predictably improve their mid-level leadership abilities. At the very least, a mid-level leadership improvement would reduce the negative impact leadership has on retention. At the best, this leadership improvement would actually retain airmen.

## **Developing Leaders**

Leadership is a learned skill. Representing a vast amount of leadership research, leadership theorists Richard Hughes, Robert Ginnet, and Gordon Curphy stress the importance of education and experience in leadership development.<sup>5</sup> While experience is relatively self-explanatory, defining education demands some attention. Education comes from many sources, two of which are formal education and informal education. Formal education refers to academic studies, such

as the study of theories and application in controlled exercises. Informal education, however, stems from a variety of sources. One source of informal education is a superior leader. Superior leaders play an influential role in the informal education of developing leaders. Specifically, a senior leader has the authority and ability to teach young leaders how to apply the formal lessons of leadership.

Many examples illustrate the concept of using informal methods to reinforce formal education. For example, consider the early career of a new Air Force pilot. After graduating from flight school, a new pilot usually enters a form of apprenticeship upon arrival at an operational squadron. Fighter pilots usually fly as wingmen for a period before progressing to flight lead. Pilots flying larger aircraft with crews fly as co-pilots before advancing to aircraft commander. During these periods, senior pilots teach the new pilots how to apply the skills learned in flight school. This education of new pilots by senior pilots represents an informal teaching process.

In terms of leadership, a more experienced leader can teach subordinate leaders how to apply their leadership skills. In short, subordinate leaders learn the science of leadership in formal education but learn the art of leadership informally from a superior leader. The Air Force defines this as mentoring. According to AFI 36-3401, mentoring is a “relationship in which a person with greater experience and wisdom [the mentor] guides another person [the subordinate] to develop both personally and professionally.”<sup>6</sup>

In order to develop effective subordinate leaders, both a formal and informal education program must exist. If a subordinate leader finishes a formal leadership education and enters an organization with no follow-on informal education, his leadership education is incomplete. The responsibility to create this informal program lies with the leader of the organization.

Furthermore, it is an obligation to do so. Current leaders and researchers emphasize this point. “Teaching is your number one job as a leader.”<sup>7</sup> General Hornburg stressed this concept to mid-level Air Force officers, emphasizing their duty to mentor and develop young leaders. Also speaking at the same college, Lieutenant General James L. Campbell felt that what he taught to subordinate that helped developed future military leadership would define his legacy.<sup>8</sup> Finally, William Cohen professes that “Teachership and leadership go hand-in glove. The leader must be willing to teach skills, to share insights, and experiences, and to work very closely with people to help them mature and be creative...By teaching, leaders can inspire, motivate, and influence subordinates at various levels.”<sup>9</sup>

Leadership is a learned skill that improves with formal and informal education. Superior leaders have an obligation to educate subordinate leaders as a supplement to their formal education. The means of completing this informal education vary; however, one element that remains the same regardless of the type of education is the role of feedback.

Feedback is a critical element of any mentoring program.

Mentoring is a communicative process. It is not a method for shooting information at a person who writes down every word. The ideal mentor is not a guru perched motionless atop a remote Himalayan mountain peak, sitting with legs folded and naval in mind, dispensing wisdom periodically like a fortune-telling vending machine. Mentoring involves genuine two-way communication between mentor and protégé on a protracted, continuing basis.<sup>10</sup>

From the perspective of the protégé, feedback from the mentor is essential to understanding how to improve skills and to gauge the progress of improvement. A lack of feedback leaves the protégé with no road map to follow and no measure of improvement. The feedback can be formal or informal, but must have the mentoring leadership development goal in mind.

Furthermore, the feedback must be two-way, going down from the more experienced and coming up from the protégé. Looking at feedback from the mentor’s point of view, the flow of



feedback from the protégé is essential to the protégé's growth. This feedback serves three purposes. First, it allows the mentor to gauge the development of the protégé, confirming that the protégé understands the lessons and is developing the desired skills. Furthermore, with two-way communication, the protégé can ask questions, use the mentor as a sounding board, or explore new concepts or thoughts. Second, it allows the mentor to adapt methods to improve the program for a protégé who is not developing adequately. Third, the two-way feedback process is a lesson in leadership itself. Developing leaders need to learn how to provide feedback up the chain of command. Consider the following observation by General S.L.A Marshall:

An army in which juniors are eager because they have found it easy to talk to their superiors will always generate a two-way informational current.

Such an army will in time develop senior commanders who will make it their practice to get down to troops in quest of information which may be used for the common good.<sup>11</sup>

Notice the lessons within lessons inferred by General Marshall's statement. First, he stresses the role of two-way communication. One of the best ways to open lines of communication is for a senior leader to provide either formal or informal feedback to subordinate leaders. Second, he points out that by seeking the feedback from juniors, the leader teaches the junior the importance of providing feedback up the chain of command. Finally, General Marshall incorporates the concept of investing in the future by his belief that two-way feedback will eventually result in a better leadership environment.

### **Putting It All Together**

After reviewing the importance of developing subordinate leaders; understanding the role of mentoring in leadership development; identifying developing subordinate leadership as a primary

responsibility of leaders; and the role of feedback in the mentoring process; we can now define what an Air Force leadership development, or mentoring, program should be.

First, the program should demonstrate the importance of developing all subordinates' leadership skills. Leaders of all ranks need to understand that leadership development helps them do their job better; invests in the future of the Air Force; and improves retention. Second, the program should use mentoring as the informal educational process to continue the formal leadership education programs. Third, the mentoring program must be based on a robust feedback system directed at building two-way communication that aids the subordinate and the superior in the leadership building process. Furthermore, the program should emphasize the importance of creating a feedback environment Air Force wide in which superiors seek feedback from subordinates and subordinates understand their responsibility to provide feedback to superiors. These criteria will serve to evaluate current Air Force mentoring programs.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Maxwell, John C. *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998), 208.

<sup>2</sup> Marshall, S.L.A., General. *Men Against Fire*, (Alexandria, VA: Byrd Enterprises, Inc., 1947), 48-49.

<sup>3</sup> FM 22-100, *Army Leadership*, (United States Government, 1999), 7-23.

<sup>4</sup> Hornburg, Hal, General, USAF. Speech at the Air Command and Staff College 11 April 2003.

<sup>5</sup> Hughes, Richard L., Robert C. Ginnett, and Gordon J. Curphy. *Leadership: Enhancing the Lessons of Experience*. (Boston, MA: Irwin McGraw Hill, 1999) 79.

<sup>6</sup> AFI 36-3401, *Air Force Mentoring*, 1 June 2000, 1.

<sup>7</sup> Hornburg, Hal, General, USAF. Speech at the Air Command and Staff College 11 April 2003.

<sup>8</sup> Campbell, James L., Lieutenant General, USA. Speech at the Air Command and Staff College 14 April 2003.

<sup>9</sup> Cohen, William A. *The Art of the Leader*, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990), 124.

## Notes

<sup>10</sup> Kinich, John C. and Richard I. Lester. *Leadership and the Art of Mentoring: Tool Kit for the Time Machine*, (Journal of Leadership, no. 1-2; reprint in AU-24, Concepts for Air Force Leadership, AU Press, 2001), 123.

<sup>11</sup> Marshall, S.L.A, General. *Men Against Fire*, (Alexandria, VA: Byrd Enterprises, Inc., 1947), 119.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Air Force Mentoring Programs**

The Air Force mentoring program is comprised of two closely related AFIs: 36-3401, *Air Force Mentoring*, and 36-2611, *Officer Professional Development*.

#### **Air Force Instruction 36-3401, *Air Force Mentoring***

According to Lieutenant Colonel Sharon Latour, General (ret) Fogleman created AFI 36-3401 to address Air Force retention problems.<sup>1</sup> Directed at company grade officers and up, AFI 36-3401 focuses on helping officers understand what they need to do to build successful Air Force careers.

The written goal of AFI 36-3401 is “to help each person reach his or her full potential, thereby enhancing the overall professionalism of the Air Force.”<sup>2</sup> AFI 36-3401 attempts to achieve this goal through mentoring. The mentoring relationship, as defined in the last section, should prepare subordinates for the increased responsibilities they will assume as they progress in their careers. According to the AFI, mentor responsibilities include the discussion of “performance, potential, and professional development plans...”<sup>3</sup>

Once a mentoring relationship is established, the mentor should expose the subordinate to a wide variety of subjects. Among these are career guidance, technical and professional development, leadership, Air Force history and heritage, air and space power doctrine, strategic vision, and joint war fighting.<sup>4</sup> Free and open communication enables this process, providing

supervisors and subordinates the opportunity to discuss careers, performance, duties, and missions. Supervisors have several programs at their disposal to focus attention on a subordinate's professional development. Among these are "performance feedback, professional military education (PME) programs, academic education opportunities, assignment policies, recognition programs, and the individual's own personal development actions."<sup>5</sup> Performance feedback should cover a subordinate's performance, potential, and professional development. The instruction recommends that mentors pay particular attention to assignments and job levels and carefully study the Air Force career path pyramid and experience matrix.<sup>6</sup>

The latter parts of AFI 36-3401 covers specific information covering PME, professional associations, performance feedback, promotion selection, the assignment system, and the recognition programs. These sections, constituting the bulk of the instruction, provide a framework for a supervisor to use when mentoring.

### ***Air Force Instruction 36-2611, Officer Professional Development***

The goal of AFI 36-2611 "is to develop a well rounded, professionally competent officer corps to meet current and future mission requirements."<sup>7</sup> Fundamentally, this instruction attempts to create harmony between an officer's aspirations, preferences, and professional development with long-term Air Force requirements. Furthermore, the instruction states, "the Air Force needs career oriented officers concerned with their own growth."<sup>8</sup>

In short, the officer professional development program lays out career paths of officers in their respective specialties. The program "involves gaining the necessary depth and breadth of experience to improve performance and potential for increased responsibility."<sup>9</sup> The Air Force recommends different types of assignments for officers depending on their career field. AFPAM 36-2630 describes the assignments and their proper place in a career. This provides a general

path and timeframe for the career development of officers, aiding the officer in choosing among the various education, training, and assignment options in the Air Force.

Chapter 8, the Commander's Involvement Program (CIP), describes the commander's "responsibilities with respect to the professional development and assignment[s]..."<sup>10</sup> Through the CIP, the commander counsels subordinate officers on professional development and the type, level, and timing of assignments. The objective of the CIP is to "ensure the commander's or supervisor's input on an officer's qualifications is clearly communicated to the officer."<sup>11</sup> Superior officers should focus on directing a subordinate to the "right next job," determined by "identifying the stepping stones on the way to the officer's ultimate career goal."<sup>12</sup> Included in this phase is the responsibility of the commander to meet the professional growth of officers with a "well-balanced combination of professional expertise, leadership, and management skill-qualities that the commander cultivates."<sup>13</sup>

Similar to AFI 36-3401, this instruction continues with more detailed discussions of the evaluations, performance feedback, promotions, PME, and career broadening and joint assignments.

### **Air Force Leadership Programs in Practice**

With a basic understanding of AFI 36-3401 and 36-2611, we can now look at these two programs in practice. In short, many indications point to problems in applying these programs. First, mid-level officers have not institutionalized either program. Second, mid-level officers appear not to understand the benefits of mentoring.

Mid-level leaders have failed to institutionalize either mentoring program. Lieutenant Colonel Sharon Latour believes that the Air Force never properly embedded the mentoring programs.<sup>14</sup> She contrasts the implementation of the mentoring program to the development of

the Air Force core values. Lieutenant Colonel Latour claims that the leadership behind the core values embedded these values in the Air Force through a variety of mechanisms, such as pamphlets, education, and discussions. Mentoring, on the other hand, never received the backing from the leaders who developed it. An apparent lack of awareness of the instructions and a failure to follow the programs on the part of mid-level officers supports Lieutenant Colonel Latour's conclusions. Five lieutenant colonels, all squadron commanders at one time or another, were interviewed for this research. Of those five, only one was aware of a mentoring AFI. While by no means a scientific study, if these squadron commanders did not know of a mentoring AFI, then how can they properly apply it? Furthermore, is the 4 out of 5 ratio indicative of an unawareness of mentoring programs in the Air Force as a whole? Another informal survey suggests that this 4 out of 5 ratio does indicate that many commanders are not aware of the mentoring program or choose not to adhere to it. During a speech on mentoring, Major Frank Palmisano, an instructor at the Air Command and Staff College, asked an audience of about 500 Air Force majors, representing the top 20% of their rank, if they had received feedback from a supervisor. Approximately 40% of the majors indicated that they had received any feedback.<sup>15</sup> These results indicate a disturbing trend. First, mid-level officers seem to be reaching squadron levels of command with no knowledge of or desire to follow mentoring instructions. This is reflected in the fact that only 40% of the top 20% of majors receive formal feedback, correlating to approximately 8 out of 100 majors being mentored in accordance with Air Force instructions. Apparently, most of these officers' previous leaders did not know of the mentoring instructions or chose not to follow them. The amount of officers receiving proper mentoring will most likely decrease towards the bottom of the rank structure. The question begs to be asked: how many lieutenants receive any mentoring?

Another indicated problem is that mid-level officers do not understand the importance of feedback. As described in the instructions, feedback is a key element for both mentoring and OPD. However, indications are that few officers receive valuable feedback. One lieutenant colonel described what little feedback he received as grossly inflated, lacking in both integrity and effectiveness.<sup>16</sup> Referring to the Air Force Form 724B, Company Grade Officer Performance Feedback Worksheet, he described his feedback form as always being “fire walled.” In essence, his commanders providing feedback were saying that he did not need to improve in any area. It was not until this officer served under an Army supervisor that he received honest and effective feedback. In contrast, after coming to an appreciation of mentorship on his own, subordinates often thanked him for either being the first to provide feedback or the first to provide honest feedback. Echoing his remarks, another lieutenant colonel believed “there is too much emphasis placed on the form rather than thought processes and real analysis. Unfortunately, too many leaders don't want to do the difficult but essential job of delivering bad news.”<sup>17</sup> Yet another ex-squadron commander remarks, “The AFI avoids talking about the reality that sometimes mentoring is not going to be pleasant. You can talk all you want about career tracks and what school to go to but the reality is sometimes you've got to tell a guy to stop working on his PME or Masters because he needs to upgrade to instructor and right now his flying skills [are poor] because he's off the schedule twice a week for school.”<sup>18</sup> These statements all indicate that if feedback is given, it is often ineffective because it lacks integrity.

In sum, Air Force mentoring programs are plagued with two problems. Evidence suggests that many commanders are not aware of or choose not to follow mentoring programs. Furthermore, it appears that many commanders do not offer honest, effective feedback.



## **Summary and Analysis**

An analysis of these programs combined with problems indicated in their practice reveals that Air Force mentoring programs do not meet the leadership development criteria listed in the first section. First, Air Force leaders do not recognize the benefits of mentoring subordinate leaders. Second, the Air Force mentoring program concentrates on building careers instead of leadership

First, the Air Force and many of its leaders do not understand or maximize the benefits of the mentoring. For example, the AFIs do not attempt to build leadership at all levels. The mentoring program identifies the most appropriate time to start a mentoring relationship as when a junior officer has three to four years experience.<sup>19</sup> Contrast this to the concept of investing in the future by concentrating efforts on subordinate leadership development as soon as an officer enters the Air Force. Furthermore, the informal surveys conducted at ACSC indicate less than desirable mentoring results from senior leaders. Officers who understood the personal benefits of mentoring subordinates would make efforts to capitalize on its advantages. Additionally, since feedback is a critical element of mentoring, if a simple majority of senior officers recognized the benefit of mentoring junior officers, then the majority of junior officers would receive some form of mentoring feedback. If that same majority of senior officers understood the importance of mentoring to subordinate leadership development and the Air Force as a whole, then the integrity of the feedback system would improve drastically. However, few senior officers seem to understand the benefits or necessity of mentoring subordinate leaders or creating an effective feedback environment.

Second, the Air Force mentoring program focuses on building careers instead of leadership skills. The genesis of the mentoring program suggests that building the officer's career was its

original goal. An article written in 1979 states mentoring ultimately facilitates the “upward mobility for the most promising officers.”<sup>20</sup> AFI 36-2611 propagates career building by focusing on an officer’s career path instead of leadership development. This career oriented thought process culminates in the AFI 36-3401 recommendation for mentors to “pay particular attention to assignment and job levels when mentoring subordinates on career development and carefully study the Air Force career path pyramid and experience matrix.”<sup>21</sup> Although AFI 36-3401’s introduction gives a cursory nod to developing leadership, its following sections concentrate on the career pyramid with no focus on developing leadership skills. AFI 36-2611, expanding upon the same topics covered in AFI 36-3401, does not offer any recommendations on leadership development. In short, both AFIs guide an officer along a career path that will benefit the Air Force. This limits the mentoring program. The mentoring program should expand its goal, focusing on building subordinate leaders with career management as a secondary objective.

Another problem with the mentoring program, closely related to the concentration on career development, is that the Air Force implies that leadership starts at the unit command level. Thus, the Air Force prepares officers for command instead of building leadership for any role. In essence, the Air Force concentrates more on an officer’s future career rather than what role the officer fills at the time. Thus, the Air Force ignores the importance of its neophyte leaders in the leadership pyramid or officers who do not hold command positions. The Air Force does not teach lieutenants how to fill their roles as lieutenants. However, the Air Force does teach them how to prepare for more responsibility and better future careers. By not emphasizing the important leadership role of junior officers, the Air Force fails to develop their leadership ability. This is evident in the lack of feedback received by the majors at ACSC and the five lieutenant colonels interviewed for this research. Unlike Napoleon’s concept that every man carries a

marshal's baton, the Air Force places the baton squarely in the hands of the unit commander: the Air Force holds onto the leadership baton until an officer has at least 3-4 years of experience and then it hands it out sparingly.

In order to develop young leaders the Air Force mentoring programs needs to change. First, the Air Force must shift the focus from career management to leadership development. Second, the Air Force must institutionalize the program to create an environment in which all officers understand the benefits of and their role in subordinate leadership development. The second portion of this paper develops the concept of building subordinate leaders and offers a suggestion on how to institutionalize a better mentoring program.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Latour, Sharon, Lieutenant Colonel USAF. Interview, 14 February, 2003.

<sup>2</sup> AFI 36-3401, *Air Force Mentoring*, 1 June 2000, 1.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>7</sup> AFI 36-2611, *Officer Professional Development*, 1 April 1996, 5.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 20.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 20.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 20.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 20.

<sup>14</sup> Latour, Sharon, Lieutenant Colonel USAF. Interview, 14 February, 2003.

<sup>15</sup> Palimsano, Frank, Major, USAF. Informal survey conducted at the Air Command and Staff College, Maxwell, AFB, AL, October, 2002.

<sup>16</sup> Becker, Joseph D. Lieutenant Colonel, USAF. Interview, 1 February 2003.

<sup>17</sup> Otto, Steven R. Lieutenant Colonel, USAF. E-mail correspondence, 2 February 2003.

<sup>18</sup> Clare, Brendan G. Lieutenant Colonel, USAF. E-mail correspondence, 9 February 2003.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 113.

<sup>20</sup> Young, James D., Lieutenant Colonel, USAF, *Use of a Mentor to Enhance Professionalism in the Air Force*, Reprint in AU-24, *Concepts for Air Force Leadership*, (Maxwell Air Force Base: Air University Press, 2001), 112.

<sup>21</sup> AFI 36-3401, *Air Force Mentoring*, 1 June 2000, 3.

## Notes

## **Chapter 4**

# **Developing an Air Force Mentoring Program**

### **Overview**

This section illustrates how to embed a mentoring program focused on subordinate leadership development. This proposal identifies a new leadership centric goal for the mentoring program, recommends methods to embed the program, and finally redefines the current career management goal and makes it a subset of leadership development.

### **The Goal of Mentoring**

The goal of a mentoring program should be to develop the leadership abilities of all subordinates. This goal differs in two main areas from the current mentoring program. First, and most importantly, it puts the primary emphasis on developing leadership skills. Unlike the current mentoring program, which mentions leadership development and then focuses on career progression, the primary goal of a mentoring program should be to develop leadership skills. Second, this mentoring program builds the leadership abilities of all subordinates instead of starting with officers of 3-4 years experience. Permeating all ranks and experience a mentoring program should reach down to the brand new lieutenant and airman and start building their leadership skills as soon as they enter the Air Force. Overall, an effective mentoring program focuses on leadership development and targets the growth of every airman from the lowest ranks.

This mentoring program teaches airmen how to apply their learned leadership skills and starts building their leadership ability as soon as they enter the force.

### **Embedding the Mentoring System**

Embedding mentoring as a fundamental responsibility of leadership requires a change in the organizational culture of the Air Force. The culture needs to change from one that does not value mentorship to one that embraces the concept and understands its benefits. Changing the Air Force leadership culture from one that focuses on developing careers to one that develops leaders demands a top down approach starting with the Air Force Chief of Staff (CSAF) committing to embedding an effective mentoring program.

Edgar H. Schein identifies three levels that define a culture.<sup>1</sup> The first level, artifacts, refers to the visible or overt characteristics of an organization. These characteristics can be seen, heard, or felt. They include the language, products, and symbols of the organization. The second level, the espoused values, is the common beliefs shared by an organization. The basic assumptions of the organization make the third level. The basic assumptions are the unwritten and often unknown scripts that members follow. They include what members pay attention to, how they react to different circumstances, and what actions they take. Changing a culture requires time and effort. Schein identifies primary and secondary mechanisms that leaders can use to change their organization's culture. Some primary mechanisms include what leaders pay attention to, role model, and promote. Secondary mechanisms deal with the organizational structure and how it enables cultural change. Together, these mechanisms serve to change the artifacts, values, and basic assumption of an organization.

The CSAF should incorporate primary and secondary mechanisms to promote a culture that accepts mentoring as a fundamental responsibility of leadership. First, CSAF must change the

basic assumptions and values of Air Force leaders. All Air Force leaders' basic assumptions and values must include mentoring as a valuable and inherent duty of leadership. Second, the CSAF must change the Air Force philosophy to reflect the importance of leadership to its mission in doctrine and instructions. Third, the CSAF must change the Air Force's organizational procedures so that they reinforce and implement effective mentoring programs. Fourth, the CSAF must make career development subordinate to leadership development. These actions will embed a leadership focused mentoring system in the Air Force.

### **Changing the Basic Assumptions and Value Systems**

The Air Force must demonstrate to leaders how mentoring benefits their units and missions. For example, consider General S.L. A. Marshall's description of how subordinate leadership can benefit a unit in combat. General Marshall graphically depicts the fear and confusion that units face when confronted with combat.

The junior leaders are affected as much as the rifle files. The unexpectedness of the experience has made them less confident, and the more confidence slips, the more they hesitate to give orders which might stimulate action by the more aggressive men. That orders are not given further the demoralization and immobility of the line. Knowing that the leaders are afraid make the men more fearful...Could one clear commanding voice be raised – even though it be the voice of an individual without titular authority – they would obey, or at least the stronger characters would do so and the weaker would begin to take heart because something is being done...But clear, commanding voices are all too rare on the field of battle. So they wait, doing nothing, and inaction takes further toll on their resolve.<sup>2</sup>

Referring to the opening of this paper, Lieutenant Colonel Moore took this lesson to heart when he chose to develop the leadership skills of his men. He knew that confusion would reign throughout a battle, and he knew that confusion would grow without sound leadership. Furthermore, he knew that leaders would be lost and the lives of his men and the success of his mission relied on somebody taking command when needed. Both General Marshall and

Lieutenant Colonel Moore understood that success in combat depended on someone taking charge and acting as a leader. For Lieutenant Colonel Moore this translated into developing the leadership abilities of all his men. Thus, he mentored his subordinates, ensuring they knew how to apply their leadership skills when the time came. Lieutenant Colonel Moore understood that mentoring directly benefited him and his mission.

For Air Force leaders, this need to develop subordinate leaders may not be as clear. Young Army and Marine lieutenants, similar to 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry lieutenants, find themselves in combat leadership positions early. The Air Force, on the other hand, has few combat officers since most Air Force combatants are pilots. Furthermore, of these combatant officers, even fewer face leadership positions early in their career. Most pilots will go through a long development phase as co-pilots or wingmen. Even when they do assume command, most around the captain level, they are more tacticians than combat leaders. Support officers, on the other hand, may assume leadership positions earlier. However, they rarely see combat. Thus, Air Force officers are not as cognizant of how mentoring benefits themselves, their units, or their missions. The Air Force needs to show its senior officers that building subordinates' leadership skills does not apply only to combat operations. Civilian practices and leadership development programs provide a starting point for the Air Force to change this mindset.

When Colin Powell became the Secretary of State, he understood that he needed to develop the leadership skills of his civilian subordinates. Far away from his roots as a combat officer, Secretary Powell focused on developing subordinate leadership skills. Secretary Powell knew that the key to a group's success

...lies in exceptional, innovative, fast execution. Execution lies, in turn, in the capacity of people to quickly capitalize on fleeting opportunities in the marketplace; develop imaginative ideas and creative responses; generate fast, constantly changing action plans; mobilize teams and resources; get the job done



swiftly and effectively- and then continue that process with relentless commitment...What effective leaders do is create an environment in which great people can flourish in optimal pursuit of the enterprise's mission.<sup>3</sup>

In essence, Secretary Powell was teaching his subordinates to lead, taking advantage of situations as they arose, developing teams, and creating environments in which their people could flourish. John C. Maxwell labels this concept *The Law of Explosive Growth*. He identifies key characteristics of leaders who build leaders. Among them is the leader's desire to be succeeded; to give power away; to invest time in others; and affect people far beyond his reach.<sup>4</sup> Fundamental to this concept, however, is the development of these characteristics in subordinates.

Developing subordinate leaders benefits any leader in any situation from combat to routine office work. In combat, it helps to reduce the fog and friction of war. Soldiers facing fire and cut-off from formal leadership will have the leadership skills to take command when necessary. In peacetime, by creating an environment conducive to building subordinate leaders, superior leaders reap the benefits produced by the leaders they developed. The Air Force needs to teach this concept, giving it the highest priority in mentoring programs. From the Chief of Staff down, each successive layer of leadership needs to build the leadership skills of the officers directly below them. Through this process, leaders will come to understand the value of mentoring to develop the leadership skills of subordinates. In turn, this embeds mentoring in the basic assumptions and value system of Air Force officers.

### **Changing Doctrine and Instructions**

As the Air Force embeds mentoring by changing the basic assumptions and value system of its officers, it must also create an organizational environment conducive to institutionalizing mentoring. Merely creating an instruction on mentoring does not guarantee the success of the

program. The Air Force must include mentoring and leadership development as basic doctrine; create a leadership development instruction; and require officers to evaluate leadership development in subordinates.

The Air Force should include leadership development in its basic doctrine. Air Force Basic Doctrine (AFDD-1) describes the fundamental beliefs of how to apply Air Power. Part of that belief is Centralized Control and Decentralized Execution. This tenet of air power emphasizes the fundamental role *leadership relations* plays in applying airpower, but it does not emphasize how important *leadership itself* is to the concept. Centralized Control and Decentralized Execution requires good leadership skills in subordinates in order for them to make appropriate decisions.

Contrasting AFDD-1 to its' Marine Corps equivalent, Marine Corp Doctrinal Publication 1 (MCDP-1), illustrates the relative importance of leadership development to each service. MCDP-1 emphasizes leadership development throughout its chapters. After starting with the same basic topics of doctrine, strategy and the nature of war, MCDP-1 begins to focus on the role leadership has in accomplishing the Marine Corps mission. MCDP-1 teaches that the "Marine Corps' style of warfare requires intelligent leaders with a penchant for boldness and initiative down to the lowest levels."<sup>5</sup> MCDP-1 continues to reinforce the importance of leadership by explaining "... our philosophy requires competent leadership at all levels. A centralized system theoretically needs only one competent person, the senior commander, who is the sole authority. A decentralized system requires leaders at all levels to demonstrate sound and timely judgment."<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, MCDP-1 clearly lays out responsibilities for building leaders. "The responsibility for implementing professional military education in the Marine Corps is three-tiered: It resides not only with the education establishment, but also with the commander

and the individual.”<sup>7</sup> MCDP-1 links leadership development of all subordinates directly to command responsibilities:

All commanders should consider the professional development of their subordinates a principal responsibility of command. Commanders should foster a personal teacher-student relationship with their subordinates. Commanders are expected to conduct a continuing professional education program for their subordinates that includes developing military judgment, decision-making, and teaching general professional subjects and specific technical subjects pertinent to occupational specialties. Useful tools for general professional development include supervised reading programs, map exercises, war games, battle studies, and terrain studies. *Commanders should see the development of their subordinates as a direct reflection on themselves.*<sup>8</sup>

Notice the major differences in MCDP-1, AFDD-1 and the Air Force mentoring programs. First, the Marine Corps has included leadership development in its basic doctrine, emphasizing the need to develop subordinate leaders to conduct the Marine Corp mission. Contrast this to AFDD-1, which *does not even mention the role leadership plays in the Air Force*. Second, MCDP-1 demands that the Marine Corps develop its leaders down to the lowest levels in order to have the ability to execute decentrally. Finally, MCDP-1 makes commanders personally responsible for developing subordinate leaders and failure to do is a *direct reflection* of the commander. Furthermore, MCDP-1 is not unique among services. FM-1, the Army’s capstone doctrinal manual, dedicates a section to the importance of leadership in fulfilling its mission, describing leadership as “the lifeblood of The Army.”<sup>9</sup> The Air Force needs to follow the lead of MCDP-1 and FM-1 and incorporate leadership development into its basic doctrine.

The Air Force should also produce an instruction dedicated to leadership. Air Force instructions do not offer any guidance on how to lead. As demonstrated earlier, the only instructions dealing with leadership focus on mentorship, which equates to career management in the Air Force. However, the Army provides another good example for the Air Force to follow. The Army publishes FM 22-100, Army Leadership. The purpose of FM 22-100 is to provide “a

single source reference for all Army leaders.”<sup>10</sup> In short, FM 22-100 establishes “the Army’s’ leadership doctrine...” and “...the fundamental principles by which Army leaders act to accomplish the mission and take care of their people.”<sup>11</sup> Revolving around the three words, “Be, Know, Do,” FM 22-100 describes leadership skills, actions, roles, and relationships. In essence, FM 22-100 acts as an instruction manual that leaders can use to apply their leadership tools. Producing a similar Air Force instruction would serve two functions. First, creating a single point of reference for all leaders to use establishes standards and guidelines to promote and develop leadership. Second, the instruction serves as a surrogate mentor to young officers if their superior officers fail in their duties.

Incorporating the importance of leadership into basic Air Force doctrine emphasizes the importance of developing subordinate leaders. Furthermore, creating an AFI dedicated to leadership development provides guidelines and standards for Air Force leaders or developing subordinates to follow. Together, these factors change the basic assumptions and values of Air Force to a philosophy committed to subordinate leadership development.

### **Changing Organizational Procedures**

The Air Force must change its organizational procedures to promote a healthy and productive leadership centric mentoring program. The Air Force should require commanders to evaluate subordinates’ leadership skills. Currently, the Air Force feedback and officer evaluations system do not make leadership evaluation a mandatory item. AFI 36-2406, Officer and Enlisted Evaluation Systems, states, “You [the supervisor] may also address the ratee’s ability to evaluate and develop subordinates.”<sup>12</sup> Addressing leadership ability is optional and entirely at the discretion of the supervisor. As noted before, evidence points to less than desirable feedback compliance in the first place, so many officers will not receive any feedback.

Of those who do receive feedback, they may not receive any feedback on leadership abilities since it is optional. When the officer is evaluated, AF Form 707 A/B has a simple DOES or DOES NOT MEETS STANDARDS box to check. However, what are the standards? If AFDD-1, or an instruction similar to MCDP-1 or FM 22-100, identified leadership standards, then a supervisor would have standards to compare. However, with no standards to compare, and no requirement to evaluate leadership skills, senior raters often overlook leadership skills. In the words of one Air Force lieutenant colonel, “We can’t measure what is important, so we make what we can measure important.”<sup>13</sup> Since the Air Force has no means to measure leadership, it has no clear means of promoting leadership ability. Thus, the Air Force makes important what it can measure, which is career progression. Focusing attention and methods of promotion are two of Schein’s embedding mechanisms: requiring leaders to give feedback on leadership abilities and promoting leadership skills further embeds the value of developing subordinate leaders.

Institutionalizing an effective mentoring program focused on building leadership requires the Air Force to change its cultural environment. Teaching senior leaders the value of building subordinate leadership skills; including the importance of subordinate leadership in accomplishing the Air Force mission; and requiring senior leaders to evaluate subordinate leadership skills all serve to embed leadership focused mentoring in the Air Force.

### **Career Management and Mentoring**

As the Air Force institutionalizes leadership focused mentoring, it can place career development in its proper place. Currently, Air Force instructions do not distinguish between mentoring and career management. While career management plays a major role in the development of subordinate leaders, it is not an end unto itself. The Air Force must clearly define career management as an obligation subordinate to leadership development. This places

the emphasis of the mentoring program on leadership development while recognizing the importance of career management. The Air Force can accomplish this by creating a different set of instructions for leadership and career management. The Army provides another good example to accomplish this objective.

The Army separated the two leadership functions of developing leaders and career management in different instructions. FM 22-100, already discussed, focuses solely on leadership development and constitutes the primary leadership instruction. The career management instructions are contained in Army instructions AR 690-950, Career Management, and PAM 600-3, Commissioned Officer Development and Career Management. Notice that in the hierarchy of regulations, these instructions fall below FM 22-100. This reinforces to superior officers that they should focus efforts on developing subordinate leadership first and career management second. Thus, regardless of how an army officer's career develops, superior leaders will always attempt to build his leadership skills. This results in producing a more effective leader despite the career path he takes. However, if superior leaders do not focus on leadership development first, than an officer may be able to manage a good career without being a good leader. By changing the priority of these leadership responsibilities, the Air Force begins to focus more on developing leaders while continuing to manage an officer's career properly.

Combined with codification in AFDD-1, implementation in instructions, and mandatory evaluation of leadership skills, the Air Force will begin to properly develop leaders at all levels. These embedding methods make leadership focused mentoring an ingrained part of the Air Force culture, readily accepted by officers of all levels as a tool to help them accomplish their mission and invest in the future of Air Force leadership.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Schein, Edgar H. *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, (On-line: <http://www.tnellen.com/ted/tc/schein.html>), 8.
- <sup>2</sup> Marshall, S.L.A, General. *Men Against Fire*, (Alexandria, VA: Byrd Enterprises, Inc., 1947), 48-49.
- <sup>3</sup> Harari, Oren. *The Leadership Secrets of Colin Powell*, (New York: McGraw Hill, 2002), 128.
- <sup>4</sup> Maxwell, John C. *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998), 210.
- <sup>5</sup> *Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 1* (United States Government, 1997), 57.
- <sup>6</sup> Ibid, 81.
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid, 67.
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid, 63.
- <sup>9</sup> FM-1, *The Army*, (United States Government, 2001) 11.
- <sup>10</sup> FM 22-100, *Army Leadership*, (United States Government, 1999), vii.
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid, vii.
- <sup>12</sup> AFI 36-2406, *Officer and Enlisted Evaluation System* (United States Government, July 2000), 46.
- <sup>13</sup> Becker, Joseph D., Lieutenant Colonel, USAF. Interview, 1 Feb 04.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Conclusion**

The Army identifies leadership as its “lifeblood.”<sup>1</sup> The Marine Corps claims that it needs leadership “down to the lowest levels.”<sup>2</sup> Secretary of State Colin Powell recognized that success in his organization depended on building a leadership-enhancing environment.<sup>3</sup> John Maxwell believes: “Add ten followers to your organization and you have the power of ten people. Add ten leaders to your organization, and you have the power of ten leaders times all the followers and leaders *they* influence.”<sup>4</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Harold Moore knew that “on the battlefield leaders are killed in battle...” so Colonel Moore “...wanted every man trained for and capable of taking over the job of the man above him.”<sup>5</sup> General S.L.A. Marshall saw that failures of leadership on the battlefield brought disastrous results; however, he acknowledged that one person with leadership skills, whether a formal leader or not, could turn the tide of battle.<sup>6</sup> Napoleon saw the inherent leadership ability in each of his soldiers, knowing that every foot soldier “carries a marshal’s baton.”<sup>7</sup> Recognized throughout time and across professions, leaders have realized the importance of developing the leaders below them. However, the Air Force has not learned this lesson.

The Air Force ignores the development of subordinate leadership. It has created a mentoring program concentrating on career management but not offering any guidance to help build subordinate leaders. Thus, the organizational culture of the Air Force disregards the



benefits of developing leaders. Many accomplished Air Force majors have not received any sort of developmental feedback. Furthermore, at least a few Air Force commanders are not even aware of the Air Force mentoring program. Unlike its Army and Marine counterparts, the Air Force fails to teach its officers that developing subordinate leadership is critical to accomplishing its mission.

The Air Force needs to change its institutional culture to one that embraces the concept of developing subordinate leadership. Through proactive mentoring programs targeted at building leadership skills at all levels, the Air Force can improve its effectiveness. Through embedding mechanisms, the Air Force can institutionalize this concept. To change the Air Force's leadership culture, the CSAF must teach senior leaders the benefit of developing subordinate leaders, incorporate leadership into basic doctrine, create a single point of reference for leadership standards and guidance; and focus mentoring on leadership development instead of career management.

The 7<sup>th</sup> Calvary left the Ia Drang Valley victorious. In the first major clash between US force and the NVA, the 7<sup>th</sup> Calvary outnumbered 5 to 1 defeated its enemy despite the odds against it. Throughout the battle, young men stepped up and filled the leadership roles of their fallen or separated leaders. They did so because Colonel Moore took the time to mentor them and develop their leadership skills. What fate would they have met if Colonel Moore counseled his mid-level officers on career development instead of building the leadership skills of all of his subordinates? Colonel Moore knew that leadership was the lifeblood of his unit. It was subordinate leadership that brought the 7<sup>th</sup> Calvary victory that day. It was Lieutenant Colonel Moore's mentoring that made that victory possible.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> FM-1, *The Army*, (United States Government, 2001) 11.

<sup>2</sup> *Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 1* (United States Government, 1997), 57.

<sup>3</sup> Harari, Oren. *The Leadership Secrets of Colin Powell*, (New York: McGraw Hill, 2002), 128.

<sup>4</sup> Maxwell, John C. *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998), 208.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 23.

<sup>6</sup> Marshall, S.L.A, General. *Men Against Fire*, (Alexandria, VA: Byrd Enterprises, Inc., 1947), 48-49.

<sup>7</sup> Bonaparte, Napoleon. Attributed. From John Bartlett, *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2002), 387.

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